

a good use

*a conceptual environment
for the built environment*

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Foreword

This essay does not in itself present a theory of the built environment. Instead it creates a conceptual environment in which theory becomes possible. A kind of Manual for the maintenance of theory. The reason for approaching things in this way lies in the fact that I felt the need for a cogent set of concepts whose relation to each other had been thoroughly thought through and braided into a single story. This story had to avoid the idea of a natural bridge between thinking and doing. The basic premise of this essay is that thinking and doing take account of each other but offer no natural or necessary a priori links. We are given the world around us in the form of situations and we must decide how to act upon them. Thinking about this helps. It is the nature of the bridge we make between thinking and doing that constitutes design. The wealth of our life springs from the fact that we are made to conceive, plan and build that bridge ourselves and have only our experience of the world and our imagination to guide us.

That is why this philosophy happily takes from what has gone before: Pragmatism, Phenomenology, Existentialism and Radical Empiricism, the various schools of Constructivism and the pragmatic insights of Wittgenstein. They all provide the elements of a way of thinking through our proper relationship with the built environment. This book sets out to find a way of relating these concepts and tying them together.

I want to grasp what it is we do when we make a planning or design decision. This understanding will help me form a working attitude to the environment I live in, it will help me consider my desires and it will help me make decisions in altering that environment for my own use. It will also make clear to me what my responsibility is in that process and how to find my part. This then is a philosophy for individuals conscious of being part of a bigger thing: the environment or the world they live in. That to me is the basis for collective behaviour: me doing my thing by taking account of the other. If we want to alter our collective behaviour we have to start with ourselves. This book is directed at finding out how to stand relative to the world we make a difference to. What I do not want is to put forward a particular theory of design. Rather I want to define what is good and under what conditions something has to fulfil to be considered good.

I want to focus my philosophy of the built environment not on the large-scale workings of states and multinationals but on the responsibilities of planners and designers, people who perform actions alone or in small teams that influence the world around them in very concrete ways. My

mission is a philosophy of the environment in which we are properly placed with regard to that environment and called to order.

Having an attitude to design, development or making is not the same as having a design strategy. Having an attitude means that you have developed a way of understanding things that inclines you to want to deal with things in a certain way. As such it can lead to a strategy. It does not do so by itself. With an attitude all you have is a standpoint, a perspective or view with which you judge things. Your attitude might tell you whether something is good the way it is or whether it isn't. That is all. It might even tell you *what* is good about it or *what* is not good about it, but it does not provide the techniques or technology needed to create the qualities you find desirable as a result of having that attitude. For this you need to go beyond your attitude into your experience of the world. Your attitude needs experience and vice versa. An attitude not based upon experience is impossible and an attitude based on a narrow and inadequate experience is probably, although not necessarily, flawed. Only in experience can you measure whether a design lives up to expectations. To see how it works you need to either build it and observe what happens once it is built. All methods of simulation are selective and give at best just a partial view of the end product. How can you make sure that the qualities you wish for can be designed, be made according to your design and manage to avoid achieving their goal at the cost of something else that you have not foreseen? It requires a sophisticated building culture, which we need time to learn and practise.

The structure of these essays resembles a snowball. It is impossible to represent the concepts I use in a purely linear way. For the one I need all the others. So I start small and grow large rather than starting at one end and ending at the other. So the first essay, The question of philosophy, rehearses most of the themes in the book as a whole but itself asks a relatively straightforward question. All the others pick up on themes in that essay and explore them, elaborate upon them and look how they interconnect. For this reason I do not only not want to apologize for the overlap but see this as an essential price to pay for the integral approach I seek.

This philosophy does not pretend to truth, it pretends to *work for me*. It gives me a simulated model of the way things work in this world. It will be flawed.

This text is meant to support my teaching at the TU Eindhoven. It is not finished, it is a work in progress, it will never be finished but merely abandoned. The text contains pieces about which my thinking is not fully formed. I welcome any and every comment, criticism and correction, but I do believe this is what I want to say about the subject.

Kant was right, we do appear to believe that what we think is what others should think too. Whether it is arrogant or not I do not know, but it is certainly responsible for a lot of bloodshed. My approach is personal I am concerned about thinking well for myself. This is deliberate and comes from a deeply held conviction that thinking is an embodied activity, done by someone from the position he takes up within his world. Thinking needs a body in its environment to make sense of what is being thought about. In that sense abstractions like humanity, objectivity, civilisation, movements and styles are all too large. Thinking is done by a person, often in conversation with another person, or through an internal struggle within the person, a struggle with a particular challenge. And there is good reason for this. The situation I find myself in is uniquely configured. If I am a unique human being, that uniqueness comes not just from the fact that my body might function slightly differently to other human beings because it has a certain constitution, a different build and look, it comes primarily from the fact that my situation and my history, my passions and operative fictions are part of my portrait of *a life* that I claim as my own. I have my own body and my own environment. I read them *my way* because of my unique situation. That is what makes every one of us unique while we are all probably broadly similar. It makes communication always uncertain but certainly possible. Each attempt at communication as such is an act of measurement in the sense that Heidegger tried to convey in his essay *Dichterlich wohnt der Mensch*. I have as such *measured myself against my body and my environment*. I have not written my sentences in such a way as to eliminate myself from the discussion. I have posited myself squarely within my thought. Thought is a biographical, life-describing activity. I have not tried to become objective, instead I have tried to be honest and sincere. With this attempt at sincerity all I can do is hope that the reader, should he choose to persevere, measure himself against what I say. The result of this measurement cannot be predicted. At the same time, these are essays, exercises in thought to find an appropriate and compelling attitude for my *self* in relation to my body and my environment. You, the reader, are invited to measure your thoughts against them if you want to. But you will have to do your own work on them in order to make sense of them and in order to appropriate them for yourselves. The thoughts

presented here constitute what I think. I have tried to make them communicable, but I cannot ever guarantee their communicability. Thinking is a uniquely situated activity. That is what constitutes its personal nature. At the same time, that is all that constitutes its personal nature, so I have good hope that we can overcome our situatedness should we choose to and manage to have a conversation through this book.

As designers we maintain and develop ourselves as people and professionals by acquiring knowledge, skills and an appropriate attitude, a properly defensible stand on things. This book is about developing the knowledge and skills with regard to thinking in order to work on that attitude. With a well-practised and generous attitude you can still be a lousy designer, but it does not necessarily make you a worse one. It certainly does not pretend to have the power to make you a good one. It will however make you see things in a different way, and who knows what effect that will have.

This text falls within my research concerning the concept of use. My research project is called *the ontology of use project* or *OUPs*, a philosophical exploration of architectural design theory and practice, engaging the relationship between aesthetics and ethics to look at the social morphology of the environment. The aim of the OUPs is to develop a fully-fledged ontology of use through the perspective of a phenomenological pragmatism, a synthesis between two schools of thought exploring the compelling links between a pragmatist approach to the environment and a phenomenological-existentialist one. The purpose is to come to a description of the concept use in the arena of our doing, thinking, making and experiencing, to then mobilise this description in the construction of a conceptually generous aesthetics of use and a thorough typology of use. This might colour my approach...

Architectural and urban designers participate in society just as everyone else does. Having said that, they do have a special task, a special responsibility; they design our environment and help us produce our space to an extent that few others can claim to. They organise our space for us through the use of walls and openings, they organise the set of various sorts of boundaries which gives our life structure. My confidence in being able to give straightforward advice on concrete matters of design has never been great, but has early on been further shaken with the insight that there are many ways to do things well. What is important for a teacher who does not teach the skills of design but the skills of thinking about it, is to make sure

the attitude offered here is honest and well thought through and practised to make sure that they measure up to the attitude that formed the intention behind them.

My task is not to deliver a history or indeed a critique of other philosophies or theories of design or society. In this sense this essay falls well short of current academic demands and at the same time goes well beyond them. It offers a view. A large problem with making sophisticated thinking accessible to intelligent people in branches of human knowledge other than philosophy is the problem of jargonisation. There is a risk in choosing to unfold your world of fine nuances and careful distinctions through the use of neologisms. It requires a considerable administration. I would like to avoid a philosophy that is bureaucratic in its feel and have chosen the dangerous approach of catachresis which is to use words most people are familiar with and try to sharpen or blunt them for my own purposes in the largely unfounded confidence that this is a good thing rather than contribute to the already large mountain of words that mean almost the same thing.

I want to thank Thomas A.P. van Leeuwen, who long ago exploded my familiar view of the world and introduced me to some very strange people indeed, all of whom have become friends through their marvellous books even though I have never met them. I also want to thank Ivor Smith who put my world back together again around the issue of design in architecture. I would like to thank Paul Shephard who, as far as I am concerned knows how to tell a story to start making you think about things without wanting to control where it will end. I would also like to thank my colleagues at the TU in Eindhoven which is a wonderful place, especially Jan Westra and Bernard Colenbrander who have been immensely generous to allow me to get on with things. I am deeply grateful to them for that. I would also like to thank all my students, in Leiden, in Kingston, in Rotterdam, Groningen, The Hague, Tilburg and especially Eindhoven, of course, all of whom have taught me all I thought I taught them by wrestling with me and getting me to go back and think again. But all this falls into nothing beside the contribution of my family who thankfully never took me seriously.

This book is dedicated to Victoria

Contents

Foreword.....	2
Part I: The question of philosophy, a radical pragmaticist approach.....	15
picture man.....	15
design = a word.....	16
a philosophy of the design of the BE{question mark}...	17
design [AND] inspiration: breathe in the (dirty) air	21
an unremarkable thesis	23
theses.....	26
philosophy as an exercise in autobiographical placement and orientation	30
a very good concept of the good	31
philosophy as a game: philosophy = {a word}; Pericles = {an Athenian}	32
the game of philosophy = {a discipline}.....	33
a game to find non-games	34
a tectonics of behaviour	35
a game of abstraction	36
phenomenological description: a game of being-in-the- world	37
a tectonics of form-behaviour	39
a view of phenomenology sharpened	40
the art [AND/OR] point of describing things.....	41
pragmatism.....	45
Part II: The question of philosophy [AND] theory.....	48

philosophy [AND] theory: norm.....	48
philosophy-theory-method.....	49
Fail again, Fail better.....	52
language, use, and the utopia of meaning	53
words as portraits	58
theory [AND] theory-run-wild.....	62
building [AND] theory: the curious freedom of thought	64
philosophy [AND] theory: the uses of ground	65
[IF] phil. = building an att. [THEN] phil. = building a me	67
I take a stand and thus become me.....	69
philosophy = the call into question.....	70
practise theory & practise practice.....	71
rules of the game	72
games [AND] rule<space>cheating.....	74
game space: ground and measurements.....	78
philosophy [and] theory meet in practice	79
a good theory.....	80
practise [AND] the practice of philosophy.....	82
philosophy, theory [AND] theology	84
design and selection	84
freedom as athletic use.....	88
athletic being	89
a preliminary look at good things	89
a theory of generous action: a will to art.....	90

a theory of generous action	91
experience [AND] belief: correspondence.....	94
response [AND] responsibility existing= f(being+having+doing) = using	95
how do I use well?	96
world [AND] body: me and my philosophy.....	97
Part III: The question of metaphysics, ontology: how we can speak usefully about the world and its behaviour	102
truth, trust, the real and its behaviour	102
the question of truth.....	102
the question of being [OR] ontology, the body [AND] the environment.....	104
the trust set [AND] the universal set of the possible..	105
evolution and madness	108
speaking as an I = {a body of relations}.....	111
the portraiture of being	113
a-body-in-its-environment.....	114
Part IV: The question of metaphysics: logic and the grammar of experience	117
Logic [AND/OR] madness [AND] feeling	117
logic and the grammar of experience	119
keep your thinking tidy	120
the use of taste	124
wild use	126
taste and the authority of words	127
feeling a feeling and describing a feeling.....	130

making things general: becoming social	131
practising your taste: becoming athletic, becoming good, using well	133
the wrong feeling [OR] the wrong game	135
madness, logic and society	138
taste and ground.....	139
Part V: The question of metaphysics: a social existence.....	140
society and its fictions.....	140
Success	144
aesthetics and selection, [IF] {a} [THEN] {b}.	145
conditions and ground: [IF]/[THEN]	148
the double bind of the arbitrary	150
feelings.....	152
the strange logic of authenticity	160
the problem of a duck being a duck.....	163
the mona lisa and my love for her	165
branding	169
addiction to authenticity.....	170
making value, a lesson in metaphysics	171
products as social documents.....	173
technological documents: a building	174
Part VI: The question of aesthetics	178
how we can desire well.....	178
the interest in disinterest.....	178
physics and art	182

portraits of the whole	184
das zielbewußte Schaffen, while we turn, we raise ourselves into space.....	185
an aesthetics of being: quality	187
what is a quality – quality is a what	197
describing a quality	200
a quality is a description of a relation	201
Kant’s aesthetic and the tectonics of behaviour	202
a quality can never be neutral	205
a quality = a relationship.....	207
analysis and synthesis	208
concepts as sets (of qualities)	212
a story about a quality: serenity	214
object-tcejbus	219
use, less, full: useless, useful.....	221
a good use	223
description as creation.....	225
taking responsibility	230
Finding Beauty, a Spinozan approach to good use	237
Part VII: The question of ethics.....	252
the physics of good use.....	252
questions about what we are doing	253
communicating behaviour	254
sameness & difference.....	257
expressing & behaving.	259

laws describe and/or prescribe.....	261
the technical and the social imperative.....	263
a me-in-my-world imperative	270
the idea of a community	273
and the problem of the future	273
using well	274
ethics: the word [AND] the question	275
quality: ethics [AND] aesthetics	275
when N +1 morphologies meet in behaviour.....	276
qualities socialise	277
desire as an evolutionary mechanism	278
Just, justify, justice	279
morality [AND] morals	280
instrumental [AND] compound ethics	281
intentions [AND] consequences.....	283
use of critique	285
consequences [NOT] intentions?	285
things and their style of being	286
back to the consequences of things.....	287
life [AND] action//plier = to fold//complication = to fold up [AND] explication = to fold out	291
causal web.....	294
understanding understanding.....	296
veracity, sincerity, honesty	297
a world reasoned	299

a world of virtues	300
Rawls' lessons in planning and design	305
freedom.....	306
situationality	309
responsibility.....	314
balance.....	320
Part VIII: a manifesto on design	322
design and the endless questionnaire	322
the praxis of theoria.....	323
The questionnaire	325
Now start again.....	338
Glossary.....	344

Part I: The question of philosophy, a radical pragmaticist approach

picture man...

Watch him as he moves through space-in-time, a mobile, occasionally rather elegant, replicating organism within a changeable world; a world he helps change by acting upon it. He is made of meat that withers and decays quickly if it is not lovingly cared for. He believes he is autonomous but is in fact completely dependent on gravity, on his size relative to other things around him, on the size of the earth, on what mass and energy are capable of, he is dependent on others of his sort, on the stuff he eats, drinks and breathes, the stuff he uses to maintain and develop himself. Others use what he wants to use and that generally leads to awkward situations. Even though he is dependent on all this, he is also free: doomed to choose his way because he is ignorant of the way the world works. There appears to him to be no natural bridge between thinking and doing, he has to build it himself. To help him decide how, he tells himself stories, for instance about why he has more right than another to use this or that. He never believes them completely; or at least there is always doubt, always discussion. When doubt is swallowed by certainty things can become truly dramatic. But all things considered, he is quick to adapt, able to change his ways, even if he rarely does so willingly. He can change clothes, change activities, change alliances in the blink of an eye. He can become a different man overnight. He lies a lot, especially to himself; his face is a mask, a tool of self-preservation as well as a tool of predation. He has a huge range of activities and interests. He is, to all intents and purposes quite mad, can make almost anything and can happily destroy even more in the name of what he considers good. He can feel a whole encyclopaedia full of different emotions, even if, in the end, they all come down to love and hate, joy and sadness, to having him say yes or no. He loves beauty, loves wisdom but lives in ugliness and stupidity, not because they have turned against him, or have disappeared, they never do, but because he simply stops seeing them. His moods swing quickly; things can get extremely ugly, he both loves and hates violence. Don't ask me how that works but it does. Try and pin him down, he will escape, he will elude you, because all of the above is true, but not always so.

design = a word

The word design comes from the Latin *designare* which means "to mark out" or "devise," which is a combination of *de-* "out" + *signare* "to mark," from *signum* "a mark, sign." A design marks out in signs what is to be devised or made, what is envisioned. A designer attempts to predict a future state of affairs. This is not fundamentally different from natural selection. In fact designers design through selection: selection on the basis of experience and an awareness of possibilities and limitations. A designer has his experience and his creativity where evolution has the limitations and possibilities of a reasonably stable environment, a coded set of operating instructions in the form of DNA with its own logic of transformation and a selective margin from which to choose that which is useful.

A designer leaps from an understanding of what there is when he begins the design process to what there will be if and when his design is realised. This is a vast conceptual leap. If his environment and the situation he designs for remains stable, his own experience will serve him well and he will, to some extent at least, be justified in entertaining a good hope that what he envisaged will indeed be realised, after all he has experience of the workings of that which is the subject of his special field of design: construction, architecture, machinery, household appliances, computer software, legislation, political processes, medical treatments, scientific experiments, you name it. Because he has this experience we trust him when presenting his vision of the future.

The strategies he can use to transform his environment and his relation to it are almost endless. The explanation and exploration of these strategies is properly the subject of histories of design and architecture. There have been many attempts to systematise design processes. This means essentially privileging one design strategy over others and although that might help things along for a while, a strategy becomes counterproductive when it is reduced to a thoughtless routine. It is after all thought that makes our material world come alive in our perception of it. It is that, I suppose which people dislike about copying and imitation: it is the reduction of a way of doing things to an uncritical routine. The questions is whether that view is fair. And to judge this one should ask oneself the question: is it possible to conceive of a highly intelligent, critically sharp and creative way to copy or imitate? Personally I think there are.

The interesting thing is how design is always an *architectural* process, in that it structures the world, or bits of it, *for our use*; it organises the world *for our use*. The activity of ordering and organising for the purposes of use is what characterises any kind of architecture, architecture is what is possible when we acquire experience, whether it concerns the architecture of the computer, the architecture of a philosophical argument, the architecture of a theory about the world or indeed the architecture of the built environment. The interesting thing about the word *organisation*, when it is looked at literally, is that it refers to a process whereby we give something body and life: in organising we structure something into various “organs” that work together, and as such present us with a body, a corpus, something that is given life.

a philosophy of the design of the BE{question mark}

Politics decides upon priorities within a world that differentiates itself according to values and norms. Value and values are the subject of economics in its widest possible sense, remembering that not every value has to be translated into capital per se, even though we are perfectly free to do so. Norms are the subject of morality and law, things determined by of convention: contracts, codes of conduct, game rules etc. Here then we have the three foundational pillars of any society: politics, or the way we decide upon what direction to take in an economy which creates value and conflict and the legislature which tries to ensure that we live according to how we have decided to live through our political and economic systems. There is a fourth coordinate that makes up the foundation of any society however, it concerns the space in which we perform: the (built) environment: BE. All social processes take place in organised spaces, spaces organised by walls, openings and signs. When compared to the other three, the BE performs its role quietly enough. It imposes limitations and offers possibilities, creates places and atmospheres and thereby gently filters the processes of the world we live in.

One question that we have to address before we start on this philosophy of design of the built environment is how a philosophy of the built environment or rather a philosophy *of the design* of the built environment distinguishes itself from any other kind of philosophy. This is a moot question. The cameo picture of the place of the built environment I just offered would surely suggest that any philosophy of the built environment will need to take account of politics, economics and legislation. At the same time, let us not make it more difficult than it has to be. We can surely

agree on a number of issues immediately. We can, surely without argument, acknowledge that the built environment concerns:

- technology: technological and artistic issues are relevant to the making and changing of our environment
- society: the built environment is something that the organisation of work and the structuring of our society takes account of. Winston Churchill famously said that we shape our buildings and then they shape us. We build filters and boundaries and then these filters and boundaries start doing their work: they help in the process of selection.
- spatial quality: Like music, architecture is an immersive art; the is fully immersed in a building or an assemblage of buildings: we enter buildings, and as the body is an aggregate of more or less coordinated organs reacting to the environment it finds itself in, the quality of a space goes beyond mere social structuring as mentioned under the previous point. A philosophy of the built environment must be concerned with the quality of its spaces from a bodily point of view
- meaning: The body is able to think and remember; and as buildings are among the more stable of our products, whose presence moreover is difficult to avoid, they have inevitably become part of the language of social exchange. Buildings do not only impress upon our bodily capacity for spatial experience, but they speak to us through our own reading of them, they express things because we look for meaning in them. They express things intentionally and subversively, presenting a subtext of unintended and intended meanings. They tell us about our history, about what we find important, how society keeps itself ordered and how institutions speak of their own place in society but also of society relative to those institutions; they say things about themselves but also about society at large and about our own individual experience of them.
- art: Architecture is not just meaning and significance; it is everything art is as well. And art is the exploration of the world by calling that world into question in whatever way it chooses to. The artist is the flea on the skin of society, preventing us from

becoming too complacent and comfortable and shaking us out of our somnolence. That is a crucial task of the built environment. The artistic anarchy of architecture is crucial to the very society it brings into being and calls into question. The built environment not only engages the artistic in that it gives a place to art, but it is, at the same time art itself.

So how does a philosophy of the design of the built environment distinguish itself from other kinds of philosophy? I would suggest that it does so in a number of ways:

1. it must incorporate its own rich if contradictory and sometimes curious tradition in thought and practice. The theory of the built environment is as old as building itself as much of it lies implicit in the buildings we study. Perhaps those theories are not as accessible as we sometimes like to think. Our reading of them uncovers the many dilemmas of interpretation; a building lies folded within traditions of architectural thinking which range from the narrowly rational to the madly inconsistent. All have helped to generate not only wonderful buildings, but even a way of looking at and undergoing our built environment. Any philosophy of the design of the built environment that is merely dismissive of that curious tradition in thought is narrowly conceived and, as such, suspect.
2. Furthermore it must incorporate, even though it cannot be fully represented by, the work of formal philosophy, with which I mean a purely analytical philosophy which has no other end than to do its job well: the open-ended, non-dogmatic discursive exploration of concepts.
3. A philosophy of design cannot help being rooted in action that precedes any philosophical discussion and evaluation. Philosophy can only deal with what is in front of us in the form of a problem, a situation, a concept or a thing. Discussion and discursive thought can prepare us for future action, give us answers to a *what if* scenario, but it can do no more. Like Sartre's postulate that human existence precedes human essence, assumptions about the world given to us, and situations we encounter precede our reflection upon them. The long and short of it is that design happens whether it is properly thought about or not. We

hope the designer practices design through careful reflection. We can hope our own reflection upon the built environment we encounter is adequate and refined but at a certain point the die is cast. Whatever is the case, the world will go its way and we have to act or we shall go cold and hungry.

4. A philosophy of the design of the built environment should be aware of the conditions upon which it and any theory it produces might be said to obtain. At the same time a theory of design cannot be too weighed down by the tussle of conflicting schools of thought if it is to be useful to a designer who has no desire to become a philosopher. As Paul Valéry rightly pointed out, people who act, need a cogent *philosophie de poche* and preferably one that is adequate to the task. Philosophy is a tool to deal with uncertainty; at the same time it is also a tool to prevent certainty.
5. A philosophy of the design of the built environment must concern itself with all aspects of the philosophy of technology as the design of the built environment is a matter of techné, of making. We use things in order to make our environment thereby affecting our environment by transforming it through that making. The design of the built environment is a wider field of enquiry than most of the issues affecting other forms of technology, its range of scale introduces a complexity which knows its own emergent behaviour.
6. A philosophy of the built environment must concern itself with the phenomenology of human spatio-temporality. The organization, configuration and construction of spaces may be said to be the core business of building. As such one could safely argue that a full understanding of the body and the space it inhabits and moves through furnish far and away the most fruitful insights for the compelling design of buildings.
7. It must incorporate but cannot be fully represented by the problems of linguistic theory, interpretation and exegesis. Words are just one way of communicating. Mathematics, drawing and sketching, showing and gesturing are others. No one would deny that an important function of a building is for it to be an intentional or subliminal expression of society, a text in a context, and although a building can be read as a message either

subliminally, subversively or explicitly, that is not and can never be seen as the whole of any building's significance.

8. It engages both traditional and new aesthetics in that it is pre-eminently concerned with the realization of specified qualities belonging to traditional aesthetics such as beauty and the sublime but also with the concerns of a wider pragmaticist aesthetics which tries to draw all experiential qualities and the issue of their desirability into the program of aesthetics
9. Furthermore any philosophy of the built environment severely undermines itself if it does not incorporate the problems of the politics of space and place, the economics of space and place, and the judicial concerns of space and place.

How to make sense of all this without trivializing any one part of it? That is probably impossible unless we state at the beginning that if we lay an emphasis here and spend a little more time there, we do so knowing that we are expressing a personal bias, choosing a perspective from an infinite array of possible perspectives.

design [AND] inspiration: breathe in the (dirty) air

Let's subject the word design to a grilling. What is the activity of designing? What is *a design*? What does a designer do when he is being *a designer*? What is a designer when he is not a designer?

I have tried below to picture design as a chaotic activity and tried to put that chaos into a loose sequence of imperatives. The sequence is there purely for the convenience in writing it up. We ask ourselves questions at the most inopportune moments. That is why I called it a chaotic activity: the same concerns and the same acts often return but in a different order and in a different guise and concerned with a different object for a different use. Let's for the sake of argument imagine that the design process starts with someone enters our office and orders us to DESIGN! We might want to ask him some questions:

1. Design what?
2. For whom?
3. How?
4. Where? When? Why? To what end? To what purpose?

5. For whom? Who are the users? Have you taken all of them into consideration? Do I need to? Are there hidden users whom we have not considered? Are abstract concepts like "Architecture" users of architecture?
6. LEARN! from nature and nurture: look [AND] watch [AND] touch [AND] taste [AND] smell [AND] hear [AND] listen [AND] believe [AND] doubt [AND] think [AND] find [AND] know [AND] feel [AND] imitate [AND] explore [AND] do [AND] practise [AND] practise [AND] practise
7. DECIDE upon values [AND] norms
8. PRACTISE your knowledge, your ideas, seek out inconsistencies and conflicts
9. PRACTISE your attitude
10. PRACTICE what you preach and don't preach too much
11. PRACTISE your skills
12. DEVELOP a vision by imagining possibilities
13. EXPLORE your limitations [AND] possibilities well
14. CONCEPTUALIZE principles
15. BE critical, develop your understanding, beware of overstanding,
16. USE a misunderstanding to good effect
17. USE your means well and athletically
18. UNDERSTAND how and when you are abusing your means
19. ALLOW yourself to be shown, to be told, to be criticised
20. INDUCT, from experience to possible and cogent principles
21. DEDUCT from principles to possible consequences,
22. ABDUCT by seeking relations between apparently unrelated things
23. PRACTICE, rehearse, and practice again
24. EXPAND your frame of reference by looking, undergoing, reading, writing, teaching
25. DECIDE when it feels right/when it feels wrong
26. CONSIDER/RECONSIDER
27. INTERPRET without losing sight of the fact that that is what you are doing
28. NEGOTIATE problems
29. TELL, retell
30. DISCUSS
31. ZOOM in/out
32. HIP HOP, (do the exact opposite of what you intended to test your idea)
33. FORM habits

34. REFORM habits
35. KILL your darlings (dare to get rid of banal metaphors and favourite ideas that have started getting in the way of things)
36. BREAK habits [AND] BUILD new habits
37. REDO
38. SWITCH scales and relate them
39. SWITCH perspectives and relate them
40. CHANGE your mind? Or change your approach without changing you mind. Or change your mind without changing your approach
41. PERSEVERE when you feel it is right but it doesn't yet look it
42. START AGAIN? No.
43. MUDDLE ON? Try to remember what it was you set out doing.
44. DON'T WHINGE, boring
45. LOOK back and REFLECT: what have you actually done do you think?
46. DESIGN the next thing! And the next and the next.
47.
48.
49.

I am reminded of that wonderful quote by Samuel Beckett in *Worstward HO* (1983) "All of old. Nothing else ever. Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better."

One thing I do believe that this list of imperatives within the design process illustrates is that design and evolution are both selective activities and not in any way contradictory. I shall discuss that at greater length later, first now to philosophy.

an unremarkable thesis

philosophy is the thinking of theory and practice, Alain Badiou

To philosophise is to think without the benefit of proof, André Comte-Sponville

This essay constitutes an odyssey through two overlapping areas of inquiry. The first is the area of philosophy itself and concerns itself with the question of philosophy and the kind of questions philosophy needs to ask. The second constitutes a series of introductory explorations of some of the questions we shall be addressing in greater detail in the subsequent essays.

I wanted to combine these two journeys into one, because in the end, the question of philosophy cannot easily be separated from concrete philosophical questions.

To begin with then, here are two questions to ruminate upon; they constitute the challenge to be met by these essays...

How are the practice¹ of philosophy and the planning, development, design, making and maintenance of the built environment related?

How is a philosophy of the built environment and of the planning, development, design, making and maintenance of that environment related to the philosophy of human being generally?

As these questions already imply, this essay will not be exploring specific issues affecting the built environment such as the problem of sustainability, fair competition and the design of liveable spaces. These will be dealt with in separate essays. This and the subsequent essays on metaphysics, aesthetics and ethics concern themselves with the stuff that needs to be in place before all that can usefully happen. They try to put in place the conceptual environment needed to make proper sense of the built environment. This essay's central concern is with the question of philosophy as it can be applied to the relationship between human beings, their society and their spatiotemporal environment; it will give us the means to begin questioning our world generally, thereby making sure we see the issues affecting the built environment as part of the continuum of human experience.

Let's begin with an unremarkable thesis, a theory. No philosophy is possible without a theory (a fiction) against which it operates and my theory is decidedly unremarkable; at the same time it informs all my discussions and actions even though it is not yet complete or completely consistent. For all that it is a theory I have not felt the need to abandon, either to nihilism or indeed (for as long as it lasts) to a better theory. So here it is:

¹ The distinction between the words practice and practise is in these essays important. Practice refers to doing some sort of job: the practice of medicine and architectural practice, while practise refers to the need to exercise and improve upon a skill learnt

Society, despite its obvious problems and shortcomings, is the most hopeful and useful instrument to help make our survival as human beings possible, comfortable and fulfilling. To keep society sustainable it will need to reform itself constantly by making adjustments here and there in order to centre its only adequate purpose, which is to give everyone and everything within human experience a worthy place.

This thesis is based on a number of assumptions, namely

1. That each entity or being-in-the-world cannot, in the pursuit of its own survival and fulfilment, avoid using another entity
2. That this use involves each entity in a process of socialisation where conflicts of interest are likely but neither necessary, inevitable, nor indeed easily predictable; use need not be destructive or detrimental to others, indeed my theory pursues what we might call *a good use*.
3. That, in the light of the above, society should be so designed so as to allow everyone to be left free to pursue their own well-considered sense of *good use*
4. That the distribution and use of goods in society is made fair across peoples and generations.
5. That to achieve this broad social purpose in design, it is essential for the planner, the developer, the designer, engineer and builder to plan, develop, design, engineer and build their experience of life and their frame of reference critically with reference to this goal²
6. That those professionally concerned with the built environment need to acquire the knowledge and skills of their chosen profession and practice both against an attitude towards a society of which they themselves form a part and that attempts to understand, in the widest possible sense available to us through the sciences, philosophy and art, what it is good to desire and wish for and acquiring experience with reference to the best practices, strategies, tactics and actions that are effective, legitimate and fair to achieve those desires. One way to do this is to understand the nature of social production of space, that is, to understand the many factors that help produce *a space*.

² All of these are involved in some way with the processes of planning and design. I shall let these two words stand for all these actors and activities.

This theory is surely unremarkable.

It comes down to this: in order for planners, developers, designers, engineers and builders to explore their task to achieve a *good use*, they need to have a well-sharpened attitude toward the environment and the society they are doing all this for and they need to learn their craft well. They need to be able to argue through their plans and design from the point of view of all the users of their buildings and the city space surrounding them, including themselves. In order for them use well they need to have a thorough understanding of themselves in relation to the world they live in. They need to practise so as to become athletic in their use; that is what makes them professionals and when they are well-practised, athletic, they will find unexpected possibilities.

theses

The journey leading to this unremarkable thesis is full of exotic but compelling adventures in thought. We shall come across some very strange ideas and ways of describing things that will at first confuse rather than clarify; that will, at first appear to deny that there is anything out there in the world which we can hold onto usefully. But that feeling will pass. We shall soon realise that it is precisely what we have always had at our disposal, namely *our experience* and *the frame of reference* this provides for compelling thought that in fact gives us our firmest hold on the world, gives us our ability to understand, critique and improve our actions in the world we are an inextricable part of.

It will show us that it is experience, our carefully built, situationally configured and conditional trust in experience that can help us prepare to go beyond that experience into the unknown that every action in fact implies; that it is the exploration of experience that allows us to take responsibility for our lives and our use of the environment, seeking out that responsibility wherever we have invested it and never attempting to abandon that responsibility to some *run-away system* or *the arbitrary authority of strong men*. Responsibility will not allow itself to be abandoned, it sticks to you, like every other action you perform. But we shall get back to that at the appropriate time.

That brings me to the theses upon which my exploration of a conceptual environment for the creation of a philosophy of the built environment starts off with. It is these theses I would like to take responsibility for. The

theses are given here in the form of a list so that I can later ground them with the help of arguments. I have felt it useful to do this so that the various theses can be seen as a collection, forming their own whole and not as fragments to be discovered in the flow of the text.

1. The built environment is a product of human endeavour and human endeavour is a product of the natural world. That is, it is a product of evolutionary, biochemical and other forces that we ourselves are a product of. We can speak of *a continuity* between human production and natural production. If parts of human endeavour appear to be concerned with destruction then that is no less natural. Being *natural* does not necessarily make something *desirable*.
2. Philosophy as it applies to the built environment is the attempt to formulate a compelling attitude to planning, development, design, making, using and maintenance and to ground this attitude on argument and conditionally accepted theory
3. A suitable form for this process of grounding one's attitude on argument and accepted theory is the essay. The word essay can mean two things. It can mean *an attempt*, from the French essayer: "to try" or "to attempt"; more familiarly it is the name for a written composition establishing a personal point of view on a subject with the help of arguments.
4. Philosophy, like planning and design, is a discipline that requires *discipline* and *practise*.
5. Philosophy as a discipline of thought can be usefully organised and given shape using three interconnected plateaus of inquiry: metaphysics, aesthetics and ethics; these plateaus are accommodating enough to represent the three questions that drive any *philosophy of action*: *What conditions need to be satisfied for something to be the case?* or, to put that same question another way: *How can we talk usefully about the world?* The second question is: *What do we wish for and to what end?* And the third is: *How should we go about fulfilling this wish?*
6. Philosophy is a question-driven practice that produces theory as hypothetical answers. It subsequently calls given theories as explanations of an event, process, structure or situation into question.
7. Questions are philosophical if and when they *analyse* and *critique* a theory presented to them. *Analysis* is the activity of trying to take a compound (a system, a structure, an object or

thing, a concept or network of concepts, a causal network etc.) apart, to see what elements it is made up of and how these elements relate, while *critique* is the testing of an assumption against another assumption, or testing one theory how it behaves in the light of another theory.

8. Answers to philosophical questions are fundamentally theoretical in nature in that they suggest possibilities, norms, values and priorities.
9. Theories stabilize themselves and the paradigmatic context of explanation they form a part of, through continued analytical and critical practice.
10. However theories strengthen themselves through evidence which helps them to be further verified or falsified
11. Philosophy is primordially *useful* to us as it leads to a well-practised attitude to the world or some aspect of it.
12. Use is what occurs when one entity imposes itself upon another entity forming a qualitative relationship for the purposes of the maintenance or development of itself as an entity, or that of a larger entity it is part of or related to.
13. The generic nature of the above definition of use is essential to be able to be precise about the nature of relationships that entities forge with each other. Rather than being precise about use, we should see use as the force that drives the rhizomatic proliferation of relationships between ourselves and the environment.
14. There can be no *necessary* relationship between philosophical analysis, theoretical imagination and practical action (or doing). Any philosophical question can (in principle) lead to any theoretical answer, which in turn can lead to any practice or action. Any affective or effective relationship between the three is decided upon or affirmed by the person considering that relationship in the light of a theory held by that person about that relationship and so forth *ad infinitum*. As such a philosophical question is a function of the theory held and vice versa.
15. Desire for the realisation or understanding of a quality drives philosophy, theory and practice to *take account of each other* in discourse.
16. There are, within our experience of the world as we find it, good ways of doing things and bad ways of doing things, depending on what is the case and what the goal. As one moves from a simple

instrumental task to a complex task it becomes incrementally more difficult to determine what is a good way and what is a bad way as the possibilities and factors of influence proliferate.

17. The realisation of our desires as people causes us to produce social space.³ Every action we undertake reverberates through our environment and affects that environment.
18. In the matter of planning, development, design, making and maintenance a significant role is put aside for thinking about justice and justification. This role determines both the aesthetic and ethical considerations at the basis of our actions.
19. Theories are built through philosophical discourse upon other theories. There is no doubt some absolute ground for the world, some ultimate truth, but this truth is by the very nature of our process of cognition inaccessible to us except in the form of a description of its working and behaviour under specific conditions.
20. There is only experiential or theoretical falsification and verification to help stabilize a theory so that it can help form the paradigm against which we measure and understand the working of the world.
21. The use of a theory to ground a particular action within a situation is decided upon by the person taking a stand on the issue. He may be relying on the authority of some person and may be helped by checking the theory for its logical consistency within a greater network of theories, and/or by measuring it against its correspondence with the experience of daily life (which includes the experience of scientific and scholarly research) or he may be relying simply on the explanatory power of the theory. But all this does not diminish his role in the use of the theory: He chooses to invest it with authority.
22. Philosophy is a discursive practice, an art of conversation and debate. A philosophy of considered action, of design and making, of technology, as the theory and its grounding in critical thought is a personal possession. This requirement makes discussion between holders of a philosophy useful as a method whereby their possessions can constantly measure and assessed against each other to establish difference and common ground.

³ Henri Lefebvre, *The production of space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden: Blackwell, 1991 [1972])

23. By describing the world to ourselves and our involvement in it, we explore its possibilities and limitations. That is what design research is about. It is a legitimate role of the art and science of design to explore descriptions for their creative potential. Where the empirical sciences test descriptions of the world, design explores descriptions of the world for their possibility to generate the new.
24. Planners, developers, designers, makers, users and maintainers respond to a situation philosophically by seeking out their responsibility in that situation.
25. It is we ourselves who choose to invest something with authority in order to come to a decision. Our investment in a belief structure, a theory, forms the mechanism whereby the qualities we would like to realise as planners, developers, designers, engineers and builders achieve a certain stability in our minds. We decide to invest some person or idea or quality with authority and on the basis of that decision let other decisions follow.
26. In testing any theory, the absurd helps establish the coordinates of limits and boundaries thus suggesting ways of improving on a theory.

philosophy as an exercise in autobiographical placement and orientation

Philosophy helps me in my personal struggle with life, my struggle with my own incessant stupidity, carelessness and nonchalance. Philosophy helps me to measure my stand on all issues that I am confronted with or with which I seek a confrontation. Not by giving an answer, but by making me ask good questions. This is where philosophy distinguishes itself from religion and management theory. Philosophy has no respect for theories that cannot stand up to criticism. At the same time criticism is only as good as the questions asked. When I ask myself: how do I stand with regard to sustainability? I am asking myself to judge something that is too big and unclear as an entity. Sure I like it. But what does it mean? How does it work, what are the conditions necessary for it to work well? What happens if our frame of reference turns out to have been too narrow? And what does *well* really mean in concrete terms? What exactly are we trying to sustain? Is that a good thing? Why? Who benefits and how much? We can ask these questions with regard to a lot of issues that affect the building world: How do I stand with regard to third-world urbanism, first-world cities, hostile

neighbourhoods, gated communities, European tendering laws, suburbia, iconic architecture, air-conditioning, cradle 2 cradle thinking, vandalism, graffiti, you name it.

Most important is the question whether my actual behaviour and my wishes are fully consistent with my theoretical stand on these issues. That question can be extremely confrontational. The chances are they are not.

This book is in no sense a complete answer to what philosophy is. It is not even a complete answer to the question to what philosophy might be to *me*. It is designed specifically for a course in practical philosophy for people involved with buildings: planners, developers, urban designers, architects, building technology engineers, construction engineers and anyone else involved with the built environment. (Who isn't?) However, it starts from a point where planning, design and making are not yet the central concerns. It starts before that. The purpose of the book is to provide the groundwork for an attitude to the world in which all these activities can find a thoroughly thought through direction, released from the burden of bad and inconsequential thinking, thus making possible a theory of design and making, a philosophy of space and place, a philosophy of technology and the tectonic.

a very good concept of the good

A philosophy of planning, development, design and making is primarily concerned with the idea of *the good*; it is concerned with questions like:

1. What would it be good to do (*plan, develop, design or make*)?
2. On what grounds is that a good wish?
3. How can I (*plan, develop, design or make*) something well?
4. What qualities should {this detail}, {this construction}, {this building system}, {this space}, {this building}, {this street}, or {this neighbourhood} have and on what basis do I think that?
5. How should I go about realising {this quality} without abusing {whatever it is that I am using}?
6. How should I use what is at my disposal, well?

In order to get to *a good concept of the good*, we shall have to pause a while and argue things through, showing why it might be a good idea for a planner, developer, designer or builder of the built environment, to take account of philosophy and ask: what is philosophy to *me*?

philosophy as a game: philosophy = {a word}; Pericles = {an Athenian}

Philosophy, a word used in all European languages, comes from the Greek *philosophia* or "love of knowledge, wisdom," from *philo-* "loving" + *sophia* "knowledge, wisdom," from *sophis* "wise, learned." According to Cicero and Diogenes Laertius, Pythagoras first invented the word from *philia tes sophias*, *φιλία της σοφίας* "love of wisdom".

Wisdom itself, Pythagoras argued, belongs to God alone. To be called a wise man was therefore blasphemous and showed hubris. He preferred to be called *a lover of wisdom*. This is a rather nice way of putting things, ensuring our modesty with regard to what we can know. We can love knowledge but can we possess it with certainty? We can love the good and the beautiful but can we know it fully? A wise decision always reveals itself after the event, never before. A lover of wisdom therefore considers a problem in the light of his experience and from that experience dares to reach out into the possible, not with the benefit of hindsight, but something nearly as good: generalised experience.

Pericles, during a speech to commemorate those who died in the Peloponnesian wars, called the Athenians *lovers of beauty and wisdom*: *philokalein* and *philosophhein*. Below is the paragraph in which the words appear:

"If we prefer to meet danger with a light heart but without laborious training, and with a courage which is gained by habit and not enforced by law, are we not greatly the better for it? Since we do not anticipate the pain, although, when the hour comes, we can be as brave as those who never allow themselves to rest; thus our city is equally admirable in peace and in war. For we are lovers of the beautiful in our tastes and our strength lies, in our opinion, not in deliberation and discussion, but that knowledge which is gained by discussion preparatory to action. For we have a peculiar power of thinking before we act, and of acting, too, whereas other men are courageous from ignorance but hesitate upon reflection. And they are surely to be esteemed the bravest spirits who, having the clearest sense both of the pains and pleasures of life, do not on that account shrink from danger." From: Thucydides *The Peloponnesian War* (Book 2.34-46)

The speech as a whole is an extraordinary manifesto of a society seemingly at peace with itself and not a little proud of it; setting itself up as a model

to all. Whether Pericles was being sincere in his description of Athens, is an interesting problem, but one that can be left to the historians. Athens certainly became a model both on the basis of historical veracity and groundless myth. Nevertheless, the speech is beautiful, thoughtful and well worth reading, even if it does not reflect the actual situation in Athens, it certainly shows me something of what I can admire and would wish to emulate. What I particularly enjoy is the emphasis on thinking and discussion as a preparation to well-considered action. That is what this book is about. Pericles' speech ties in with what Aristotle later calls *theoria*.

Aristotle's concept of *theoria* as put forward in the *Nicomachean Ethics* is, in Pierre Hadot's view, a way of exercising one's paradigm, philosophy as the practise of life: the exercise of one's view of the world.⁴ *Theoria* is a *human being* practising *being human* by developing and maintaining a view of his world. A *theoria* is a conception of the world, which perhaps starts off being rather banal and rough, full of strange inconsistencies, but which, with practise and the practice of philosophy grows into something wondrous, deserving of loving contemplation. The *theoria* is a simulated model of the world and becomes more and more sophisticated, more consistent, stronger each time the philosopher turns a facet of that model towards him and examines the weird lines that connect one coordinate to another. And in fact furnishing the grounding of one's being in terms of one's response, one's ability to respond and one's responsibility towards any situation given in experience.

the game of philosophy = {a discipline}

Before it can become anything else, philosophy is first and foremost *a discipline*. This is worrying if you read the definition of discipline below taken from *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*...

Discipline (di.siplin), sb. ME [-(O) Fr. Discipline – L. disciplina f. discipulus Disciple.]

Instruction imparted to disciples or scholars; teaching; learning; education -1615.

A branch of instruction; a department of knowledge ME

⁴ Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, trans. Michael Chase, (Cambridge, Mass. & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002 [1995])

The training of scholars and subordinates to proper conduct and action by instructing and exercising them in the same; mental and moral training; also used fig. ME

A trained condition, 1509.

The order maintained and observed among persons under control or command, 1667; a system of rules for conduct 1659

Eccles. The system by which order is maintained in a church; the procedure whereby this is carried out; the exercise of penal measures by a Christian Church 1549

Correction; chastisement; in religious use, the mortification of the flesh by penance

A medical regimen. (rare)

a discipline = a type of game

Ignoring all the questions and worries that the geography of its meaning might throw up, let me quickly state that I interpret the word discipline, with due consideration to the definitions given above, as *a game*.⁵ A discipline is a game whereby the game-rules determine *what* is to be studied, *how* it is to be studied and to *what end*. Philosophy, then, is a game disciplined by *rules*. The rules determine *how* things are to be studied. One of the main rules of philosophy is to constantly subject its own rules to scrutiny, to penetrating questioning and if the game-rules are found wanting, they are adjusted, or, to use the language of discipline: corrected.

a game to find non-games

There is a paradox when thinking about games and rules which becomes visible when you ask yourself the question: Can I think of a game that is not a game? The easiest answer would be to invent a game in which there are no rules. A state of complete entropy or chaos in which there are no rules would surely escape the label “game”! But to invent a game that is without

⁵ Ludwig Wittgenstein, (1953) *Philosophical investigations*: the German text, with a revised English translation by Gertrude Elizabeth Margaret Anscombe, Blackwell Publishing, 2001

rules is quite a different matter. That very rule, namely of not allowing any rules, shows it is a game with at least one rule. That is a paradox, or is it? One of the great paradoxes about paradoxes is that they are very rarely truly paradoxical! How can a game professing to have no rules, have the rule that it will not allow any rules? In fact it is not a case of a paradox, it is a mere case of self-deception. There is no game without at least one rule and any game professing to no rule is simply in error, or lying. Those who believe they have discovered what they like to call non-games, deceive themselves: even non games are games with at least one rule. We are caught in a circle, a tautology: As soon as you can speak of a rule, you have essentially what can legitimately be called a game. It may of course not be a very good game, or much fun, but it can legitimately be called a game nevertheless. So philosophy is a game, a game of questioning itself and everything around it in order to understand things better. The only rule is that there are no rules that can be declared holy.

a tectonics of behaviour

Is there anything in our world, accessible to us through experience, that does not behave according to some rule; that does not somehow show a pattern of behaviour that would indicate a limitation that could be interpreted as a rule? In my experience I cannot think of anything. It appears that even chaos has its rules. As such, games are tightly embedded in our universe: things play because of the limitations they are subject to, and the possibilities those limitations afford and the force that appears to drive them to explore those possibilities. That is what I like to call *the tectonics of behaviour*. Tectonics is the study of what happens when two or more material forms or force-fields or whatever you might like to call the substance of our world, collide, either in construction, or in the plate tectonics of the earth's crust. Energetic mass has a form and that form behaves when it interacts with other forms. As such existence appears to come down to an exploration of the behaviour of form. The world is an equilibrium punctuated discontinuously by events. It re-establishes stability through the exploration of physical, chemical and biological possibilities and limitations. Things work, they do things, stuff happens. Don't be fooled by these words. Ultimately they explain no more than Nietzsche's *will to power*. I am not sure what *a will* is except that it is consistent with Aristotle's observation that *things move*. Spinoza's phrase for it comes down to the same sort of thing, namely the *will to maintain oneself*. Hegel's word *dialectic* also does not cover things fully although it at least tries to model the process as does Gilles Deleuze's rhizomatics or

Darwin's system of natural selection or Stephen Jay Gould's model of the punctuated equilibrium. None of them do more than model a process of change. All of them, should they ask themselves the question of why form behaves at all, would have to resort to something as unsatisfactory as a will or force or whatever empty word. There is, indubitably, something going on, *things move, things behave* but how to answer the question why there is movement at all? Do we answer it with words like God? Nature? Will? Élan vital? None of them are satisfactory. I think Nietzsche's *will to power* might as well stand, for the moment. As Goethe advised us, let's not worry about the why of things but instead concentrate on the how.

a game of abstraction

We must be careful then and interpret the word *rule* in a special way. The word rule stands for an abstraction, something that is intellectualised, as if it needs the attention of consciousness to work; the phenomenological equivalent of a rule is *the world of limitations and possibilities* just described. Spinoza might put it something like this: Substance has the freedom to explore itself through its attributes and modes. To illustrate it in my ham-fisted grasp of modern science let me give you this simple example: for some reason, a reason I do not fully understand, a hydrogen atom can make a connection with an oxygen atom and an oxygen atom can connect up with two hydrogen atoms, but not with three. I don't of course know the nature of the connection. The word connection stands in this case for a rather hopeful image of whatever it is that hydrogen atoms and oxygen atoms do together. Scientists concerned with this connection have a more sophisticated image of the nature of it, but even they cannot go much further than capture the connection in highly abstract words like *force*, described using mathematical models making their behaviour *as a result of the working of that force* predictable. Now hydrogen atoms are not, as far as I know, conscious of this rule, they just behave according to it. That is the game they play, a game of the geometrical configuration of force-fields and possibilities these allow. It is this geometry of connection that *apparently* determines the behaviour of molecules. The word *rule* is merely the abstraction of a limitation they suffer, but which affords them the possibility of becoming part of something we call H₂O, which, when there is enough of it for us to notice, becomes water, ice or steam depending on the situated environment. The point is that we are describing things in terms that seem to make sense. Scientists are at least able to make the things they study subject to some form of understanding, namely the understanding of the way things behave. We know nothing

about what it is that behaves, except that it behaves in a certain way. Maybe that is more than enough... After all visible or audible form is whatever matter or substance turns out to be behaving in a certain way the light and amongst the vibrations of the air which when internalised by the body become sound and all this perceived at our scale of observation.

phenomenological description: a game of being-in-the-world

Even in the activity of philosophising, most of the rules we work by are not just tacit, but implicated in the very structure of our being and too rarely described. That is what makes phenomenology such an exciting project; it tries to do just that: describe the way our bodies are involved in the world. We need descriptions of our involvement with the world for two reasons. First of all for their cogency, that is their compelling ability to describe what we are undergoing. The second reason deserves some emphasis because we tend not to think about things in this way: descriptions offer the possibility to enrich experience itself. Descriptions create ways of seeing and experiencing things. They, as it were, create more for us to experience by making our experiences richer and fuller.

The act of description, for whatever purpose, seeks out *possible relationships*, wherever we might find them. That means at least two things. It means that description reveals relationships that are possible, i.e. that might well get close to putting into words the actual way things work, that is they approach what we might call the unknowable truth and at the same time description seeks new relationships or relationship that have not been thought of that might be worth investigating further and help to put things *in a different perspective*.

Descriptions make use of all the means at their disposal: the language of mathematics, to describe relationships that can be quantified in some way or to model behaviour; simile, metaphor and analogy always governed by the framework of logic to decide what is a legitimate move and what is not. Sketches, that efficiently describe relationships that might otherwise take many words or formulas to describe, and there are words which can describe abstractions and intangible relationships that are impossible to visualise or model mathematically. Description in whatever medium, is central to any attempt at understanding. But there is a trade-off. When something has been described you have determined its relationship to you. We must never allow such descriptions to hold sway over us unconditionally. There are always other ways of describing things.

Phenomenology is a special game of description; it tries to describe in words our involvement with the world in concrete terms. It does not ask, for instance, what is *the cause* of pain? The causal network is not the focus of phenomenology even though its exercises in thought affect our idea on causality considerably by quickly undermining any linear conception of causality. Instead it asks: how does pain manifest itself in our body? What happens? It would challenge us to describe pain as it works itself through our body. It is a philosophy of the concrete. It does not worry about truth, that is, the correspondence between our experience of the world and the actual world out there; instead it worries about sincerity on the one hand and the cogency and sophistication of the description on the other. This relates phenomenology to the project of art and literature, while remaining firmly within the dictates of good philosophy by never pretending to be more than it is: a discipline concerned with the description of phenomena as they relate to our body. It is not a form of psychology or psychiatry, both of which are concerned with causality and cure; it is a philosophical discipline which questions the rules, conditions, limitations and possibilities that determine much of our being here and now.

The “rules” our bodies operate by, emerge into consciousness as intellectualised abstractions: as descriptions of rules similar to the rules we *have to think about and decide upon* in for example complex social traffic in a special situation, while visiting the queen for instance. Even so these rules are somehow different to the more immediate limitations and possibilities our body affords us that don’t have to be written down but which are equally important for the success of a game of *Being-in-the-world* or indeed a game of *Philosophical reflection*. The fact that our body is on average about 1.80 m tall and about 50 cm wide, that it can walk at a certain speed, that stairs are comfortable when the tread is of a certain height etc. impose rules upon our behaviour. They form the silent body of rules that underpin, for example, a visit to the queen. The difference between these silent bodily rules and the social rules governing a visit to her majesty are however curiously difficult to define. It is certainly true that the one is the stuff of habit while the other is special. The rules that we write down in rulebooks for games might be called explicit rules. But the fact is that games would not survive without the quiet unspoken rules of limitation and possibility. Another example: what would a game of chess look like if we didn’t have gravity? Think about it. So when I use the word *rule*, I use it in its widest possible sense, starting as a tectonics of behaviour, the stuff of physical force and ending numinously in the force of command;

I use it as something that includes the idea of *affordance*: limitation, possibility, power and force, where force I see as a direct physical pushing, pulling or coupling and power I see as something that can send messages over a distance, like an angry look: in Dutch (and German) the difference is beautifully contained in the words *kracht* (physical force) and *macht* (psychological or latent power). But power as just defined should not be seen as *insubstantial*. To send a message across a medium like air in the form of a facial expression or a command to affect the emotional state of a person receiving the message, can ultimately be described in terms of force, matter and their relativity. We do not have to go for a dualism between the substantial and the insubstantial. That would not satisfy the frugal economics of explanation. The insubstantial nature of power, the power of expression, the power of meaning, the power of a message is substance working through its attributes in the same or at least derivative way as the working of a weight with momentum working on a surface. *The tectonics of behaviour* and its possibility of relation is enough to explain our world. I shall need to explain that in greater detail.

a tectonics of form-behaviour

Tectonics is a Greek word referring to the art of carpentry; in geology it is used for the study of the movement of the earth's continental plates. What binds these two meanings of the word, is that magic happens where things collide or come together; atomic things, molecular things, or large scale aggregate things. Behaviour happens when things come together within the context of a medium, or at the moment when something is divided into two. The geometry and topology of what we might call matter or substance or force is crucial here. Certain geometries of matter allow certain combinations while others allow other combinations. Certain topologies allow certain lock and key mechanisms to function and others allow others. In fact, behaviour and form are so closely related that one could safely speculate that *all phenomena are in fact perceptions of the behaviour of form*, or indeed *the form that the behaviour of matter/substance makes possible at a certain scale*. Form is what behaves and form is the product of behaviour. A strawberry may or may not be red in the world out there, we do not know. What we do know is that it behaves *red* because of the way (in my naïve comprehension of science) that its molecular structure and light meet and the way our perceptual apparatus meets the reflected or ambient light in the event we call *seeing a strawberry*. I think that with this advance on a proper and detailed

description of form- behaviour we can pass onto to the game of philosophical reflection.

a view of phenomenology sharpened

As with every game, philosophy evolves, and during its evolution, sprouts variations. Philosophical movements represent the evolutionary speciation of philosophy in order to deal with specific issues or to proceed with their special explorations on the basis of hypothetically accepted axioms (from “axios” meaning “something worthy”) and theories. Accepted or worthy axioms are not shared by every movement in philosophy. Realism and Idealism, for instance proceed on the basis of diametrically opposite axioms, which I will not however discuss here. Phenomenology and pragmatism are very careful as to what they allow to take part in their game of thinking. Husserl, the founder of Phenomenology as a self-conscious species of philosophy, famously bracketed every statement about the truth of this or that position and encouraged us to *go back to the things themselves*. Husserl wanted to describe “things” *again*. He wanted to describe things by freeing himself, as far as possible, from his own conceptual presuppositions, hidden assumptions and blind prejudices and beliefs. Husserl believed you should suspend your own beliefs and approach things with a blank sheet as it were, and make sure you are yourself freed from any agenda, any judgement, except the accurate description of the experience of the object you are describing. That should be your agenda! That really meant becoming aware of the baggage you bring to the world around you and the constant judgements you make with reference to that baggage in terms of use, that is in terms of good and bad. On the basis of that acute awareness Husserl wanted to try and Bracket our involuntary cognitive baggage and put it aside. In this way he tried to describe things anew and as faithfully as possible. Such description almost presupposes a certain naiveté; it tries to reconstruct the astonishment of a first confrontation and tries to understand every phenomenon as freshly as possible. In this way phenomenologists try to see how objects “unfold” or shape themselves in experience. This did not mean you had to reject your beliefs, but merely put them aside for the moment. In this way Husserl wanted to make subjective experience answer to the same discipline and rigour as science but without trying -as many people had been trying to do- to transplant scientific categories onto something as complex and messy as daily life. Phenomenology, then, is the study of consciousness and the structures consciousness creates to refer and embrace objects outside itself. As such a phenomenologist will describe his body and the way it

undergoes its environment. We receive the world, perceive the world and we conceive the world. Because we can conceive of objects that we do not receive through our engagement with the world, phenomenological reflection should not presuppose that any object studied does actually exist in a tangible sense, it can also exist in a virtual sense. Existence then is not so much the issue. Anything imaginable exists, but it exists always *in its own way*. So in a game of phenomenological description we are asked to bracket the question of existence and put it aside for the moment and concentrate instead on the manner of existence. In this way we go beyond the worry as to whether something exists and free ourselves to study our own experience of the phenomenon, the way it exists for us, whatever its nature in reality. When Husserl studied his own mind he discovered activities such as remembering, desiring, perceiving and judgement. Well, there was nothing much new in that. He also found the material on which these activities are performed. This “content” Husserl called meaning. Meaning is the material we employ when contemplating an object and establishing a relationship with it. We use something by extracting meaning from it, and the use we make of something, determines its meaning for us. We ourselves produce meaning. Things do not communicate meaning; we produce meaning about things by learning about the way they work and the way we can use that understanding. Things only *contain* a message if we decide it has a message for us.

Meaning allows an activity to be performed towards a certain purpose. That implies a direction. A direction is an intention; the quality of direction is intentionality. Intentions reveal what something is or could be *about*. The several branches of phenomenology then, concentrate on the various parts of the process of making intentionality possible. The study of the basic components of meaning making intentionality possible Husserl called Transcendental Phenomenology. The study of how these meanings are built up in the course of experience he called Genetic Phenomenology. But the most important part of phenomenology is the idea of pure description: “To the things themselves” which is something of a misnomer as we can only describe things in the way we receive, perceive and conceive them.

the art [AND/OR] point of describing things

A picture may paint a thousand words, but words can help paint an infinite number of pictures. A lovely quote I read in Honour and Fleming’s *World History of Art* by Tung Chi’i Chang gives a good perspective on the relative value of each medium:

“Painting is no equal to mountains and water for the wonder of scenery, but mountains and water are no equal to painting for the sheer marvels of brush and ink”.

Each thing has its own magic and does its own trick. Words do one thing and images do another. Words can give access to dimensions far beyond the visible three or four. If mathematics allows an infinite number of possible dimensions, each predicate might well be taken to be one of those dimensions. The types of medium of which each sensory system can take account of do not cancel each other out, they complement each other. Taken together they make a fuller understanding possible.

No perception is ever raw in the sense that it is immediate. The word *raw* at least implies an immediacy that perception is simply not capable of. All perception is mediated the instant it becomes perception. We do not deal with *unmediated* perception because perception is itself mediation: it is the translation of, for instance, vibrations in the air caused by two materials colliding (the tectonics of behaviour) into sound by the brain. For sound to exist an ear attached to a living brain needs to exist. Vibrations in the air do not themselves have a sound it is the organism that has the capacity for hearing sound when its body surface is *touched* by the wave motion air particles are capable of. We do not have to become mystical about the world *out there*. It may well look exactly like the world we undergo, the world we understand in its behaviour. At the same time there are a few things we need to take account of. For one, our senses are rather limited. That is easily illustrated by the fact that our eyes can deal with only a tiny range of the complete spectrum of possible light waves. Our hearing is not much different. We now know that other animals have a different reach and may well perceive a world that is different, a world that meets them on their scale and not ours, a world moreover that meets them with respect to their way of coping with the world. The difference may be ever so slight. But even if it comes down to the fact that they find different things interesting, their world will be radically different in its composition, which invariable *centres what is of interest* and exiles to the periphery that which is not.

But that is not all. We meet the perceptions we undergo with our senses, with the brain we have been given and the mind or I we have developed, with, that is, our experience, or, what comes to the same thing, our organised memory and its whole being. Perception is a holistic affair in that

every single perception is received within the context of the whole.⁶ In order to perceive in the sense of becoming aware of something, we meet our sensory data with memory and experience. The product of that meeting is what we call perception.

This means that every presentation of some perceptive tableau is already a *representation*, that is, a carefully organised tableau of significance.⁷ And significance is the determination of a relationship between the body and its environment, husbanded by the *I*. Things are presented to our senses and received by our cognitive apparatus, which measures every perception against experience. Things presented are represented in our bodies to be able to deal with them, to cope with them and perhaps use them or information about them. Representation is in that sense *the embodiment* of whatever presents itself to us: every perception is taken up and made part of us *as its meaning*, that is as an experience, changing us in the course of that perception into that we become, namely: {this person with experience} + {this experience}. That is the nature of our dynamic being, our constant becoming: in the representation we make what is presented part of ourselves as something with meaning for us.

A photograph, which is admittedly very accurate, does not tell the whole story of the original scene it was taken from. The image was selected, framed and composed (by carefully selecting a view) and so transformed into something with a purpose, an offer of use and an as yet undetermined significance. And even if that wasn't done intentionally by the photographer, it is received intentionally: scanned for useful information, scanned for what it might hold in the way of interest. The story the photograph tells is limited in time and size and at the same time exceeds the limits and duration usually reserved for the real world: the photograph captures a moment in a still, making that moment special in a way it wasn't by itself. And, being captured in a stable medium it is allowed to infect moments well removed from the event the photograph it was taken from. This does not mean that the still acquires a static significance. Its

⁶ Henri Bergson, (1910), *Time and free will: an essay on the immediate data of consciousness*, Transl. F.L. Pogson, Cosimo Books, New York, 2008, see also Henri Bergson, (1908), *Matter and Memory*, Translated by N.M. Paul and W.S. Palmer, Zone Books, New York, 2008.

⁷ For a discussion on this see Gilles Deleuze, (1983) *Kant's Critical Philosophy, The doctrine of the faculties*, transl. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, Continuum Books, 2008.

significance in the eye of the beholder will change dynamically as time passes. People who have looked at the same photograph twice at different periods of their life will know exactly what I mean. A drawing is even more selective, translating the image from textures and surfaces and the play of light and dark and colour into modulations of pencil lead. A drawing creates new worlds.

Words provide a very abstract means of representation. They establish relations through utterance and recognition within a context or climate of meaning, giving us the ability to make comparisons. The picture made of an event becomes itself a judgement upon that very event. A portrait of an event is in fact a judgment, an ordering of that event. Words as such do not represent an event neutrally but *dress* it, clothe it and order it to be seen in the way the words dictate. Something similar is true for our senses. They can deal with what they can deal with on the basis of their formal structure determining the way they behave and fire when its sensitive surfaces collide with that to which they are sensitive. At the same time, the significance of the perception is both personal and situational: my space is the product of what captures my interest; in the same way my dictionary is both personal and situational, the product of what my life is about. Stories overlap, situations are comparable, but will always carry a personal colour. A philosophy of the built environment, rather than seeing this as a problem, needs to take it as its starting point, its freedom.

Furthermore, descriptions using words, drawn lines, photographs, film, or computer generated images all infuse an object with a value, a potentially infinite series of values. There is the information and use value *put into the description* by the person making it. And there is the *never completely commensurate information and use value* extracted from the description by the person taking up the description and making it his own. This value creation is done by selection: putting in and emphasising particular aspects and moving others to the periphery or leaving them out altogether. As such, descriptions are products of selection, participating in evolution. And in that sense they create more life through a process analogous to speciation: they re-create the object described in their own medium. This re-creation is in fact indistinguishable from creation in all of our earthly senses of that word. We shall have to leave *creation ex nihilo* to God.

Describing objects or events then, is a way of recreating (re-creating) or modelling an object in the way you understand it, or with regard to what you find special, important and useful about it. Drawing an object with

your own hands, or describing it in your own words makes you re-create that object in terms of your own purpose within the confines of your ability to see.

Martin Heidegger in his analysis of Being claimed that phenomenology could make manifest what is hidden in ordinary everyday experience. In his *Sein und Zeit* (1927) Heidegger tried to describe the structure of everydayness, of being in the world. He came up with an interconnected system of equipment, social roles and ways of being. What he wrote about bodily states and powers such as anxiety, thinking, forgetfulness, curiosity, distress, care, awe was not meant as psychology, it was meant as philosophy. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger's purpose is to bring to light what it means for a man to be. It asks the question, not *what is the cause of being*, but simply, *how it is to be*? This leads to the question: what does it mean to ask: "What is the meaning of being?" This has led to an extraordinary revolution in philosophical thought in which it has become clear that we can only really see ourselves as intimately engaged with the world, part of it. The significance of being is the significance of *being-in-the-world*. In other words, our being, as a body in space, makes the space just as much part of us as the body that is involved with it.

pragmaticism

At around the same time as the birth and development of phenomenology, the pragmatist view concentrated on trying to place the traditional role that is given to concepts such as truth on a more acceptable footing.⁸ A pragmatist wants to look at *the way things work* and how we can describe the way things work in ways that are useful to us. Just like with phenomenology they were keen to bracket any metaphysical position with regard to the mode of existence of the world out there. They did not want to pretend to know a truth they regarded as unknowable. They did not want to fall into a metaphysical trap whereby we are made to choose a belief about the nature of the world in order to be allowed to talk about it. This they felt would compromise their project. Rather they lay the

⁸ It is usual to refer to this group of mainly American philosophers as pragmatists. I specifically align myself to an early form of that pragmatism, namely the work of Charles Sanders Peirce and his view of the interlocking of the three main disciplines of philosophy. He also wanted increasingly to distinguish his particular outlook on philosophy from the work of his colleagues James, Mead and Dewey and so himself introduced the word Pragmaticism. I feel this word is also a more fortuitous choice in that pragmatism has an unfortunate connotation which I want to avoid.

foundations of what would later also be called constructivism by saying: whatever the nature of the world out there, we are looking for descriptions of the world that correspond to its behaviour as made manifest to our understanding through our senses and experience. We will confine ourselves to constructing theories and descriptions *that work*. So to put it in a nutshell, for them $E=MC^2$ is not representative of some deeper reality about the world, but a credible theory *that appears to work* in that it can be borne out by experience and therefore models the behaviour of the world accurately. That is mystery enough. We get to know the world through our ability to study and model its behaviour. That is all we have access to.

Phenomenology and the constructivism of the pragmaticist approach seem to me to be useful for the construction of a philosophy of the built environment. They do justice to the fact that the built environment is primarily about our experience of it and they invite us to extend that experience. Furthermore they allow the elaboration and sophistication of that experience. They allow us put aside our anxiety for truth, as we would never get anything done, and supplant that anxiety by the more conditional contentment in looking for that *which works*. I.e. looking for descriptions that do what we want of them: predict behaviour, show us new ways of looking at things etc. That puts a great responsibility on us to form our attitude to the world we inhabit carefully. What we really have to become good at is *wanting*. We need to learn what to wish for and for this we need a fuller and *working* knowledge of the world. Not just scientific knowledge, but all sorts of knowledge, knowledge of the way things work and knowledge of our means of experience, knowledge of the relationship between knowing and doing, experience and design.

Phenomenology and Pragmaticism are philosophies that do not go beyond experience in exploring that experience. Instead they deepen experience and enrich it. The one describes experience and the other concentrates on finding working descriptions of the way the world works that can be tested in experience. An ultimate truth, although most certainly out there somewhere, is almost by definition inaccessible to us as truth in this Platonic sense cannot be divided and must be comprehensive and all-inclusive. It cannot therefore be narrowed down to some description or point of view, even when that description manages to describe and make predictable all behaviour.

I don't mind taking a step further than this. I believe that to allow the hypothetical positions of a transcendental metaphysics, (i.e. a metaphysics that tries to speak usefully about the world beyond our experience) sway over our daily actions is dangerous. It can lead to forms of arrogance, aggression, violence lead by the absurd. Anything can lead to arrogance and aggression and it is never nice, but to allow something unknowable such authority seems to me to lie well within the labyrinthine wards of the mad and the absurd, a point Kierkegaard made when exploring the world of Abraham. Transcendental metaphysicians, as long as they respect the boundaries of hypothesis, and make sure everybody knows that their utterances are highly conditional, hypothetical and speculative, are not just allowed the freedom to speculate upon what is completely inaccessible to us, but even positively encouraged to do so, but let them or more pertinently their followers, not make the mistake of imposing their theories as an ideology of "truth".

Philosophers of willing and action need to take into consideration the fact that people are, well, like people: difficult, wilful, sometimes nice, often weak, and sometimes truly monstrous. So for a transcendental metaphysics to filter down into the philosophy of willing and action, into theories of action, it cannot proceed without vigilance and any such filtering down must never lose sight of us or our environment and must never take precedence over experience.

I shall argue that you can arrive at well thought through action without the speculative foundations of a transcendental metaphysics, with which I here specifically mean a construct that is not accessible to us in experience; that any philosophy of willing and action, such as a philosophy of the built environment must be, can and must strictly adhere to what is accessible to us in specific ways and not in others (see the section on ontology) I shall argue that a philosophy of willing and action can be made adequate at any level of knowledge as long as one takes a couple of existentially arrived at game-rules seriously: the rule that society should be seen as a place where everyone must be allowed a worthy place that gives the access to their dignity, the rule that everyone should be allowed to pursue their good so that any pursuit of such a good preventing others from doing so disqualifies itself, and lastly the rule of difference, whereby we may use what we like and how we like it as long as the thing or person also benefits from that use. If the person using something derives advantage from the thing they use then this should not be at the disadvantage of others, including the thing or person used.

Phenomenological Existentialism and Pragmatism tend to judge theories constructed with the help of speculations about what is beyond that which is bodily accessible to us and which cannot be tested in experience as not particularly useful to the kind of decisions we need to make in daily life in order to make our life into a work of which we can be proud, which is the focus of my interest in philosophy generally and my interest in a philosophy of the built environment in particular.

In order to develop, design, build and maintain a desirable and durable world we cannot afford to look down on artifice. But the nature of artifice will have to be as complex, rich and sophisticated as nature itself.

Part II: The question of philosophy [AND] theory

philosophy [AND] theory: norm

When people claim to have a clear view of what is right or useful to believe and when they believe that such a view leads to particular actions and not others, their philosophy has become what we call normative. Their thinking at that moment has sway over their activities and steers them, selecting what is good and rejecting what is bad from the perspective of that view, centring what is important and pushing to the periphery what they consider unimportant. On the basis of that portrait of their world, they have decided upon the norms, values and priorities informing their lives and have invested their authority in particular strategies. In fact they have what we shall from now on refer to as *a theory*, a set of interconnected beliefs that steer their affections, their belief as to what might be desirable or right, towards a certain course of action rather than another.

Theory is defined as a "conception, mental scheme," 1592 from Gk. *theoria* "contemplation, speculation, a looking at, things looked at," from *theorein* "to consider, speculate, look at," from *theoros* "spectator," from *thea* "a view" + *horasis* or *horan* "to see.")

I shall use the word philosophy to refer to that discipline which covers both the specifically philosophical activities of thinking in the form of analysis and critique as well as the theoretical activity of tentative description and prescription, that is of making speculative models of the world and

speculative models of action by trying to take account of that analysis and critique.

With this I am implying that theory is subsumed within the field of philosophy. This means in effect that any *theory* about anything is in some way part of the philosophical project. That does not mean its quality as a theory is guaranteed. Unfortunately the quality of philosophy is famously difficult to guarantee. It is certainly not guaranteed by the emergence of a professional body of philosophers. There is more involved. It also means that management theory, design theory, planning theory, architectural theory, the theory of art and media, literary theory, theory of social interaction, all system theory constitute both the product and the immediate object of philosophy. The practice of Philosophy both produces theory and takes theory for its object when subjecting it to analysis and critique, *trying to determine the conditions upon which something can be said to be the case*.

There are some serious people with much to contribute, especially within the various branches of the building trade, who look suspiciously upon the very idea of theory and do so not without reason. They do not like a particular kind of theory or a particular way of speaking or going about things. They even feel proud of the idea that they have rejected theory: "I don't have a theory," they say, "I just get on with it." In this they do little except reveal their very specific theoretical stand. By criticising obscure theorists, they themselves commit an even worse crime: they lie about the fact that they themselves in fact have a very pronounced theory, at the very least about obscure theories, but also about how they should go about their task. The way they go about it they commit the very crime they accuse others of perpetrating. They become the ultimate obscuritans! Having a theory is quite simply unavoidable, everyone has a theory, a view of things, it constitutes a large part of what makes them, *them*. It defines their stand with regard to some issue or other. The task is to get these theories to exercise themselves and make them athletic and better relative to what we want and wish for.

philosophy-theory-method

Occasionally we might feel a little nonplussed when confronted with a situation that we have never met with before, but most of us have a way of dealing with even those difficult moments; some ask somebody who has

the requisite experience, others enjoy the challenge of puzzling things out for themselves. Everyone has *a method* for dealing with things.

Methods are the most important theories: they help you decide how you might approach a task. It was Plato who applied the Greek word *methodos* which means *following after or pursuit*, to the *mode of prosecuting an inquiry*.

A method describes how to approach a problem. It takes the form of an algorithm, a set of steps. At the same time that algorithm of procedures to be followed is subject to philosophical discourse. Gregory Bateson was fond of putting it as follows: *What difference do you allow to make a difference to your thinking?*⁹ It is very difficult to decide upon what it is that is allowed to make a difference. I shall illustrate this at the hand of my own tussle with the idea of having a Christmas Tree in my house which says something about the difficult task of creating a sustainable environment.

Taking a Christmas Tree from the forest, putting it up in your own house and decorating it, is a German idea. It was exported to other countries in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and became the stock in trade of all Christmas festivities everywhere. We have one in our house every year and get a lot of fun out of it. The whole process of warming up to the idea of getting one, going out with my son to find the right one, spending a lot of time theorising as to whether this one is better than that one and why, and when we have finally made our selection, buying it, stuffing it into the car, setting it up and finally decorating it only to stand back in genuine admiration that something so weird can be so wonderful. The tree stands in a prominent part of the living area for a number of weeks and then, before the 6th of January, it is denuded, stripped and abandoned on the pavement outside for the rubbish collectors to do their thing. And we all feel slightly sorry on the one hand, but also slightly relieved on the other. It is good to be able to claim back one's living room.

I have my qualms about having a Christmas tree; it is not a neutral acquisition. It seems so wasteful of nature, so careless and selfish, especially now that it has become such an enormous industry. I pictured the millions of trees cut down every year to satisfy our decorative

⁹ Gregory Bateson, (1978) *Steps towards an ecology of mind*, University of Chicago, 2000, p. 315

supplement to religiosity. We discussed buying a Christmas tree with roots so that we could plant the tree after our use of it in some place, but rejected this, partly because we are lazy and partly because we imagined a growing forest of abandoned Christmas trees which also seemed absurd. We thought about getting a plastic tree, but rejected that without much need to dwell over it. Horrible idea! Then I was told that, in fact, far from being bad for the environment, the large scale cultivation of Christmas trees was a good thing! After all it meant that the Christmas tree, far from being threatened with extinction was now a successful species. Eager for any supporting theory, I found this argument immediately convincing and happily bought Christmas trees for a few more years until I heard that in fact the large scale cultivation of Christmas trees is a mono cultural nightmare. Christmas tree forests are the product of monoculture and cannot support the varied and intricate ecology that one identifies with “nature”. So, even though I still kept buying them, every year, I no longer felt happy about doing so. Then I saw how they have started to cultivate them in Finland, in forests harvested by clever robots, able to walk with great care and precision through the forest, avoiding any unnecessary destruction and picking out only those trees that are suitable for harvest, thereby leaving intact the delicate ecologies that the tree is a part of. I felt happy again. No doubt I am missing part of an argument which will again change my mind about Christmas trees, perhaps one will surface that is powerful enough to help me take a stand in the family and get our Christmas tree habits changed for good. I don’t know. But what is interesting about it is that the increasing circles of argument made me feel differently about having a Christmas Tree in the house every so often whereas my attitude to the environment stayed quite constant: I did not wish to hurt the environment. At the same time the culture of the Christmas tree was not easily routed, it formed a very special part of what our family was and is about. Getting these things to add up in my mind was not easy. And yet, I shall continue to have my Christmas tree for the foreseeable future making sure to praise Finnish forestry techniques.

This particular example is characteristic of the history of consumption over the last three or four hundred years. Particularly the last forty years have been interesting in this regard as consumption of resources started taking on a radically different meaning. As we increased our rate of consumption we have also developed an increasingly sophisticated view of our role in our environment, and are busy discovering creative ways to live well and use our environment well. In fact, as far as I am concerned we already have some of the technology required to live, even in such great numbers,

according to the three rules given earlier about everyone being given a worthy place, everyone being allowed the freedom to pursue their own good, and everyone making decisions to improve their own lot only if they at the same time improve that of others. That then is what is allowed to make the difference. Now it is up to us to devise algorithms and ways of doing things so that these rules can make the jump from theory into practice. We need the technology, the technical know-how, the methodology to live according to those rules.

Fail again, Fail better

That requires time and above all practise. Devising good ways of doing things is complicated in the most literal sense of that word. The development of methods and techniques is a heuristic process whereby slowly all the factors that can influence the outcome are taken account of. They are slowly improved, slowly perfected, slowly adapted to new insights, beliefs and ideas. Moreover the ideas and beliefs that function as the sounding board against which these techniques and methods are developed are also being developed. New insights need to have their say; new ideas need to be tried out, slowly perfecting the method and at the same time critically adapting the vision to which the method is directed. A lot of the problems of the built environment that arose after the second world war had, as far as I am concerned very little to do with all the expensive critical theories that have been offered to explain the so-called “failure of modernism”. Modernism hasn’t failed, we failed, above all we have failed to theorise the failure we are blaming on an abstraction called modernism. Blaming abstractions is a bad idea. We need to stop blaming altogether and start allowing the time to practise and perfect our techniques of wanting, building, but also, and above all, of dwelling, of being in spaces. There is nothing wrong with modern buildings per se, having said that, we were not used to such spaces and took our time to get used to them. In thinking about method we need to take on board an urgent message: the world is given us, it is all we have, let’s take care of it by seeing ourselves as a part of it. That appears to me to be a defensible theory and to my mind, the three rules given above do just that: everyone must be allowed a worthy place, everyone must be allowed the freedom to pursue their good and any decision needs to benefit not just the maker of that decision but his ecology. I may be wrong it is just a theory and as we saw with the Christmas tree, implementing the theory in our daily lives is not easy it needs sustained analysis, critique, theoretical modelling and practise.

Summarising we can say that to arrive at a theory of action one has to have an image, an idea of something that is presented and which one can accept as a good representation of what is the case. As it stands this belief can already furnish one with an attitude towards action and thereby help steer that action a certain way. However, this image or idea has to be found compelling. Phenomena have to be described; descriptions have to be measured against our experience of the world and tested against our vision for their logical consistency and legitimacy. The point of the Christmas tree shows us that, although my wish may be very worthy and all that, to find a strategy that actually does what I want is not so easy. Our vision needs to be tested against our descriptions. Our descriptions need to be tested against our experience. In order to achieve cogency, theories and strategies, as products of the philosophical leap into action, have to become the object of philosophy again, have to be analysed and critiqued, measured and tested. Methods have to be devised, techniques have to be developed, adapted, and allowed to evolve against our well-practised vision of the good. In this way the representation of our world reshapes itself and becomes better able to withstand the onslaught of falsification, the attempt to find conditions under which the theory as it stands cannot hold. One of the main challenges in this process, and one we have so far overlooked is the effect of language itself. Language presents us with a problem all of its own.

language, use, and the utopia of meaning

The way we talk about the world confronts us with a tricky problem. Every word we use is a symbol, a presentation of sounds and signs that supposedly refers to something in the world. We are the great signifiers, giving the world its meaning relative to us. The symbol that is the word, its sound in our head or its look on a page, refers to something *in our experience of the world*, but what? As we know our experience of the world is communicable to some extent, in that we tend to get things right in the end as long as we struggle on long enough to make sure both partners in a conversation are talking about the same thing. When we use a word, we are not always aware of crucial variations in interpretation of that word, nor can we have a clear idea of its working in the mind of the other with whom we have just used it. Everyday episodes of misunderstanding make life interesting as well as frustrating, funny as well as risky, absurd and dangerous. *That* we communicate, we may take for granted, but *what* we communicate is not at all so clear. People who are familiar with each other have a relatively easy time of it; people from

different cultures need to bridge an almost unfathomable chasm of difference. Let's face it, we use a word that is backed up by our experience of the world. When that experience is radically different how can we possibly communicate exactly what we want to communicate?

But that is far from the only difficulty. As soon as a word is called into existence, it starts to lead a life of its own. It starts evolving. It becomes part of the evolution of language and meaning. It becomes something that is more than just the sign of the thing it is supposed to refer to. I take a word to mean or cover *this or that* territory of my view of the environment around me and the relationships it allows me to make; my partner in a conversation may, however, have staked out that word's terrain slightly differently, or may have placed the word in a different context of experiential coordinates, leading us both to completely different conclusions, from what appeared to be the same premises. In other words meaning is subject to a landscape of continuity which cannot simply be surveyed and divided *objectively* without confusion.¹⁰ We need to spend considerable time measuring each-other's words and comparing each-others' dictionaries.¹¹ However, we may not want to do that. The words we hear the other speak may be used guilelessly, but a word may also be a disguise and be part of a disingenuous political agenda. Man is characterised most blatantly, not by his knowledge as *homo sapiens*, not by his playful inventiveness as *homo ludens*, not by his ability to make and build as *homo faber*, but most tiresomely in his extraordinary ability to lie and subvert a cause: *homo mendaciloquus*. The problems in communication as a result of this extraordinary skill must be clear to all of us. It has got us both into, and out of, a lot of trouble.

But this ability to lie is only the beginning of our problems. The world itself lies. As a symbol of experience a word is never more than that. And appearance can be very misleading, as we all know. Almost any system of words representing our experience of the world can be made reasonably consistent. Philosophies using all manner of abstractions can get away with extremely complex and convoluted systems of thought based on categories that seem very compelling as long as one accepts their

¹⁰ See for this W.V. Quine, "Two dogma's of empiricism" (1951) especially the famous statement "our statements about the external world face the tribunal of sense experience not individually but only as a corporate body", which, taken by itself is consistent with a pragmatist view of the continuity of experience.

¹¹ A reference to advice given in J.J. Rousseau's *Confessions*.

underlying premise. The story of theological, political, economic thinking as well as the story of scientific and artistic thought contains very good examples of these curious theoretical constructions based on premises that we ultimately have had to reject. But when someone finally pulls away the carpet and makes them collapse, which happens with every paradigm shift, the ensuing destruction can easily take with it much that is valuable. Life is complicated.

Abstractions, which are what words create, pictures or portraits of the world, are built upon our experience of the world, and that experience is itself an abstraction of the world. What do I mean by abstraction? Abstraction is a process whereby we reduce something we experience to an essence defined in terms of our frame of reference and our use. We portray something by composing a picture of it in relation to everything else, but that picture is composed by our view of things. Essence means something very peculiar. An essence is never the thing it is an essence of. It is a new creation. When we reduce experience to a word we reduce that experience to an essence. But that essence says little about the world out there and everything about our relationship to it. An essence, as such, is a reduction of something, a distillation of something relative to our use of it. Gilles Deleuze pointed out that a word, a symbol, is a symbol of a sign, something that appears to us and contains information for us about something else that is not contained in the word. Signs in turn are never more than signs of signs, making the world of signs subject to an infinite progression: a sign is a sign of a sign of a sign of a sign etc. This is true in a very concrete way.¹² Think of the word “architecture”. The definition of the word architecture rests on other abstractions such as structure, process, and design. These in turn rest on further abstractions, which.... etc. The problem is beautifully explored not only by Gilles Deleuze but also by Michel Foucault in his analysis of René Magritte’s *ceci n’est pas une pipe*.¹³ This is what makes talking about the world so hard in anything except a happily practical way whereby we ignore issues of reality and just get on with the practical effects of what we do and say: If the word *stop* uttered in the right tone of voice and in the right situation can achieve the desired effect, then we use it and would be fools if we didn’t, whatever impossible

¹² Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1987 [1980])

¹³ Michel Foucault, *This is not a pipe*, Transl. James Harkness, Quantum Books, 1982

abstraction the word stop might represent, it works. We call this approach to meaning *common sense*. But contrary to most people who like to keep to common sense, this does not stop us exploring the philosophical ramifications of meaning, nor should it. After all the commonness of common sense needs exploring, to see if it holds more than its practical effect and to see what a practical effect in fact can hold. Some words point at things or activities in a seemingly unproblematic way, other words refer to abstractions or even stranger imaginings that either party in a conversation may have just made up. Don't ask questions like: *what is an object*, or, *what is a thing*, or, *what is an abstraction like the state*, or *modernism*, unless you are ready for a rough ride through Semantic Wonderland.

In representing what is presented, *you make it your own*. This is well illustrated in everyday conversations in for example the design studio where we are constantly *negotiating* meanings. Even the words that point at things in a seemingly straightforward way, point at those things in a highly abstracted way. Words point not to the object or quality as a neutral thing, but point to the object or quality with reference *to our actual use and our concrete experience of it* and as such are highly selective in what they bring out.

Take a hammer, Heidegger's favourite piece of equipment. The word hammer, even if it sounds quite innocent, is not a neutral word. When I hear the word hammer, it brings with it a diffuse network of meaning, a context if you will, of which the activity of hammering is one. A word denoting *a thing* denotes that thing from a perspective of use, our use of it, and not just a narrow band of intended uses. I have used a hammer for many different activities, only one of which is hammering. A hammer accumulates within its definition a personal history of our relationship with it and other hammers and associations that spiral off into infinity. Being rather ham-fisted, I have a very different "filling" to the word hammer than an expert carpenter might have. Someone who has lived through communism will have a very different image of the hammer, fully infected with the consequences of a political ideology, compared to someone living under a regime where hammers do not function as symbols on such a penetrating scale. Again, those who do not know Nietzsche will have a different idea about hammers than those who do. What I am saying is that every word *is* an abstraction and veils this personal accumulation of associations and uses and requires a world in which it can be given a place. It is subject to ownership: I own my word *hammer*. You *own yours* in that

we both have a world in which that word takes its place within the whole network of meaning. We own our words in a very intimate sense. We own the use we make of them.¹⁴ My word home and your word home are obviously different, but so is my word house, architecture, built environment, politics etc. In exchanging these words in conversation we *have to negotiate* how to proceed. We have to negotiate their use. Each conversation is an act of arbitration. For many words this does not pose a real problem, but for qualities in design it most certainly does. My word for serenity is no doubt coloured differently to *yours* even though we might find agreement quite quickly about core issues when using it and when trying to discover the spatial conditions under which it can obtain in the built environment. A word like bicycle, car, a pair of socks and an education, an experience, a visit to a museum, is *owned*. To own something means that it has made part of the furniture of a person's world, the set of relationships between his body and his environment with which he is familiar in some way. It takes up its residence as part of that person's way of looking out into the world.

If such qualifications of words, that is, if the making concrete of specific qualities, abstractions brought into existence by words, are translated into the concrete spatial conditions under which these qualities obtain when undergone in experience can cause difficulties in a conversation, how would you think they fare after a building or an ensemble has been built and *abandoned* to the judgment of visitors and the like who have never actually sat down to have that conversation? There lies a big challenge.

Words, being personal possessions which have to be negotiated in every conversation are *necessarily* unstable. They achieve a measure of stability in a culture when they are well-used and used often. At the same time that is where they produce their greatest flowering of variations. A written dictionary allows the greatest measure of stability and functions as a necessary *north* on the compass of any meaning, however, they too need regular review and by holding a word to its meaning by way of a dictionary in fact causes the requirement for ever more exact words to proliferate. The nice thing about vagueness is that a single word can do a lot. When words become more exact in their boundaries, the proliferation of words becomes both necessary and frightening.

¹⁴ Ludwig Wittgenstein, (1953) *Philosophical investigations: the German text, with a revised English translation* by Gertrude Elizabeth Margaret Anscombe, Blackwell Publishing, 2001

In discourse words are given the care and attention they need to take their properly considered place in the conversation so as to not become an obstacle to communication. We think carefully about how to tell a story so that we can hope for communication. And communication happens when others in some way *recognise* (re-cognition) that which a person is talking about to them. But that recognition has no guarantee that the *intended* meaning has been transferred.

words as portraits

If we say “triangle”, of which we all have a reasonably clear idea, how can a triangle be said to *exist*? All of us who have done a little mathematics know that a triangle is an abstraction and that things that look triangular to us, at our scale of observation, are not so when we look closely. The triangle used in geometry is a weird thing, a set of lines without thickness... But is this really any different when we talk of *a hammer*? Or even *that hammer*? Surely a hammer is as much an abstraction as a triangle and even if it isn’t then it is legitimate to call a triangular thing which we come across, a triangle, even if it, strictly speaking, is something quite course when we look closely. A hammer is only a hammer if it gives a unified experience of a hammer within the experience of daily life. Things are to us what we use them for. And if we use a piece of paper cut roughly into a triangle to show a child what a triangle is to let him become familiar with the abstractions we use in daily life to survive and communicate, then so be it. A true triangle is there, ready to hand, to be used if we want to use it. We can conceive it but we cannot touch it. So what? What is the difference between a hammer untouched in a shed and a pure triangle untouched in my conception of it? What is the difference between a hammer in my hand and a mathematical problem I am working on? The difference only matters if you are stupid enough to try to use the one for the job to be done by the other. That is the point, their difference needs to matter. So the question you ask yourself is: what am I doing with this triangle obsessing me, what am I doing with this knowledge of the hammer in my shed, what am I doing with the hammer in my hand?

A word abstracts its relationship to *the thing* it refers to by conjuring up not just the thing, but the world of which that thing is a central part. A word as such is a portrait not of the thing itself but of the thing as part of our world, with the portrayed posed in the centre and its world surrounding it, either within the frame or as part of the room the portrait is hung in. And the pose is significant, as is the context in which the thing is

exhibited. Thomas Hobbes used to talk in terms of poses and gestures in this way. A portrait always begs the question: *is it a good likeness?* A portrait carries with it the express possibility that what is portrayed can always be looked at in another way, at a different scale, from another angle and in a different context. Other portraits of the thing are possible! And different ways of looking at the same portrait are possible. In other words I exercise my hypothetical rights. When I choose to use a word, I choose that use in such a way that I remain conscious of my bias, of my imprecision or indeed my over-precision, of possible significance of which I may be ignorant or which I may be ignoring for the purposes of easy communication. This helps me when negotiating the word with others. It helps make me sensitive to their meanings. That is what makes me richer. I try to remind myself that I am looking from a specific perspective and at a specific scale of observation and that my view of things is always *directed*, intentional. I may have a good view but never a complete view. Other people's views complement mine, but also tell me when things have gone too far. In this sense I can achieve a transcendental perspective, a perspective that goes beyond just me. After all I can imagine that others might think differently. That is a huge step and one that is essential to design.

It might help to describe this *perspectival view* of meaning more exactly by pursuing the simile of the portrait. If we see *a word as an object-in-its-environment*, we might acknowledge the fact that when an author is looking for a word, he chooses *which side* of the word he wants facing him. So the word used by the author is as *a partial object* of which only a couple of sides are properly visible. Three of the six sides of the object (if it is a cube) will be hidden behind the occluding edges, and that is precisely where misunderstanding as well as much creative interpretation happens, for the reader has, more than likely, a slightly different view of the word facing him on the page. By seeing the word he may conjure up a different portrait of it. There may not be a big difference; it may be a portrait of the same thing, but in a different pose, painted by a different painter, with a different background. But we cannot avoid such slight shifts in perspective between reader and writer.

The call, often heard, to be more precise in our use of language, will only help so far. Usually what we mean by *precise usage* is *correct usage*. When we use the word *correctly* we usually mean that we feel that the dictionary should *legislate* in our conversation. It means that we respect the semantic, syntactic and pragmatic tradition of language as codified in the dictionary.

That helps. At least that means that if we, as two people involved in a conversation, are both aware of the rules and well-practised in them, communication through recognition will be easy, with which I mean that there will be a considerable measure of overlap between what I mean to say and what you understand me to say.

The ideal would surely be to have a language that is extremely exact, making all misunderstanding impossible. There have been such calls for exactness. John Locke for example thought that all our troubles would be over if only we could just be *more precise*. Exactness would not a bad thing but for the need for an enormous administration to support that wish for exactness. We would need many more words than we have at present. The limits of what we can cope with on a day to day basis are quickly reached. If we have to have a word for everything, we will need so many words that our brain would weigh heavy on us, it might not even be able to cope. So instead we have spheres of vocabulary to coincide with spheres of concern and action. We have words like beauty and goodness, ugliness and evil, which pass judgement on some situation or quality relative to us and thereby refer to something different every time they are used. They constitute a group of words pass judgment without specifying the quality we endow something with when coming to that judgment. If we were to be challenged each time to declare our exact meaning when using the judgment *beautiful* or *good*, we would be hard put to perform well. Often we do not know why we like something and when we subsequently try to put that liking into words we know, as we utter them, that that is not exactly what we meant. Even if we were able to reason through every judgment, it would soon become tiresome to do so. We sometimes want to use short-cut words like good or beautiful and have done with it because they express our approval. Often it is more important to indicate *that* we like something or approve of it than to indicate *why* it is that we do so. Sometimes the judgment is all we need and the construction underpinning that judgment is left happily invisible.

On top of all this we have context sensitive vocabularies. We have a professional vocabulary with lots of jargon, a matrimonial vocabulary which is an almost private language shared with an intimate partner, a sibling vocabulary which is very similar, a vocabulary for children, a shopping vocabulary, the vocabulary of violence etc. This archipelago of vocabularies is explored, mapped and exploited to the extent that tasks between these spheres of action overlap and interact. The same words used in different settings can mean completely different things. We see

that professionally engaged people have very precise vocabularies for their particular field of interest. But it would surely be unreasonable to ask everyone to be able to wield the full set of a language's vocabulary. If we have a limit to the words a brain can cope with, we need to mould our limited vocabulary to the needs of our experience and select words so that we can communicate well about that which concerns us directly and more generally about things that do not. I, for example, do not need a far-reaching vocabulary for bodily conditions and illnesses but can, with the use of metaphors and similes get on fine with my doctor who is diagnosing me and who has an expert vocabulary at his fingertips which he happily knows to be completely useless when talking to me.

In a certain sense you could say that the problem with exactness is that it comes with exclusion. By becoming more precise, you are also more precise about what you are *not* saying, so that the implication of what you *are* saying becomes correspondingly poorer, so that you have to be all the more active in making sure you do not exclude that which you want included. Vagueness has the advantage of delaying such decisions to the moment you can give them your full attention and allow the flow of conversation to direct itself to the details. With immediate exactness you have to be correspondingly more God-like in your simultaneous all-seeingness. But if becoming a god is not part of the deal you were offered when entering this world, the challenge of being precise about everything would also limit the experience we could cover adequately. The dirtiness and slovenliness of language, even when used by our greatest writers in their imagined precision, is what gives language its richness. Listening to other people talk, gives me another way of looking at things. We can only afford to become precise when we know everything. And as we don't, our use of language negotiates experience in the same way as our feet use the floor we walk on: to move on. And the meeting of my foot with the floor will sometimes feel secure and sometimes feel somewhat slippery. Slipperiness has its uses. At the same time, it is true that people who are able to cope with a large and well exercised personal vocabulary see the world at a higher resolution, that is indubitably so.

Words are abstractions of tangible things to which can be pointed or intangible things or relationships that can be described. We need overlap just as much as we need a measure of precision. It is good that the word {leg} does not differentiate between {a man's leg} and {a Giraffe's leg} as it is useful to have a word that generalises the concept of {leg}. But how do we define the set of properties that would be included in the set {leg}?

Precision is a wonderful tool but so is the ability to talk in generalities and large dirty concepts that allow us to think of sets in which {Human leg}, {piano leg}, {Giraffe's leg}, {leg of a journey} [AND] {leggings}, {walking}, {standing} [AND] {elegance as a posture involving your legs} as well as {eLEGance as a play on the word} all belong together on the basis of the slightest connections rubbing off on each other and creating a network of possible directions for conversation. This associative creativity, or associative surfing is extremely important for the artistic and scientific abductive exploration of the world, without which we could not search out possible relationships which to explore further. The complication of meaning can be adequately described by set theory, which allows the extraordinary fluidity of sets overlapping and merging and becoming part of each other. If we need exactness in our vocabulary we also need the complexity of overlap and subjection. The important activity of poetic abduction needs this fluidity whereby relationships suggest themselves to those busy exploring the possibilities of what the world has to offer.

theory [AND] theory-run-wild

It is perfectly acceptable to speculate about the world beyond our senses as long as the discussion remains safely hypothetical. It is, however, risky to lose oneself in a fantastic journey of hypostatised belief, helped along by concepts of things we have not seen or been able to experience such as, gods, angels, ghosts and dragons, or indeed bosons, electrons, ions and quarks. The question is not *whether* these things exist, but *how*. How does each of these things exist? Do they exist as stories or as tangible things? What makes the one kind of existence more compelling than the other? Philosophy is co-evolutionary with religious, artistic and scientific thought; these are disciplines also trying to make sense of the world with questions like: where do we come from? Why are we here? How did we come about? [AND] Where are we going? What are our possibilities and limitations?

How far can philosophy go in this process? Philosophy has the task of questioning theories. It questions their mode of existence. It questions the conditions that are necessary for something to be the case. How does a specific concept exist? What is its nature as a concept and how does it relate to the thing it is a symbol for? But as I have already argued, it is hard to do this without a grounding of theory against which this process of questioning can take place. We need a theory in order to question a theory. So the production of theory is an essential part of philosophy. It is, if you like, the applied part of philosophy. How far can a philosophical movement

go in the direction of theory production? Well, as long as it treats its theories as hypothetical, nothing is lost. The moment it takes a step further and decides that there is something right [TRUE] and something not right [FALSE], is the moment when a philosophy slips from theory into something stronger, into belief. At that moment it cannot really be distinguished from religious, scientific or indeed artistic belief. There are, for example, some mathematicians at this moment who believe for instance that mathematics is *real*. That means that they believe that mathematics not only *describes* the world with extraordinary accuracy, but that some mathematical process in fact *governs* the world. Fair enough, but this *belief* is completely indistinguishable from a belief in God or ghosts. Beliefs constitute an *existential leap*: a decision to believe. And that decision is always personal. It is your decision to make and you must take responsibility for it, whether it is the authority of the book you have read or the authority of the person who has told you about this or that or because of the beauty and consistency of the theory. Whatever you invest with the authority to decide what you allow to make a difference, it is you who have made the investment and you who will gain or lose when the belief turns up trumps or disappoints. That is the existential position.

The leap into belief is also the point at which theory relinquishes something of itself, its virginity if you like; with the leap into belief it has become part of the *real* world, the world where things get dirty and need to perform. It is at that point that theory is used to determine action, where it leaps into the unknown world of consequence. Any theory: any theory of planning, development, design, making and maintenance that is *acted upon* has become something like a religion, or if you prefer a more acceptable word for much the same thing: a *paradigm*.¹⁵ Furthermore it is, to all practical purposes, believed in to the extent that it is acted upon and lived. But theory, based as it is on other theories, cannot and can never be fully demonstrated, cannot be fully proven. There is always the risk that when the frame of reference extends, theories which used to look so good and work so well, fall short in that new frame of reference. Newtonian Physics is a case in hand even though it still works beautifully at our scale of things.

¹⁵ Thomas S. Kuhn, (1962) *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, Volume 2, Number 2, second edition, 1972* see especially the postscript.

We need to reach a point at which we allow ourselves to invest a theory with enough trust to act upon it decisively.

building [AND] theory: the curious freedom of thought

The often erratic trajectory of theory in the process of being altered and improved through analysis, critique and selection, also holds for any theory of the built environment, which, when it suggests that certain ways of doing things might, under certain circumstances, be better ways of doing things than others, slips into being *an accepted theory of the built environment* or *an accepted theory of architecture or urban planning*, which then should resubmit itself to the rigors of critical thought and creative exploration.

One of the great challenges of applied theory, such as the theory of the built environment which extends in a continuum from the smallest to the largest scale, is to avoid the pitfalls of wild theory while enjoying its creative benefits. Theory that is erected on bad foundations, on loosely held social prejudices and habits of unexamined thought, might produce interesting insights but cannot be left in that condition. It needs tidying up with love and care for what is good and useful about it. When, for example, a theory of design does not make a proper distinction between the social value of a word (how a word can be used to affect a person's standing in a group) and its operational value (how a word can be used to describe a particular state of affairs or operation) and if it then fails to see how these two mesh, we have a problem.

The words art and science are cases in hand. When a baffled visitor to a museum of modern art says: *this is not art!* he means: this thing should not be allowed to be called art, it is not special enough: art is special and this is not. When somebody replies: *art is anything anyone calls art!*, this second person is saying: *stop being such a snob, art is the name of a discipline that produces any object for contemplation and reflection in whatever way it sees fit. By all means call it bad art, but do not call it non-art because that is just silly and shows you up for the ignoramus you obviously are.* Something very similar obtains for the word science which also conveys social magic to the things it touches. If something is thought to be scientific, it is automatically given a high level of authority to decide things.

Thoughts about what it means to use abstractions like *the modern, the idea of progress, the authentic, identity, art and science, use and the useless, honest architecture, imitation and originality, the power and its relation to the built environment, function, atmosphere, the nature of behaviour and form and their relationship to each other, the role of intentionality, the role of the arbitrary, the working of responsibility, the relationship between words and the qualities they denote and connote, the relationship between subject and object, between physical and mental, the constitution and working of space* and so forth are all instances where theory needs to measure itself against the best philosophical questions.

Powerful images, such as the concept of *the generic city* for example, are an easy target for being hollowed out by careless thought, reducing its conceptual mechanics to the slimmest visual similarities. We need to guard ourselves from the easy and glib. That things look similar on one level often means that they differentiate radically on another. There is a generic similarity between cities but each city has been peculiarly speciated into a unique object. I remember that when I first arrived in the city of Kingston Jamaica, coming from a familiarity with European cities and their monumentality, I found it very difficult to orientate myself. *Everything looked so similar*. But luckily I was going to be there for some time. As I practised the city, I began to adjust my way of looking for marks and significance. *I learnt to negotiate that city*. Now that I am back in Europe I look at European cities with that newly acquired skill and it has opened up a completely different world to me. Sure there is a generic way to approach cities, but there is also a specific way to approach each one.

philosophy [AND] theory: the uses of ground

Having a theory about something is the activity of entertaining a belief that this or that way of looking at a situation is a good way of looking at it. Having a theory means that you accept something about the world we are in. A theoretical stand is thus (or should be) always hypothetical. It is not a certainty; it is accepted and settles in. It allows belief a route of escape to a better way of looking at things. Accepted theory either affirms current paradigms or helps in the construction of a new paradigm. Anything you accept as valid to act upon remains hypothetical, it may stand as long as it is not found wanting after analysis (the taking apart of something through description of its elements) and critique (the comparing, weighing and selecting of those elements and their relation to each other), that is after philosophical investigation. The difference between theoretical acceptance

and certainty is huge. The one is conditional the other pursues a false absolute. The one is open-minded and the other is closed. The one makes it easier for a discussion to be truly concentrated on the subject, leaving aside, as much as possible, the social dynamics of winning and losing, rivalry and jealousy. The other drives each discussion exactly to that concern, because of the nature of certainty, discussion is by definition a threat. Certainty is fine if it is kept completely personal and private, as Kierkegaard argues, it is very damaging to open society.

There are those who want to argue that some theories are true in a way which lies well beyond bodily experience, that they are true in what they like to call an absolute sense, whereby they localise the absolute in *the everything*. They may be right, I don't know. They have never been able to convince me, so I don't play that game; nor do I have any use for it. I might, as I shall do with respect to Cradle to Cradle as a design theory, happily concede that *law* and *experience* can overlap to such an extent that you can trust a law as long as you make sure that what you are in doing in its name is, on the basis of experience, true to it in every instance. But that is not really very revolutionary. When you start trusting ideas whose substructure lay beyond experience you start making decisions that can only be verified through the use of one or more types of argument which the logicians rightly dub *fallacies*.

Movements in philosophy, such as existentialism, phenomenology, pragmatism, radical constructivism, positivism, deconstructivism, structuralism and scepticism, are movements in which theory and philosophy challenge each other in a game of thought about a certain problems and according to specific rules. The analytical philosopher may have doubts about the kind of game a phenomenologist plays for example, while the phenomenologist thinks the analytical game all wrong, full of curious abstractions that have no basis in bodily experience, full of wrong ideas about how you can and how you cannot speak usefully about the world. The radical constructivists are radical indeed and barely distinguishable from the weird Alice-in-Wonderland-world of George Berkeley. But philosophy is allowed to follow any idea where it will go in whatever way it deems useful, that is its task and it is an important task.

It is when a philosophy becomes normative in theory that the challenges appear. Nietzsche, for example, is an exciting but dangerous philosopher. In the hands of the philosophically lazy he can wreak havoc. He is easily misunderstood and is sometimes just simply wrong and wrongheaded.

Nevertheless he was an extraordinary thinker, one of the finest and most robust that I have the pleasure to know about. I love his books, but also know that some of his ideas have to be handled with care: look but do not touch. Whereas others are clearly brilliant and wonderful. Philosophy cannot be applied to daily life without the mediation of discussion and the test of experience. And as soon as it touches very basic problems such as cruelty or humiliation we need to be doubly careful. A theory needs to be tested against a dearly held image of the kind of world and our place in it, against the kind of social space we want. Any action sanctioned by a reading of philosophy which leads to cruelty or any kind of humiliation, as Nietzsche's philosophy clearly did in the hands of German Generals, prevents the victims pursuing their own good and thus promotes an unfair distribution of goods that cannot be defended except on grounds of arrogation and simple selfishness. We need to know about the consequences of our actions.

While formulating an attitude to action, which is the task of a philosophy of the built environment, one cannot lose sight of the fact that 1. We all live in the world and 2. That surely no one person or group can have more right to that life than any other person or group except from the perspective of that person or group. To live in the world surely means to be part of it, part of the whole. These constitute the two main axioms of *my thought, my philosophy of the built environment*. It is, essentially, a personal attitude. I cannot force it on to anyone else as it could just as easily be different. A better attitude I have not yet come across, and it would be hard to imagine one; having said that, anything is possible. As these two assumptions lie at the basis of my theory, everything else, every concrete decision I make about doing something or avoiding something takes experience of effective action as its point of departure and is made to take account of those two axioms. But they remain, however important in my thinking, theoretical positions, hypothetical positions; almost as trustworthy as the sun coming up tomorrow, but not without that small possibility of being wrong. And as such they need to be called into question, regularly, whenever the coordinates of our frame of reference changes.

[IF] phil. = building an att. [THEN] phil. = building a me

Whatever movement you feel at home in, philosophy asks hard questions, theory provides tentative answers, which philosophy then questions again. I use the word philosophy to cover both activities because to ask a question without having something to ask it of seems rather a waste of

time. When you ask a question you want at least some answer, even if it is only in the form of another question. Philosophy asks questions of the world as it is given to us. The problem is that it is not at all clear what exactly is being given and how it is given. Theory is the attempt to model answers to these questions. From this way of looking at the task of philosophy it becomes clear how important it is to see philosophy as a form of exercise, a thing that needs practise and which itself requires critical evaluation. There might be some philosophers who will look up in a surprised sort of way at this description of the two and their relationship to each other. And yet if we can all agree that philosophy is a question-driven form of analysis and critique, without recourse to proof and theory is the decision we make as a result of that probing thus producing norms, priorities and values then the initial surprise will no doubt quickly change its tone and settle into congenial discussion using the razor sharp instruments of philosophical dissection that theory has provided through practise as well as the wonderful imagination that theory requires, leaving the semantics for what it is. Theory and philosophy are like the two legs of a body: they move issues onwards.

Philosophy is a discipline in which you build theories through analysis, critique and creative thought. That really means that you use philosophy to *build an attitude* towards the world and your place in it. In finding that attitude, you have, in fact, taken a theoretical stand on the matter. This helps you be you *as a developer, planner, designer, maker and maintainer*. Such a stand becomes one of the building blocks of who you are, professionally and in a more complete sense: as a first, second and third person singular and even as a first, second and third person plural. With this I mean that it determines you in the way you see yourself, how others see you and how you group yourself and how others group you. No doubt there will be a lot of overlap in these ways of seeing and grouping, but that overlap is in no way to be taken for granted.

The philosophy of justice, when it has finished with its analysis and critique of existing notions and concepts, has, in a manner of speaking, left behind the shape of what can be kept of these concepts and notions and the negative shape of that which has been rejected. At the end of the exercise, the partners in the discussion know, or think they know what they want and what they do not want. On the basis of this they begin to look for ways to repair, reform or renew these concepts so that they can arrive at a better concept of justice, which in turn will affect the ethical norms, economic values and political priorities that in part rely on a conception of

justice. This is where the philosophy of justice becomes *a theory of justice*. One of the most famous and compelling of these theories is John Rawls' *Theory of Justice* which, together with Aristotle's Nicomachean ethics, Spinoza's ethics and Immanuel Kant's work on the metaphysics of morals stands as one of the monumental theories of what is right and fair, toughened and made resistant by the constant assault of good thinking.

The interesting thing about John Rawls' theory of justice is the theory he used to arrive at a good way, or method, to think about justice and how a just society might work. It is explicitly based on a game, a conversation with game rules. Not only that it arrives at a concept of justice whereby a just society is arrived at, or at least striven for on the basis of a small set of game-rules, thumb rules to live by against which to judge all your decisions. We shall come back to that aspect. What is important to mention here however, is that it is immediately obvious how his philosophy of justice, leads to a theory of justice, which leads to a very clear stand on all sorts of issues that pass by in daily life and professional life. Adopting his theory is to adopt *a way of life as an attitude to your place in the world*.

I take a stand and thus become me

What does that mean: *your place in the world*? Existentialists believe, and I think I agree with them, that the word person, or personality, or indeed the word "me" or "I", is an abstraction: a virtual creature produced by our body in its attempt to maintain itself in its environment. The "me" or the "I" is the product of being a body in the world which continually practices its being in the world and practises its stand with regard to all sort of issues it is confronted with, minute by minute, second by second. The I is a constant within the dynamic movement of spacetime: it is the here and now that directs itself to the world with the help of its structured experience of the world, encoded in bodily memories. It is born complete in the baby but transforms and changes itself, it grows into a rhizomatic network of bodily memories, personal opinions and beliefs about things that affect one's reaction to all sorts of things that come one's way. Taken together with the affordances of a situation, the possibilities a situation offers and even suggests, the habits and ways of doing things that a person has developed and the culture he has become part of, this stand in fact constitutes the "me" that this person uses to refer to himself: the "I" with which he will talk to a "you" about the world both live in. The "me" that I am, is then a dynamic conception; it constantly practises itself, relating the

body it is a virtual representative of, to the world it has to survive and live in and take a stand on.

Gilles Deleuze writes that a representation of something is in fact something with which we have wrestled, is part of knowledge. Being part of knowledge is not as clear a statement as it appears to be. Things present themselves to us through our senses and we, in taking on what is presented, *represent* it selectively, using language, gesture, behaviour and in that representation it becomes infected, immediately with our history, our perspective, our stand on things, our memory our ability to describe things. It is a position that is very close to Henry Bergson's beautiful description of perception. The "I" is an assembly point for representations, a place where they are structured into a significant whole ready to receive the world through the senses. The "I" is then my stand. This is corroborated by the way we use the word I in speech a writing. The I is a virtual construct to relate the body to its environment. It recognises the world with its experience and coordinates conscious response.

philosophy = the call into question

I have already said that philosophy asks questions. It asks questions like:

- What conditions need to be in place for someone to be able to say that A is the case?
- How would you need to look at the world for what you say to be the case?
- Is what you say also the case when you look at the world in another way?
- Are you sure, how do you know this?
- What does it mean to say: "I know this"?
- What does it mean to say: "you have made a mistake in your reasoning"?
- What does it mean to question the validity of the categories we use to think with?
- Are there better ways to say something?
- What does it mean to say that something is better?
- If I want things that are good, how do I ensure that what I wish for is good?
- What qualities do I in fact wish for and on what grounds and for what purpose?

- What if what I say is acceptable to me; what will be the consequences and attractions of holding such a view?
- How will I act, now that I accept what I say?
- How far will I go in my actions?
- How do theory and practice relate then?

Charles Sanders Peirce, the founder of Pragmaticism, was right when he said that philosophical questions can usefully be brought under three main disciplines. Philosophy calls into question that which is given in experience and explores that which is possible to think beyond experience. Philosophical questions, as far as he was concerned, are either of a metaphysical nature, an aesthetic nature or an ethical nature. That is a running theme of this collection of essays. These three kinds of question establish the foundation of our ability to communicate usefully about the world by assuming, through the relation that these sorts of question maintain, *a continuity of experience*. Metaphysics asks: what conditions must obtain for something to be the case and how should we talk about that? Aesthetics asks: if metaphysics has determined what a quality is and how it works, what qualities are desirable and which are not? Ethics then asks: If we want a quality how should we adjust means to the end, how should we go about achieving that quality?

practise theory & practise practice

Theory answers questions, thereby setting in place the necessary conditions for norms, values and priorities to establish and define themselves in use and habit within the game rules suggested by the theory. Theory is selective and legislative. By providing an image of the way the world looks and works, it suggests which set or recipe of norms, values and priorities stand a good chance within that image. That then leads to changes in our judicial, economic and political thinking, answering what is right and wrong, fair and unfair, what is valuable and valuable in a negative sense and what is high and low priority. When translated into norms theory affects every field of human endeavour. By setting a norm, a value is placed upon whatever is involved because norms are selective and thus produce a hierarchy in value: that which is selected as normal has more value than that which is not selected as normal. Norms, values and priorities as instruments of selection affirmed or suggested by a theory, differentiate the world about us into the special and the peripheral. Norm, value and priority articulate each other. It is the relation between a theory and its consequences with regard to norm, value and priority that has to

be *practised* in discussion (the practice of theory) and practice (the implementation of theory in daily life). A theory works together with practice to shape these norms, values and priorities and establish their place. It is the configuration of norms, values and priorities that a theory suggests and continues to shape in practice which makes that theory engage with society. A theory does not suggest a configuration of norms, values and priorities by itself, it does that within the context of the whole, the context of our habits, the culture we come from, the history we carry with us, and so forth.

There is no necessary connection between the set or recipe of norms values and priorities and a theory. That connection has to be built. It has to be *decided upon* existentially. Even though a theory is selective there is always a range of options to choose from. Any strategy for action could just as well be exchanged for another recipe that *fits* the theory. Moreover the *actualised* connection between a theory and practice is similarly not *necessary*. It is subject to arbitration, it is in that sense arbitrary, and it is achieved by discussion, by taking account of all the factors and making a decision. Does this then contradict the determinism as put forward by Spinoza? No it does not, it affirms it. It merely reveals our ignorance and the *necessary* shortcomings of a human perspective on the world about us which is limited by our bodies, their possibilities and limitations. One way to overcome these individual limitations has been to form society. This has certainly increased our power to see further and last longer. Modern technology has again increased the size of society through the internet. That has extended our power even further than the city. Who knows what the next stage will be. At the same time these ever increasing *bodies* of which we have become part, although they have increased our power, have also imposed new limitations on the individual.

rules of the game

The fact that there is no necessary connection, no natural bridge between a theory and the set or recipe of norms values and priorities or between theory and practice has its origin in the nature of logic. When we use the word logical what do we really mean? We mean that a particular answer or a particular solution *fits* a question or *fits* a problem. The criteria for fitting are variable and need not concern us just yet. What is important is that this fitting is seen as satisfying. Even though we might be right to believe, with Spinoza, that there is always a *right answer* and a *right solution* to a problem if only we had the requisite knowledge and overview of a

situation, this does not mean that we cannot *choose* to give *any* answer or *any* solution to a question or problem. In fact, any answer *is possible* to any question. We can, should we choose to, wilfully answer “lemons” to a serious question about the state of the weather. This is not just a joke, this constitutes a real philosophical problem, by which we are affected in daily life, if only because we make use of this mad freedom. The problem that any theory *can* be acted upon but does not *have to be* acted upon, and that each theory *can* suggest a plethora or possible actions following the act of *interpretation*, constitutes a problem that has to be dealt with in such a way that does not ignore the central fact of the arbitrary relationship between theory and practice. Not only is the relationship between theory and practice arbitrary, that is subject to arbitration, but there are some pretty weird theories about in the world that have persisted up to the present day despite the fact that they cannot withstand the rigour of clear thinking, and yet, people appear happy to live by them and in most instances these people lead *good* lives.

There are also theories that take critique seriously that do not deny the arbitrary relationship but see it as central to their success, becoming stronger as they practise their premises and try out their conclusions. Such games of critique have a social purpose to them, namely to get people to *measure* themselves against whatever is held dear or is thought of as stable. In this way games help people to place themselves in a situation, relative to a group or to others or within their culture, or with regard to some event or situation or idea.

Games allow a more immediate goal, which is to win, or at least not to lose, or, indeed, to gain some advantage in some way. Evolution concerns itself with improving the game of genetic reproduction through selection. Evolution does not concern itself with the game-rules. These are given, they are the rules of selection, natural and artificial, in which the latter is perfectly natural but has the benefit of experience and memory and both pursue advantage in whatever sense. Evolution in producing different ecologies might alter the playing field here and there, creating a new context for the game, defining anew what might be considered an advantage, but it can only play within the rules that has been laid down by *substance* whatever that turns out to be when we arrive at our theory of everything.

The game of life produces winners and losers. The winners are those who are “successful” and the losers are those who... aren’t. What success

means and what failure means is not always clear and depends on the situation. In purely evolutionary terms success means successful reproduction. But we, as complex creatures, have made the criteria of success more interesting. Sure we are happy to reproduce, but *a successful life* is more than just reproduction. And yet, all this is still, by definition, part of the game. Success at our scale of existence is all sorts of things. Winning might mean winning from another person, but you can also win with respect to a previous personal performance, in that case you play for a new personal best. That kind of winning is usually called improvement. Or you may win against some fixed standard. All these are legitimate ways of winning at a game. The game of philosophy is won if it can show how a theory (seen from a specific perspective) might be improved upon by asking the right questions or when it can help to alter or affirm our attitude towards a certain issue on the basis of thorough reasoning. A theory has won if it stands up to critique or indeed if it is able, after critique, to improve on itself, relative to some purpose. I will happily admit that the idea of winning at philosophy sounds a bit raw and uncultured, but there it is. Any pursuit is relative to something else and as such, is measured before and after, either in terms of seconds and centimetres, or in terms of words like better or worse. Let's not get too stuck up about it.

games [AND] rule<space>cheating

Games have a specific space in which certain rules of behaviour obtain. Even the game Mornington Crescent has its rules. Its space is confined to the last minutes of a radio programme on BBC radio 4 called *I'm sorry I haven't a clue*. One of the game's rules is to maintain that it has no rules, or at least to keep quiet about its implicit rules. The patterned behaviour that one can observe when the game is played shows that for the players to maintain that the game has no rules is merely obeying one of its tacit rules. Only names of underground stations in London are allowed and it always ends with the station Mornington Crescent. To take another example, there is a curious and compelling similarity between a game of, say, monopoly, and a game of philosophical critique. We have our field, our space-time-frame in which the game is played and its rules obtain, we have our tacit, implicit rules and our explicit rules whereby certain moves are considered legitimate and productive and others are illegitimate and destructive of the game. We have the elements and instruments to be able to give the virtual game shape in real space and time. We have negotiation and rivalry and a lot more besides.

Philosophy questions whether a theory, an answer, a proposition, or indeed a question, is legitimate within the set of game-rules it has devised for itself. That set of rules marks out the particular game played: a game of analytical philosophy, a game of realism, idealism, positivism, and phenomenology. At the same time there is a realisation that the set of explicit rules are never completely up to the task. There are implicit rules as well, rules that are so obvious that they are taken for granted or factors that are simply not known about and can therefore not be taken on board. This is why logic, language and ontology play such an enormous role in philosophy.

A game needs only one rule to be a game. Any limitation is a rule. Any possibility given and affected by limitations may legitimately be called a game. The fact that I cannot walk through a wall is limiting, and as such becomes a rule: I try to avoid doing it. Making sure I do not walk into walls could be seen as a game, just as children and neurotics like to walk on or avoid lines in the pavement. Where there are rules which are not *also* physical limitations, the possibility of cheating, of subversion arises. You could call the rules that allow cheating “soft” or “social” or whatever. The point is that they are of a different order to what we call “the laws of physics” and yet work analogously. Their only real difference is that they allow choice and cheating. They are not simply the result of physical limitations. They are not just determined by physical force (*kracht*) but also by the potency of power (*macht*) which is given only in the reflective effect of meaning and significance. In these circumstances behaviour according to the rules cannot be fully predetermined without an almost impossible amount of knowledge. In such conditions, whereby so many factors crowd in on the situation, behaviour can only be predicted stochastically. At the same time even this stochastic ability to predict *proper behaviour*, i.e. behaviour within the rules, can be made more complex by cheating. The social sciences take this ability to cheat on board and incorporate even that into their models of human behaviour. It all gets very messy. It also shows the extent to which human being is *free* and in fact *doomed to freedom*. For although we are limited by the “laws of physics” and limited by bodily size and capacity, by our cultural background and by the means at our disposal to do things, we are given so much freedom that everything we do more or less comes down to our own responsibility.

To cheat is to mess around with the relationship between means and ends. Cheating subverts a game by giving a primacy to the end, happily sacrificing the means to achieve that end. Winning the game, success, is

placed above *playing well*. In other words, the desire for success institutes a transformation of extant norms, values and priorities; it reconfigures them to play the same game but with different rules. In fact it has changed everything, the whole game, even though the other players might not be fully aware of it. It has made it a different game.

Cheating is a first sign of intelligence, a selfish intelligence. Within our sophisticated societies it ignores both the first and second of John Rawls' principles of fair society and as such works to destroy fairness and every good intention to live together well. As a sign of intelligence it cannot therefore be counted very highly. At the same time, societies that have rules that are unfair or societies that do not implement their rules well, encourage cheating. It cuts both ways.

The possibility of cheating can deliver success only in higher order social-evolutionary terms. At the more basic structures of life, cheating dissolves into mere advantage. Cheating only appears with the ability to reflect, the ability to make rules on the basis of power. Cheating is risky however. It understandably makes people very angry. Cheating makes winning what playing is all about; makes winning *the purpose* of the game. But this is a narrow view. Should we posit that it is our purpose to give everyone a worthy place in society and to allow each person to pursue their good while ensuring a fair distribution of goods, then winning is the achievement of such a society, in which case all individuals have won when our whole ecology has achieved a structure and organisation that is beneficial to each of its living constituent parts. With such a wide purpose, only good behaviour can ensure winning and winning is an individual achievement rewarded by state in which each individual is given a worthy place: a fair society. The positing of such an ideal would in no way contradict evolution. And although it would require selective behaviour, in the sense that all behaviour is necessarily selective, such an ideal would immediately be corrupted if we were to fail to give a worthy place to those who cheat. This is the eternal paradox of tolerance. How far should you go in tolerating that which is destructive of tolerance? That is not a question I want to answer. It has already been answered by Karl Popper, Hannah Arendt, John Rawls, André Comte-Sponville and many others.

Evolution in nature sees success as survival. Society as it has evolved until now has erected its own aesthetic structure in the place of this success-as-survival of basic evolutionary selection; it requires us to win, it wants success-as-winning, it wants a surplus value of survival: social success. And

because social interaction works on a system of rewards and punishments as its main technique of self-correction and self-preservation, the selfish winning that can be given by cheating the system holds enormous attractions. So much so that society is groaning under the strain of corruption, fraud, and all manner of cheating. Cheating in society on the level of interpersonal relationships, on the level of institutions, once discovered, makes participants lose faith and trust, which is very hard to regain. Also it encourages imitation. When people lose trust they begin to look for simple advantage in whichever way they can get it. Such social processes can be disastrous and lead to what Robert Cooper called the failed state or indeed the postmodern state whose challenge is to cope with double standards.

There is, when power becomes possible in meaning, always a tension between ends and means. It is not a good idea to forget that means help determine the end reached. When the means are changed, the end undergoes a transformation in the sense that the nature of play changes. We could picture it by saying that the end *flattens* or is *overshot* when the means are not respected. It can be illustrated in a simple way. If a man achieves his wealth through fair means, that wealth has a fullness and an openness that allows the man of wealth to keep his person whole, as a full part of society. If a person achieves his wealth by unfair means, it could be said to represent a flat wealth, a wealth for which a part of the person has been sacrificed, a wealth for which the means have been sacrificed. It is, as a result, a lonelier wealth, in that the story of its acquisition cannot be told except though lies while its benefits can only be enjoyed at the cost of others.

Cheating changes the goalposts of the game from one where winning is a result of “good” play (skilled or lucky play within the rules) to one where winning is the result of “crypto-effective” play (skilled, lucky *and* cunning play outside of the rules in such a way that the other participants are fooled into a false sense of “good” play). Those who indulge in cheating see it as effective practice, because for them winning has a different relationship to the game than for those who prefer not to cheat. Winning with cheating is pursued for different reasons than playing within the rules. They both play the game but have a different goal or purpose in playing that game. Cheating is looked down upon by those who play fairly, and those who play fair are considered buffoons by those who cheat. People who cheat do not have the game at heart but the social gratification of being considered a winner. A game that is played well *within* the rules

shows a different set of skills than a game that is played well *outside* of its rules. Often people cry that cheating *is no fun!* That condemnation speaks loudly and deeply. However, a society pretending to fairness that does not give a place to cheats immediately renounces any claim to fairness. Society, or indeed any relationship between people, can absorb some cheating but certainly not too much; when trust is lost, institutions break down. That is the true challenge of the modern age and part of what Robert Cooper meant with the challenges of double standards. We have tried many tricks to establish good and fair government. It is why we divided the three powers of state, into the legislative, executive and judicial systems, that is why we made church and state end their all too comfortable intimacy; it is why society needs to re-examine itself constantly in order to find a response to the subversive forces in society that accumulate too much power and sadly but invariably wield it to promote what they think of as their own advantage.

game space: ground and measurements

A theory has a ground upon which and a context in which it is constructed. The game it creates forms itself against both, explicitly against the axioms of its ground but all too often implicitly against, for instance the spatial configuration of its setting: the need for the game-board or field to *have a size related to the body or a height for each player to see it comfortably*, the need for a table, chairs, a comfortable climate, an atmosphere conducive to playing etc. are all implicit aspects of a game. They are moreover not specific to the game. Games can be performed in a range of contexts. But this freedom does not free the game from its need for a context.

The ground of a theory is a founding image of accepted axioms, the paradigm to which it answers. Those axioms and that paradigm are conditional, not absolute. They are able to change and shift. Non-Euclidian Mathematics and Secularism are both examples of profound paradigm shifts. Philosophy is a game which is about uncovering the ground, which often lays well hidden in a theory and testing it, finding out one what conditions something can be said to be the case. This can be especially useful in a critique of a philosophy or theory of the built environment because we have to understand:

1. the nature of our task as planners, developers, designers, makers and maintainers or managers of the built environment, whose

concerns transcend those of individuals and even society to include our whole ecology

2. that a decision with regard to these tasks is an existential decision for which one invests one's authority in something that is allowed to make a difference
3. that any decision is an act of power with which you transform the environment and therefore our relationship to it
4. the dependency of logic on the frame of reference that provides its coordinates for the making of legitimate statements

philosophy [and] theory meet in practice

How do philosophy, theory and practice relate to each other? As soon as you have a question you start wondering, imagining an answer. The act of wondering, or questioning, turns into the act of imagining, making an image. The nature of exploration changes the *what have we here to a what if...* and the *how does it work?* to a, *how might I use that?* a, *how does it compare with this or that?* to, *I'll have that one please...*

Philosophy and theory cannot be separated from each other. A body is transformed completely when either of the two legs attached to it is removed. Questions and answers define and form themselves *against* each other. They can however be distinguished from each other on the basis of what they do. They are involved in a continual game, measuring each other against each other. Philosophy asks questions, theory gives answers, in Dutch this relationship is made clear in the word *antwoord*, which literally means anti-word or word against; answers form themselves *against* questions so that philosophy can then devise further questions and so on. Something like this used to be called a dialectic. Its tools were the thesis, (theory) antithesis (counter theory) and synthesis (theory as a product of the first two taking account of each other).

Thinking is a dirty, messy business and needs to be cleaned up and made consistent and experientially sound before it is presented to others. But when it happens in the privacy of the philosopher's mind, his brain-body, thought can be suspiciously uncontrolled, moody and subject to inexplicable inspiration. Philosophy and theory are something like Martin Buber's I-You relationship.¹⁶ There is no "I" without a "you" against which

¹⁶ See also: (1994) Robbert Veen, *Filosofie als Gesprek, Een inleiding in de systematische wijsbegeerte*, Spectrum.

to form the itself . There is no philosophy without a theory against which to formulate questions and there is no theory without philosophy to test it and explore its limits. The reason it is a good idea to distinguish philosophy and theory in this way is to keep their roles clear. Theory is answer, philosophy is question. Philosophy is the questioning of the world through analysis, which looks at the way a concept can be further broken down into its constituent parts, and critique whereby the boundaries of the concept are determined by comparison to neighbouring and contrasting concepts. Answers are always hypothetical and conditional upon the game being played and the frame of reference in which the game can make legitimate moves.

Theories construct possible worlds, or part-worlds, concepts and descriptions; philosophical questions analyse, critique and deconstruct these. In the beginning of this essay I quoted Alain Badiou's curious sentence that philosophy *thinks* theory and practice. I think that does not mean philosophy thinks *about* theory and practice and their relation to each other. I think he means it literally: philosophy is the thinking of theory and practice. It is the practice of thinking of producing and consuming theory. And it is the bodily thinking that practice involves. The relationship between philosophy theory and practice is intimate. Each occupies a corner of a triangle. Philosophy and theory are forms of practice. Practice is informed by theory and critiqued in philosophy. They simply cannot exist without each other, they produce each other. Philosophy is the practice that produces theory and destroys or transforms it in critique, this process produces practice about which theory and philosophy concern themselves. In coming into being they *take account* of each other.

a good theory

We exist before we start philosophising about our existence. Culture exists before we are born. There is already philosophy when we are born. But we have to live for some time before we manage to start thinking with anything like the necessary degree of sophistication to go beyond where history has already been. Our philosophising gains momentum as we live life and pay attention to it. This means we can dispense with the need to quibble about chickens and eggs, about beginnings and firsts: We are in the world right now and we have to make sense of it in order to deal with our being at this moment, with whatever means at our disposal. Most of us have been trying to make sense of the world we are in since our birth and have become really good at it. However, a theory's correspondence to

daily experience, or a theory which at least does not appear to contradict daily experience, may be alright for some, but that in itself is not enough for a theory to become a *good theory* to the most critical. More is needed.

Philosophy is the analysis of the given and the given is never given in the form of raw truth, or raw sensory data, whatever they are. The given, is given us in the form of experience. Experience is what is given, but always measured against memory, stories and concepts, all of which have been given a place by us in our frame of reference and been explained or at least described in some way; in short *the world is given in the form of interpreted experience and in the form of theories about things*. These interpreted experiences and theories are not necessarily consistent. Philosophy is the act of measuring a theory, of sizing it up, of subjecting it to tests. But if that is true then it means that theories have to be measured *against* something, tested *for* something, sized up in relation to something. What do we measure our theories against? We measure our theories against other theories, that is, theories that have been accepted and have become entrenched in our culture in the form of paradigms.

When measured against these, theories become compelling when they answer correctly to one or more of at least three criteria:

1. their consistency within a system of logic.
2. their consistency with bodily experience.
3. their power to explain things as yet unsatisfactorily explained thereby shifting a paradigm out of place.

Note that it is not their truth as such that is here measured, but their cogency, that is to say, their attractiveness as theories on the basis of their correspondence to something or consistency with something, or simply their power to explain something well. A good theory resolves any conflict between logical consistency and experiential correspondence. That gives a *feeling* (that is an emotive and bodily response) of clarity and allows generalisation. It is a relationship based on the recognition of, what I would provisionally like to call *a fit*. A fit is achieved when one theory can explain another, or at least when one theory does not contradict another.

The three criteria are not arranged in a *necessary* hierarchical order by the way. Correspondence is not more important than consistency or vice versa.

In this game, no single criterion can claim precedence over another. Explanatory power is the resolution of any conflict or disagreement. But as systems of logic are constructed on the basis of experience (that includes mathematics) one could say that all theories are tested against other theories which correspond to and are found consistent with experience. Even so, it suits me to differentiate three criteria and their equivalence is axiomatic and must be respected in order to maintain the cogency of a theory.

The more compelling a theory becomes, the more it starts behaving as a foundation for the building of further theories; the more it behaves as a *paradigm*. And when such a well-rehearsed and foundational theory starts to crumble it can cause real anxiety amongst people, not least because a paradigm, however fantastical its interpretation and ridiculous the use made of it, paradigms filter into every institution of society, including its economic, political and judicial systems often to maintain or undermine the extant power.

practise [AND] the practice of philosophy

Philosophy is the discipline (praxis) in which theory (*theoria*) concerning the world (with us in it) is subjected to analysis and critique for the purposes of falsifying and verifying that theory or improving upon it relative to some ground, some paradigm. This is a delicate operation because theories can become powerful instruments of social organisation. A philosophy of the built environment is a way of helping life by thinking about how to live it. It will help organise our tasks by instituting norms, values and priorities which will reconfigure with every concrete situation that is presented to us in order to stay true to the theory.

Philosophers have the privilege and luxury to explore philosophy as an end in itself and many of them have helped thereby to extend the boundaries of thought considerably. They do not escape practical usefulness as such as they help to extend the available frame of reference, so the most abstract philosophers are, paradoxically also the most useful as they are responsible for creating and furnishing the space in which practical thinking is possible. It is helpful to develop a fully *thought through* attitude to the task in hand and make the approach more sophisticated and generous. In one of my favourite books, that of Pierre Hadot about what antique philosophy is, philosophy is presented as a way of practising the questions of life in a virtual space so as to prepare oneself for real space.

Whatever the merits of philosophy for philosophy's sake, and they are considerable, practical thinkers want philosophy to help orchestrate their daily lives with greater immediacy and urgency; they need a compelling and easily *portable* philosophy to help them make well considered decisions about what they should do in certain circumstances and what they should think about certain situations. In order to make that doing and thinking effective they cannot afford to be weighed down with too much philosophy, otherwise it gets in the way of what is their true purpose. In our case this is to provide society with a built environment adequate to the concerns of the moment, which are many and large, without sacrificing an indeterminate future. Philosophising helps to arrive at a compelling theory by questioning a situation to make sure it can develop in the desirable direction. By developing the right attitude to a problem we feel we can formulate strategies for an adequate response.

So how is philosophy different to management theory? Well, it isn't all that different. Management theory toughened by good philosophy is simply good management theory. Management theory which is consistent within the game of logic it is playing and which does not contradict human experience and which addresses the concerns of man in the short as well as the long term is just simply good management theory. Having said that, management theory generally has a clear and narrowly defined goal, much of which is left implicit. Its goal is *the success* of the individual in society by ensuring the success of his concern within a specific culture, such as the business community; by extension its goal is *the success* of the company or the undertaking. Defining that success is crucial. Is it the creation of capital? Is it the creation of wealth? Is it the creation of a harmonious and happy workforce? Is it all of these at once? And if that definition of success is not called into question, is not allowed to be part of the discussion, then management theory foregoes some of its rights. It is precisely the job of philosophy, *to call things into question* and nothing is allowed to escape its reach. If a management theory concerns itself only with a narrow success of the individual within society, or the success of the company within the economic climate and if it does not also call into question its relationship with society and the paradigm of economic progress, it would ally management thinking to theology, a relationship I will come to describe below, but which essentially requires us to allow certain axioms to go unquestioned.

philosophy, theory [AND] theology

The relationship of theory to philosophy and the relationship of theory to theology I would like to characterise as follows. In philosophy the theory is subject to philosophy. In theology philosophy is subject to theory. If a theory cannot maintain itself against the critique of philosophy, it is forced to change. If a theory is found compelling it is allowed to change the requisite theories it contradicts. Theology turns the whole thing around; it departs from the truth of a single theory, explores its implications to the full and unwittingly thereby builds a web of theories around that central theory so as to further stabilize it. Bad theology will continue to extend that web of theories in order for the favourite theory to remain standing, despite all indications that it should fall. Bad philosophy, in the form of muddled thinking, will not analyse and critique a theory properly and will allow it to stand or make it fall on false premises. Is there good theology? Yes, just as there is good normal science. Once a paradigm is in place and holds itself well, it is useful to explore all the familiar coordinates of our thought in relation to its strictures. When a stable paradigm establishes itself, it is time for consolidation, which involves exploring its implications. Normal science as defined by Thomas Kuhn and Theology as defined here have a lot in common and an important role to play. The proper condition for them to work in is [IF] theory {a} [THEN] A concrete example: [IF] God wrote the bible [THEN]...the bible is the word of God, or: [IF] Copernicus was right about the sun and the earth [THEN] Ptolemy got it wrong and we need to start all over again.

design and selection

Evolution and the physics of life work in strange ways. Evolution uses selection to effect development and adaptation to new situations. It has no purpose beyond survival. If comfort helps survival, then it will select on comfort. If beauty helps survival in any which way, then it will select on beauty. If music is proven useful in any way, it will select on that. Evolution produces variations; some of those variations prove useful to whatever else makes use of the world. That fact alone might help the survival of a variation. Any instance of selection contributes to the evolution of the world. Evolution is blind. With this I mean that something that is selected is selected for use in some way. This use cannot be determined *a priori* or beforehand. Use is *found* and a thing proves itself useful. It is on that basis, the basis of something giving an advantage of being inextricably bound up with something that gives advantage that ensures survival and even proliferation. All instances of selection influence evolution, in that they

determine the world in some way, however slightly. Human endeavour has found it useful to develop an agenda which tries to take life to a stage beyond *mere survival*: we want more. We want *wealth* in whatever form we define it, we want *knowledge* to control the environment around us and arrange things to our advantage, we want *wisdom* to do that well because we all of us know that in the end we are part of the world and not separate from it. All these things are products of our evolution, even the recent realisation that the welfare of the world at large determines our welfare. We want beauty, comfort and pleasance because they are signs that things are going well, we want challenge because we get bored, after all we are machines of adventure, machines to deal flexibly with fluid and unstable situations. If everything becomes too stable we get bored and destructive. But evolution can work in wonderful and unexpected ways. In evolutionary theory the weakest are supposed to lose out. There can be no doubt about that. If you are not up to the situation, you are done for. But who are the weak? How can we define weak? The weak are certainly not those who get help from others, or those who work together. We might, for instance want to extend the range of survivors to include things and people who, under normal conditions might not have much of a chance. One nice thing about being a human being with the power to think, is that we have the power to think about what we want to select. This power has not always been used to good effect. It has even led to disasters, but that does not mean we cannot try again to fail better. Nobody ever said evolution is always and in every case *good for you* as an individual. Evolution is good for that which has the advantage in a particular situation.

Design, as a process in which selection plays an important part, is an aspect of evolution peculiarly concerned with the furtherance of human being. And human being (I am using these words now as adverb and verb instead of a noun) is partly what we make of it. We have the power of choice, that is, of selection. The extraordinary success of human being may have got in its own way, but we do not need to judge too harshly; we are still here and although there is a lot of iniquity, there is also good. Moreover the good bits are to be found in the strangest of places. We should concentrate on them, learn from them and seek to extend them through example. The world as both the product and system of evolution responds to the situations it itself creates through a proliferation of being. Situations are selective. Our ability to select on the basis of experience should not be seen as separate to evolutionary processes. They are, on the contrary, an integral part of them.

Once a human being becomes aware that he is part of the world he lives in and dependent on that world, dependent on other people around him, on the environment in which he moves about and gathers his living, the perspective on his own position shifts and influences his selective activity. This process might well end up with those people saying something like: *I do not want to be destroyed as a being just yet; I am enjoying myself too much. I understand that my arguments for self-preservation and self-development are weakened if I arrogate the right to impede the survival and development of others.* This is an interesting statement and will dramatically affect his selective activity. Furthermore it has a long history which begins for us with the emergence of game rules and law with selective thought and philosophy. It traces the history of ontological, aesthetic and ethical thought and leads to the following statement: *I believe it a good idea, from my own perspective, to gear society to a quest to ensure that everyone be given a worthy place.* That is a declaration of faith in the self-interest of generosity. What has that to do with philosophy? Well, every theory is a declaration of faith. And theories have an important role to play in philosophy. Philosophy is not a substitute for faith; it is a way to critique what you believe. It's a way to generate new theories by critiquing the old ones and finding out where they pinch.

Each person inhabiting his place and his time begins his personal development from birth, from conception even; it takes a lot of thought and practise to arrive at a conception of society where generosity forms a seamless continuity with one's self interest, even a conception as unremarkable as the one given above. There is a lot of interference in the processing of one's experience. Good ideas are in an evolutionary sense generally no more successful than bad ones. We have no more than fictions or cognitive constructions to work with, working explanations. How do we know that one fiction is better than another?

The existential adequacy of my theory is therefore unhelpfully decided by the fact that it is my deliberate choice to believe my theory is adequate. I could, in theory, think something else, but, after having thought about it at some depth, I have chosen not to. I think my theory is a good one. Indeed, if I think further still I may well stop believing what I wrote. But for now, my unremarkable theory will do fine. Of course I have tested my theory, I subject it continuously to criticism, I try to falsify it, by deliberately looking for situations where my theory might not hold. At the same time I remain sceptical with regard to anything that helps verify the theory, very much in the spirit of Karl Popper. Its resilience to criticism makes it stay up, but it is

my decision to invest the methods whereby I test and critique my theory with the authority they need to do their job.

All that is contained in the theory I am presenting here I have come by through the experience of life itself, through living it in all sorts of situations, including those I have only virtually experienced through literature, film, art, music. This is essential. The philosophy of concrete human being (adverb/verb) has to be fully immersed in that being and its experience. I have practised justification, subjected my knowledge, skills and attitude to sharpening, in conversation with others, through books and debates, in order to do so as well as I am able. At the same time my abilities in acquiring understanding are severely limited.

People who know about these things might have recognised the above as built upon the thinking prevalent in a number of philosophical movements. I have mentioned Popper. Popper fits in very well with the world-view of the pragmatist Charles Sanders Peirce, who though never giving up the search for truth knew that it was futile. The truth is inaccessible to us. The best we can do is to build simulations of reality with the means at our disposal: language and mathematics, and then look in these for patterns that help explain our world to us in such a way that the resulting theory *works*. My theory of society is pragmatist. It is concerned with workings, uses desires and structures. My theory is also existential in that I understand the phrase that existence comes before essence. I understand the claim that we, as living creatures are thrown into life and have to build our understanding of it and furthermore I understand the phrase that we are condemned to freedom. Whatever our knowledge however compelling a system of knowledge it is we as real human beings made of flesh and blood that have to invest those systems of knowledge with the authority to help us decide issues concerning us. That is an existentialist position. I claim responsibility for my choice, knowing that I could choose differently should I want to. My theory is empirical in that it does not go beyond experience in attempting to find explanations. It is phenomenological in that it attempts to explain experience through its careful description, i.e. though constructions of concepts that stay very close to the body and its relation to its environment, resting on concrete experience. Furthermore people will realize that Spinoza, Hume, Rousseau, Kant, Wittgenstein, Deleuze and Rawls play a significant role in my thinking. Taking from all these it is none of them; it is itself, an attempt to come to a refined and honest description of man's relationship to his environment that *works*.

An understanding is a personal thing. It is a situated activity. We cannot take its communicability for granted. Each one of us is a signifier; one who sees significance. Only through discourse can we attempt to approach each other with regard to the significance of a situation. The reader can read this text, but will have to do the requisite work for himself and will no doubt come out at a different place than I have in writing these it. Texts are, as Sloterdijk rightly remarked, epistles to seek friendship across space and time. But they can do no more than be there. They need to be picked up and read for the friendship to have a chance. The work of meaning is a two way process.

freedom as athletic use

Spinoza felt sceptical with regard to traditional notions of freedom as free-will. He believed you would never knowingly make a bad decision. In this sense the idea of free will is already compromised by intuitive psychology. And it would seem acceptable. Making a bad decision willingly would seem absurd and if a bad decision is, for whatever reason, out of wilfulness or sadness or revenge, considered a good decision we can quickly see that the border between good and bad becomes problematic. Bad decisions, Spinoza felt, come from having insufficient knowledge, inadequate skills and a flawed attitude with regard to a situation. This not dissimilar to Socrates' belief that evil is error. At the same time, Spinoza realised that the world in its workings, its wild and directionless concatenations of cause and effect is so complex that it is impossible to know beforehand what the right decision might be in every case. As such, a person has, he concluded, something that *looks like freedom* but which is really no more than ignorance as to the best way to proceed amidst a plethora of options to choose from. Choice is not to be confused with freedom; it is in fact a form of imprisonment: you are doomed to choice because you are not fully cognisant of the best option in any situation. This sounds very similar to Jean Paul Sartre's slogan that we are *doomed to freedom*, with which he meant that we are forced to make choices and this force does not at all feel like freedom. I do believe this gives the slogan a new perspective, and an important one. I can accept Spinoza's view as compelling and I feel that Sartre got it right here. The way relations between things in the world work is complex and every situation in which a human being is asked to perform well, that is to use well, is very confusing, there are so many factors to take into account. Slight modifications in the number and geometrical configuration of factors appear to change the significance of a situation's landscape considerably. At the same time, we know *from*

experience that it is possible to improve one's performance within a situation, just as it is possible to improve one's game of tennis. As the word freedom in its traditional sense is no longer needed, we might as well call Sartre-Spinoza's *doomed to choice out of ignorance* concept *freedom*, for lack of a better word. At the same time something curious happens when people are engaged in an activity which they feel is going well. An activity *well performed* feels free. At that moment the obstacles become means, the performer has built up a familiarity with the activity which has not yet deadened to a routine. He is *on a roll*. That is a kind of joyful freedom we should investigate. I call it *athleticism of being*

athletic being

The freedom to explore the workings of the world both radically and responsibly emerges gradually from having learnt and become well-practised in the techniques and traditions that are available to us and working on from there. It also comes from us expanding our frame of reference or by framing and focussing on a narrow field which we can with relatively safety treat as independent or autonomous. When I consider people who are, as far as I am concerned, *truly free*, I see for instance, Michael Jordan playing basketball, Johan Crujff playing football, Maxim Vengerov playing his violin, or Frank Zappa his guitar, Alvar Aalto playing his pencil and paper, Fazlur Kahn devising the construction for the John Hopkins tower, my neighbour polishing his car and my son absorbed by his Lego. Note that their freedom comes to the fore while they are absorbed with doing what they are good at and what they *enjoy* doing. That freedom might well disappear as soon as they are brought back to the world of daily concerns. I don't know, but no matter. While they are at work, they are well-practised people, who have, as far as their age, circumstances and ability allow, explored their limitations and possibilities and become *athletic* in what they like doing best. They are athletes of their being. Athleticism with regard to the ready at hand allows the freedom to explore possibilities and limitations.

a preliminary look at good things

We are concerned here with the idea of good. A good is something that, as I discussed at the beginning of this chapter, operates at the scale of entities and concrete situations. Entities such as human beings cannot help using other entities in order to preserve and develop their being. In the use of other entities concrete situations arise. The possible conflicts of interest in such situations determine the occasion of good and bad. So we can

arrive at a definition of the good. *A good judges issues with regard to a specific situation which needs to be overcome according to an attitude to the situation.* In other words, a good is a judgement. When we use the word *good* in daily conversation we in fact give the judgement while leaving the underpinning arguments and feelings that produced that judgement behind. Perhaps we occasionally use some of the factors that helped towards making that judgment in conversation but in fact most of what we use to come to a judgment has no adequate language to express itself. Sometimes this is because there is no language to express it; sometimes we simply are not able to summon the words necessary. That is why a good author is such a pleasure; he or she seems able to put into words what we feel.

There cannot be many unconditional goods. I personally know of none other than Spinoza's brilliant concept of the perfection of the world and the chance this gives me to explore and play what we might call the great virtues in their curious and sometimes paradoxical interdependence. I know of a pretty universal *good* that arises with human being and consists in the wish to avoid two kinds of specifically human evil: the acts of humiliation and rape in their widest sense which I, on the basis of experience and reason suspect to be universally held evils. I also know of some goods that apply in many situations, but even with those I can imagine situations where they do not apply.

As some situations are stable and as some situations resemble each other in some aspects, goods appear to be transferable between situations. But their transfer is conditional and not without risk. Nothing guarantees the success of a single good applied in two different situations.

a theory of generous action: a will to art

For Nietzsche human being as a product of evolution was subject to the incessant exploration of the *will to power*, which I will interpret, legitimately I think, in its most Spinozan sense, i.e. as the force whereby the physics and chemistry of being is able to explore and realise its potential for self-maintenance and development through the reconfiguration of substance in the pursuit of love and the repulsion of hate. Human being is capable of overcoming almost any limitation imposed on it and a proper conception of the value of its place within the world as a whole can address the desires that rest upon an incomplete conception of that place. Nietzsche, although he himself got a lot of things wrong, was

the great re-evaluator of all values, making us aware of the existentialist ground of our morality. He invited people to make their lives into a work of art. Art comes in all forms and sizes. Within the concerns of his time, and even within the coordinates of his inquiry into human being his way of thinking lead to a worrying egocentrism; but it did not have to; it could lead to the very opposite. Thinking through his ideas on slavery and sovereignty for example, his idea on the superman, and placing them within a non-hierarchical conception of the world, in which everything has its place, in which a good can, but should not push aside other goods, we arrive at the idea of a sovereign who realises the value in serving the whole, so that the very idea of slavery dissolves in that of the sovereign. The important thing Nietzsche brought forward is that we, as spirits able to free ourselves, find in that freedom the freedom of others. In this way we are able to change, to overcome ourselves. We are the undetermined animal. We can grow and develop in any direction of our choice, even the right one, the most generous one, the truly sovereign one. A real sovereign rejects evil, the petty, and the mean-spirited not because it might not serve him in realising some immediate goal, but because he knows it diminishes him and impoverishes the world as a whole. The planner, developer, designer, maker is in a unique position to develop these ideas of sovereignty by always fitting their plans, designs and actions within the picture of what it means to be human.

a theory of generous action

Generous action is the attempt to act by seeing yourself as an inextricable part of an unknowable whole. Generosity and selfishness are closely related, they are forms of each other. The generous rewards the self by making that self a part of a larger whole; selfishness rewards, and destroys the self in the same movement by withdrawing, setting up, not an autonomy, but an all-absorbing self. They are both forces of attraction, the generous is attractive and attracting while the selfish is merely omniphagous and grasping. Generosity make things orient themselves towards it, while selfishness, unless it can make use of a disguise, has to pull the world toward it. Selfishness in its narrow sense is in fact self-destructive as it cuts the bonds that relate someone to his world with violence. The selfish become small islands, lonely and mostly bitter as they do not fully understand their selfishness. Their mistake was that they never learnt how to wish well. Selfish people have a problem with desiring. When generosity meets selfishness it needs to be strong to survive.

Generous action is a fuller, holistic selfishness; it is self-serving by serving the whole. How does one perform a generous action? Not by simply giving. Giving has in fact nothing to do with generosity, although it is often mistakenly thought that it does. Giving is a quite separate activity that can be generous but does not have to be. No, generous action is action with reference to the interconnectedness of things, with reference to the knowledge of an unknowable whole. This is in no sense meant in a mystical sort of way; it can be taken quite literally: we are all connected with the world and everything in it, but do not always know how. That creates a margin of uncertainty which has to be bridged with a leap of faith of some sort, a kind of hope for the best. The more sophisticated the sciences become the smaller this leap of faith will become but it will never be reduced to zero. And even if it is, we will surely not want to work out every little relationship to that level of detail. Most action will remain *stochastic*, well aimed approximations. A such, generous action may be action disciplined by Rawls' axioms holding everyone's good as sacred in the pursuit of one's own, and making sure that in the distribution of goods no-one loses out. And these axioms have to be extended to the whole ecology of man. Generous action then is well practised experience and the wish to be good. Not good in the sense of *goody goody*, but good in the sense of good at your job, good at being a father or mother, good at a sport. Good as in athletic with regard to our sophisticated society and interconnected ecology.

Generous action is not afraid of system, but it makes sure it tends to system so as not to relinquish responsibility to it. A system is only as good as the love and care that goes into it to maintain it, develop it and policing it, so that it is not allowed to run away with itself into the realms of logical extremism. A system that is unloved is going to encourage subversive action, sabotage.

To arrive at a generous action one has not only to be good in the sense just arrived at, there is another requirement. It is this requirement that addresses the complexity the world assumes when we try to think of its interconnectedness, its wholeness. A technique for arriving at an adequate and relevant image of the web of factors influencing and being influenced by a decision is what Rawls calls *the veil of ignorance*. The game rules for a design conversation is that the participants picture the world exactly as they see it, as ugly and as beautiful as it can be, as unfair and as surprising as it is. They need not romanticise human being or nature. Both need to be seen as accurately as possible. This conversation does not require ideal

people. It requires people as they are, warts and all. It does not require an ideal world; it wants the world just as it is, perfect in its Spinozan sense, perfect in its heterogeneity. The participants can have a good knowledge of their job, their profession and everyone can join in but they are required to “forget” something and that is a sense of their situation. They must not know whether they are men or women, white or black, living now or in the future. The game requires them to remove their concrete situation. Generous action arrives at action by rehearsing all possible effects on any and every living element within an ecology. From that map it can arrive at a fair valuation and prioritisation. The fact is that our scientific knowledge is now slowly making such panoramic views of the causal networks possible. Generous action derives from a detailed view of this causal network. The participants of a design conversation or a planning conversation have to remove themselves from their own situation in order to prevent any decision to become biased in favour of that concrete situation.

The question of how to act in a particular situation needs to be freed from narrow situated concerns to answer it well. However, one can imagine that this is the biggest challenge any theory of generous action has to meet. Generous action must not be allowed to become paralysed in an eternal loop of indecision, weighed down by the sheer size of the frame of reference which forms the set of coordinates on which any system of logic functions. Generous action has to be decisive. Moreover its ability to respond to a situation specifically means that any generic response is almost by definition suspect. Should we want to lighten our burden by trying to write an algorithm for generous action we would have to in fact make this algorithm sceptical with regard to itself. A complete trust in system may minimise *our sense of responsibility* but does not diminish our actual responsibility. We are responsible for the systems we invest with the authority to help us with our decisions. This is not to say that simulations are unhelpful, on the contrary. Good and full simulations of the causal network are invaluable, although we only know whether they are adequate when they succeed in replicating real experience. That is a definition of understanding, the ability to replicate the working of the world. I am not sure it is a full definition of understanding but it is a start. We need to grasp experience in working simulations of it. Call it constructivist or pragmaticist; it comes down to the same thing. We make models of our world and test them on the basis of their predictive power. With human being that is difficult; with the use of space and the development of a sustainable way of life that is extremely complex.

Decisive generous action is based on a discursive struggle with the issues, embedding them in a wide context, learning and practising one's opinions athletically against experience and the possible. It is based on a self-evolving game of discourse. This struggle is not a lonely struggle, it is a societal struggle. Society has to be brought back, each time it spins away into a whirlwind of enthusiastic destruction, to desire a space, a climate if you will, where we attempt to give everyone and everything within our ecology a place and the means and the dignity to make life into something we can all be proud of when we look back on it. It is a struggle where people seek out their responsibility by opening themselves to the world in order to explore their connection to it. We have to live life while trying to make sense of it. We are not given the luxury of first having the secret of life explained to us in the womb and then, having been fully prepared before we emerge, given a shot at the thing itself. We are here now, it is a messy business and however confusing things appear, we just have to muddle on, make do and as Iris Murdoch put it, *get it right*.

This does not, however, give us the excuse to believe or do anything we like. Just because life is confusing and occasionally contradictory, we can think rigorously and usefully about our place in the world and derive good ways of doing, developing, designing, making and using from that. Our task is to seek out our responsibility in any event or situation that is presented to us and turn it to some good. But what good and whose good? That is the million dollar question. A good stands for the quality one desires and wants realised, perhaps in your design, or in your product or in your life as a work of art. Any good is conditional upon what you want to achieve, and what you want to achieve might conflict with other people's interests or indeed the interests of other animals, but it is well worth the effort to seek out and attempt to understand those conditions and think about the nature of achievement and measure both against experience.

experience [AND] belief: correspondence

Human experience ranges, along a curious continuum, from the intimately personal and everyday to the objectified experience of science and scholarship. That spectrum of experience has given us considerable scope for measurement. The pragmatist distinguishes three instruments of measuring human experience. There is the idea of logical consistency whereby we are able, within limits, to deduce things about the world. We have already touched on some of the problems involved with this. We also have to be wary, however, of experience from which we make *inductive*

judgments about the world. Like logical consistency, experience is a useful tool that has a way of leading you up a blind alley unless you subject it to proper analysis as to what you can and cannot say about it. However useful experience is, you cannot trust yourself to understand it just like that, it takes practise and even then you can get it wrong. Karl Popper for example warns us about the problem of what he calls *verificationism*, which is the noble art of find examples to fit your theory and selecting away any instance which does not fit your theory. For this he introduced the idea of falsification, whereby we have to do the opposite: When we have a theory we need to look for examples that can disprove it. In this way each theory is challenged by tough arguments instead of helped to stand when it cannot do so by itself. He accused theories like Marxism and Freudian Psychiatry of *verificationism*. Be that as it may. It does not solve the very real problem that the critical exploration of these theories also brought us a lot of good and interesting thinking.

Deduction and induction are not the only tools of thought at our disposal. There is a third tool which can get us out of as much trouble as it has got us into: our ability to imagine creatively. Abduction is the attempt to find relationships between things that have hitherto not been related or been related in a way you find unsatisfactory. Abduction seeks relationships which deduction and induction can then test against their own criteria. What more can we say about Abduction? Very little, except that it is where creativity is located and that it works by analogies, metaphors, the comparisons of processes and behaviour. But we will come to this later.

response [AND] responsibility existing= f(being+having+doing) = using

The point is that we find ourselves in this world and have to make something of it. We have only an incomplete and often inconsistent attitude towards this world and our place in it. There is lots of stuff we do not know and cannot reasonably be expected to know and we have the immense task and responsibility of not taking that as an excuse for our non-involvement in the world. At the same time we also know to what disasters our well-meaning enthusiasm can lead, especially in the field of building. I am afraid there are many who hold the building world largely responsible for the state of the world as we find it. That this is unfair does not detract from our responsibility to *get things right*. I shall argue that, although we cannot be held responsible for all our actions, we have to look for our responsibility (our ability to respond to situations) in any event or

situation presented to us. There is a good way of dealing with situations as long as we have a generous conception of that good; it is our responsibility to find that way and act accordingly.

how do I use well?

Does my existence as a human being, itself require justification without an action against which it is measured? How would you want to justify it? It cannot be justified, but neither can the opposite. We simply exist.

Existence is a given, which needs no justification. On the other hand our engagement and doing in the world does, every time. If I want something, then that fact alone is enough to affect others, so I have to justify my wanting it and my means of getting or achieving that what I want. I may not have to make that justification explicit to others; I may not need to justify myself to others but I have to justify things to myself, always. I want answers to questions so that I know how I should act and desire in the world. Absurdity is that which cannot be justified. In this way our existence might be taken as absurd and it has certainly been taken in that way by many people. But as I said, our existence by itself is not really a problem we need to be concerned with. It is in itself neither good nor bad. It becomes so when we engage in the world through action. It is then our behaviour in the world which is at issue. That means that we can leave existence for what it is. Every life that exists should be allowed to continue in its existence unless we take responsibility for ending it to further some use. That begs the question: What use can we possibly have to justify ending a life or using that life for our own purpose? I am not going to come up with a solution to this question here. But this is the central question of any philosophy, the question every philosophy should in the end come back to, however far its detours in abstraction: Can we justify our use? The question for theory is to establish a satisfactory answer to the question: *How do we arrive at good use?* That is, or should be, the central question of our philosophical activity. And the absurd is a good test. The absurd is the test of a game rule where law and experience (fail to) coincide. Once uncovered, we can always decide that a small amount of absurd behaviour is allowable and worth the inconvenience. Safety on the roads is a good example where we are willing to tolerate a measure of absurd behaviour. But at least it shows itself as a weak spot which can then be looked at when technology becomes available with which to iron out the problem or when the priority becomes pressing enough to alter the rules. So the absurd gives us direction in our thinking. Where we can uncover it, it allows us a forward movement.

world [AND] body: me and my philosophy

The world is, we may be quite sure, much richer than any one person's rather poor ability to see it. We humans have only five senses connected to a body with very definite biological needs and desires and a way of seeing everything in terms of those needs and desires. If our experience of the world is confined by that mechanism it will be richer than all our ways of looking added together, because we are human beings and not the world as a whole. We are limited by our bodies, our relative size, the nature and working of our senses, our scale of observation and the prosthetic aids we are able to devise to overcome our limits. We can describe and analyse behaviour but there is no doubt a whole wealth of reality which is simply inaccessible to us. And even if there wasn't, we would never be able to confirm our conviction about this either way. If I discipline myself to take account only what I can legitimately say about my body and its relationship to the environment, I can arrive at a useful way of being in the world that will give me a satisfactory sense of duty, a carefully balanced view of means and ends and the realistic hope that I can look back over my life, when arriving at the end of it, to say: "well, that was fun, I wouldn't mind doing that again." What more do you want? All I have is my body and the environment it is in. If I understand that relationship well, I will know how to live well.

Pragma is the Greek word for action, or deed. The question: "How should we act?" is for me the most important question. But I feel that the question: "How should I act?" is a question that comes at the end. After having fixed the importance of acceptance and the criteria for acceptance, which is a metaphysical aspect of my philosophy, I feel I need to ask: what should I desire? What should I wish for? What do I desire now? Why do I desire that? Is it possible to change what I desire? How does one learn to desire well? What should one take into account? How do desires become selfish and egoistical? Why is egoism not good for the ego? Does the overcoming of old desires and their replacement with new ones help me in some way? What is the activity of desiring? And if desiring is an activity that brings qualities into focus between me and the object of my desire, then where do those qualities reside?

My central concern in life is to live well and die well. For this I need the freedom to pursue my own good and because I cannot see myself as an exception, I need to give every living thing this right. I need to act well and think well and build up a theory of the world that is compelling and can

sustain the constant onslaught of philosophical wondering. But there are quite a few things I do not need, whether they exist or do not. I do not, it appears, need a clear concept of God or the afterlife. A good understanding of the way nature works is more than sufficient. I believe I can ground a generous conception of my place in the world as being part of a greater whole without the concept of God or the afterlife. After all my concern is not the after-life, which is inaccessible to me. If, having lived well and died well it comes as a surprise reward, then that is good. Strangely enough this is really no different to any conception of a good life held by any major religion. A good life, with them, leads to the afterlife. So all of us have to live the good life now. The advantage I have is that I do not feel I need to be scared or seduced into behaving well. I want to reason myself into behaving well. For me society is not a bastion of power for the powerful, it is the inevitable result of people living together in the world. So we can decide what society should be and I have decided it should be a structure to give everyone a place with which they can build a life of dignity, pursuing their sense of good. That is my choice, my existential leap. I could have decided something else. But I didn't. To this end I shall work. I can exist well within the confines of that which is accessible to me. Things become annoying when, as has too often happened in history, some idiot chooses to point a gun at someone's children and wants them in exchange for the life of that child to say that they believe in their God, how absurd.

When I have a clear image of what I desire and to what end I desire it and what desiring means and when I have a clear idea as to my need for that which I desire and to what use I shall put it, can I ask myself the ultimate question which is: *"How should I act to realize my desire?"* I feel the need to confine myself very strictly to that for which I can find compelling answers, answers that can be measured carefully against experience, a loose term which to me covers as I have mentioned earlier 1. My own experience of daily life, 2 compelling scientific research done on the basis of scientific protocols, and 3 the consistency of legitimate moves within a well-designed game of logic with a frame of reference set by science, art and philosophy. I do not want to be forced to make leaps of faith into the absurd. My faith has to go step by step and feel happy as to where it can and cannot go within the rules of my game. I want to believe something that conforms to experience, that can be useful to me in some way, I cannot simply believe anything.

So, to sum up, philosophy is a discipline that asks three questions not unlike those of Immanuel Kant.

1. What conditions are necessary for something to be the case?
2. What should I desire? And how do I desire well?
3. How should I act to achieve my desire?

In my world those questions divide themselves into the three main branches of philosophy, namely metaphysics, aesthetics and ethics.

But we are not quite there yet. There remains a question to be answered. My philosophising cannot conveniently bracket life and set it aside *for the moment*. I am in the midst of the bustle of life; my philosophising is part of that life and dependent on what I have learnt and experienced and thought. My philosophy is a philosophy which I use as an attitude, I use it to rehearse, prepare and practise appropriate behaviour and I use it to think through what I want, wish for or desire. And as I am in the midst of life, I have a lot to learn so that my philosophising could not possibly be allowed to become a static constellation of opinions. It will have to be able to cope with new insights and further developments in science, philosophy and my personal experience of the world. My philosophising will depend on my slowly metamorphosing background, my changing bodily limitations and possibilities, and my increasingly practised way of describing the experience of the world. My philosophy cannot help being mine alone. I have to react to my situation, and need to decide things on the basis of my body's interaction with the world. That does not mean I cannot learn from others. The experience of others is extremely useful to me. We may all be the same, but we cannot know that; it is certain that we all are in a different situation with a different configuration of characteristics, making each of us unique in that sense. That means we have to define our own world and build our own laws, which can improve through critical discourse with others. You, my reader, have a different background, are in a different period of your life, have slightly different vocabulary at your disposal, give words slightly different meanings based on your experience of the world. And when I interpret somebody else's thought, I am pretty sure that that person would quickly distance himself from my interpretation of their thinking, would at the very least qualify what I said, would have some response. He would no doubt find my interpretation foreign to him. That happened with Charles Sanders Peirce, who felt that even so gentle and perspicacious a thinker as William James, had made something of his pragmatism that was alien to his own version of it. On the basis of this he decided to change its name to Pragmatism, a name I have

now adopted, knowing he can no longer object. On the same level there is Heidegger's philosophy, for which I have immense respect. It becomes mine in my interpretation of it. It would be arrogant of me to pretend that my reading of Heidegger is his or even "correct". Philosophy may have long admired mathematics as a discipline of exactness, and the admiration is justified, but the business of words is full of ambiguity and personal bias, just as it would be futile for Heidegger to claim that my reading is "incorrect." It can only be called "incorrect" if and only if my interpretation pretends to be his, but it doesn't, it is mine, he must be allowed to speak for himself as we must assume that he took great care with trying to put his often original thoughts into language, which, when you are thinking original thoughts is difficult to do as those thoughts do not have a ready tradition to fall back on. Original thinking has to make do with existing language. That makes things difficult. If my interpretation of his thought is bad, then so be it, it will be ignored, but if it is at all compelling it will stand alone and be done with as others do with the thoughts they read: make them their own. I am not for a philosophical academism. Rules and systems of interpretation are subject to subversion, they remove the possibility for a thinker to seek out his own responsibility for his thinking. That, I believe, is a bad thing. If we relinquish our responsibility we make the world go silent, we drive creativity as well as our independence as free agents underground. I suggest we do not go there. Let's impose exacting rules only where they help and let us not create a world of illusory scientism. We must not, certainly not when discussing a philosophy of practice, of planning, development, design and making, relinquish our responsibility for our own thinking. Let's use rules that have a precisely circumscribed power: my struggle with thought needs to be personal, open to discourse and critique, but mine. I must take responsibility for it and respond to my critics. I must make my thinking withstand the assault of logic, the assault of experience and I must make it able to explain compellingly. I must use it in discussions with others and listen well to what others say. But it remains *my* thinking with reference to my body, in my world, my situation and my configuration of characteristics. That is the challenge when having to plan or design for someone else and the struggle, performed with due care and generosity will lead to considered action. It may still be disastrously destructive, but we will no doubt muddle on and improve. All I can do is learn from my involvement with the world, from others by opening myself to their ideas and arguments and I must pay careful attention to their way of arguing, the meaning they put into their words and I must make their thinking mine by attempting to understand that thinking as fully as possible, but it has to be made mine. This does not

mean I do not acknowledge their inspiration; on the contrary, they are my true masters. I approach their thinking by wrestling with it personally and in discourse with others, but I make up my mind about it and take responsibility for what I find and think. My thinking cannot be theirs. But does all this mean that philosophy is solipsist? Does it mean that philosophy is incommunicable? No, it doesn't. Philosophy is communicable, but in communication, where we compare notes, we cannot iron out all the small shifts in emphasis and meaning that make misunderstanding so common. Discussion and practise allow us to approach each other, but in the end, I shall have to take responsibility for my philosophy and you will have to take charge of your own, taking from, and interpreting others in order to make your own work of art called a philosophy. This puts the onus on the philosopher to practise and become athletic in his thinking. Sloppy thinking is like sloppy manners, sloppy behaviour: unattractive and inconsiderate of others, for it means your actions cannot avoid egoism and egoism is not selfishness by itself, it is badly informed selfishness, it is self-destructive and self-defeating selfishness: it destroys the very thing it tries to protect.

So I offer these essays not as the right way of thinking about things, but more like a magnetic north. You yourself can, with its help establish your own true north and then go south if you like. My interpretation is my work of art.

Part III: The question of metaphysics, ontology: how we can speak usefully about the world and its behaviour

truth, trust, the real and its behaviour

The *metaphysics* of Aristotle was not meant to bear that name. It was certainly not a name Aristotle used. The story goes that an editor in the 1st century AD was wondering what to do with a small collection of Aristotle's writings that did not clearly fit anywhere else in his oeuvre. After deliberation he apparently felt they would be best placed *after* the physics. With that innocent action he inadvertently labelled a discipline that has had an interesting ride. Never have I come across a word with a more chaotic set of meanings. I am going to keep to a pragmatic definition of Metaphysics, which, at a stretch, might include most of the others. For Peirce *metaphysics is the discipline which is concerned with describing the landscape of the world's intelligibility*.

In order to define desirable or undesirable qualities, the responsibility of aesthetics and in order to describe good and bad ways of achieving those qualities, which is the concern of ethics, metaphysics, the third great leg of philosophy, may be defined as *the discipline which explores the conditions upon which the first two disciplines can operate. It describes the landscape of experience and makes it communicable; it sorts out that which is compelling enough to be believed from that which is flawed, so as to form a basis for desire and action*.

The study of language thus fits within the discipline of metaphysics, as language is that which mediates between aesthetics and ethics. And language to be compelling and useful, must prove itself against experience.

the question of truth

A second word, both an obstacle to, as well as an instrument of, metaphysics, is truth. What is truth? Is truth a correspondence between our statements about the world and the world itself? That option appears attractive. But what is the nature of that correspondence and how do we get to know the world? Immanuel Kant had quite explicitly said that the world can only be known through the structure of our thinking body. (I am trying to avoid the word mind here) He said that *das Ding an sich*, the thing

itself, cannot be known, can only be *approached* or *approximated* through studying our experience of its behaviour.

We want to have access to something we like to call *the real world out there*, but can only get access to its observable behaviour. The history of *das Ding an sich* has become as contentious and tortuous as the history of the word metaphysics and the word truth. For the purposes of this text I am going to keep things simple by adhering closely to what Kant says about this. *Das Ding an sich* is, as far as I am concerned, simply the world out there doing whatever it does, its job. It is accessible to us through our sensing body and met with our ever developing experience of its behaviour. As soon as it is enveloped in our bodily system of sense, experience, feeling and thought it is experienced selectively. The world is only accessible to us through our bodily network of senses, memory and ability to feel and think. It is accessible to us in *the tectonics of behaviour*. What we see of the world out there is therefore always *mediated* by the structures of our ways of experiencing things. Even science has access only to the world out there through the observation of its behaviour, observation through the mediation of complicated apparatus, but in the end it can only see how things behave in light, in space, in time and in relation to other things.

So what is truth? Well contrary to fashion, I believe that Peirce had it right. As Richard Rorty says, the pragmaticists will be there standing at the end of the road applauding the latecomers: Truth is not a question you can expect a full account of. It exists undoubtedly. There is something called truth, even if it turns out to be no more than a concept, an abstraction of something more interesting. But it can only be approximated, never owned in any full sense. The reason for this is simple. We are people with five senses and a body of limited capacity. There is a possibility that there is more to the world than we are able to pick up through our sensitive body. It might not be the case, but the possibility is there. So even if we are staring the truth in the face, we would simply not be sure that it is what it says it is. So instead of worrying our heads about truth let us instead try to get as close as possible to it by developing models of it that at least have the charm of working well. We need to work with a more provisional model of cogency, a model that says that statements may or may not correspond to a reality out there. We shall never fully know whether they do or do not. The best we can do is to formulate theories (fictions) that work when measured against the best scientific research, the most compelling descriptions of phenomena and experience.

Through critical thinking we are encouraged to build up our experience of the world and we can allow theories that work against the most compelling paradigm. And if it doesn't work, either the paradigm or the theory must give way under the pressure...

As such, truth is, to all practical purposes (and that is all I am looking for) indeed not much more than a correspondence to experience. A statement that is true is an empirical judgment that bears fruit by proving itself useful in modelling our experience of the behaviour of the world around us. In this way it can help us prepare strategies of action. I leave the other kind of truth to theologians. They know what to do with it. I don't.

Now, does this mean that several contradicting things can be true at the same time? Well no. But several things can be true that *appear to contradict each other*. Perhaps we should forget about the word truth, it is too confusing. Instead we should be talking in terms of accepted theory or working thesis. For someone with an unpractised and meagre experience of things, a compelling story can be provided by some very weird theories indeed. And he will label them as true. Someone with a more critically practised and extended experience of the world will generally not find such theories compelling and will see them as false. But that does not necessarily mean that the person with a small experience of things is thereby forced to give up his theories. He can, and should be free to persist in his way of looking at the world, should he want to. Nor is it necessarily the case that his more naive theories are worse than those of a more sophisticated view in terms of their consequences. A little knowledge, as we know from experience, can have disastrous consequences.

the question of being [OR] ontology, the body [AND] the environment

Ontology asks three questions:

- What presents itself to me?
- How does it do that and what is my role?
- What could it represent or mean?

Logic and ontology are the two legs of metaphysics with which we explore how we can speak usefully about the world. This section concerns ontology and the next is a slightly devious approach to logic.

Science, art and belief together form the acoustic chamber in which we shout in the dark and listen to what happens. The echo thus produced is what makes ontology possible when it is listened to by the likes of Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau Ponty, Hubert Dreyfus and Hermann Schmitz. This essay is not an attempt to summarize or introduce their thinking. There are enough great introductions that can do a far better job. Instead I want to think through the problem of ontology from the point of view of a philosophy of the built environment. Those in the know will see that what I have to say is heavily indebted to Heidegger, Merleau Ponty, the Pragmaticists and Deleuze.

There are many ontological positions: realism, naturalism, idealism, transcendental idealism, social constructivism, radical constructivism, materialism, scepticism, monism you name it. But you won't find them being explained here. As abstractions of theoretical positions and styles of thinking they have a way of leading a life of their own and unless you become a professional philosopher, in which case it is part of your responsibilities to learn about these *styles of philosophy*, you may not feel at home in their war of words about words.

The planner, developer, designer and maker of the built environment has to tidy up his thinking for his own purposes and that involves trying to look for things to say about these activities which are grounded in a way that is useful for them. That does not free us from the need for an ontological position. An ontological position declares an understanding of the world, a construction of knowledge, hopes and expectations on the basis of which we can make a *decision* to act.

That decision we can call *existential* in the sense that we make it with the help of our knowledge of the world, but because that knowledge is *our* knowledge, it is *our knowledge* (which may be completely wrong and mad) that legislates in our practical reasoning. Therefore we are responsible for our body of knowledge and we have to take that body of knowledge seriously and maintain and develop it lovingly as we *make our world mean something to us*. That is the position that most existentialists share from Dostoyevsky, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, to Heidegger, Camus and Sartre.

the trust set [AND] the universal set of the possible

If my understanding of the world is my responsibility, then what can I say in order to ground my ontological position adequately without getting

involved in a war of attrition concerning words? I think I could make the following set of rules:

I will trust things said about the world and my place in it that are accessible to any and all of us. Any attempt to pass things onto me as knowledge which is only accessible to special people, people with gifts that are not accessible to me I shall not trust. On that basis I will give my trust to things passed on to me through

- The proper study of our own bodily experience of the world
- critical observation of the environment and its relation to us
- the properly conducted experience of science

Furthermore all of the above has to be found consistent with each other when subjected to critical discourse

We will later qualify this by saying that we can also accept judgments properly arrived at through use of the veil of ignorance and reflective equilibrium but they can be left out of the argument here.

This ontological position puts me in the camp of the so-called *radical empiricists* with the Pragmaticists and Gilles Deleuze. Radical empiricism, says William James in his essay *The Meaning of Truth*, holds the position that "the only things that shall be debatable among philosophers shall be things definable in terms drawn from experience". Our view of the world does not need "extraneous trans-empirical connective support, but possesses in its own right a concatenated or continuous structure."

That phrase *continuous structure* will start playing an important role, but for now we shall concentrate on the idea that everything that can be said when measured against these game rules may belong to a set defined by the boundary: "trust". Everything else falling outside of that set, falls into the universal set of the "possible". This set includes:

- Anything that is not accessible through the above channels
- Any law or theory that imposes itself claiming its ground from beyond experience, such as God or any Categorical Imperative, any theorem of mathematics whose axioms are established on grounds beyond experience
- Anything explored by art and science which has not been tested empirically

- Any metaphysical theories, such as the pantheism of Spinoza or realism, naturalism, idealism or even string theory, which though extremely compelling and more than likely to be more or less accurate, attempt to say things about the world which simply cannot (yet) be grounded in experience.
- Any observations which require special gifts or faculties that lay outside of our normal abilities to deal with the world as human beings. This subset includes prophetic powers, clairvoyance etc. This is not to deny their possible existence, but merely to bracket them as not accessible to *any and all of us* and therefore to keep them firmly within the realm of the possible but not trusted.

We do not dismiss any of these theories and claims; they have a very important place in our personal lives and in that of society as a whole, but only *as perspectives on the possible*. They may well be *given* trust by some of us, and as long as this does not contradict the principles of freedom and fairness that we have already hinted at in the introductory essay, there is no problem. I shall come back to this. The possible may also play a big role in design thinking as sources of inspiration, as images and metaphors. Nevertheless we treat the possible with some care, by bracketing it and never allowing it, or any conclusions based on the possible to pass the line from the hypothetically possible into the trusted. The only time when the possible passes into the set of the fully trusted or vice versa is when a status change occurs on the basis of a (scientific) discovery and becomes able to answer the four criteria of accepted knowledge listed above. Similarly, if experience is explained in such a way that things heretofore belonging to the accepted come suddenly to fall outside of that boundary, they take up their place in the set of the possible. They remain perspectives on possibility, but no more. Some of them achieve the status of paradigm and direct our ways of interpreting experience, and serve a hugely influential role but that does not mean they are allowed on the other side of the line. In this way we *discipline* our understanding of the world. Allowing the possible into the set of trusted all too quickly allows a philosophy of the built environment to spin off into infinity subscribing to the weirdest positions, most of which are perfectly harmless, but some of which can become horrific, humiliating and debasing to others. Madness is perfectly acceptable as long as it does not become humiliating, rapacious and cruel.

As such it is all the more important to maintain this separation of the trusted from the possible for the management of the built environment as

a controlling medium, as a medium of real power with which social space can be manipulated and governed. This is why, like with advertising, a lot of architecture, such as the subtle architecture of commercial exploitation, should be subject to game rules of what is acceptable and fair and what goes beyond the pale. Similarly, one can use the division between the trusted and the possible in the allocation of priorities with regard to whom and what gets our attention and to what end. I would (and will) argue that it is the redressing of imbalances that should be at the forefront of political and indeed all thought about the built environment, (politics is a type of design thinking) in which case the health of our environment, our economy, our legislative culture and our marginalised members of society nearly always constitute our highest priorities.

It is important in a world where all conceptual ground is subject to tectonic shifting, to have a clear image of what it is you want and what means are acceptable and effective in achieving that aim (the business of aesthetics and ethics) You do not get that from an ontological position as such; you get that from projecting your ontological position (knowledge as your understanding) into a conditional position (practical reason) which leads to action: [IF] we want a fair society [THEN] we shall need to.....

- Define what fairness is
- Learn to plan, develop and design for fairness
- Be fair in our planning, developing and designing
- Which means that a, b and c are acceptable strategies, but d and e are not....

That practical deliberation can lead to the emotional weight needed to cut discourse existentially in order to arrive at action.

evolution and madness

Anything can measure itself against the possible. If the possible is allowed into the trusted camp it causes madness. A good example of the madness it causes, that we must cherish as an example as it cost a lot of people their lives, is the extraordinary madness that followed from a badly understood and politically expedient Social Darwinism, or the madness that resulted from taking a man who claims to have special knowledge of God's will too seriously when what he says is cruel and humiliating to others. Society thus spins out of orbit, becoming a prison and a chamber of horrors instead of a

stable community with the purpose of giving people a place to live their lives and pursue their good without recourse to hate and humiliation. The point is that such madness had a built environment, much of which was designed for the purpose. Auschwitz was in part *designed* by a Bauhaus architect!

Darwinism (not Social Darwinism) has, through scientific verification, now more or less changed place with Christianity: it has become the paradigm of a trusted belief backed up by evidence; while the Judaic-Christian-Islamic world-view has shifted from trusted to merely possible, at least within the world of science and scholarship. That does not prevent serious scientists and scholars believing what they like, but it does direct the way they give that belief a place in their professional lives.

Most of us now understand how evolution works, we understand its conditionality and its situational perspective on success, and we have seen the absurdity of using evolution as a tool for political and ideological power. Evolution has, ironically in a way very similar to the ethics of Jesus Christ, become the strongest argument of all for society to be defined as *a place to give people a place*; for survival itself to be seen as evolutionary success so that attitudes to those of us challenged in some way can overcome the threats to their survival through help and creating a world where they too can be successful. The idea of the survival of the fittest means only that those who have survived are fit, however they managed it. If their environment is conducive to their survival, they are fit. To call handicapped people dependent is to beg the question regarding our own supposed independence. Could we survive without each other? Could we survive without the symbiotic creatures busily at work in our bodies? In other words, being fit demonstrates itself only *a posteriori* and has remarkably little to do with autarchy in the sense of rigid and violent independence. A handicapped person who is helped in his survival through technology and the care of others is as fit for survival as any other surviving member of our race. Nietzsche was one of the first to understand that within the model of evolution anything can be overcome, precisely because evolution is what it is. The German generals of the First and Second World War, among many others, had not quite got that bit. They read Nietzsche, but he is easily misunderstood, it has to be said. They mixed their Spenserian theories with a Hegelian march to a naively conceived absolute superiority; it proved a fatal mixture.

In design such madness also occurs, not only when we create controlled spaces and social filters but also more innocently, when concepts chosen as qualitative judgments, such as honesty, character, identity, authenticity and so forth, are not thoroughly thought through against the ground in which they operate as concepts. It even happens when one of the three criteria of judging good buildings: use, stability and desirability, achieves a wilful primacy over the others, ignoring the fact that each needs to be tested against the others because each is grounded in the other: We desire usefulness; to have useful buildings they have to have an appropriate measure of stability; stable desires have been thoroughly tested for their usefulness.

And that the problem is still alive and well is illustrated by a poster I came across as this text went to print. It advertised a symposium about the thesis that all development should privilege the end user, i.e. the person in the building. I had hoped we were further than this and had learned to consider all users important.

We have made a world where truth plays its proper role as one side of a binary operation to test statements and their correspondence to their relevant criteria of judgment, as a method of affirming correspondence or non-correspondence: [IF] A [THEN] B = {TRUE} [OR] {FALSE} . Truth is no longer allowed out beyond the operative sphere of logic, where it is only allowed to decide on correspondence to the criteria set for any problem.

Trust or acceptance has taken over the role of truth. We either trust something to be the case, we either accept a theory or we do not. And some of the things we trust, we trust fully and others we look on with kindness, knowing we might be burning our fingers. But there comes a moment when that trust transforms into no more than a compelling possibility, one which does not deserve our trust but can only be afforded our hope. As such a possibility needs to be kept as a beacon in our world so as to be able to orient ourselves with reference to the hope it may give, but we cannot and must not trust it blindly. The outer reaches of the universal set of the possible are occupied by theories which have not been considered yet as well as very unlikely theories trusted by the unpractised, the unathletic, the mad, the lazy and, possibly, the genius out on a limb who will one day show the world how wrong we were...

The working of this world of trust, hope and possibility is analogous to our solar system, whereby the compulsion of a theory, belief or opinion

increases and swells into trust with the gravity that increases as the weight of assembled critical opinion gathers around a specific point of discussion without ever achieving the status of an absolute truth. This trust is not always accorded to things along the rules set out above. There are many people who arrive at trust along different game rules. Large populations in this world trust in things that I would have fall well outside the set of the trusted. Their rules for trusting things are different to mine, but as long as that fact does not lead to hate and humiliation, to rapacious abuse and horribleness, that is not a problem to me. And when it becomes a problem, we should not make the mistake of descending into hate and humiliation ourselves to redress that balance, that was the important lesson of Christ, one of the greatest thinkers ever.

The trust that the above rules of radical empiricism allows, is the only release from scepticism that is available to us and (by a very thin margin) it avoids the trap of a radical constructivism as it allows the world and the body to meet in the middle, in trust. I can go beyond experience if I dare. The daring is romantic and adventurous and quite acceptable socially if you are sure you are pursuing only your own good and not affecting the good of others adversely. If you are, then you need to decide how you feel about that. Acting on trusted understanding is safe as it is backed by experience.

If a theory becomes lonely in the outer reaches of the universal set of the possible, that is no reason to reject it *per sé*; it is merely a reason to put our trust in properly conducted science and critical thought and in our ability to observe ourselves carefully, knowing the dangers of distortion, of anamorphosis, or the problems of scale and the dynamism of time.

speaking as an I = {a body of relations}

Language is a system for communicating about the world that takes for granted our size and our bodily configuration and the body's relationship to its environment. We have to realize this and pause at words which appear so self-evident in their meaning and stop to think again, trying to puzzle out what that word means if that which we take for granted is no longer so self-evident.

I am at this moment typing this essay on a small laptop in the train between Eindhoven and Delft. That is where I like to work on such things. The train gives me a spatial setting conducive to thinking without the prospect of being disturbed for a while.

There are all sorts of assumptions in the previous three sentences that start behaving strangely when you stop and pause a while at their meaning. For example, there is an *I* doing something called typing, which is an activity involving this *I*'s body and a laptop computer in a situation governed by space and time.

Who or what is this *I*? Well this *I* is talking, through the medium of the written word to a *you*, the reader, whom this *I* probably does not know personally. Have you noticed that every *I* directs itself to a *you*? If the *I* doesn't turn to a *you*, what remains of it? What does it become then? Well, when I think to myself, I create a virtual *you*, it would seem. I start talking to myself: my *self* becomes the *you* I am talking to. When I dream, I appear to see myself even as a *he* undergoing all sorts of adventures, some of which are pleasant others are very frightening indeed. So the first, second and third person singular all engage me at one time or another. I believe that other people have a similar experience, which is gratifying as I would otherwise have to conclude that I am mad. Of all these persons singular and plural, the most important is the *first person singular* addressing itself to a *you*, you the reader, or you, my alter ego, or the person against whom I measure my actions. I imagine other people's reactions to my actions. My *I* appears in very real ways to shape itself in its relationship to others in the real (actual) or virtual surroundings. (For me, typing here now, the *you* I am addressing is virtual. When you read this, you have become real and I, the author have become virtual) I use the word real as *here and now, tangible and present* and I use the word virtual as *not actual*. The virtual is a type of here and now but then in the form of a representation; it has the power to become actual and real, but either isn't yet or has been.

Another thing we can say by simply observing ourselves carefully is that *I* is non-locatable. That is to say you cannot pinpoint its existence. A body has organs, which, when you remove enough of them, would seem to disqualify an *I* from any form of existence as a first person singular in real space-time: it dies. So the *I* is intimately related to the body and dependent on the body for its existence. But the body is equally dependent on the existence of the *I*. The *I* appears always to form the relationship between things rather than being something itself. In other words the *I* is a body without organs dependent on the body with organs and that body's environment for its launch into life. The *I* is the coordinator of relationships. We might also describe it as a body of relations, which is not all that different from Heidegger's *Dasein*, the being-there. After all a there implies a here, that is a set of relations. The *I* determines and

undergoes the way my body behaves in the world it is in, its environment. While I am typing this essay, I feel the slight discomfort in the tips of my fingers because my train journey is long and my enthusiasm in typing great and I have been doing too much of it. Similarly my eyes are sore and tired. My body feels parts of itself and thereby constitutes my *me* in feeling things and this *me* takes a stand on those issues, just as it takes a stand on the *you* I am addressing. In fact the other words are similarly baffling. In fact the very action of typing implies virtually the whole world as it is before you can start making sense of it. You can test that by trying to explain to a being not subject to gravity and whose body is trained to receive light-waves as sound what typing is.

the portraiture of being

If you are not completely confused by now, it must be clear that we appear, with our way of speaking about the world, to be constantly making, or rather alluding to relations between things. And these so-called *things* or *objects* have a curious position. A thing is always a part of something, it is always a part of the whole, whatever that is, and yet when we talk about *things* or *objects* we talk about them as separate *entities*. Moreover we feel quite happy about doing so, it is useful to us. In this way we can count things and add things and define relations between things and so forth. Furthermore, our speaking about things makes those things stand out against their surroundings when we give them our attention. There are loads of things that are not being given our attention. And they tend to form the surroundings of what we do give our attention. What happens to these things that merge into *the surroundings* when we give our attention to that which appears in their midst?

Our body takes up a privileged position in space and time. It forms the centre of our world, a centre that is taken up by a non locatable *me*, (a body without organs whose job it is to take a stand upon things relating the body to its environment) That body has a *me* who takes up a central position because it makes sure it is concerned with the way the body takes up a position in the world. That much our way of speaking about the world and our way of being in the world can be induced from observation. It means among other things that when we affect to speak about the world we are in fact negotiating between our bodies and the world. When we speak about the world we are really speaking about our relationship with it and building that relationship as we speak. Our speaking *forms* that relationship.

Speaking is an activity like any other. Any movement can be called an action when it negotiates between our body and the environment. And that negotiation takes part in the movement that is my continuously transforming relationship with the environment. Any snapshot of that relationship or any general qualification or assessment of the dynamics of that relationship is an abstraction. There is no exception to this rule. Speaking and thinking thus produces abstractions of our relationship with our environment, representations in which that relationship is being qualified and embodied in the form of conscious thought. At the same time that speaking or thinking *as an activity* itself transforms that relationship.

Thinking requires stuff to be exchanged. It requires flows of something or other; it requires a *situation*, like my train which allows me to concentrate and the time to dance my fingers over the keyboard while I ruminate. The body and its environment are as it were a core and a universe, whereby the core is of the universe and the universe experienced by the core is peculiar to it, owned by it.

My body is the centre of my universe and I have learnt to see that there are other centres of the universe, among them you my reader, making the universe an interesting place. There is no paradox there, merely a lag. It means that when we speak about our relationship with the environments we need to take into account the effect that speaking has on that relationship.

So, we can propose that:

{Any action} [IS] {a negotiation} between {the body} [AND] {its environment}.

That is an extraordinary statement if you think about it. So the subtlest inner working of a logician's mind, with its neuron activity and slight posturing, we can call *an action*, as it is a negotiation between his body and its environment. The environment in his case is partly constituted by the problem he is concerned with. And his relationship with that problem will transform as he ruminates, it will become clearer, it will be affirmed or it will end in disappointment, or whatever. It will change.

a-body-in-its-environment

The point of talking in terms of a-body-in-its-environment is that the borderline between the two is so difficult to establish without reverting to

rough and ham-fisted abstractions and violent game rules. We can say that the body has its borderline at the skin, but anyone looking through a microscope knows that that is a very rough and violent way of defining the body. We can say that a body has an interior, but we know that that is an abstraction better captured by talking of the body as an endlessly folded set of diaphragms hemmed with seams and stretched into taut tendons and sinews, which, on a microscopic level, dissolves the distinction between inside and outside. And if you look at the body from that angle, the whole notion of interiority becomes questionable. Insides only exist at a particular scale of observation; they are useful abstractions, with a real existence only on the level of our scale of observation and the experience that goes with that scale.

If every action is a negotiation between the body and its environment through the *I*, then what does this mean?

Well it means first and foremost that action is what we *are able to* study. We can study the tectonics of behaviour and behaviour is the way things behave in their environment. The interesting thing, and Kant recognised this, is that it is our understanding that then legislates in practical reason and that practical reason, although fed with knowledge of the way things behave, in fact affects the thing in itself that is inaccessible to us. Action affects the thing itself, even though we can only see *how it behaves*, that is, how it behaves in light, how it behaves with sound, relative to us, with our sense of touch, smell and taste, how it behaves in its surroundings when part of the network of causality. This brings us back to the problem of the real. The real is a word we usually reserve for things that have a peculiar mode of revealing their being to us. The real is what we use to denote that which behaves visibly, tangibly. The real is what is brought into presence through activity.

Real comes from the Latin word *realis* meaning "actual," which in turn comes from *res* meaning "matter, thing," The *real* is thus a word that says: *this thing is actual*. The realized is *that which is actualized*. Actual L.L. actualis "active," adj. form actus "a doing" and actum "a thing done," both from agere "to do, set in motion, drive, urge, chase, stir up," These have a root in the Proto Indo European word ag- "to drive, draw out or forth, move" Compare this with the Greek agein "to lead, guide, drive, carry off," and the Sanskrit ajati "drives," ajirah "moving, active;" or indeed the Old Norse aka "to drive;"

Realisation is actualization and actualization means to act, to set something in motion, to drive a point. Its behaviour will then reveals itself to us. When I use the word *real* I do not consider its mode of existence beyond what can be gathered from experience, the way the brain and its sensory apparatus in the body represents behaviour to us. Something is allowed *reality* if it drives my senses to take account of it and to act upon it, either by ignoring it as of being of no consequence, or by turning towards it and focussing my attention on it. By acting on something, I act upon it as *a thing in itself*, even though all I notice of this *thing in itself* is what I can access through its behaviour to which I am in some way sensible. Any further reality is, as far as I am concerned beyond the accessible. So an optical illusion that makes me walk in a curve instead of a straight line, because it looks as if it is an obstacle in my way, is a *real* optical illusion, and at the same time *not a real* “coke bottle” because it is painted on the ground to look real. Magritte’s pipe is not a real pipe, but it is, to all intents and purposes, a real picture of a pipe that makes me think about the nature of representation. The voice in a schizophrenic’s head may not belong to a real person but it is a real voice, however it got there.

The reality of some things are haptic, tangible and other things have a virtual reality. There is real space, though which I can walk and there is virtual space thorough which I can imagine walking. That virtual space is not a real {space} but it is a real {virtual space}. There is absolutely no paradox involved there, just a slight shifting of categories to accommodate difference. The virtual space does not belong to the set of spaces you can walk through but it does belong to the set of spaces that you can imagine walking through or have a digital puppet walk through; so a real space is both virtual and real: you can imagine walking through it and you can walk through it. A virtual space tends to be poorer.

So the real is, to all intents and purposes, the accessible *in the way it is accessible through its behaviour relative to us*. That is my ontological position. Now back to language and more specifically its game rules: logic.

Part IV: The question of metaphysics: logic and the grammar of experience

Logic [AND/OR] madness [AND] feeling

Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze spent a lot of their creative thinking on the subject of madness. Foucault wrote a history of madness and Deleuze after having written *The Logic of Sense* wrote two books about capitalism and schizophrenia together with his friend Felix Guattari. Friedrich Nietzsche and John Ruskin both died in 1900 having become mad some ten or twelve years previously after they both launched their extraordinary ways of describing the world. The great philosophising poet Friedrich Hölderlin went mad doing exactly the same, while his friend the philosopher G.W.F. Hegel should perhaps have done so judging by the impossible convoluted description of the world he constructed. Many great thinkers have been called mad by the society whose conception of the world they tried to change. Socrates' allegory of the cave in Plato's *Republic* is a beautiful story about how people seeking the truth are called mad by people happy in their illusions. There are also people who operated within society in such a way that society was later judged mad to go along with them.

Deleuze in *anti-oedipus* illustrated how some people's madness consists in developing a sense of *becoming one with the world* in a bodily, of if you like, literal sense; that the madness consists of their *being a separate being* losing its sense of distinctness from what that *being* subsists in: the environment. Everything becomes one, the body feels itself to be dissolved into the world as it no doubt is, when bodies die.

It is strange to call *that* madness when one considers the dynamic physics of energetic matter, of metabolic flow and exchange. You might on the contrary wonder that we are not mad in trying to maintain our distinctness, our sense of bodily autonomy, a distinction that quickly dissolves when you look through a microscope or indeed through a telescope. Madness assaults us on all sides. On top of that we have to acknowledge that the borderline between sanity and madness is not uncontested, take the case of the *mad genius* and the razor sharp truths of the court jester.

Madness, it would seem, assaults us most violently when we try to break out of tautology and say something useful about the world, whereas it is

often the tautological way of speaking about the world that is considered mad. Lewis Carroll provided ample evidence of this. I recently did a workshop with a group of students attempting to arrive at a diagrammatic visualisation of *the future*; not in the form of a *vision of the future* with rockets and UFO's and such, but an image of *the concept of the future* as it might relate to the concept of the present and the concept of the past and time and such. It was an interesting and maddening exercise. In the end each diagram we came up with had something in it that was able to contribute usefully to the discussion as long as we managed to find the right way of looking at it. Even a crumpled up piece of paper made us see perspectives on the future we had never before come across. This would seem mad, and yet, when we use the word *the future* we believe ourselves to have quite a clear idea of what we mean: a state of affairs that is to come. But how its relationship to the present and to the past should be visualised is not so easy. To simply draw a line and call the right hand side of it the future and the left hand side the past, while the present is like a pivot in the middle is rather a poor way of seeing it. Then somebody in the workshop said: "let's think logically about this..." And we all looked at each other as if we were caught doing something we shouldn't. We soon discovered that logic is not innocent.

Madness has a particular relationship to logic. People reason, about everything and at all times, but their reasoning has the tendency to spiral into infinity in all sorts of wonderful ways. Madness and sanity offer great panoramic views along the paths they beat through the landscape of our experience.

A good way to study logic is to find out about all the ways your reasoning can go off track, how it makes illegitimate moves. There are many fallacies that one can commit when trying to convince oneself of something. These fallacies are doubled in frequency when you try to convince someone else of the same thing. These fallacies have names, the argumentum ad...Baculum, Consequentiam, Hominem, Ignorantiam, Invidiam, Logicam, Metum, Misericordiam, Naturam, Nazium, Odium, Populum, Superbiam, Verecundiam you name it. A quick search on internet can deliver most, if not all of them with examples. Most fallacies are pretty straight forward, and you would have to be very naive to fall for them. The point is that most of them are committed when we forget (or choose to ignore) the conditional nature of the ground against which a logical construction *holds itself stable*. This happens all too frequently in design studio where the

argumentation for a particular decision can follow strange routes indeed. Later we shall trace one of these routes in the word authenticity.

logic and the grammar of experience

There are, according to Charles Sanders Peirce, himself a logician, three kinds of reasoning: deductive, inductive and abductive.

Deduction starts from a set of premises and reasons from those premises to conclusions; its conclusions can be either correct or incorrect depending on which statements are counted as legitimate and which are illegitimate within the set of rules followed. Its instruments are the operators of logic [IF] [THEN] [AND] [OR] etc.

Inductive reasoning starts from experience and reasons from concrete events to generalized principles. It measures patterns against experience and tries to find generalised descriptions for those patterns in mathematics. Its operators are critical observation, generalisation and descriptive mathematics or descriptive language.

Abductive reasoning is always the first step, it starts when somebody starts thinking about a set of seemingly unrelated facts, armed with a sense that they are somehow connected, that a pattern should emerge, if we had the right way of looking at the problem. It is the kind of thinking required to produce a hypothesis that then needs to be tested inductively or needs to be deduced when considering the necessary premises. Abduction uses analogy, causality, simile and metaphor as its operators.

Logic as deductive reasoning studies the way that premises, which are generally grounded in experience, can explore the implications of those premises. It reveals the world that these premises disclose. It is essentially tautological, except that these tautologies can be as large and complex as the dictionary of a sophisticated language. Inductive reasoning looks directly at patterns and tries to generalise those patterns or at least find their limit in experience through descriptions: mathematical descriptions or indeed phenomenological descriptions. Abductive reasoning scans experience to find its loose ends and seeks to tie them up. Logic searches for grounded rules by which we can make legitimate statements through these methods of reasoning.

In this sense the madness of deductive reasoning resides in the fact that you can reach absurd conclusions if your frame of reference is too narrow.

The madness of inductive reasoning resides in the fact that you can use experience to verify almost everything. The madness of abductive reasoning should not need further elucidation. You can find patterns everywhere, the patterns of psychosis, where things proliferate into everything every time and the patterns of neurosis which become little fascisms of rule and coercion.

keep your thinking tidy

I will not introduce the subject of logic as it has been studied by many extremely clever people. To attempt to do something so ambitious would make nonsense of their subtle thought and would not actually help us. Planners, developers, designers and builders do not have to become professional logicians, but they do, like all professionals have to keep their thinking tidy. This essay is an attempt to help tidy up our thinking, not so much by watching out for a number of well-known traps, the trap of logical reductionism or logical extremism, the trap of wild subjectivism, the trap of pseudo-objectivity, the trap of oversimplification of any sort, but by starting off in an empty room that needs to be furnished tidily. I am not going to deconstruct each trap in succession in order to warn you of ways of not to falling into them. Keeping a map of possible traps in your head as you talk and think is too burdensome. Nor is this an introductory course in formal logic.

Instead I am going to show that a philosophy of the built environment has to start from a very curious position, which appears rather mad when you first encounter it. Then I am going to show how the apparent absurdity of that position can be made less absurd without ever sacrificing the complexity of a task to a falsely simplified model. So let's dive in at the deep end.

Logic works well within a familiar frame of reference, a game with a game space, game rules etc. If the frame of reference is inadequate, the operations of its logic quickly reach the absurd. There is a good reason for this; it is that without an adequate frame of reference, taking the operations of logic all by themselves, we start off with a very mad world indeed. The point is that without a frame of reference that can legitimise certain operations and forbid others...

{any question} can lead to {any answer} can lead to {any action}

Or

$$\{\forall q \in Q\} \sim \{\forall a \in A\} \sim \{\forall c \in C\}$$

Which means that any q of the set Q corresponds with any a of the set A and any c of the set C .

This is why logic alone will not save us. We need more, we need something to invest with the authoritative weight to cut through the deliberations, an empty weight, that cuts the Gordian knot and builds bridges over unfathomable existential gaps between thinking and doing. We need a taste, a theory, a fiction, a game to judge whether an operation is allowed or whether it is tasteless or just wrong. We need experience to show us that some ways of achieving a goals are better than others. But before we get there let's just look at the formula.

It is a thesis of arbitrary correspondence and probably a recipe for disaster. Let's rehearse it: No member in the set {Questions} has a necessary correspondence to any member of set {Answers} and no member of set {Answers} or of the set {Questions} has a necessary correspondence to any member of the set {aCtions}, so that all members of one set can in principle correspond with any members of another set. We do not take the mathematics of it any further. Empirically it could, I believe, only be proven by exhaustion. In design or indeed in planning terms one could put it like this: any design problem can lead to any design proposition.

$$\{\forall dprob \in Dprob\} \sim \{\forall dprop \in Dprop\}$$

This thesis feels wrong, intuitively wrong. Surely there must be some things which have a *necessary* relationship. Surely there must be some stability to be found somewhere. It feels as if we should be inviting heaven to drop down on us if we allow such patent nonsense. And yet this thesis is not only logically legitimate but it is grounded in experience. A small example:

Daniel Liebeskind designed his buildings using straight lines because, as he declared once, perhaps jokingly, he did not like curves. Fair enough. One doesn't have to like curves. I dislike round windows myself, or at least most round windows, but don't ask me to defend myself for I shall soon see the shallowness of my taste for square ones. Can there be a compelling reason not to like curves? I suppose there must be somewhere, but it will always come down to some feeling about things. You could argue that you like straight lines because they give sharper shadows. That is a very reasonable thing to say, but it is not logical in itself. It simply means that you *like* sharp

shadows. The logic is merely that experience has shown that straight lines tend to give sharp contrasts so that [IF] {I want sharp shadows} [THEN] {I must design using only straight lines}. The [IF] [THEN] of deductive reasoning is crucial here, for it provides the operator, ultimately grounded in experience that a purpose can be achieved if conditions are met.

The [IF]...[THEN]... is given by experience and constitutes at least one of the rules of the game you are playing. [IF] I want X [THEN] I must do Y. How do I know this? In mathematical terms I know this because all mathematics derives from its axioms and its operators. In the experience of life I simply do not know. I suspect it, because I have come across something similar before. I can only be helped by the patterns hit upon by abduction, described and generalised in induction in order to furnish premises for deduction. A logical decision in the experience of life is not so much *logical*, as a decision well grounded in experience, whereby the aesthetics and the ethics are well attuned to each other and to experience and the words with which we speak about them are found to be effective and consistent.

More important is that this way of approaching the logic of planning and design allows us to be more economical in our thinking. Of course we can keep in mind all the traps we might fall into, but as I argued before that approach is burdensome. This approach challenges us to reason through our design decisions against a ground which I will call our *taste*. As we will see this puts a big responsibility on forming, reforming and practising our taste.

It would be no different were we to invite decision theory to help us make decisions. Decisions reached through the calculus of decision theories might *feel* good because the emotional weight of a decision is here supplied by the sense that we have done our work properly when we have calculated the risks and probabilities with the help of some particular system. Whether you allow the decision thus reached to *decide for you* is then another question. Most people would not want to relinquish their own responsibility in that way. Systems are invariably too narrowly conceived to take on anything as complex as human being and daily life, limited by being able to take too few premises or parameters on board, or by being unable to weight these factors *situationally*.

This reveals a deep problem with logic; it cannot do what it is often being asked to do. When we say "This is a logical decision" we do not actually mean what we say. Logic cannot lead to a decision. We need authority,

which is a feeling guided by experience and shaped by likes and dislikes, by a taste, based upon an idea about the world and the way it works. If some scientist were to invest a lot of his time in ringing bells every time he gives a dog a bone, we feel that the reaction of the dog to the ringing of the bell is *logical*. But the logic involved is minimal, it is merely the suggested association hardened by experience that does the trick. There is no logic without taste and experience against which to work its machinations. And when we have taste and the experience to act purposefully, the logic falls silent in the background, like our footsteps on secure ground, it merely performs its binary operations which are all elaborations of the [IF] {a} [THEN] {b} kind filled in by taste, trust, hope and experience.

It is also possible *not* to like sharp shadows, in which case it would be less reasonable to like designing with straight lines, unless of course you have a taste for some other characteristic which determines the choice for straight lines. But Liebeskind, as far as I could find out, never said anything about that, (forgive me for not being exhaustive in my enquiries here) so we do not know for what reason he liked straight lines, he may not have bothered to investigate his taste. And why should he? But enough about this, the point is that feelings, likes and dislikes, the idea of taste constitute the subject of aesthetics and their realisation is the subject of ethics. Logic works with them and they work with logic. So to talk of “a logical decision” is to in fact presuppose an end as well as the effective means to pursue that end and achieve it with some accuracy. Logic brings means and end together on the basis of experience: If I hit my thumb with a hammer, it will hurt. How do I know that? Well, I am able to generalize from previous encounters between heavy objects and my limbs. So what does it mean to say that this is logical? Decisions are based on trust that something will be so because we have experience of such things. There are logical outcomes. In fact every outcome is logical as long as one knows what went into that outcome and one has a sufficient experience of the factors involved to understand their behaviour. But just because the world operates in a stable way, whereby *things in themselves* behave in a way that can be observed and studied by physics, chemistry and biology and described through mathematics, does not make design *decisions* logical. It merely means that it is worth understanding the behaviour of the things in the world so that you can familiarize yourself with its working and discover the logic that is always there, as long as you can grasp it.

A logical decision is in fact more accurately described as a *tasteful decision* now that we are beginning to know how our bodies work neurologically.

Logic itself cannot come to a decision, it merely tells us what is legitimate and what we can hope to expect. Logic is the operator of experience, it processes experience into patterns. A logical design decision is merely a compelling one where by a clear desire [IF] I want {a} can be met by a set of actions borne out by our experience in such things [THEN] I should do {b}. There are only well-argued, compelling decisions in which logic, ontology, aesthetics and ethics each get enough space to do their thing properly. When making a “logical decision” you are really saying: My desire is tasteful in that it fits with what I expect of myself in the circumstances and my method of achieving my tasteful vision is adequate because it is consistent with the world as I know it and the way the world appears to work. Gilles Deleuze rightly reduced the question of ethics to the question: is what has happened worthy of me?

the use of taste

I think I have proven my point adequately for now, be it on a very slender example: so as far as I am concerned the thesis may be allowed to stand a little longer: {any answer} is possible to {any question} and {any action} can follow from either.

$$\{\forall q \in Q\} \sim \{\forall a \in A\} \sim \{\forall c \in C\}$$

However we can already make a distinction that might offer some initial relief to the perplexed. The sentence: *It is possible for any question to lead to any answer to lead to any action*, is very different to the sentence: *any answer to any question is a good answer and any action following from either is a good action*.

There lies the crux. That is what makes the difference between supposed madness and supposed sanity and makes so much sanity look mad and vice versa. Furthermore it makes the word *good* take on quite a lot of responsibility.

Any investigation into the logic of planning and design which does not take account of the possibility of wilfulness, bad reasoning, inadequately practised aesthetics, inadequately practised ethics, and a poor or incomplete understanding of the world leading to design decisions, is not worth the paper it is written on. Let's face it we are able to make very bad decisions. More amazing still is that bad premises can occasionally lead to very good decisions. Strange beliefs can lead to the building of fantastic

environments. How is that possible? A philosophy of the built environment that cannot answer that question satisfactorily is not worth the paper it is written on.

Decisions with regard to action are the result of negotiations between ontology, logic, aesthetics and ethics. In the end however, a decision is the activation of the *I* as a body in its environment, as a stand on the relation between the body and the world. The *I* in this case is what Deleuze would call the body without organs, that is our desire, our taste, our understanding, indeed our vanity, working together and being only distinguishable as crude if useful abstractions. This negotiation comes to a decision on the basis of trust in the available information, the meaning available sounded against that body without organs.

Nothing relieves us of the responsibility of having to put our trust somewhere. We have to *decide* to trust our own deliberations, those of another person, or some miracle. These deliberations and the actions unleashed by our decision to trust them are our responsibility. The emotional weight a satisfying reason provides is our body speaking.

We can give any response we like to anything presented to us. So, if we can say: Any (*q*), member of the set {*Q*} corresponds to any (*a*) of the set {*A*} and can lead to any (*c*) of the set {*C*} or in the language of set theory:

$$\{\forall q \in Q\} \sim \{\forall a \in A\} \sim \{\forall c \in C\}$$

But what makes us choose some responses above others? What makes the thesis given above so interesting for planning and design thinking is that it takes account of the madness *possible* in planning and design while at the same time allowing questions, answers and actions to take account of each other and to approach each other in a wide and yet perfectly adequate variety of ways. It shows the importance of experience and practise, discourse and the critical reflection upon personal and collective experience. It shows the importance of situationality and the infinite number of small variations that make each situation unique, always requiring a slightly different response to be truly effective. It shows us also the role history and experience could play if precedents were to be analysed for the *descriptive qualities* they make possible of spaces and relations in spaces, buildings, streets and squares and neighbourhoods. It allows abduction to take its turn at trying to find relations that have hitherto been left unexplored.

Descriptions are ways of *playing with* and *practising* the relationship between qualities and the conditions necessary in space to produce them.

wild use

In a negative sense it is also a good idea to let this thesis of arbitrary correspondence stand. If it isn't allowed to stand a lot of things would be very hard to explain, in the area of evolutionary biology but also within the area of planning and design. Both planning and design as processes obey the selective operations of evolution, they operate with whatever is at hand in any way that is legitimate within the game space of physics and chemistry. The *use* what there is, to explore possibilities and only when they have coded those possibilities through experience of them can planning and design begin to work intentionally. Experience and especially a realisation of its continuity is paramount. Anything that is possible within the limitations imposed by what is at hand is legitimate even though it may not, in the light of experience be very effective or sensible: what is legitimate from a perspective of physics and chemistry may not be legitimate from a social or life affirming point of view. That is why we need to think carefully about what we do and do not find acceptable, that is where the word *good* as a *metaword*, as a judgment becomes operative.

Planning, design and evolution are instances of *wild use* of that which is at hand. Evolution is the process of selection. Genes are a type of memory. But when evolution has the benefit of learning from experience reflection becomes possible, the body without organs becomes possible, selection becomes infected by experience. That is the nature of design: evolution with the help of memory and experience, with the help of learning.

Wild use works on the assumption that the relationship between form and function, that is behaviour, does not impose a necessary sequence on that relationship; the one cannot have anything but a culturally or wilfully imposed primacy over the other. With this I mean that neither follows the other *on principle*, or *by necessity*, they follow each other by convenience and conviction, through cultural and social normation. Form follows function when we have the experience of the working of forms and a clear picture of function. Moreover forms suggest functions through endless experiment and play, directed by our increasing experience of the world. When we decide, for whatever reason, that something is important, it starts to be taken account of in that way. Questions, answers and actions take their cue from that preference. Our use of things gives them a

direction relative to us. Behaviour, which is the working of use and form, happens in whatever way it can.

This constant de- and reterritorialisation of objects in the search for function by form and vice versa, was illustrated by Gilbert Simondon with the cylinder engine, where the gradual development of its efficiency consisted of ideas being suggested for this or that function, which, when implemented, subsequently suggested further possibilities. Because of the tendency of metal to expand when heated, the second generation of cylinders were designed with cooling fins to extract the heat more quickly, which with a third generation of cylinders were used structurally to then lessen the necessary amount of metal for an adequate performance. Gilles Deleuze illustrated something similar with the orchid and the wasp, caught in a network of cooperation through the exigencies of evolutionary selection, whereby particular species of orchid grew strategically placed shapes resembling female wasps. These pseudo wasps afforded the suggestion to visiting male wasps that it might be a good idea to copulate with them, making movements which then helped the pollen the male wasp would be carrying from another orchid to rub off onto the stamen. It is a wonderful world of mad designs that exaptive evolution throws up in its blind search for use in the variations it produces. Things have effect. They present themselves, perhaps as by products of this or that change and *are made use of*. When the power of memory and experience comes into play, the effect is dramatic, the possibilities for use explode exponentially, as the history of the world over the last few thousand years has adequately shown. Experience teaches and we search for appropriate things to help us. Wasps and orchids do it blindly: variations in the orchid's structure *prove useful* simply because they are *used*. The orchid and the wasp need not be aware of each other being such wonderful playmates in evolution's strangest reproductive system. The cylinder engine was designed the way it was because people practised and experimented with possibilities. Both evolved. With the possibility of reflection and experience, evolution goes quicker and becomes planning and design.

taste and the authority of words

Predators evolved too, as did human cruelty. Does that make them good? Does it make them tasteful? It certainly makes both *natural*. If we were to allow only the weightless operations of logic to have their way we would never be able to decide any question. And we do have to decide. In order to decide on the goodness of something, we have to develop a *taste*

regarding the issue at stake. Taste is *a body of knowledge* (hence part of the body without organs) or a conviction grounded in experience or authority which *dictates* choice. There is no *real* choice; there is only uncertainty of taste or experience. Taste is a body of knowledge polarized and given direction by the values and norms we hold. The annoying thing is that these values are often hidden behind words like *natural* and *artificial*, *old*, *ancient*, *new*, *traditional*, *modern*, *innovative*, *progress* and more. These words are perfectly acceptable as words to describe experience, but their use is stretched to rather more dubious ends. They become *black boxes* into which we have tried to place our responsibility with regard to deciding a particular issue, they make a particular connection between thinking and doing appear necessary or 'natural'. Moreover they start leading a life of their own.

Someone might legitimately say: *this type-writer was progressive and modern when it was first put onto the market*. How does this differ from the sentence: *he was a progressive thinker*? And, how, does that differ from the sentence: *I want to be progressive*. They differ in object and subject of the sentence, but they don't *really* differ. The first is a description of the introduction of a typewriter which was in some way emblematic of how typewriters would develop after the introduction of this particular one, a judgment suitably made *a posteriori*. The second is the depiction of a thinker who moved our way of thinking into new directions that were found fruitful. The last is the expression is a wish to be *just like that*, to become the agent of such introductions and movements *a priori* before they have happened. In this way the word achieves a magic authority. It says: I want to be the kind of person who introduces things that will lead to interesting developments. This is perfectly understandable when we see what progressiveness means in a merely descriptive context, but we can see that the connotation of the word has shifted it has become *admirable for its own sake*. Now it stands for the kind of person we find *admirable* and the question becomes not how can I make good typewriters, but how can I be considered progressive by others. How long will it take for the word to stand for things that we admire when they are not in the strictest sense progressive? How long before the word will stand for wishes regarding all sorts of things in which the progressive, in the strictest sense, plays no part? The word becomes politicised in that the priority to become progressive increases, it becomes subject to an economy and its inflationary pressures in that the value of progressiveness becomes such that everyone and everything wants in on it. It no longer just describes a situation, it labels someone to help him put his best foot forward. The

word progressive suddenly acquires a magic aura, an authority as something to be desired for its own sake. Progressiveness inscribes itself onto the body without organs. Having said that, as soon as a word is used in this way it has also begun to gnaw away at itself and soon it will be no more than a word which is felt to be *empty*. When analysed these *black boxes of authority* reveal a *taste*, that has acquired its shape, its body, by the way they are used and the context they are used in. To use such blanket terms to ground your taste quickly creates problems. Imagine the following example. I can say: *If I believe everything natural is good and if human cruelty is natural, I have to accept human cruelty as good*. In terms of logic there is nothing illegitimate in what I have just said. And in fact you would be hard put to deny me that use of the word natural. But what is left of the word natural as an authority to decide issues? Very little surely, please don't tell me you are now going to advocate human cruelty! Taking such a perfectly valid argument seriously would disqualify you from participation in most of society, or at least that part of it which thankfully holds a different belief regarding cruelty. I think that this illustrates the problem of the word *natural* as a container of authority for decisions. And yet how many times can we not catch ourselves committing a comparable fallacy? *Naturalness*, *Progressiveness* or any of the words listed above and many more, can be used to help shape our values and norms, can help to describe situations but should not be given the authority of our opinions. Mere *naturalness* cannot determine a situation to be good. *Naturalness* does not and cannot *forgive* an action or a situation, ever.

The ground of our opinion should be held by something at once more secure and at the same time better able to judge the dynamics of a situation. Our opinions should be grounded on our practised understanding of the world, a theoretical position based on practised understanding. This means that our experience of the world has to be allowed to grow and develop, select itself and sharpen itself. An inexperienced mind is in this sense as much in need of care and didactic attention as a mind that has closed itself for further development. Permanent education is one of the most exciting developments of today. To put it in terms of cultural developments: the young have to practise and gain experience while the old have to exercise their openness and prevent their opinions from sclerosis. The middle-aged have to do both at the same time. We all have our challenges, none more than the other. This perpetual need to practise one's experience and open-endedness (in the sense of open-mindedness) is not a *natural* end, although it is arrived at by means that are available to any and all of us. It is an end *decided* upon by us on

the basis of experience. Open-mindedness and experiential sophistication are both a product of our evolution in that we are capable of having and using such qualities in making decision, but it is also a way to overcome the limitations set by evolution in that we can learn to deal with and overcome bodily limitations as people.

Words like *natural*, *modern*, *progressive*, *conservative*, *authentic*, are all words that have shed their purely descriptive qualities to reveal something of an imperious clamour. None of them, as authorities with legislative power with regard to our design decisions, hold up under scrutiny. They quickly and irrevocably lead to the absurd. They are words that may help us describe and even hold weight, but only ever relative to *a situation*. The decisions they lead to or the justification they allow, are limited by the image of the word as held by the person using it. A sentence like *it's only natural* as a justification requires us to have a pretty naive image of the natural. There are things that are natural that cannot be justified so easily in a society in which we all deserve a place of dignity. Such words form part of the legitimate furniture of our taste but lead to the absurd when they are used as the ultimate authoritative ground for a decision. By using them that way we relinquish our own authority and make us look foolish.

feeling a feeling and describing a feeling

We *feel* that some answers to questions are better than others; this is not a metaphorical use of the word feeling, we *feel* it in our bodies. An attitude is a bodily feeling, a feeling that shapes and judges a situation *in the form of an attitude to it*. It is where our desire, taste, understanding and vanity come together and fuse in an attitude. When something *feels right* the chemistry of our body is at work. We similarly *feel* that some actions are more appropriate than others. We clothe these feelings with words that appear to describe and perhaps justify them. We practise the description of our feelings and believe they *capture the feeling relative to the situation*. This description *places* the body in the sense that these descriptions accurately represent our understanding of the situation as related to the feeling about our stand taken.

An understanding is a stand taken regarding a situation. This means that the number of words available to us to describe our feeling of a situation is of special significance. The mathematics is simple: fewer words leads to descriptions at a significantly lower resolution. A slightly different *reading* of a situation can lead to a radically different description of that situation.

How does that matter? Spinoza in his *Ethics* describes the way all sorts of nuanced feelings can ultimately be reduced to situational modulations of joy and sadness. These descriptions are beautiful in the unsettling attempt to make them appear to behave like geometry and worth studying as works of art but they are also very compelling as approximations of *how things work*. The interesting thing is that Spinoza takes two basic emotions and makes their effect take on a definite and subtle identity relative to a situation. How large is our palette of possible feelings from a bodily perspective? We have a great range of intensity of feeling, but how many different *sorts* of feeling do we have access to? Is it not rather the feeling in relation to an image of a situation that gives a feeling its proper and refined identity?

In communicating our feelings relative to situations, we need to describe them, using words and gestures and expressions. This requirement demands introspection and discourse; practise helps us develop the description of feeling relative to situations and thereby helps us determine the situations for ourselves. The description *of a feeling in a situation*, is capable of altering our understanding of the situation for us and help us take a different attitude to it. The feeling determines and judges the stand we take and we get that feeling when things have been got *right* or *wrong*. As we learn we become more fastidious and more exacting as to what might *feel right*. Nothing outside us can justify anything; we have to *feel* that it is right. And this event of justification has to happen for each body in its own situation.

making things general: becoming social

We believe our feelings are generally applicable because we have noticed similarities among us. We have noticed this because we have learnt to communicate with each other and can contrast and compare our experience of the world. The need for generalising our experiences is that each body (me, you) makes use of other bodies in its environment to maintain itself (I make use of your generosity, you make use of a vacuum cleaner). By making use of our environment to maintain ourselves we interfere with the other. That *other* includes *others* who appear to be very like ourselves. This activity of making use of each other *socialises* us. Our socialisation (the fact that we cannot help interfere with each other and our environment at large) forms the basis of all our decision-making. This concern with our socialisation forms the basis of our *understanding*, as the *stand* we think appropriate to the situation at hand. Is there something

about us that is not affected by our socialised being? I cannot think of anything. My most private thoughts are those thoughts which are more *socialised* than all the others, for they are kept under lock and key so as to prevent me from getting into trouble. My most public thoughts are meant for consumption by others and as such obviously part of my socialised person.

Planning and design decisions are primary among decisions based on this state of socialisation. Both sorts of decision have to be justified in social terms. I shall come back to this in several other sections. To justify an action we need to look at our relation to the world we are part of. We have grasped at words like naturalness, or progress, or authenticity to provide a ground for that justification but these words do not go all the way down. They have to be given significance by us and that makes them partial, biased and incomplete as grounds for all our decisions. The only ground that we have available to us that can go all the way down is ourselves-as-part-of-the-world. We, as individuals, are the legislators of our opinions and beliefs that make us part of our world. Any word we invest with authority takes a view of our being in the world and narrows us with regard to that view. People who blame *the system*, or *others* for their careless, anti-social or even atrocious behaviour are just as culpable as people who dare blame themselves. The latter have at least the moral advantage of being honest. Having said that, narrowing ourselves when trying to decide on a specific situation is perfectly legitimate. After all it requires specific action on the basis of our understanding of that situation (with which I mean *our stand taken towards it*).

However, *to narrow ourselves* without that relation to a situation is an *impoverishment* of our being.

We may like being *natural* in most situations, but naturalness, whatever it is taken to mean by the signifier (the person giving significance to something relative to himself) cannot be appropriate for every situation without leading to the absurd. To prevent us using naturalness as a blanket term and helping us to refine our view of our being in the world we need to justify our taste for words like naturalness by analysing them and seeing how far down it will go. Precisely where they become problematic is where they become interesting by forcing you to refine your stand. To say: *I like straight lines*, is a kind of Dadaist action. The sentence leaves implicit the network of reasoning that it is the visible part of. But by leaving that network out it becomes *strange*. Surely you have to like straight lines

because of something. Now to say: I like straight lines because I am a Dadaist, would be quite sufficient for the moment. For the two people involved in this conversation who know what Dadaism means and share a large part of their image of it, that sentence would need no further qualification. But Dadaism is a relatively neat and tidy little package of networked significance when compared to nature and the natural. Naturalness leaks from *all of nature*. All of nature is by definition natural. To say I like curved lines because they are natural is to beg the question: are there no straight lines in nature? Alternatively, to say: I do this because it is natural, means something. However its meaning is charged by a particular image of naturalness which you find satisfying and worth pursuing. Confronted with the fact that human cruelty is also natural might shock you and might make you want to rethink naturalness as the emotional basis of a decision. If it does not I would find that strange. So nature and the natural as a justification of what you do cannot go all the way down, cannot be used separate from a specific situation. This means one of two things: either you need to justify your taste differently or you need to assess your taste and see whether it is adequate to the task of responding to situations. Your taste is a body without organs called the intentional part of your *self*. With that I mean it is that which forms you as your attitude to the world.

Now, that feeling, the feeling for example that the word *natural* makes a decision *the right one* can be changed and transformed through exercise in discourse and the description of experience. Knowing that naturalness no longer fits the bill will make the person who used to like the idea of things being natural look out for a better way to justify a decision. What might he choose? I don't know. I just know what I chose when I realised the problems that naturalness threw up in my personal taste development.

practising your taste: becoming athletic, becoming good, using well

What does someone who practises his taste become? Does he become a better person? I don't believe he does, at least not *necessarily*. Someone who exercises his taste becomes an athlete, not a better person per se. He develops an *athletic taste*. This taste is not necessarily better than a *non-athletic* couch-potato kind of taste, but it certainly is more refined and active, more critically conscious and of a higher resolution and fitter. No doubt of that. But is it better? Well, that depends on your situation and your end, your purpose, your desire. This situatedness of the idea of

something being good is essential. If we allow goodness and badness, good and evil to be unsituated qualities we would thereby allow the possibility of some people being better or worse than others *without having done anything*. That would be absurd and horrific. Your being depends on the way you *use* your taste for regarding a situation.

Here the heavy responsibility of the word good and its equivalents comes to the fore. The idea of *being better* is judged situationally and selectively. Of course, our reputation carries over to the expectations others harbour with reference to how we deal with things but we can surprise. We talk of better or worse in use; that is when we relate things and configure them for use to whatever purpose. It is our experience of the limitations and possibilities of that which is at hand that teaches us how to use things well in our exploration of life in the world. So how does that work?

A television documentary about Pina Bausch the great choreographer made just before she died, recorded interviews with her and the people around her. In it she explained how she arrived at her pieces. She did not work with a preconceived plan, but rather with a vague idea. She would allow dancers to get on with what they do best: dance and improvise while she would look out for *that which felt right*. On the opening night her pieces were invariably given the rather neutral name Neues Stuck (new piece). In other words they had no determining name above and beyond the idea that it was *a new piece* she was working on. The whole performance was often changed as a result of the experiences of the opening night, gradually acquiring a more definite form and, consequently more deserving of a definite name.

A composer whom I admire, Gerard Beljon, works in a very similar way, postponing the determinate until every part seems to have been found and relations between them have been sufficiently exercised. During the development of the piece Bausch would invite dancers *to do things*, ideas would be tried out and during a conversation, ideas would congeal, be given definite form or lead to changes which would inspire new ideas. One memorable event was a dance whereby the dancer translated a song into the language of the deaf. His elegant but repetitive movements created a curious dysleptic effect whereby moments of recognition of a word in both languages would coincide only to be pulled apart as the gestures again became more abstract although never losing their elegance and stringent communicability. Pina Bausch was in this instance a midwife choreographer, she helped others give birth to her pieces. The dancers

played a central role in the creative process, as did she herself. She also came up with ideas but all ideas were selected, perfected, questioned and made concrete by her. When during the documentary two dancers were asked to comment on the way Bausch *used* her dancers they both said: we were *used well*. That is an extraordinary statement. It affirms, as much as an individual case can do so, that use as such is not an evil in itself and that good use can in fact be a wonderful thing to the used. It is awful to *feel used*; it is wonderful to feel yourself to be useful, to be given a purpose in something you want to be part of. It is awful to be used by others who do not take you into account in their use of you; at the same time it is wonderful to be used well if that use of you by others coincides with your own desire. When things are used well, it *feels* right using them in that way. When things are *used well* from their perspective, they don't mind being used, they even like it. What is this feeling? It is surely no more than a sense of *a fit*, a correspondence, a snugness, the affirmation of an accord whereby taste and immediate experience coincide and their correspondence *feels* good. The feeling is the accord of the game rule satisfied, which, in turn *satisfies logic* that looks for legitimacy within a situation. Legitimacy feels good. Illegitimacy can be made to feel good if that is the game you are playing, whereby illegitimacy becomes a peculiar form of legitimacy. That is the secret of logic: things need to feel good in order to fit, or alternatively they need to fit in order to feel good. The commutability of this sequence touches a deep cord. We can, within margins, order things to feel good; we can, within margins, order things to fit. Beyond those margins there is, within the narrower world of force (kracht), physical limitation. Within the almost limitless world of power (macht) there is only madness and the social exclusion that this forces.

the wrong feeling [OR] the wrong game

To illustrate this let's return to the thesis $\{\forall q \in Q\} \sim \{\forall a \in A\} \sim \{\forall c \in C\}$ There are a number of reasons why we may *feel* that this thesis is wrong. For example, some answers do not *feel right* as a response to some questions. That would surely indicate a flaw in the thesis. But the opposite is the case. It is quite possible that the feeling is wrong or that you have landed in the wrong game. I may be getting that feeling without having trained it adequately for a specific situation which I have not yet learnt to deal with. I may be playing the wrong game. If I ask you what time it is and you answer "apples", I might feel justified in my feeling that you did not give me an answer to the question. You did give me an answer of course, and it was in response to a question, but the two did not feel right

together, they did not meet expectations. The question was about something called [time] and the answer was about something called [apples]. The result appeared unhelpful and illegitimate. All I could get from it is a vague sense that I would not want to ask you another question. So I suppose it had some use. I used your answer to tell myself: beware of this person; she is not playing my game. I was looking for an answer in the line of something like: “still early” or “twelvish” or even “12.02”. Instead I was given “apples”. Nevertheless, as Wittgenstein argued in a similar vein, a game is conceivable in which apples would have been exactly the right answer to the question, in a game of nonsense for example. And had we been playing a game of nonsense, I would merely have been disappointed that your answers showed such lack of imagination. Apples? Why not filleted sharks or brain-dead walnuts, or indeed hard boiled eggs and nuts? So we have to conclude that the reason why this answer *feels* wrong is not because it might be illegitimate in all situations, but because it is illegitimate in the game I was playing. That is an important distinction. In the game we play called daily life, the words [time] and [apples] can very safely be brought into the same sentence in all sorts of ways, but not in the way just illustrated without having to deal with the *social consequences* of such a madness.

When I went to see a film called *The Dark Knight* some summers ago with my family, the only two people who enjoyed the film were my youngest son, who was about 10 at the time, and myself. He enjoyed it because of the unrelenting action in the film. He had got quite used to not understanding much of the plot or much of the conversation of any film. That did not bother him, as long as there was plenty of speed, gadgetry, clean violence (no scary gooey stuff) and evil-full-of-hubris, he was happy. I didn't like the action much and thought none too much about the plot, but I liked the simple trick that lay at the base of it. It was a trick that was being played on people's sense of the appropriate. The joker was a nasty and slightly sad character. He was especially nasty because he had placed himself outside of society; not just outside of that part of society that tries everyday to behave reasonably within a context of stress, disappointments and small frustrations but he had even placed himself outside of criminal society. He answered no one's expectations, neither those of the goodies nor those of the baddies. His actions were geared to an end all of his own making. He refused *to fit* the image of the usual greedy criminal. His evil and the violence that went with it appeared as ends in themselves. His actions, although dastardly cunning, seemed arbitrarily weighted often completely disproportionate to what the situation might have demanded

of a more economically minded criminal. He was quintessentially evil and quintessentially mad, because his evil pursued an aesthetics which had itself as object. His evil had as its objective to pursue evil. As a result it was hard get a grip on him, impossible to establish a pattern, to know his next move; even Batman was forced into some pretty dubious practices to try to catch him. It is rather quaint in a perverse way, but nevertheless true that most criminals perform their crimes in order to enjoy, be it in a narrow sense, some of the fruits of society. Many of them are rather unambitious in their taste, they want predictable things: wealth, luxury, ease and the company of beautiful people. Criminals tend to be rather middle class and bourgeois in their aesthetics, they frequently lack daring in their taste and sophistication in their desires; moreover their aspirations fall within the band of what society itself sees as perfectly normal: the pursuit of wealth, comfort and luxury. It is not their end but their means of achieving that end that is seen as problematic to society. With The Joker it was not just the means that were at fault but the very ends in themselves. The joker was a wild card. He looked for none of the things society sees as admirable. His was an experimental drive to explore the limits of crime itself. He showed us where madness and sanity in reasoning intersect and entangle. All he wanted, was to be the centre of an extraordinary ordered criminality: *a beautiful chaos of violence and pain*, which is not as much a contradiction in terms as one might imagine. His violence and his criminality were ends in themselves: means that are also ends: he enjoyed them and not their fruits. Or rather, the fruits of the chaos he created was the chaos itself; that is what he wanted. Those ingredients caused havoc in Gotham city, to the point that even Batman was ultimately forced to take on the role of the baddy in order to make sense of the mess The Joker had left behind. The Joker operated *hors catégorie*; there appeared no pattern to his ingenious cunning and his unexpected asceticism. Originally he may have been motivated by something like revenge; he had been abused as a child by his dad, but he managed to overcome the limitations that this might have imposed on his actions. The inappropriateness of his actions and his purpose made him fall outside of the norms of society and that is exactly where he wanted to be. Most actions correspond to the experience and expectations of society, his didn't. He was mad *and* horrifically sane and quite happy about it.

When an action appears inappropriate in a situation it appears so from a specific and usually socialised perspective. It may just not rhyme *with your game* or the game of your culture or society. The interesting thing here is that inappropriateness of action assumes a ground, just as much as

appropriate action does. It assumes an image, an ideal, a standard a norm, against which things can be measured. This image, norm, standard, ideal, is formulated by you-as-part-of-society, you-as-part-of-your-environment. It is a product of negotiation or arbitration within that environment or society. That is true even for the Joker who created that image by systematically deterritorialising his relationship to society so that not even an *anti-pattern* or the negative of a pattern could emerge. Even so he needed to understand society extremely well to arrive at that deterritorialisation.

madness, logic and society

When reasoning and logic falls outside of the norm, or the ethos of a society, it assumes madness in the eyes of society. It does not have to be bad logic in itself, but it serves a game that few people play. And when people insist on playing such games, they tend to play by themselves, alone, isolated from the rest, just in the way the people of an asylum do. They exist in themselves. Many of the options allowed by our thesis cause you, when pursued to place yourself outside of *the norm, outside of society*. This is the rule that lies at the basis of an investigation into the logic of environment thinking with regard to planning and design. The million dollar question goes as follows: *Is it useful to give any answer to any question or to respond to any situation with any action?* It is certainly useful that this infinite flexibility is allowed, as it means that we can adapt to situations still unknown to us. If, however, we make full use of that freedom (as borderlessness) by exploring the absurd possibilities it offers, and by acting on them in the manner of The Joker we inevitably end up alone, placing ourselves *outside of society*. Kierkegaards much misinterpreted study of the absurd in *Fear and Trembling* shows beautifully how this process works with regard to the inexplicable action of Abraham in being willing to sacrifice his own son.

The next question is: *Do we want really that?* Do we want to place ourselves outside of society? In some instances it has its advantages. If for example society has become intolerable to the individual by no longer affording him the freedom to pursue his own good, no longer allowing him his chance at dignity and the means to obtain a fair share of the goods, then society would appear to no longer deserve the name. It has itself become a machine of the absurd and cruel to boot. To work outside of the rules of society in order to redress this balance might then be very sensible.

Pushkin's advice to poets in his two famous poems on the poet, follow this line of thought.

Alternately, if society has become so fluid that it no longer offers the stability to learn, practise and develop, then, perhaps the absurd has achieved a level of prevalence where the border between what is constructive and what is destructive to society is hard to make out. But in a society where one's freedom to pursue one's own good is ensured and where one's own dignity is not constantly under threat and where the means to obtain a fair share of the goods are available to everyone, society is oppressive only to the extent that it has to ensure those affordances and to guarantee everyone their place. That is a level of oppression that people who do not want to interfere with other people's lives too much, might be able to live with quite happily, even to the point of having occasionally to endure small frustrations and absurdities. They will no doubt feel content exploring all possible answers to all possible questions without necessarily acting unreasonably or irresponsibly on the more absurd or hurtful ones.

The point I am making is that the worst thing that can happen to someone using his ability to give any answer to any question is that he thereby risks placing himself outside of the norm, outside of the ethos of society. And if he is thereby not violent to others nor robs them of their freedom and fair share, he is harmless and society can get along fine without needing to segregate and isolate him. Society, when free and fair has, as Rawls convincingly argues, a large ability to absorb. Such a person, in exploring his world may even come up with something society discovers to be useful to it. Sometimes the logic of madness is just what you need.

taste and ground

Reasoning constructs itself against a ground. This ground can consist of a set of premises or axioms, a paradigm of trusted beliefs, (knowledge); it searches for relationships, observes patterns and generalises them into premises, it then builds deductions from those premises. That ground is shaped and configured by *a taste*. It is related to what Deleuze refers to as a body without organs. We could call it something else, but we won't because that word comes nearest to what it is: a body without organs; except that it is constantly organising and reorganising itself, taste is the / made up of opinions and beliefs taking a stand on the situations it is confronted with, continually. Its game of legitimate moves depends upon the premises that constitute that ground: [IF] I want a fair society [AND-IF]

fairness means x, [AND-IF] I have experience of what actions affirm and what actions destroy fairness [THEN]...I shall achieve my end.

Nothing escapes the need for a ground. It is useful to declare that taste and to subject it to the game of *theoria* described earlier. It is best declared by owning up to the image you have in front of you as your end. By declaring your a facet of your taste you make it part of discourse. The sophistication of that image will partly reveal the level at which you have practised and trained your taste. Discourse, the philosophical game of conversation, can both critique that end and search through experience to find the means to achieve it well, (i.e. an optimal fit between ends and means so that neither are sacrificed to each other).

Part V: The question of metaphysics: a social existence

society and its fictions

I can name an impressive list of the top ten mad ideas which we still live, plan and design by and quite a few people would be prepared to kill, die or relinquish their position in society for. In fact I think most of us would be able to give such a list. It would be interesting to compare them. Society lives by fictions: ideas and myths, metaphors and beliefs and has, perhaps as a direct result of this, learnt to be conservative. Fiction rules, however, it does not treat established beliefs and good ideas lightly. They are held on to tightly; they are stolen; they are the subject of jealousies and rivalries. Things that have proven themselves *to work* are held onto as *good tricks*. However in holding on to them these ideas nevertheless undergo constant situational transformation. Nietzsche compellingly described a process he called resentment, whereby a good idea can when meeting some sort of obstruction become frustrated and turns around to become destructive. This problem lies deeply embedded in all process theory and in the management of people and organisations.

Ideas that have not proven themselves are looked at with suspicion by all except those who would be called pioneers or dupes, depending on the success of their investment. To change a paradigm in science or the myths we live by costs a lot of energy, never mind the cost in sheer genius. Socrates, Jesus, Copernicus, Galileo, Darwin and Einstein are cases in point. God, perfectibility, progress, the absolute, the dubious benefits of

selfishness and even smoking all appear ineradicable as ideas even though some of them have proven fatal to many. There are grasses who systematically turn back any genetic variation that occurs in their DNA.

From an evolutionary perspective, conservatism is one of the products of an evolving society which has given that society a measure of success, *it has proven itself useful*. We might ask: what kind of success? Can we define that success? Is it not simply the success of survival and procreation? That would be a good question. Conservatism is not a *necessary* quality of a good society it is a *useful one* from a particular point of view; it is a *situational* and *conditional* good; it can help when things threaten to spiral out of control. In that same breath it can prevent new ideas from gaining foothold and thereby keep us from adapting to new situations. Conservatism, just like its opposite is not a good in itself, it is a good when used to balance contrasting and mutually exclusive goods. Nothing, in the philosophical game I play, can be given the status of *good in itself* except, perhaps, existence. Or rather, existence precedes the problem of good and bad. First something exists and only then can it be judged good or bad relative to some taste, some ground. Everything has to prove itself within the confines of a situation and relative to some view or perspective given by a taste. Or is there another way of looking at it?

Good and bad is what relates stuff to other stuff. Good is a relation, a judgment applied to the tectonics of behaviour. Nevertheless there is a use for the idea of *a good in itself*. We could harbour two variations of that good in itself. A *good in itself* could be a good that relates something *as a good to itself*; or alternatively it could be *a good that relates something to everything else as a good*. I am not sure there is a real difference here. In any case both goods come down to the idea that the good in itself is something that simply exists. Everything that exists could be described as a good in itself, because, in Spinozan terms it is perfect: an adequate expression of the laws of nature. It is allowed to exist by the laws of nature or deity so it must be good in itself as an adequate expression of the laws of physics and chemistry. This is in fact a useful standpoint; it implies that everything that exists has, as far as the laws of physics and chemistry are concerned, *the right to existence* if we take the adequacy of an expression of the laws of physics and chemistry as the ground of that right. That is quite a sensible ground. I cannot think of a better ground in fact. Everything that is not an adequate expression of the laws of physics and chemistry cannot exist and therefore has no right to existence. Everything that does exist is necessarily an adequate expression of the laws of physics

and chemistry, so that everything that exists has the right to exist (it sound a bit strange to put it like this, but bear with me). This is a good within the confines of force (*kracht*). Does it also hold within the limitless world of power, where anything is possible? In the first case we could simply say that me as a human being am an adequate expression of the laws of physics and chemistry and therefore have every right to existence: my existence as a human being needs no justification. As I am able to exist I have a right to exist. My existence is a good to myself and a good in relation to everything as an adequate response to the laws of physics and chemistry. But so is my handicapped neighbour. She too exists, is able to exist and therefore has the same right to existence as I have. Existence gives the right to existence. That is the implication of a good in itself. That is a useful ground: sympathetic. So how is it possible that people who arrogate power, are able to deny me and my neighbour that right? Well the simply can. If they are strong enough or can get help, they can take away my existence and deny me the right to exist. It is that simple. Can they justify that denial? To themselves no doubt. But let's go to the next step.

My existence requires me to interfere with the existence of other things in order to maintain my existence. I cannot persist in my existence without eating plants and animals. I cannot persist in my existence without using my environment for my purposes. If I use something, it will take a stand on being used. If the thing I am using is devoid of life, and is confined to the world of force (*kracht*) its stand will confine itself to being used within the limitations of its material form: a brick can be used well to build beautiful arches but it cannot do what concrete does. A drawing can do what a landscape can do but it is not a very interesting landscape, whereas a landscape is not a very good drawing but a fantastic thing to walk through. One cannot walk through drawings. When things are delivered to the limitless world of power (*macht*) it is different. At this level things can take a more sophisticated stand on their use. A horse can get upset and kick, a fly can try to escape, a chameleon changes colour, a lion growls and threatens. When life takes its exponential flight into the fully developed human brain things become really interesting. But even at the earlier level of life, use socialises.

Every use of the environment to persist in my existence is an act of socialisation. I cannot stop using the environment but I can understand that other existing beings might be transformed as a result of this interference. I can even imagine that beings much like myself might even

object to being used by me for my own maintenance. Suddenly existence is something that calls good into question, it articulates the world of existence into good and bad. Good becomes *relative* to neutral, or bad. This articulation has the result that we portray the world, make things take centre stage, abandon other things to the periphery or even allow things that cannot be seen at all to be where they please as we cannot see them anyway. In a situation where behaviour socialises, good is a relation between two existing things that have the capacity to transform each other into and out of various forms of existence.

By describing existing things in such a way that we are really saying that their existence is a good to them we have to acknowledge that relative to something else that good is not so certain. I might object to being transformed by someone else into something else. I might object to being used. Society is an answer to this problem. Society is a way we have discovered to give things a place and to regulate our interaction in such a way that the harm done is channelled as best it can. Society as such is a delicate affair, like civilisation. It needs constant love and care. It needs to find a way to deal with destructive forces, turning them to good, it needs to guard against too much good becoming bad through processes such as the resentment, etc. A society has as its objective to achieve fairness and stability. However, although it would be difficult to think of a situation in which fairness is not a good, after all, fairness is a stability reached when we all feel *well used*, that cannot be said for stability. Stability is not a good in itself when *used* by society to achieve stability for its own sake. It can become draconian. It can become subject to the process of resentment and as such undermine itself. It does not go all the way down, it can become a terrible obstacle to the very society it wishes to protect. A society as such is successful if it achieves stability in fairness. Success, is like the word good, a judgment which needs both an object and a subject.

Success is nothing unless its terms are settled upon by us. Success needs grounding. And stability for its own sake does not ground. What determines success? It is determined by the grounding of it against *a taste*, a well developed constellation of images that make up an image of the world that is desirable. At the same time, and this aspect provides a complication, the constitution of success needs to be situationally determined, like good, like beauty and like a small set of other metawords.

Success

Any species surviving in the situation it is in, is *successful* in a narrow sense of that word. Survival is the ground of *success* in evolutionary terms. A species stops existing in instances where success is not achieved. They lose their identity as entities and transform into something else. The world becomes quiet. Let's assume, for the sake of argument that there are two races on the world, a set {Bl} with blue eyes and blond hair and a set {Br} with brown eyes and brown hair. How are blond hair and blue eyes better? Well they are not in evolutionary terms because both exist, so they are both successful. One may be more successful in these narrow limits of the word success, if there are more of them. But again that is a point of view. We could hold a different point of view. Evolution does not have a point of view, survival is success. If a species dies out someone has to mind about that for it to matter. Minding belongs to the world of reflection not to the world of intimacy as George Bataille calls the world of unreflective life. It sounds strange, very strange, but the devastation being brought onto the world by ourselves, only matters to those of us to whom it matters. For the rest, no one and nothing cares. If we want to find a sustainable attitude to the world fully grounded on good thinking we shall have to do better than mere romanticism. The animals affected care of course. They have immediate problems they have to cope with, but they do not know of the cause, they merely stand perplexed.

Survival is something that evolution makes possible but it is quite unperturbed by dying, death or extermination, or indeed genocide. In fact those are some of its instruments to perform what it does. If we allow evolution a point of view for the sake of argument and define success in terms of surviving numbers we could safely say that bacteria, viruses, corn, wheat and rice are far more successful than people. But evolution doesn't have a point of view, it does not *care*; we do. And we should. It is our caring that is important. After all we are not autonomous beings, we are part of an ecology.

A situation is imaginable, created by people themselves, which is determined by their sense of what qualities are desirable in a society and what qualities are undesirable. If the situation is such that the set {Bl} is favoured over the set {Br} and if people with power are prepared to perform intentional selection on that basis then there will appear a greater prevalence of people with blond hair and blue eyes as long as the others are caught before they have had a chance to reproduce or if they are killed

off wholesale. The good to be achieved or the end served is here not questioned. It is merely a cold observation, trying to show up the complete nonsense of holding such an aesthetics. In a situation such as society creates, whereby we try to regulate good and bad in our socialised state we need to ground our good. And if we seize on being stronger as a good, the weak suffer. If we seize on technological development as being a good, we all suffer until we understand what we are doing and we can develop a technology that tries to regain the balance its earlier avater had lost us. We can seize on anything as *a good*. And the absurd goods we have seized upon in history are there for all of us to see. We could with equal logic, hold the view that society should be a place where we have to ensure everyone a dignified place and the chance to pursue their own good and acquire a fair share of the available goods. Why make our lives a misery, why make other people's lives a misery? There is absolutely no need to as long as we decide to behave in a way adequate to that purpose on an everyday basis.

Such an attitude could, in fact be very easily instituted. Why isn't it happening? I think the answer is simple: we do not really want it. We want something else; we don't even really know what we want and a *good life* is possible under all circumstances, as the admirable attitudes of people under a repressive regime have shown. We are the undetermined animal, we can overcome our own limitations and extend our possibilities, endlessly.

aesthetics and selection, [IF] {a} [THEN] {b}.

Whatever the chosen set of reasons for favouring one kind of behaviour or one set of people above another, selection occurs and a prevalence and privileging of one is achieved over the other. This privileging is dependent on the situation and, within the world of reflection, grounding. Selection dominates planning and design as much as it dominates evolution. Both planning and design are processes exploring possibilities and limitations and selecting among them. During the first half of the twentieth century, societal aesthetics in Europe (not just Germany) were such that Semitic peoples were thought by sizeable and powerful groups to be undesirable. This had all sorts of causes of which jealousy and rivalry and a deep-rooted dissatisfaction with society as it was, in combination with a muddle-headed way of thinking and a cunning exploitation of this muddle-headedness by others was helped and given direction by a very worrying interpretation of evolution, namely eugenics.

Does eugenics have a logic? Well yes, of course it does; an extremely tempting one. It is grounded on the idea that one sort of people are better than another. It is very hard not to see all the ways of doing things you have become used to and which have shown themselves to work, as better than other ways of doing things, that, from the point of view of the media at least, do not work. Why not think that our way of doing things is better? A Dutch satirical cabaret called The Flying Panthers (De Vliegende Panthers) has written a song about it which sums up all the reasons why white people think of themselves as superior, ending with the refrain that “we do not discriminate on the basis of colour, so the white race is superior.” (In Dutch this rhymes: kleur = colour and superieur = superior) The irony is obvious as is the message: it is hard not to fall into that trap and to go beyond paying mere lip service to the idea that this is not so and behaving well accordingly in concrete situations. Thinking through the actual behaviour that is appropriate to people being equal in worth and dignity requires either a basic irreducible conviction or some very sophisticated thinking and resolve. It is not achieved by merely declaring hopes and intentions.

It is at the same time quite easy to define something that is situationally better and to make the mistake of assigning this *situational* and *conditional better* the status of a *categorical better*. It requires sophistication to prevent yourself from unsituating your sense of good and bad, partly because there are kinds of behaviour that do appear to be universally admirable, advantageous or objectionable; everyone likes a winner. Experience gives us messages that can easily be interpreted in all sorts of ways. The idea that we all have the right to exist is not at all obvious when subsisting in a culture in which someone is constantly being made to feel either special or unwanted. As if to help this gravitational stratification of society, the selection of desirable characteristics is possible and works well. Beautiful people beget beautiful children, clever people beget clever children, what works for chickens cows, horses and crops, also works for people. Eugenic aesthetics privileges one kind of person above another on the basis of a feeling, but that feeling is narrowly conceived, it obeys a narrow aesthetics. It is guilty of unsituating qualities and making them more universally desirable, that is categorically desirable. The wonderful thing is that this is an arbitrary existential decision, based only on acculturation, on the habits of a cultural perspective. We can think and act differently. Eugenics rests on a situationally determined preference; change the situation and another aesthetic would apply, or change the aesthetics and another situation would emerge. Concepts of bodily beauty

are individually practiced within the context of a societal climate. They are culturally determined and stretch well beyond the individual. Norms of beauty come from societal discourse, come from the fact that societies assemble around specific points for discussion. The individual then decides upon his stand with regard to the issue. But that stand is not completely free, it is formed subject to societal pressure, peer pressure. Only through analysis, critique and practise can you free yourself from these pressures and make up your own mind with all the care you wish to invest in your thinking. To a large extent we share our idea of what a beautiful person might be. There are cultures where a person can be considered beautiful in many ways, others where this is more limited. A sense of what a beautiful person should look like is no doubt the product of evolution, through Darwinian selection or the complementary Baldwin effect. But even though it is deeply coded in our DNA and our methods of cultural moulding, there is no *necessity* to conform to it, once it has passed into the realm of conscious discourse. We can overcome anything that dwells in that realm and find a new, more sophisticated attitude. We do not have to conform to the habits of behaviour that evolution has thrown up through selection. We can enjoy its fruits: the rich variety of survivors and refuse to bow to its pressures to generate instinctive hierarchies of choice.

The job of aesthetics and civilisation is to stretch our affiliation to the world, well beyond the *I*, beyond the family, beyond the neighbourhood, beyond the nation all the way to the world as a whole without letting go of the parts that are dear to us, but placing them all the more carefully within a context that is better understood and better practised. It is our task to stretch our aesthetics beyond the accepted and to explore the avenues open to us, always keeping the rules pertaining to the society we want, before us and letting them help decide our action and our selective activity. That would be a truly mature aesthetics, one that can encompass our relation to the world as a whole through the generous placing of its parts. A racist's taste is simply a taste that has not been well practised or is being pursued for personal political ends, it is stingy, mean, ungenerous and primitive. When a racist accuses someone of being primitive, we should laugh in our fists for we know he is looking in the mirror. And if the racist merely dislikes foreign people coming here and taking *his* job, his racism is sloppily conceived; there are other issues involved, important issues, issues of fairness, society is clearly failing. These issues should not be abandoned to the problem of racism. The society a racist person conceives of in his visionary design of it, is based upon a limited image which leads to the absurd, an insincere aesthetics, a universalised parochialism, a categorical

situatedness. A racist is aesthetically uninteresting for he has determined his ground on the basis of ungenerous, unkind and untenable narrowly conceived local premises. Why, in God's name should someone with blue eyes and blond hair be better than one with brown eyes and dark hair? There is no argument from a properly Christian point of view; there is no argument from a Darwinian evolutionary point of view; there is no argument from an atheist or agnostic point of view, there is no argument from any point of view except badly rehearsed versions of the aforementioned mixed with a wrongly interpreted Hegelianism or Platonism and a banal cultural priming through the local imagery of things like angels and demons. Much of our mad history is the history of primitive aesthetics held by people worried and afraid.

If you think all this has nothing to do with planning and design then think again. Planning and Design are both forms of selection with the benefit of experience and reflection. The design of, for instance, housing which takes into account only their cost and price, only their method of production, or any other narrowly conceived leading idea, thus robbing people of designs in which the unfolding of daily life takes centre stage, is not just analogous to the ill-conceived aesthetics of social prejudice, it is an expression of it. It shows we have misconceived our priorities.

conditions and ground: [IF]/[THEN]

The problem of the logic of *evolution and design as selection* is always reducible to the formula:

[IF] {a} [THEN] {b}.

Logic can become very complex indeed, but at its basis there is always this conditional formula: [IF] {a} [THEN] {b} where {a} and {b} can *in principle* be anything at all even though their relationship becomes more compelling when borne out by experience. The cogency of the relationship between {a} and {b} is defined by the rules of the game, experience and/or the mad aesthetics of some societies. It is the foundation of all propositions and all logical formula's. What is extremely important and which is never forgotten in mathematics, but is quite readily forgotten in daily life is the [IF]. The [IF] grounds our thinking.

In order to discover the [IF] [THEN] of segregation as a planning or even design principle, for instance, you would have to interrogate the person holding a segregationist or (to make the example clearer) racist view. It

would, if conducted well, quite quickly show that any racist standpoint can only be based on a complete tautology whereby the racist would have to admit he is a racist because he simply *enjoys* being a racist and *enjoys* hating people of a different race or colour because it gives him a workable thesis. It is easy to differentiate people whose difference is right at the surface. It works. Every other *reason*, to be a racist can be relayed to a mistake of category. Say for example he was a racist because he found foreigners disgusting, one would be able to show him his own occasional disgustingness or that of his compatriots; we could show that disgustingness is not unique to the people he has selected for his disgust. We could show that disgustingness as a quality pertaining to a person can be shown to relate to someone's behaviour in specific situations and to not someone's full being; we could show him that his disgust is a concern for a way of being that cannot be accurately tied to race or colour and that there must be people of a different race or colour who are not disgusting according to his criteria and that therefore he has committed a mistake of category. He need not be a racist to dislike that what he finds disgusting. He minds about certain kinds of behaviour and should become a campaigner to promote another kind of behaviour rather than being content to be a racist. Racism is an absurd and somewhat lazy position in all forms of society. Racism is, when held onto despite all arguments against it, merely wilful. It may be situationally and culturally determined, it might be inspired by well-grounded fears, but as a reaction to these things it is built against a very shaky aesthetics indeed. This is not however, obvious to the person holding a racist standpoint, as I am sure he would not want to be exposed as the fool he is. Nevertheless, it is constructed by undisciplined thought against a taste that has not practised itself well.

Now racism is not an obvious problem for planners and designers, although they are directly affected by it in all sorts of ways and need to define their position with regard to it. However, it remains a useful example, because such argumentation obtains for most other positions we take up. It is a theme beautifully explored by Robert Musil in his three volume masterpiece *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*: things could just as well be different..

The problem of ground is simple: thought is built. It is built *with* something, *in* something, and *against* something. It is built by describing relations between terms which can only be known by their behaviour as we perceive it either in the everyday or through the help of science. All we have to go on are descriptions of behaviour, and this act description concerns itself

with relations. Thought is built by describing relations in the context of described relations, which have settled well and have been found compelling.

the double bind of the arbitrary

Much aesthetics determining the planning and design of our built environment is doubly wilful. People think of game rules as a defence against the arbitrary and thereby commit themselves to a double arbitrariness, a game of judgment and decision devised to cover the lack of certainty as to how to proceed. There is no intrinsic problem in this except that we can choose between all sorts of games, some of which are markedly more interesting and *better* than others when conceived to help relate human being to the experience of being in built space or when conceived to make human beings become a conscious part of a larger ecological network.

People tend to be frightened or dismissive of the arbitrary, frightened of the wilful and this fear can be forgiven as it is a clear sign that their actions and beliefs lack a satisfactory ground against which to form themselves. As I said, often this leads to a double arbitrariness: an arbitrary game to fill the gap where a grounded reasoning has not been able to gain a foothold, or where it has not been given the chance to do so.

Both in the planning process and in the designing process this happens when norms, values and priorities appear undecided and the unsettling luxury of freedom makes aesthetics turn in on itself and remove itself from the network of relations tying it to the world and human being. At this point aesthetics does not become involved with the useless as has often been argued, for this is impossible. The useless is just another way of being useful. The mode of existence of the useless is that it can be *put* aside or ignored. The useless is useful in helping us articulate our norms values and priorities. And do not begin to say that beauty is useless, for you would be contradicting most economic theory, value is created in the desirable, and what is desirable is part of aesthetics, even when we desire disinterested beauty as Kant and Ruskin did.

No what I mean is that the aesthetics of the planner becomes sensitive to resentment. Because the flow of reasoning is blocked or lost, because the frame of reference is lacking, because there is uncertainty about how an aspect can impact on the whole, he loses or cannot find the relationship

linking the his plan with its object. He loses the link with his purpose, or his narrower or immediate purpose loses its links with the larger purpose of placing humanity in the world. The same can be said of the designer, who might lose the link between the purpose of the neighbourhood, building, construction system, with the use he wants to design; he loses the link between the objective and the central question guiding his design, he loses the link between what he draws and his experience of the consequences of what he draws, or maybe he simply does not yet have that experience. He loses contact and begins to devise games, either to cover his panic or because he genuinely believes that he can permit his freedom. Good designers have these moments, but they know what to do without falling for the double bind of the arbitrary game to hide his arbitrary answer to the question.

Because we are socialised through our use of the environment everything we do, except our existence itself, needs to be justified. Everything.

When we are condemned to freedom and left without *a grounded feeling or argument* to decide the issue we should not devise a game to decide the issue: we have to go back to the question: what are we doing? Why are we doing it? Who are the users, the stakeholders, the affected, how do they play a role. What is my task. How does this task follow through in the various scales of the design? If we are building spectacle then let's retrace our path to the idea of spectacle and *design* that spectacle in all its facets; if we are building with brick then let's design *for* brick, if we are designing social space (of which spectacle is one form) then let's argue the design through from the point of view of the norms, values and priorities of the institution we are designing for *and* the society we are designing the institution for.

Now some aspects of design do not appear to be very important when measured against an image of what is desired. If a free and fair society is desired, how could a simple preference for straight lines over curved ones matter in the design of, say, a chapel? Surely chapels with straight lines and chapels with curves can be equally effective as places of silence and worship? (John Ruskin did not think so by the way, in a lecture on architecture given in Edinburgh in 1853 he half-jokingly *proved* that God was a Goth when designing nature by positing that if God had been Greek he would have made the waves of the ocean curl in a neat fret). Some things are important and some things, quite simply, are not...So the question as to how to approach design becomes *free*, that is, subject to

arbitration, subject to the arbitrary. But this freedom is very rare if you are a careful designer: the effect desired, the spatial quality desired must surely be the guiding light in the design determining all decisions from situation, orientation to spatial organisation, from materialisation to the tectonics of the detail, from construction and safety to the aesthetics of comfort and wellbeing. If something *appears* unimportant and ungrounded, it is that a compelling perspective on the issue is missing. It is worth trying to find that perspective.

Logic is brought to closure by feeling. And feeling is free, or at least *undetermined* by necessity. A decision *needs* the freedom to determine itself with reference to *a situation*. Situations *are always unique*. As such the feeling that a decision is *right* is given in the coming together of the factors to be considered that arrange themselves relative to each other in an order determined by norms, values and priorities. Society channels these and helps to mould us, helping us to assemble around relevant issues and taking a stand on them determined in part by factors coming from our environment. We ourselves spend our lives trying to find good ways to channel our feelings and thereby mould ourselves into definite shape. We determine ourselves and may force ourselves into habits of feeling. But this is us *doing things to ourselves* and has nothing to do with *logical necessity*, everything with the building of a taste. Logic's necessity confines itself to procedure to deciding what is legitimate and what is not legitimate when speaking on the basis of held premises: in other words it confines itself to the question of how legitimacy can follow from grounded premises coordinated in the body without organs of taste.

feelings

A feeling with which a decision process is brought to closure can transform itself with the help of understanding. Understanding legislates within the domain of feeling. It helps then to test each feeling for consistency and against experience and relates them to other feelings and ideas cherished. It helps to use explanations of the world to test our feelings about things, which curiously enough (we are after all talking about feelings...) is why science and the scientific plays such an enormous role in our thinking. The conclusions of science feel good, they feel solid and dependable.

Nevertheless a feeling is free in the sense that it is undetermined; it is free to decide with situations in the best way it can so that it can take account of all the influencing factors. In this way it helps to determine a situation

and the situation can help determine the appropriate feeling by its bringing together taste and available and relevant practical experience. This means that people with blond hair and blue eyes only have better genes if some idiot wilfully decides that they do and dares to act accordingly. There is no other empirically viable reason. Racism is an existential choice, a wilful attitude, decided on the basis of a simplistic taste taking account of a meagre frame of reference. Having said that we should not underestimate the joy people feel in hating something tangible. Whatever the case, I use the word existential here in its Sartrean sense whereby meaning is made of existence. We make meaning as we live our lives, in order to live it well in the situation we find ourselves in, in order to learn *how to use well*. Meaning is made of life. Life has no pre-existing meaning accessible to us except that of the culture into which we are born. In order to live life we need meaning to maintain ourselves and spend time maintaining meaning. To act according to a taste, according to an image of the good, according to an image of society as it should be *is always wilful*. The best we can do is channel this wilfulness by taking account of that which has proved itself *good or useful* in experience, by taking care of our frame of reference, by reasoning through our choices and by learning from our mistakes. Planning and design improve in heuristic process of learning and practise.

As such we can ground our design only against images we feel happy with and attempt to fit our means properly to their ends. [IF], for example, we feel that technology is a measure of civilisation [THEN] those societies with a highly developed technological basis are more civilised. But why should we feel that way? And how good a measure is technology of a civilisation? We could with more justification say that *reasonable behaviour* is a measure of civilisation so that those societies which encourage reasonable behaviour with all reasonable means at their disposal can be legitimately be called civilised. After all civility is a word that conjures up reasonable and considerate behaviour in a city, in a situation where people have to take account of each other. Technology does not. And yet has this very aspect not been the measure of civilisation throughout the nineteenth, twentieth and the first bit of the twenty-first century? Absurd! Looking around at what we have made of our world, there is not much reason to cheer. However, let's not be too glum, there is nothing that a human being cannot learn to overcome. Not even his evolutionary determination, not even his deeply rooted sense that technological progress is a good in itself not just because existence of everything can be described as a good in itself but because we feel that technological progress is good *in any conceivable situation*. We are the undetermined animal; we use our life to

determine ourselves. We make stories of our lives; that is our main product. That is why all ways of life involving the robbing of other people's freedom and the being unfair are wasteful forms of behaviour as soon as you critique society and the curious ways it connects values to things. These curious ways, need the constant critique of science, art and scholarship so as to steer society clear from becoming cruel and hateful.

Evolution is an operator that selects. It selects that which survives, that which gets there first or, when the power of reflection enters the equation it selects whatever is desired. Both intentional selection as well as natural selection have co-evolutionary effects, which can be considered for use when they appear. Uses and behaviour can suggest new uses and generate new behaviour. Something can be desired for the strangest reasons. Some people want to treat poodles like hedges so that poodles are then selected for their ability to resemble hedges. If that isn't strange I don't know what is. Alsatians are selected for some quality which has as its co-evolutionary product, the weakness of their hind legs; *authentic* Alsatians can be identified by the weakness of their hind legs! Is that not absurd? The same holds for the effects of natural selection which can be just as strange: the Peacock, the spider, the moose, you name it, wild lines of selection. The same goes for buildings and streets, squares, neighbourhoods and whole cities. What makes one successful and the other fail? Sometimes it is no more than an idea, a fashion, a whim. How can St Petersburg be a successful city? How did Mohenjo Daro fail? Why did they burn the library of Alexandria. Why do people like tall buildings?

The design of buildings, the design of building systems, constructions, processes, are all subject to a curious process of selection where intentional selection can be measured against experience and empirical testing. There is no difference between design and evolution. Design and evolution are both processes of selection exploring *the possible* and *the limit* for use. Evolution stores its experience in genes, design stores its experience in memory. DNA is memory, a building is memory. DNA is a blue print for a body, a set of drawings and specifications is a blueprint for a building, the designer has *learned* to design them.

I was talking to a composer the other day. A man whose compositions I enjoy. He described his method of composition and the way he was criticised. Oh, his critics said, so you do not have a plan, well then you cannot be a good composer, you cannot be a proper composer. A proper composer has a plan, a system, and intention. This composer also had a

plan but his plan was to compose and his method was to try things out. And he felt a little guilty and he said to me, well of course I don't sort of plan a cathedral and then go and build it. And I had to think about that. No that is not how he went about his business. But then what does planning a cathedral really mean? You see cathedrals were planned and built by bands of men who had a secret. They carried their secret from place to place and used it to build their cathedrals. That secret was how to build a cathedral, a knowledge. But with every cathedral they got better at building cathedrals. Not every cathedral ever built is an Amiens, a Chartres or a Reims. Each cathedral became more ambitious. Things went wrong and they tried things out and things went wrong again. They worked on a plan: they wanted to build cathedrals. That was their plan. They had a way of going about it, they had the knowledge skills and attitude, but they struggled to get it right, they had to learn and try things out, they had to build up experience of what worked. And at last they hit upon the limits of what was possible: Beauvais.

If you think about it, that is not so different from our composer. He composes using his immense experience, his way of doing things. His plan is to postpone definiteness and determination until things *feel right* and they feel right on the basis of his frame of reference, his taste, his experience and knowledge, his idea of what is good. And his music is very good, at least to me and a growing body of fans. How does this make one feel about his critics? Well, it is best not to think about them too much. They are only saying what they know, what lies in their idea of what is good.

It is important that we are fully cognizant of the need to identify *evolutionary success as a result of natural selection* very narrowly indeed: evolutionary success as the result of natural selection = survival. It is nothing more, nothing less. Anything broader will not work without us coming in and imposing our own grounded aesthetics, thereby socialising the concept of natural selection and making it work for our own primitive ends, making it useful to us. We do not want to go there again.

Planning and design work on the basis of intentional selection. Mind you, intentional selection has the habit of bringing with it rather a lot of unintended effects, making things interesting to say the least. The reason for this is that we simply do not have the frame of reference and the experience to make ends and means fit exactly. That takes learning and practise. Ends and means have a very sensitive relationship to each other,

the slightest shift in either can make processes spin off into infinity and create monsters. The meaning of success within the field of intentional selection is caught in container words such as the good and the beautiful, in all forms of affirmation. Such judgments are however situationally determined against a grounded aesthetics.

To make evolution behave according to a grounded aesthetics is to make it into a political instrument; it is to institute a program of selective breeding. It happens everywhere. When do we not select? We as living organisms are always selecting and rearranging. That is what we do. We do little else. Natural selection takes care of itself. We do nothing to influence its performance, it is always at work. Intentional selection is intentional for only a small part of its actual working. Much intentional selection carries with it natural selection in its wake. Any action we undertake for whatever reason, is selective on a number of levels. We might only be conscious of a few. But all selection has an evolutionary product: a modification of a situation demanding response in the form of further selection.

Evolution is response to a situation through selection. This is what we do as conscious beings, we respond to a situation through the selection among possible responses and thereby alter the situation, usually to what we think of as our advantage. That thinking has to be performed. We need to decide what is desirable and how best to achieve that desire. Thus our performance in a situation is part of evolution. We can desire anything.

Let's return to the thesis: $\{\forall q \in Q\} \sim \{\forall a \in A\} \sim \{\forall c \in C\}$

We experience the fact that some questions, answers and actions are more compelling than others in a certain situation. That is because they answer to our aesthetics when measured against our experience and our frame of reference. Patterns and sequences presented are recognised and accord with expectations. An aesthetics is to all intents and purposes dynamic *and* axiomatic; it has very little possibility for proof while it constantly transforms itself as experience is processed in practice. We have learnt to overcome our tastes to determine them and then abandon them again.

As we practise our aesthetics, our sense of quality, our sense of order grows into a body of interconnected ideas. It matures. We subject our image of the world to *theoria* whereby we seek out inconsistencies in the way it presents itself to us. We scrutinize our game rules against that

image and search out inconsistencies. And that is all we can do. This process of tidying does in no way guarantee a truth, it merely increases the cogency and compulsion of one's ideas.

The Canadian philosopher Bernard Lonergan came up with five educational imperatives with which we can exercise our aesthetics: I quote:

- Be carefully attentive. Attention is the act of consciously holding on to what is there. This means to observe things as they are. It is to perceive our experience clearly and accurately. "Look closely, that you may learn," (cognitive self-appropriation).
- Be broadly intelligent. This imperative commands us to understand the pattern of our experiences or the whole of our life within whose context the circumstances surrounding it are rendered meaningful. In practice, intelligence is the grasp of an issue in its entirety without being encumbered by its details. "Understand thoroughly, that you may learn," (metaphysical self-appropriation).
- Be fairly reasonable. This implies achieving a determinate evaluation of what needs to be decided on through critical discernment, out of the available choices. "Interpret circumspectly, that you may learn," (hermeneutical self-appropriation).
- Be socially responsible. This final command consummates the movement of the other imperatives of the dynamic structure of rational self-consciousness. It consists in bearing witness to the truth that one does. While responsibility for one's actions is the essence of human dignity, it is however ultimately oriented to and is perfected in one's responsibility for others. "Act truthfully, that you may learn," (ethical self-appropriation). (Centeno, 2007)

That is all we can do: be attentive, think things through, discuss them with others, test, practise and rehearse, place things in a wider context and do so with reference to the whole. Taste, and its critique, that is what you learn. You learn to develop your attitude, your taste, and you learn to develop it by subjecting it to the test of consistency, logic and experience. In fact that is what a lot of our course is about: practising taste and ensuring ways of realising that taste in built form while making sure that we act responsibly.

How does logic fit into this? That is where things become interesting. Logic furnishes the grammar of these activities. The binary operations of logic for

which formal symbolic language has been developed explain relationships between terms. Logic makes terms take account of each other. The logical is another word for fitting or not fitting very well, making the connection between the [IF] and the [THEN] more nuanced so that we can make vague statements like [IF] lemons [=] bitter [AND] I [EAT] a lemon [THEN] I [will probably not] do it a second time. However, [IF] I afterwards learn that lemons are *good* for you [THEN] I might ignore my slight distaste for their sour taste.

The logic of planning and design, which are very similar activities, speaks in aggregates of experience. It allows analogies and metaphors and speaks in the aggregates that human experience has to take account of things so complex, so involved. We talk in terms of apples and pears, in terms of beautiful rainbows and weather, in terms of picturesque landscapes and erotic shapes. Those are not simple elements. They are aggregates or presented stuff, unified by a name. But that name is a representation, an abstraction appropriated by thought so complex that its presence to us is revealed in our meeting the world, in the activity of sensory representation, calling on all or most of our senses and faculties simultaneously, even if they perhaps privilege one or two. Logic brings into relation and as such helps in the representation of that which presents itself, it tests the present, at our scale of being and must take account of our wilfulness. To be logical, with which I mean to be full of care as to one's technique of representation, so that the *feeling of a fit* occurs even at extremely refined levels of discourse requires effort. It is easier to be illogical or rather to be happy with a rougher fit. This makes Lonergan's advice all the more compelling, it is in that way that we can take good care filling in the [IF] and the [THEN]

Answers become more compelling if they appear to correspond to our experience of our being in the world. That does not guarantee their truth and truth has, in the attractive tradition of the pragmatists been relegated to a minor role of simple correspondence. Anything is true if it corresponds to an experience in the complete set of experiences. And something is true if it does not contradict something that is thought to be true. If it does, a battle of truth ensues. Either the extant paradigm has to give way or the new candidate for truth needs to retreat. Truth then is something only to be relied on provisionally and anything more is simply inaccessible to us. Note that Lonergan's imperatives are not truths or necessities, beyond the conditional [IF] {a} [THEN] {b} sort. His imperatives may be universally valid for everyone and may apply in every situation, but they do not have to be

applied by anyone. They are choices we make to improve our being in the world. [IF] you want to improve your being in the world [THEN] Lonergan's imperatives.

However, just because necessity and the absolute truth are inaccessible to us, does not mean we can be flippant and dismissive of the compulsive force of experience. On the contrary, if necessity and absolute truth were accessible to us, we would be allowed to rest, we would relinquish our freedom to learn and practise, to exercise our responsibility. Freedom of choice may be an illusion, in the sense that the understanding legislates within the world of practical reason. But we can choose not to learn so that many choices remain choices to be made in ignorance. If understanding did not help make our choices, there would be no point in exploring the world. Correspondence to and consistency within experience is all we have.

That is the game I play. I shall not waste my time looking for Parmenidean or indeed Heraclitean truths. My need for truth does not go beyond sentences like {the sun is warm right now} = T; My new pullover itches = F (I don't have a new pullover) If a Greek comes up to me and says "all Greeks are liars" I will not stand there perplexed and pretend a miracle of paradoxicalness has occurred. I will simply not believe him, for if I were to believe him he couldn't have spoken the truth. That is no paradox, it is a simple lie and in all honesty rather unworthy of my attention. Interesting games are about giving my life significance, about finding a good way to design buildings grounded on clear thought cleared of metaphysical, aesthetic and ethical nonsense, and not about playing cross-word puzzles with logic, at least not during office hours.

Answers are more compelling if they are consistent with the grammar of our way of speaking about the world. But there are issues here. Jacques Derrida, however you feel about his way of writing up his ideas, was right and excitingly so when he disclosed the grammatological assumptions of our way of speaking and the metaphysical hypostatisation that this constituted. In our way of speaking about the world we order it, and take account of the social implications of that ordering. That ordering is a product of our size, the scales we have access to and the method of access to the world. We create hierarchies of importance and status. These hierarchies are culturally determined but nevertheless lie deeply embedded in our language. Abstractions of the world, our way of speaking in opposites and giving those opposites a place in the syntax of our sentences, all reveal a world of coordinates that in fact say more about us

than they do about the world we try to speak about. That is true for the most objective seeming abstraction of analytical thought as it is for the incessant gurgling of a gossip. Derrida was also spot on when he analysed our ways of speaking in differences as revealing no real difference but hidden hierarchies of socialised being, revealing no more than small shifts in configurative repetition, differences not on the atomic or even molecular level but on the molar level of large aggregates of being.

Consistency can also be tested against experience. A sentence like: “red is a warm colour” of which variants are often heard in design studio, are legitimate. But what do they mean? They are not unconditional statements or unsituated statements. They require a kind of cultural grounding. We all know that colours are situationally determined as far as their significance goes. There is no necessary relationship between red and warmth. Red may well be warm in one situation and something quite different in another. Does this mean the designer is using his power of suggestion? Is he really using such a sentence as an imperative? Is he ordering things to be like that, on the basis of something he has once learnt to see that way? Is it the logic of the placebo? Does he believe that warmth will result from a quick adding of red? Surely not. If he does, he will be disappointed. Warmth is a complex quality. Red may help, but it will not do things on its own. What does warm mean? Warm is used as a metaphor for a quality of what... cosiness? Is that metaphor justified? Relying on such sentences in design in no way corresponds to a consistent exploration of experience. We would need to find a better reason. What about none at all. Something like Liebeskind’s reason is blunt, but cannot at least be refuted. I use red because I like it. I find it contrasts well with magenta, or green, or because I am not afraid of it, or it reminds me of my mother. Anything is preferable to cheap and narrowly conceived generalised psychology!

the strange logic of authenticity

If we invest words like naturalness and authenticity with authority it might be useful to make sure that these words can take that authority *all the way down*. With that I mean that the use of such a concept in forming an attitude should not lead to absurd behaviour. I have argued a little earlier that this is impossible, as words necessarily present a perspectival view of our world. A condition for such a concept *going all the way down* might then be that we keep the same clear perspective all the way down too. But we have to test that. When we investigate a concept like *authenticity* we need to take account of the conditions under which it can go as far as

possible and study the mess left behind forensically when it breaks down. The fact is that this is difficult because words, when used as a criterion of judgment begin to lead a life of their own. We are not always clear what it is they are meant to judge. This is especially the case with a word like authenticity which shows some very curious logical behaviour. This has something to do with the network of definitions that the word answers to; it also has to do with the life it has started to lead now that it has become such a central criterion of judgment in the service of all sorts of qualities. In fact it appears to have become a desired quality all by itself, without performing its service of *authentication* to other qualities. Surely that is strange if you start thinking about it.

The problem is that there is nothing properly authentic about anything because everything is authentic in some ways and not in lots of other ways. A duck is not an authentic cow, but it is an authentic bird.

Using the word *authentic* without precision quickly gets us into a terrible muddle. But what happens when we do use it with precision? Before we get in to all that, let's start at the beginning.

To judge something as authentic requires a definition of terms and their relations against which to measure that something's authenticity. But before we start worrying about the exact definition we might however want to ask ourselves *why* it is we should be so worried about something being authentic in the first place. Unfortunately we are caught in a circle here, as we cannot begin to ask ourselves why authenticity could be an issue for us before we know what it means.

What we do know, just by listening to others talk, is that it affects a lot of our thinking, especially in the design studio and not without justification. For if authentic means that something *is the real thing*, we shall want to know that what we are dealing with is *really* that what we think it is. With a pencil that is quickly decided, a pencil that does not work and behave like a pencil, is not a pencil; it might be a broken pencil in which case we can do something about it, but that is another problem. What about when we use the word authentic in a case, whereby we say: *that Georgian house is an authentic Georgian house*? What about the case where we say: *he is a truly authentic designer*? What about the case where we say: *that is authentic art*! We could also take the negative variations on that theme of course: *That is a fake Georgian house; he is a fake; that is not real art*! We want to

make sure things can be trusted to behave in the way we expect them to. But this legitimate concern has launched us into a perpetual game of cheat.

If trustworthiness is valuable but difficult to achieve without effort, it forms a challenge to those who, paraphrasing Oscar Wilde, have seized on the fact that it is quite easy to mistake value for price and who seek to profit by that knowledge by finding short-cuts to our trust and subsequently abusing it. With all this attention focused on the trustworthy it appears as if *the game of authenticity* has led to absurd behaviour in the sense that people have begun to value things for reasons that appear disjointed and unreasonable while they turn their back on things which might be just as deserving of their attention.

I shall argue that all *things* are documents of *something*. They cannot help being that. I believe *the problem* of authenticity lies in this fact. We have to ask the question: [IF] all things are documents [THEN] what are they a document of? Why can they not *be themselves*? But what does *being oneself* mean? Does it not mean that the thing is a document of a set of things that one groups together as constituting a self, a knot of relations? Does *being that self* not mean that we take into account that the determination of that self *as something* is perfectly reasonable as long as one remembers that *that determination done by us* is biased, partial and limited and that the thing *as a self* is always infinitely more than the determination of it in our mind? A pencil is a pencil to us, but it is also a piece of wood with a core of graphite, a thing of which a friend of mine is fond, the favourite implement of an artist I admire as well as an obstacle on the way of

If we get our thinking clear on this we will know how to prevent ourselves from mixing up what *things* can be a document of and getting us into trouble. I shall also argue that if we fall into the trap of privileging their being a document of one thing over and above their being a document of another thing we get into a special kind of trouble that does not appear to be very troublesome, but is all the more so. I shall also argue that authenticity works well as a concept when we have those things straight in our mind and that it works very badly if we make a mistake of category and make a mess of what it is we are looking at and what we decide to value for what reason.

The word authentic has a telling etymology. In the first instance it means *authoritative* from the old French *authentique* coming via the Latin from

the Greek, ἀθεντικός, (authentikos) meaning *authoritative, original, genuine, principal*, which itself comes from *authentēs one acting on one's own authority*. In other words the authentic are those who *act upon their own authority*. (In Latin *authentā* means chief prince) That is an interesting discovery. But these people who take responsibility for their own actions, who seek out their responsibility in a situation are, as we shall see, least helped by the cult of authenticity. *Authentes* comes from *autos* or *self* and *hentes* *doer, being* which creates the connection of the authentic as *self being* or *something being itself*.

the problem of a duck being a duck

Authentic as meaning *entitled to acceptance as factual* is first recorded in English during the mid 14th C. Authentic then implies that a thing corresponds to fact and is not fictitious: it is genuine. This sense of authentic means *real and therefore trustworthy*. We are not being fooled that what we have in front of us is something other than what we think it is. Another variation on the same theme is slightly more problematic as it says that authenticity or *authenticity* means *identical to the original*. That would make a *perfect copy* eligible for authenticity. The real philosophical question to be addressed with regard to the problem of authenticity in this sense is *the problem of the duck*.

When is a thing *not* itself? If a thing is so much like what we apparently want it to be like, when does it become that thing? A diplomat is reputed to have given the following practical advice to the person he was advising: *if it looks like a duck, swims like a duck and sounds like a duck, it is probably a duck*. It is a delightful palliative against all mistrust and abstruse argumentation and one that I heartily take as my motto when confronted with such problems.

Mind you, what about those abstruse arguments? What happens when a *fake duck* starts becoming more and more like a *real duck*? When do we stop caring about the distinction? The more something becomes identical to something else, the more the argument of authenticity becomes lame. It is in fact a way of looking at the issue which corresponds to the artificial intelligence problem as posed by Alan Turing: If a computer and a human being can no longer be distinguished from each other in conversation, then surely the computer is authentically *intelligent*. So Alan Turing refreshingly turned the problem around. The real problem of authenticity is not the real versus the fake; it is how good the fake is relative to the thing *we call*

real. And if the two are indistinguishable, then what purpose does the distinction serve?

With regard to something *being itself* we might ask: What is not itself? Is a lie not a genuine lie, is a fake duck not a genuine fake duck? Everything is at least itself, surely. However the problem of the authentic is that things claim a reality as something else while they are not entitled to such a claim. Or rather, that sentence puts rather too much responsibility on a thing that may not have the power to do that. Let's put it this way: a thing can, on the basis of its behaviour, raise expectations that can be disappointed. It *pretends* to be something it is not, or we experience it as something that it is not.

Why is it so awful for a fake duck to be taken for a real one? You would need to ask the real duck that sees a fake duck swimming in a pond upon which the rifle of a hunter is aimed. That example is obvious. But with regard to matters that do not affect life and death, freedom and fairness, it becomes a rather different issue altogether. No *fake* painting by Mark Rothko can ever be or become a real painting by Mark Rothko, as the accepted definition of a real Mark Rothko is that he painted it himself. A real Mark Rothko is however, very difficult to distinguish from a fake Mark Rothko. Mark Rothko made fantastic works of art, but they are not hard to *fake*. If the fake is *as good* as the original, what is the big deal? Who are we fooling? The market? Bugger them! Unless of course you care about such things and are looking to invest your money for profit. But imagine for a moment you are not. Perhaps the fraud is a mark of disrespect to Mark Rothko himself? Rothko is dead of course, but even those who care about his name and reputation might legitimately object. They have a point. After all why should Mark Rothko be held responsible for authorship of works of art he did not make, even though he inspired the fakes that are under discussion? Mind you if Mark Rothko's weren't so interestingly expensive and if that part of the art world weren't so obsessed with money, people *doing a Mark Rothko* would no doubt be more willing to own up that they merely copied his *style*.

It is much more difficult to make a fake Ingres or Vermeer. The *real* Vermeer may have a vibrancy and patina that is lacking from the fake, but if the fake were to have it too, what would happen then? Is a fake that lacks something of the original not just merely *a bad fake*? It might be interesting at this stage to ask what would happen if authenticity were not an issue for society; if indeed the idea of originality were not an issue.

Would we then merely commission an expert craftsman *to do a Vermeer*? And would this painter-craftsman not be proud of his *ability*? Maybe he is already. However, authenticity and originality *are* issues for society, and that is not a bad thing in itself but it does beg the question why they are an issue for society. It appears that the concern for price has pushed aside the concern for other ways of expressing value. Authenticity certainly matters when there is money involved. The concern for authenticity helps direct and boost a market in which quite simply a lot of money is exchanged on the basis of a *feeling*, a magic aura.

That magic aura is worth investigating. What happens when something is *authentic*? Works of art are documents *of something* and *they are themselves*. They are documents of something that can be trustworthy or untrustworthy and their value as documents is affected by their trustworthiness. That would appear obvious. And when something is a document of something we need go no further. But what about documents that are documents of themselves? What does being itself mean? That means that they are things, entities growing an infinite knot of relations. Their documentary function remains, as such, unspecified and undetermined. It means that they can be anything and everything.

the mona lisa and my love for her

Robert Hughes, taking his cue from a rather flat reading of Walter Benjamin, suggested that the Mona Lisa has lost her magic because she has become an icon and thus been reproduced *too often*. Here the problem is clear. *The fact* that she is an icon and loved by many and has been reproduced so often, is taken out on her. We take our revenge on teh reproducers, by devaluing here as an image. Imagine that! I would reply to this: *What nonsense! She is still as lovely as she has always been. If we are experientially so poor and badly practised as to let her popularity and ubiquitous presence get in the way of her loveliness, it is we who should be pitied as unable to overcome such trifles*. In other words I have turned the problem around. I have removed the social context of the painting in my appreciation and thus reclaimed responsibility for what *I find* by establishing my own relationship with the work. This does not happen by itself. I must work to overcome her popularity and her ubiquity by placing those qualities carefully, and considering their effect. Her place in society is merely a challenge to me, only an obstacle to be overcome by putting that obstacle in the proper perspective and reclaiming responsibility for my own appreciative skill.

However, seeing *the real one* gives a *real buzz*, something that a poster cannot easily match. A visit to Paris is, for me, incomplete without a happy pilgrimage to the Louvre to see her and to reaffirm my ties. But what is this buzz? Where does it come from, and how is it constituted? Where does that magic aura come from? There are a number of candidates and they appear to be working together: the cultural *setting* that creates an expectation; the painting as a document of *history*, it is old and as such it links us to a man, its author, for whom we have an enormous reverence; it links us to a time for which we feel reverence. We are no doubt sensitive to the theatricality of her presentation: the architectural setting, the heightened sensibility as you enter a crowded sweaty room in which so much attention is focused on this one painting; the delight that, for a short moment as the museum has just opened, you are the only one to have her all to yourself if you run fast enough without arousing suspicion. Perhaps, as René Girard argues, we have a special sensibility for that which is desired by others? And as she is so desired, we feel compelled to check her out. But all these appear to be peripheral to the work itself. What is a work itself? Is it its size, its material presentation to our senses, the intellectual representation of the virtual space; the composition; the use of colour; the resultant representation of an expression; the skill with which a face is presented to us, the narrative quality of that face, its psychological ambiguity, the fact that she is not a real person sitting there? I don't know. It is all that and much more.

What role does her authenticity play? Would we feel disappointed if we had been fooled, if she were not by Leonardo, if she were not a renaissance painting, if she were not presented in such a theatrical setting? How can we in fact trust that this Mona Lisa is *the real one* that we are looking at? I can't say I would blame the Louvre if it turns out that it had replaced the original with *a very good fake*. Would I be allowed to check her authenticity if I demanded to do so? But how would I do that? Do I know anything about such things? Of course not. Nor do I want to know anything about that. I am happy to trust those who make that their interest. I love the Mona Lisa, not her authenticity as a social or technological document, not her pricelessness. They may contribute to my set of feelings about her, but they are never by themselves responsible for that feeling. I love her for the very reasons that her authenticity and her pricelessness have become an issue. It is a very good painting with a great story to it. That is the basis of her status as an icon. And that status makes her *even more* interesting, it makes her into a virtual superstar. Everything about her is extraordinary. She is the centre of a rhizoid network of

relations that stretches over the whole world, a fantastic chamber of resonance in which we hear the strangest echoes of our culture. I would be small and weak indeed if I could not overcome the disappointment that I am not the only one who thinks her extraordinary, even though such a thing might well give me a cheap sense of satisfaction which I would not be above admitting to.

But how much of a role does her realness play? Is she only to be appreciated as a document of history? As one of the summits of Renaissance cultural production? Is she only to be appreciated because it was the amazing Leonardo da Vinci, genius and polymath, *uomo universale*, who painted her? Is she only to be appreciated because we are not sure who she was? Are we only intrigued by the fact that she may, at a stretch of the imagination, present a kind of cross-dressing self-portrait of a man who may have wanted to be a woman at some point of his life? (And who hasn't ever toyed with the idea of being of the other sex?) We attempt to diminish her when we determine her fascination by investing it in any one of the many qualities she allows in our attempt to build a relationship with her. In this attempt it is not her we diminish, we diminish our capacity for experience as we narrow our appreciation to a particular determination of that appreciation. She, like a human being, is so much more than just a Leonardo da Vinci, an oil painting, the first three-quarter portrait, a magisterial piece of Renaissance work, a mysterious woman, a story. She is all these things together in a fantastic synthesis of the world and our experience of it and so much more than just any one thing.

But what role does her realness play? It plays a role in that I trust what others have told me. Their judgment is *authoritative* and I accept it even though I would never be able to distinguish the real thing from a very good fake, so what do I do? I trust everything is alright, and in the act of trust, the issue of her authenticity is silenced and plays no further role in my appreciation. But I cannot deny that it would should some story surface that made it compelling for me to believe that I had misplaced my trust. But what would happen? I would become disappointed, I cannot deny it. I would try to exercise my disappointment and inquire into it. What exactly would my disappointment focus on?

Something like this has happened with the works of Rembrandt. When a committee of experts decided that some seminal works hitherto thought to be by Rembrandt were in fact by his school, the first reaction was immense disappointment. Immediately the works were devalued, were re-

hung in another place in the museum they belonged to. And then, as we decided that it may not be a *real Rembrandt* but it is nevertheless a very good painting the phrase *school of Rembrandt* gained in value. What has thereby been accomplished? Have we not fooled ourselves that it is the name Rembrandt that matters by itself? Have we not underestimated our critical acumen, our ability to overcome that which gets in the way of the full painting as a knot of possible relations? Have we not finally decided to act *on our own authority* as princes, by addressing the painting formerly thought to be a Rembrandt and reassessed it on *its own terms* (all those things that also matter) now that the one of its relationships, that of its illustrious author, has snapped? It obviously is not the name that *really* matters; it has no exclusive right to appreciation, it is merely one of the bricks in a larger construction. If push comes to shove we are quite able to re-evaluate the object under consideration unfettered by the construction of expert authority and authentication. The name Rembrandt has, rightly, come to stand for a class of objects of which the expectations are high. But it turns out we cannot fully trust the name attached to the painting. This *untrustworthiness* luckily redirects the responsibility invested in the name for the appreciation of the work of art back to us. We shall have to make up our own mind about the polish rider and the man with a helmet.

The appreciation of a work of art cannot be fully met by the problem of authenticity of authorship. Authenticity is never itself a proper criterion of appreciative judgement. In making it so, you put the cart before the horse. Authenticity is an instrument with which trustworthiness is measured. Trust is important, but not to determine whether you like something or not, surely. Or rather if you decide you like things *because* you can trust them, you get yourself into a muddle: I can trust a thief to steal; I can trust a Rembrandt to be a Rembrandt, and then what? As such using authenticity as a concept in appreciation it becomes part of the tautology of judgment coming home. This is how it works in a sort of simplified schema: We value a work of art, ask who it is by, find more works of art by the same person, and find they have that quality too. This person who produces such fine works inspires others and the issue of authenticity crops up. Is it a real Rembrandt, or is it by one of his pupils, admirers, or is it by a fraud who wants to earn money? As the quality of the works of these different manufacturers of *Rembrandts* approach the standard set by Rembrandt himself, the less the problem of authenticity ultimately gains a foothold in critical appreciation: a good painting is a good painting in the eyes of those who judge paintings as paintings. And if a genuine but mediocre Rembrandt should exist, it would certainly qualify his reputation. If

imitations were mediocre *by definition* authenticity would be a big issue. But what is it we are doing? We are taking one aspect of the painting and letting that decide others. Those who judge paintings as documents of an author and those who judge paintings in terms of exchange value are concerned with the work of art *as a document of some societal process*. They are concerned with the work as a commodity of social exchange. That is fine, but it is something altogether narrower than a consideration of the work as an undetermined and undeterminable knot of possible relations. They determine the work of art and make it finite for the purposes of exchange, insurance or status. That is where the role of authenticity comes into its own. But there is so much more.

branding

Our desire for authenticity may have originated in a craftsman's culture, where quality was a stamp of the craftsman who had *the technical ability*. In the age of mechanical reproduction that aspect was put under pressure. Curiously enough, the fact that industrialised production removed the problem of qualitative differentiation in goods, ultimately became a problem, leading to *branding* which is the attempt to make authenticity and its tendency to make value increase also work for industrially produced products. As a result of the ease with which identical products are made, their specialness has to be manifest not in the first place by the technical skill with which they are designed and manufactured, although this certainly plays an important part, but by the issuing of a certificate, a label, which in fact becomes that which is trusted and becomes itself the prime object of desire. Branding is an attempt to cash in on the culture of craftsmanship: the product is now industrially (re)produced, each one is identical to the other, but these identical products are grouped with a label which claims specialness or quality for the product whereby it gains an extra value. By being branded they acquire the magic aura of authenticity, even though they are all copies of a concept that has itself no other reality than a set of drawings and instructions. That is clever. Fakes of these brands attempt to cash in on the added value of the brand name. This short cut to increased value, by stealing the brand and putting it onto products which are easier and cheaper to produce and which tend to be qualitatively inferior to the original copies, is disastrous for the original brand. Inferior versions of the brand diminish the brand, while products which carry the brand name without actually being made under the auspices of that brand, cut away at the brand's owner's ability to make profit. It is not authenticity that is at issue with branding, but the fact that

the factory name misses income from people profiting illegitimately by the brand and the fact that the company sees its brand being put under pressure by *bad imitations*. Good imitations would be less of a problem, with regard to the qualitative stability of the brand and even less of a problem for profits as good imitations would cost more to make and therefore be less competitive.

So, authenticity is a means to increase profits, because it matters to the people who care about brand names. Who cares about brand names? My children certainly do. Why? Because they have not thought through and overcome the process, described by René Girard, whereby we desire what others desire as an evolutionary short cut to the acquisition of useful goods without having to do all the preparatory work and experimentation to make and perfect useful things, but more about this later. The success of branding is an example of cashing in on what could be described as *the appendix of evolution*.

addiction to authenticity

The authentic as such, is a very curious kind of magic. It is peripheral to the appreciation of the object under scrutiny, but central to our means of socialising that object, making it part of our culture. Authenticity is an instrument whereby we measure trust and distrust. When trust becomes an issue, authenticity becomes an analogue of the quality of *goodness* that has begun to lead its own life as it makes a work part of the culture it is affected by and which it affects. Its authority allows use value to be reduced to one aspect of itself namely, exchange value. Making exchange value central to the social and communicable experience of art. After all, we have all experienced the *amazement* on hearing the monetary value put on a van Gogh or a Mondriaan. It raises our eyebrows and makes us feel *something*, whatever that something is, disgust, resentment, jealousy, admiration, affirmation some socialised feeling, that is a feeling that makes us take a stand on an aspect of society or our social involvement. When we have eyes for the authentic, we have eyes for the social working of an object. The object becomes an expression of (someone's) authority. We as it were invert the relationship between the object and society, its environment. We put the environment at the centre and relate the object to it. The object socialises us in our determination of the object. We judge it as part of a social construction. If we feel happy or unhappy about that, we are territorialised in our stand with regard to society and take a socialised view. If we accept it but can distance ourselves from this fact, we

are deterritorialised by realizing there is more to a work than exchange value. If we are territorialised it is a manifestation of the culture of debt whereby commercial activities from *drug dealing* to *the financial working of expertise* encourage dependency, the relinquishing of responsibility and the formation of debt. In our desire for the authentic, we relinquish our own ability to judge, and give it to the expert, in whose debt we are. We allow ourselves to become dependent on the judgment of others. Experts can command higher prices because of our helplessness. Is this in itself a bad thing? I personally do not like dependency although I recognize the fact that I cannot be an expert in everything. Here as elsewhere, it is not the thing itself which is evil, but its abuse: the abuse of knowledge, expertise, status and position. Such processes should be made to answer to the aesthetics and ethics of the fair.

making value, a lesson in metaphysics

To summarize then: the process of acquiring value surely goes something like this: A thing is made; it moves people and acquires a reputation; it is then placed in a special setting and surrounded by care to heighten its auratic charge and to safeguard it from harm. As such it assembles yet more attention and care as the work spirals in value, which makes it worth putting it in an even more special setting. When it has acquired enough value there are others who want to profit from this value. They do *a thing*, a trick; they make *a fake* and hope it comes off. They hope it will not be found out. If the trick does come off, they are richer and they laugh at the world they have managed to fool. If it does not, we, the world, feel scandalised, tricked and cheated as well as a little proud of the fact that we saw through their scheme. But of what do we feel cheated, and why do we feel proud of having uncovered the cheat? *Has it to do with realness?* No! It has to do with the fact that its value has come under discussion and realness is just one of the ways that value is determined. In purely critical terms, when exchange is not an issue, the authentic need not be an issue for art. A good work will win us over on its own terms (with which is meant all those possible ways of determining the object in relation to you the undergoer). Goodness has an infinite number of modes and attributes. And when a work *meets* the attributes we are seeking, then that is what makes a good painting special. That is what makes it acquire value. The definition that something is real and *therefore* trustworthy, is appealing as it allows us to trust the work and lets those issues which are at issue when authenticity is an issue to affect us positively, also it sets us free to explore more attributes of the work, allows us to focus on other things. It has

certainly encouraged a lot of investment in authentication and fraud. But it is just as possible to overcome the need for authenticity and find appreciation in another way.

As a critical concept, authenticity works badly as a criterion of artistic or experiential quality; from the point of view of artistic appreciation it quickly leads to absurd behaviour whereby the object under scrutiny is made to say things about the society it is a part of. It is made to say things about that which it is not. This is true whether the object under scrutiny is *authentic* or whether it is a *fake*. As soon as the issue of authenticity is brought up it is that aspect which it is made to reflect. *It can no longer be itself* as an undetermined object. It is exclusively seen as a reflection of the other, of that which is at issue. In other words the issue of authenticity makes things into documents of something else. It is an instrument to measure trust and works well as such. An aesthetics of authenticity and an ethics of authenticity will give you criteria to define and achieve and measure the authentic, but with the authentic you have only achieved the ability to trust something to behave according to the expectations it calls up by what it says it is.

We have a three-way relationship with authenticity. We have the thing or the work; that which it is a document of, and a first person singular who is undergoing the the thing within the context of his experience. As a work it is always itself, always authentic and demands attention on its own terms. As I have argued earlier, being itself really means a state of being undetermined, of not having been made into a specific object of use. As a document it acquires determination, it becomes a specified object with *a* use; it becomes part of society at large and the issue of authenticity can become important, for if it is a document *of* something, the authenticity of that document has to be trustworthy, has to be verifiable. And then there is the first person singular. He takes a stand on things on the basis of his experience, his frame of reference, so that the question is: what does he find important? Both the work in a state of indeterminateness and as a document are perfectly legitimate states of the object. The problem arises when the document state, the determined and objectified state, begins to legislate over the undetermined *thing* or *work*. That leads to absurd behaviour. How can the fact that the same painting at one time thought to be by Rembrandt, and *brilliant*, suddenly be seen as mediocre when it is shown no longer to be by Rembrandt? If that is not absurd, I don't know what is. But the absurdity comes from the fact that the determination of the object *holds sway* over us. And while it does it is hard not to confuse

the determined thing as an aspect of the full thing for the full thing *itself* a state whereby it can accommodate an infinite number of other determinations besides the one that holds sway.

products as social documents

When things are seen as documents of society, authenticity plays a central role. The issue of socialisation is crucial in any society, and if that sounds like a tautology it is not. In every act of communication as an act of socialisation authenticity is, for example, a core issue: can I trust what he is saying, can I trust the message he is sending out about himself? Take the problem of *having a past* as a social instrument of advancement. In a society where filial ties and upbringing matter, having an appropriate past is of value: we use our past to provide us with an echo chamber of our being. In some societies a *good* past, a *good* background, a *good* upbringing, a *good* status may serve a political purpose within a society that sets a value on such things. As a result it becomes profitable for the ambitious to fake their past in order to try to *belong* to the elite. It is an understandable and, as far as I am concerned, even forgivable kind of fraud in such circumstances. After all if a society is so rigid, pompous and stifling as to give no room to the talented, then surely it is not only not surprising that it is punished by being forced to give room to the talented through a cheat, as well as to the authentic upper crust. All others fall by the wayside, which is sad enough. You could hardly blame the cheat for trying his luck in such conditions.

At the same time you might wonder why you would want to be a member of such an elite. But that is precisely the point, such societies do not allow people to operate on their own authority, they make your contribution to society incumbent on things over which you can have no control. They do not respect people's freedom to pursue their own good: do not allow people to be judged on their own terms and so they are dependent purely on external factors. In such an environment authenticity becomes a particular issue. People need to acquire the paraphernalia of their past, in order to prove their qualifications. The whole of Europe worked along those lines until after the Second World War and parts of it still do. People in such societies are documents of that society rather than people in their own right. They are determined and their determination is privileged over their indeterminate being. Social advancement is a legitimate political and an economic purpose, it is a way of surviving the world. Perfectly reasonable people will do what it takes to achieve it, by fair means if

possible, by foul means if treated unfairly. Social advancement works the same way as the art market in this sense.

technological documents: a building

Just now we were concerned with authenticity as a form of social control in a *badly designed society*. It would also be interesting to think through what would be good practice on an individual level and on a collective level as well as on an environmental level in a *well* designed social environment such as that *designed by John Rawls*. Here authenticity would also play an important role. We would have to consider the freedom of ourselves and others in every decision we make and thus build up a new tradition of good practices that we can invest with a measure of trust. Design would play a huge *social* role in this. Assuming that technology would play a central part I would like, at this stage, to inquire into what the role of authenticity might be when considering documents of technology. That is all possible works that say something about the way they were made or about making in general.

The past is valuable as a *repository of experience*. Products and processes of the past (long ago and extremely recent) are documents. While building up a repository of good products and good practices for a Rawlsian society, in which the two guide rules of freedom and fairness are used as measures for our legislative, social and technological activity, the past is searched for what is *good* and *not good* to desire as measured *against* that image. The authenticity of experience serving the politics, legislation and economics of a society that forgets itself with regard to freedom and fairness, a society that views social advancement and wealth creation purely in terms of money and personal power would be a very different one than an authenticity of experience that serves a Rawlsian society, where freedom and fairness are used to *decide* every action. The past as a repository of *authentic* technological experience is invaluable to a society allowing freedom and demanding fairness as it gives us that which we can trust and measure adequately against that image gradually removing the kind of freedom that is merely disguised uncertainty and arbitrary caprice.

When we undertake a design and want thereby to transform an existing situation into a situation we would prefer, all we have is trust and hope. So we are reliant, without giving up our independence, on that which we can trust to be so. We do not allocate our trust lightly, we have our game-rules for dealing with experience. There is a big role for authenticity; it helps us

to trust our expectations with regard to the behaviour of what is at hand. Authenticity may have all the meanings listed above, *as long as the word is used to apply to experience and grounded on an image of what we desire*. Authentic experience with regard to technology is trustworthy experience concerning the behaviour of things in a particular context allowing us to *use things well*. A good use would be a use whereby the means are grounded on an image of society worth striving for. It has to be said that authentic experience can be used to build a society along the lines of Rawls, but it can just as easily be used to help build any other kind of society. There is no necessary connection between authentic experience and a kind of society.

What about the built environment? What about specific buildings or architecture? These things are works of art, (indeterminate documents), social documents and technological documents. A *style* of architecture belongs to architecture as *a social document*. Style is a way to determine authorship and determination in space and time. It is also what an author *owns* in the sense of a *specific way of doing things*. To say: *I don't like classical architecture*, or *I don't like modern architecture* or *I only like classical architecture* is to say something whereby your taste shows itself to be thoroughly socialised, thoroughly territorialised by social concerns or, alternatively it shows you are not yet very well practised at appreciation. A style, like authenticity, cannot direct appreciation by itself without leading to the absurd. There are very poor and mediocre classical buildings. Would you include them in your sweeping statement? Or is it that you like the fact that mediocrity does not shine through quite so easily in a language of architecture such as the classical which, in the design process confines itself to the combination and configuration of brilliantly conceived elements designed a long time ago? But then you would have to acknowledge that your taste is a defensive mechanism against the deadening effects of mediocrity and not a reaching out towards the excellent. Appreciation may begin with elementary observations but it grows into a sophisticated machine and requires above all that the object under scrutiny is also taken on its own terms, i.e. its infinite indeterminateness. The constant search for what else it might be a document of.

But let's return to the question of the authentic and pose it by relating it to the issue of style. If we look at Georgian buildings and look for the qualities we like in them, and we try to describe those qualities, then why would a fake Georgian house be less *authentic* as a Georgian house with those

qualities than an original work? Why is a historicist building less than a historical building? Or why is a building influenced by qualities that are to be found in eighteenth century buildings less than a building influenced by more recent ideas? There is no answer to this which does not lead to the absurd, or which cannot be reduced to a wilful taste: a taste that would want to improve itself the moment it discovered its own limitations. A style is a document of belonging because it is also a document of a *way of doing*. Anything patterned by a way of doing *belongs to the set of things* done in that way. A style is something that shows a generalised pattern of qualities that other things in the same style also shows. What is more special about an authentic Koolhaas than a building by someone who has been brilliantly inspired by Koolhaas? With a genuine Koolhaas we have learnt to expect something. With an imitation our expectations may not be great. But that is all we can safely say. To go further down would be hazardous. I know fantastic buildings inspired by the work of Koolhaas, I know mediocre Koolhaas buildings. There are pretty mediocre Georgian Houses, bad ones even. Many of them have been got rid of over time, so that we now have a wonderful selection left. A historicist is perfectly legitimate in wanting to achieve the qualities of a good Georgian House. He has no responsibility to *his era* unless we make that part of what society is about. But what kind of society is historical authenticity a part of, surely a society that practices snobbery to privilege a past or a lack of it? It is a fussy society. The modernist dictator is equally culpable as the historicist dictator. Both make authenticity of style an issue when in my society, where freedom and fairness are an issue, historicism and modernism are both fine as long as they are critically employed to achieve qualities that we deem desirable: good bodily experience in public and private space. Historical authenticity with regard to style cannot play a role in my image of a good society. I have to confess that I like Koolhaas *and* the qualities of a beautiful Georgian House as well as those of a Dutch seventeenth century house. What is wrong with that? A good fake Georgian house is so well faked that it passes for a real Georgian House. It does not bother me in the slightest as long as it enriches my experience of space and activity. A House that merely wants the qualities of a Georgian House may not look like a Georgian House at all, while it may still be *heavily inspired by one*. Is there any harm in that? Is that *lying*? That is not lying. It is merely a case of wanting something and being prepared to dress up accordingly. It is a question of theatre, of wanting to live a dream, of escape. What is wrong in that? "We have to live in the real world" you say. What *real* world is that which you would have us all live in? The world in which it is legitimate to dream, to escape the horror people make for themselves? What if the real

world holds no charm for someone, should we not let him escape for a while? There is no harm in that, surely? All such a person should do is make sure his escape is not achieved at the expense of others, who might suffer by it. Let's take another argument. *Ugliness is unforgivable*, of course, but what exactly is ugly? Are fake things ugly? And do you not find that the ugly is merely a heavier kind of beauty, which is difficult to keep up for long? There is no logic to authenticity that is not given it through our reading of experience. My charge is that most reading of experience is narrow, ungenerous, and arbitrary. No life is intrinsically better than another life. No work of art is intrinsically better than another work, it acquires that betterness from the ground against which it projects itself, against the construction of views and opinions it is measured. That is also true for the Mona Lisa and the Girl with a pearl Earring. But, I don't mind most of that construction. I like it. I have no grudge against society. I need society. I enjoy society, even its foibles and its elaborate theatre. I don't even mind its wonderful idiocy regarding value.

A thing is only ever made better through design [IF] we establish a ground against which to measure that life. And it is precisely there that we have to be extremely careful what we allow and do not allow. Acceptable grounds against which to measure that sense of *better* have been given us throughout history. Aristotle gave us a way in his Nicomachean ethics, Jesus Christ did by offering us his cheeks and his slogans on enemies and such, Spinoza did with his call to love God-who-is-Nature, Kant with his judgments after a few qualifications, Nietzsche, very carefully read, John Stuart Mill when read generously, Charles Sanders Peirce with his genius for sorting out a philosophical mess, A.N. Whitehead with his Wordsworthian ideas, Heidegger and Sartre read selectively, Benjamin with his insights and Gilles Deleuze when you finally understand what he is saying, and John Rawls. There are many more.

Part VI: The question of aesthetics

how we can desire well

There are several strands of the argument to be followed here. To begin with I want to deny that aesthetics can concern itself only with particular kinds of experience or particular aspects of experience, such as the experience of beauty as isolated in discourse from issues such as interest, desire, wish, want, need. That is decidedly a pragmatist position.

the interest in disinterest

I use aspects of Kant's position with regard to aesthetics while disregarding others. Aesthetics concerns itself with the art of judgment; that I would agree with. Judgement needs to practise freely within a virtual world of possibilities and limitations. That too I would agree with. Judges judge and their task is fundamentally aesthetic. All other tasks that require judgment, such as the planning and design of our environment are similarly concerned with aesthetics. What I do not agree with in Kant's position therefore, is that aesthetic judgment must concern itself with the pursuit of a *disinterested beauty* and that there is a real difference between the judgment of practical problems and the judgment of such a beauty. That is not so. Disinterest as we shall see is just one of the many guises of use and interest and the judgment of practical problems and the judgment about whether something is beautiful or not both use the same instruments and need the same skills, even if they employ them in different situations. Kant's position with regard to this is not without interest however, as he saw the art of aesthetic judgment as a way to *practise* judgment in the world of practical affairs and reason. I would agree with that *use* of beauty. But that very usefulness of a supposedly disinterested realm for practise establishes what would, for a short while at least, appear to be a paradox. How can one have interest in the disinterested? How can disinterested beauty be of value, which it quite plainly is, if only as a pedagogic tool to practise judgment. Is education, and the need for practise that this entails of no value? How is it possible to introduce desire into that which must be free of desire? What complicated negotiations are we asked to perform here? Did he not want to see *practising* as an interest? Is practise beyond desire? But there is another side to this, equally baffling. Say that we accept his theory, which we did; for a long time Kant was held as the last word on aesthetics, by some he still is. So say that his theory at least has consequences that are real, even if the theory itself, necessarily an

abstraction is faulty. Well we have already observed that faulty theories can have marvellous consequences. But that is not what I mean. Imagine that Kant could foresee that his philosophy would become a large political movement, a movement deciding the priorities not just in art but in all manner of instances where judgment matters. Did he fail to realise the enormous demand for what he calls disinterestedness that his aesthetics necessarily encourages? Did he not see that this *nothingness*, this *lack of interest*, would become immensely interesting? His seductive body of disinterestedness, this asexualised body of desire for that which denies itself, that became the program of art to produce is, in fact, a veil, a mask, and a face for the qualities it was allowed to represent: a new kind of interest, a new body of desire, or a newly desired body. Spinoza had it right where Kant overstepped. Spinoza saw that virtue is its own reward. That is not tautology, that is simply a technique to derive most out of being virtuous. Had Kant put it like that, had he said, beauty is its own reward, there would have been no trouble. Beauty is after all the reward of finding it. That shall be my thesis. But to separate beauty from desire, well let's just say, Nietzsche was right to laugh. And his laughter is infectious.

Disinterestedness, which is in fact impossible to conceptualise properly, became the standard of something science-fictional, a mystical light, which, far from housing *no interest*, came to stand for the world itself in all its mystery: a light of salvation, a new religion arisen like the phoenix from the smouldering ashes of the old Platonisms and Neo-Platonisms, Judeaisms, Christianities and Islams. It recreated an aesthetics of the pure on new grounds, new categories; it encouraged an aesthetics as old as the belief in miracles itself, that things are not what they seem, that certain metaphysical states *are possible* in more than just a hopeful and virtual way; because they can be said without a clear idea of what such things have to look like to work; that the most special things are antimatter: things that are supposed to exist as denials of themselves. Kant should have had a course in deconstruction. He would have realised that disinterest is just another form of interest, a privileged kind. The politics of such a position was dramatic, it engendered a pursuit of *the nothing* as the highest good. Buildings slowly began to wish to deny their weight; screens wanted to remain white and un-inscribed; altruism and selflessness instead of sensible, practical, well-regulated interest began again to be held up as great unconditional virtues, black holes wanted to turn inside out to reveal their innards and truly believed they could be "honest" by doing this instead of just smelly. The nothing became *everything*. Disinterest became the only virtuous interest. Things had to be done "for themselves" and not

for any reward: art for art's sake and all that. Kant is the philosophical mystic par excellence: the *philosufi*. What he did not realise is that he instigated a diversion; he performed one of the greatest philosophical dummy movements in history.

But it was fecund, this movement; it produced miracles and wonders. Anything that was useful, anything that had a reason, became tainted and stained in the virginal world of super-Platonist aesthetics, which is what the aesthetics of Kant is. And very compelling it is too. I like many of its products. They help me think and reflect. They are immensely *useful* to me. I desire them as examples to teach my students, as wonderful objects to have as objects but even more to have and possess them as experiences. I don't need to own the Mona Lisa as a painting, to have it in my house. That would be impractical. In any case, I already own her as a dream, an experience, a wish, a series of memories, an example, a story. What more do I want? And her ownership in these forms is very useful to me: it fulfils my life! However, the world of utility was restricted to our underwear and that created a weird situation, it has to be admitted, we don't want the Mona Lisa to function as our underwear, at least not in public... It became possible to say very strange things like, "Philosophy is not useful, a poem is not useful, a work of art is not useful." It became possible to say "pure white" and other such things. The world of the useless, of the pure of the *untainted by utility* became established not just on theological grounds, which is where it belongs, but now also on philosophical grounds. Were they sincere the people who thus fooled themselves? Proust accused Ruskin, one of the great proponents of the useless, of insincerity. I think he was right. Having said that architecture concerns itself with the useless, he continued 400 or so beautiful pages to show us how useful architecture is. Yes you will say but he meant *constructively useless, usefully useless*. Ok. That may be so. Who cares? He is wrong. A beautiful building is useful, a necessity to society. Ask an economist to calculate how useful the value of beauty is. Beauty is useful because it attracts being. We want to be with beauty. Beauty is a force of gravity. Tell me that is not useful.

The culmination of Kant's aesthetics could be said to be the DADA movement who finally discovered, or at least should have discovered, that there is no such thing as nothing, without nothing being something else; that there is no such thing as pure chance, without that being a peculiar kind of determination, no such thing as the unintentional without intention, no such thing as the useless without it being somehow useful. All there is, is side effect. In that guise all these words have a worthy function. The

minimalists can also not reduce to nothing what they do. Judd's boxes are not nothing, they mean *not nothing*, they are perhaps their own reward and that reward is the pleasure of thought, of reflection about being there, in their presence. John Cage's 4'33" is not non-music, not silence, not nothing. It is all that comes into being when music is consciously absent, when its absence is pressingly present. And what comes into being when music is consciously absent, when its absence is felt as a presence? A certain kind of music! The music of the everyday, the music of present absence. The experience of it is perhaps free, and only ever as good as your own ability in these matters, but it is neither without value nor useless, never without desire or interest.

Disinterest is not just anti-interest. Anti-interest as the uninterested is that which is discarded. It is important to discard that which can be discarded. We do not want to clog up our brain with stuff that is useful to discard as useless, to be set aside, forced to the periphery of our attention, so as to complete the portrait of what is important and how it relates to everything. Nor is disinterest just neutralised interest. It cannot be, because in the desire for the beautiful we become interested in the disinterested, we start desiring it, we focus with greed on that rarified substance: the useless, the pure, the... which are all just lambs dressed up as wolves. That desire for self-denial has been the ascetic program of romanticism. Disinterest is merely another form of interest and one that is allowed to get away with lying about its social background. It may be leisurely, it may be luxurious, but it is full of desire. Moreover, it becomes of interest to reach the disinterested, it becomes valuable and is embraced by capital and politics and so we let desire through to the argument by way of the back door. Kant's theatre of judgment had desire work as the invisible prompter. We use disinterest and as such it becomes filled with interest. We use our idea of disinterested beauty to feed our desire for concepts like purity: bodies without organs, colouring and texturing our image of the world and as such preparing our actions, our recreation of the world in our image of it. Suddenly it is *purity* that is selected, or at least what goes for purity. And what goes for purity? Ah.... Blue eyes, blond hair, beautiful innocence, pure hate, pure love, pure this and that. The desire for the disinterested has given us an interesting ride. It has created at least a part of the world we have created. Some of that world has enriched us. Yes, Kant's theory was like all theories, a selecting machine, a machine of memitic evolution. Conceptual environments, like real ones, select.

What is good about Kant's philosophy is how much of it broke down the earlier bastions of *reality*. How much of it made the world appear *constructed* by us in our minds. That was a very interesting move and one we have not finished with. That was good thinking, highly desirable, very important, beautiful.

physics and art

Physics and Art are both fields of human endeavour. It is not that they are the same, far from it, they each have their domain, their own favourite approaches, purposes and hopes but they all share the fact that they are fields of human activity; the one to produce an understanding of behaviour by describing that behaviour and making it predictable, the other by eluding predictability and describing whatever it wants to describe, for *whatever reason*, even the impossible. And in whichever way they are lead by reason, practical concerns or inexpressible desires; and whether they lead us to an understanding of the world or to the exploration of what is possible in the world, both require judgment. Judgment is the specific area of aesthetics. And the most interesting concern of aesthetics, as I see it, is not just beauty but also goodness, fairness and justice and their underlying accord.

I shall argue that the objectification of something such as beauty, that is the investment of *a thing* with the idea of beauty, creates a new totality of experience and is the product of the process of judgment. We all need to be able to judge things. Therefore we all need to take judgement very seriously. Furthermore, I shall argue that the relationship of the part to the whole, is a question of faceting. When we talk about objects and things, we never mean wholes, we mean parts, fragments, facings, cladding, that which can be seen to be the case.

Aesthetics is a discipline that concerns itself with *the art of judgment*. I want to put the aesthetics of judgment at the very heart of philosophy because I think that will help me to think clearly, reason well, but above all *use well* and *do the right thing* in my environment with regard to whatever discipline I am concerned with, whether it is physics, management, building, planning, design, you name it.

In order for aesthetics to be able to do this, it must be given ministry over the abstraction called *quality*, or *whatness*. In order for aesthetics to make sense of judgment, it has to be able to deal with human experience as a

continuous, rippling, folding, colliding, rubbing, contracting and stretching movement of the body through time-space by *qualifying* that movement, taking a stand on it, thus weaving and shaping the bellowing fabric of experience into the finely cut clothes of a well handled situation. Aesthetics needs to be able to help place human being in the environment in which it plays a part, by helping it to judge its stand on its involvement with that environment.

Aesthetics directs our relationship between ourselves and the world through judgment. A taste is, in fact, an attitudinal web, more or less coordinated depending on how well we practise it. A taste is our investment of authority and authority provides the emotional force to make a decision or judgment possible within a considered frame of reference. A taste helps the body take a stand on its involvement with the environment; it makes us what we are: a person with a stand on things, a person of qualities.

We clothe ourselves to survive the environment, to survive it physically because this environment can be too cold or too hot, too wet or too dry, too light or too dark. We also need to survive our social environment, of peer pressure and desires, loves and hates, jealousies and generosity, rivalry and sovereignty, group-being and individuality or autonomy. Clothes, like posture and gesture, *keep* the body and *direct* its *act* in the environment. To suggest thereby that the presentation of the body to its environment is akin to a theatrical presentation is not meant to trivialise either.

Aesthetics, according to Charles Sanders Peirce is the discipline that should concern itself with the description of qualities and the judgement of those qualities in terms of their desirability. That is a much more sensible position than that of Kant. Aesthetics is about describing a quality and *thereby* preparing the judgment to decide whether it is desirable or undesirable. Description plays a crucial role in this process, after all it stratifies and relates norms, values and priorities. The description of qualities is that part of aesthetics that aligns with and seeks out its relationship to *an ontological position*. The moment that this description aligns with that ontological position it becomes ready to judge whether a quality is desirable or not. This (f)act makes aesthetics a question of judgment leading into the domain of ethics, that is, of practical reason, which I see as a question of deciding on a *good strategy*. Aesthetics legislates in the domain of ethics. Ethics is concerned with the question

how a quality should be realised. I shall try to explain what qualities are and what descriptions are and that leads us to the main thesis which is that aesthetics, through its role of describing qualities becomes our means to judge the world and build a taste with which we take on a stand towards our relationship with the world.

This would also be the sensible order of my argument. But in fact what you will find is a more snowballed approach in which these various strands gradually become distinguishable and slowly weave themselves into a full portrait.

portraits of the whole

One of the main assumptions of this essay is that we should deal with the world as a whole whenever we deal with a particular aspect of it. We do not actually have to separate anything out. What we can do to keep things manageable is to *portray the world* each time by turning a particular detail towards us, and then concentrating on how that detail might reach back to the whole, describing a network of relations, trying to avoid as much as possible to single out any clear linearity that emerges and privilege it as *truth* or something like it. So when I speak of a part, what I really mean is a part-object, a facet of the world as a whole turned towards us. This way of speaking rests on the conviction that when we think, write, talk, plan and design, we make portraits of the world that help us get the thing we are working on, ordered in our minds.

Portraits are interesting types of painting because we allow perspective to dominate, not just in a spatio-temporal sense but also in a metaphysical sense. We place that which is the focus of our concern in the middle and use the surroundings, the periphery, the clothing to tie that main focus to the rest of the world. A portrait is always a portrait of a situation and never just about what is at the centre. It is about how the centre relates to the rest of the canvass and the rest of the space it hangs in and how it relates to us the viewer. That situation is made sense of through the process of making hierarchies of that which is important and that which is less important. Portraying situations through description creates hierarchies, selections, order, which is how we make sense of and take a stand on our involvement with the world. Our actual involvement comes down to the physical behaviour of matter and energy, but when we take a stand on that involvement, that is, when we reflect upon it, we require organisation and

selection, hierarchy and order, value and priority. Those come together in the act of portrayal.

das zielbewußte Schaffen, while we turn, we raise ourselves into space

Some time ago I was standing in the van Abbe museum with a small group of students. We were looking at a series of spatial compositions by El Lissitzky called the Proun series done in the early years of the twentieth century at the time Russia was undergoing the effects of its revolution. We'd got in cheap as the museum was reorganizing its permanent collection. After having visited the Proun room, a small oblong box space, cut through with lines and planes attempting to question the self-evident oblong nature of the room, we stopped in front of a painting and tried to get to the bottom of why some of us liked it while others weren't sure. We asked ourselves why we had selected this particular painting and not the one next to it and why we were standing here at all. We were beginning to enjoy ourselves chatting and had, as if by magic, formed a near perfect semicircle around the painting. It takes students a little time to break down barriers, but when they do there's no holding them. Soon we were discussing the mechanics of perception while drawing lines to almost any other subject under the sun however remotely connected. We even drew in the interest of people who had come to the exhibition on their own account. Anyway, some of us liked the tenderness of the work; it seemed so delicate and breakable. The pencil lines were so fragile and on closer inspection not as technically sophisticated or slick as we had imagined them to be. El Lissitzky had clearly got some of the perspectival depth of the planes and volumes wrong. But was it wrong? Some of us weren't sure. The awkwardness was itself enjoyable. We liked the spatial setting of the exhibition, the fact that these drawings had been framed with sobriety and hung with care. It made the place special. We liked the lighting of the exhibition which made the colours come out well and enjoyed knowing something about the cultural context of the works, their relation and reference to big events the drama of the twentieth century. We imagined having them on our walls. We enjoyed learning about the sense of specialness that El Lissitzky and Malevich felt about their own work, the sense that their work was somehow extraordinary when measured against other works of the time. We also explored ways of how this exhibition might be useful to us in design studio. Some of us went further and started reading stories into the work. Others stopped that when it turned out that that was just us "making up things", although it was fun while it lasted. We

liked idea of the sense of spatial continuity that the works appeared to be struggling with. We also enjoyed the idea that these abstract surfaces, planes and axes were part of a coded message, a symbolism of modernity, of newness, of release, of good against bad. But most of all we enjoyed chatting in this unforced way. Getting rid of the unbearable specialness with which the students felt that art so often disqualified itself. In any case, we had just had lunch and there was very little else fighting for attention: museum visit on a Friday afternoon had to be more fun than a lecture room. The people who did not like the paintings, or who did not yet know why they might want to like the paintings, asked questions like: why should *he* be hanging here? What makes him so special? Why not someone else? They did not like the sacred atmosphere of the museum, it weighed everything down they felt. They did not like the fact that these rather childish drawings were worth so much money and that we had to behave as if in church, that they were given a special place in the museum. They saw the museum as part of an establishment that is by its very nature suspicious: an official museum showing things that pretended to be against official things. They resented the fuss made of art in general, that it had something insincere about it, and felt that they could have done better than El Lissitzky. They did not want to see that his art was revolutionary in any sense. At the same time they were happy that their view was being taken seriously and not rubbished away. They felt that the only reason this art mattered is because someone made it matter. They felt the power of the curator was too big. Why should *he* decide what was important? She, I corrected. Surely there should be more secure criteria for deciding what was important than the whim of some curator in some museum? They felt the art was shoved down their throat. And yet they were there, happily being difficult, causing themselves all sorts of logical problems of which they were as yet blissfully unaware. We had a good time. We had fun. We went our way, and each of us will allow this afternoon to shape our future, in whatever way. I have written a story about it. Perhaps it is a completely inaccurate record of the afternoon. It is as I saw it, it is a sincere record. But now you are reading it you will make something else of it. This description will start leading its own life, as everything that is created, inevitably does. Perhaps it will leave you cold. That means it has helped shape you in a peculiar way, which is not fair to describe as an act of negation. If you have read this and it leaves you cold, it will have shaped you in exactly that way, by leaving you cold. It will be a story good at leaving you cold. The stuff you ignore, that leaves you cold shapes you in the sense that it contributes to the stand you have already formed, it strengthens your position. If it were allowed to affect you, it would shift

your position and the whole constellation of opinions of which you are the proud owner, would have to realign itself, even if ever so slightly. Only if you did not read this story will it have no power over you. But even if, having once read it, you then forget what it was about; it will have helped shape you, in however small a way. That is worth thinking about.

an aesthetics of being: quality

Aesthetics is the discipline that attempts to describe qualities in order to judge whether they are desirable or undesirable. It is useful to describe aesthetics in this way. If it were to concern itself only with the elusive nature of beauty as our idea of it, constantly transforming itself in our growth and development as human beings in our environment, it would be a discipline robbed of the very relations that are crucial even to that narrower conception of it. If all descriptions of perceptions constitute qualities and beauty is the description of a quality, then it is the notion of quality we should be looking at to tie beauty to the rest of the world and make it a central part of things.

Nor can aesthetics concern itself only with the static; it might like to seek out the stable, but the stable, however permanent and rock-solid it appears, are like the pyramids of Gaza, no more than stable: old but not indestructible. Narrowness of focus or the idea of permanence, never mind such godly abstractions as the absolute and the transcendental (above and beyond the merely communicable, the inter-subjective) cannot help us get a grasp on the way that beauty fits into the whole picture; and whatever their value they cannot simply through aesthetic preference be allowed more value or greater priority in aesthetics than breadth of vision, inclusiveness and instability and dynamism. Such irreducible preferences of the Parmenidian and Heraclitian sort, whatever one feels more sympathy with, would after all prove the existential thesis of beauty. We decide what is beautiful. The process of that decision is related to the way our body works in its environment. Values are situationally determined through the exploration of qualities and it is worth trying to describe how aesthetics should deal with, or respond to situations.

This means we need to describe aesthetics as *a mechanism for taking a stand in a situation*. That means we need a good image of situationality. In order to get a grip on situationality we need to understand the nature of a quality.

If we are to sharpen our thinking about planning and design we need a discipline which concerns itself expressly with an aspect of beauty that it shares with all predicates, namely the idea of quality, which I define as *whatness*. The discipline of aesthetics is as such dominated by a peculiar form of a fundamental question. The question "*what is it?*" is in fact a carefully tended: "*what is it to me?*" kind of question. It is worth pausing a moment to ask ourselves what happens when we describe a quality. What we do not do is gain access to the world out there in any way except through its behaviour in a specific situation. When describing a quality *what* we do is take a stand on our body's relationship to its environment which we attempt to capture in abstractions. An abstraction is a virtual object belonging to a virtual reality, a virtual reality in turn is an attempt to *get close* to the world *out there* by describing its tectonics of behaviour from the perspective of our capacity for observation. By classifying that behaviour into types, we make the enormous amount of information available about the particular more manageable through the generic.

This generic approach to the world is caught in the concept of law. What we call the laws of physics have no greater validity than that they always appear to apply to certain situations, they appear to work. Their truth is no grand truth, but rather the much more profound kind of truth of a binary operation sorting propositions into either {TRUE} [OR] {FALSE}. Laws are descriptions that appear to apply again and again in a certain set of situations. Laws in society are descriptions of desirable behaviour that *should* apply again and again in specific situations. Instead of descriptive, they are prescriptive in their description of the desirable and the undesirable. One kind of law tries to give us the power to predict and the other tries to make behaviour predictable. That is the only justification for generalisation into what we like to call laws, but which are, in fact, successful descriptions or compelling prescriptions of behaviour with which we achieve a certain predictive power. With each description we create and expand upon a virtual reality which appears to correspond with the world out there in the sense we understand behaviour on its terms and this in turn gives us the power to predict future behaviour. Predictive power is thus an aspect of creative power in that it helps create and expand, affirm or transform our virtual reality to *fit* the behaviour of the world out there.

Qualities as described have no necessary basis in the reality of the world out there (*das ding an sich*) apart from being a qualification of that world's behaviour relative to us. This kind of description *hopes for* and *works*

towards the ability to describe behaviour accurately so that it can be used for whatever reason and on the basis of that, to decide what *good* behaviour should mean. For this we need to be able to observe the world's behaviour and describe it.

Description requires abduction to find patterns, empirical observation of behaviour (induction) to provide us with stable coordinates of behaviour, which then create a frame of reference upon which we can play deduction which leads to conclusions and helps us decide. Descriptions lead to ways to *use our understanding of behaviour to achieve* whatever it is that we want to achieve. They do this within the confines of what is accessible to us. This is the main legitimisation of scientific research. What is accessible to us through our understanding of its behaviour gives us a measure of control. That is the reward of evolution. Survival is a good thing to achieve, so is comfort, so is joy, so is wealth and fairness. Description needs no decision regarding the nature of the real world *out there* except in terms of its observable behaviour. But in order to understand behaviour well we need simulations of the world out there. The description of behaviour observed requires an understanding of the terms and their situation.

A quality is not of a thing by itself. A quality comes about through the tectonics of behaviour: when things are brought together. A quality pertains to a thing when it finds itself *in a situation*. The more stable that situation, the more stable the quality of its behaviour. By defining something in relation to yourself, you lay the foundation for the ability to communicate about that qualitative relationship. I see *redness* and I point to what I see and say: *that is red*. The person I am talking to either concurs or disagrees. That is the basis for further communication. Whether redness when he sees it, *behaves* in the same way as the redness I see is immaterial, as long as we are both referring to the same thing. I have learnt what redness is from my parents and friends. They pointed to things that were red and said a word. I practised that association and learnt what redness is and means to me. It is a quality that is strictly personal, the redness I see is *my redness*. As I have argued elsewhere, being personal does not mean unique in any other sense than situationally determined relative to me. The word *red* allows me to communicate something about this strictly personal quality to another person, but what exactly? Its redness? No, not its redness, something more curious: we communicate *a determination* that we both call red, because our parents pointed to things and called them red. The quality that these things had relative to us thus came to be called redness, at least when specific conditions of a situation obtained,

normal daylight for instance. If it were possible for me to look with your eyes and your brain what you see as red I might want to call green or even blue. But we shall never discover whether this is true; it will always be subject to doubt. I cannot transport myself into another person's body, not fully. And there is no doubt that my eyes work differently to someone else's eyes. The reason this matters is that it does not matter at all. We are, after all both referring to the same thing and that is what really matters. We are both happy to call the quality we are undergoing relative to a certain thing as *red*. Its behaviour towards us is personal, strictly personal, and cannot ever be transferred. It can only be negotiated and agreed upon. Because this personal quality is stable and as our parents gave us both the same name for a quality that always manifests itself in that situation, however different we might be experiencing it, we can concur about our conclusions and so make the behaviour of the world communicable. Our strictly personal experiences can subsist and persevere, happily, after we both agree that what we call red may be called red. Only when we disagree do things become problematic. Then we have to open negotiations: "what do you mean?" "Oh, I see. No, I meant..." And we no doubt will get somewhere.

Redness is a quality labelling a situation, a situation where, in the simplest possible terms, a surface colours red when a certain kind of light is reflected off it. The word *redness* is part of a virtual reality, a world of abstractions, but is able to capture real behaviour in such a way that we can use our knowledge of it. We point to this behaviour, describe it, learn how we might use the pattern that emerges from reflecting on how this event (the event of redness) might be useful to us, might fit into a large picture. We then fit or adapt our behaviour in such a way that we use it to our advantage. We do not need an ontological position that goes beyond experience.

The idea of quality is an abstraction of how one feels in relation to something. Does one *feel* redness? One certainly *feels* sorrow. Does one also feel redness? Well one tends to say that we *see* redness. And when we are angry we say we are *seeing red*. But that, though of some interest is not a road we should pursue. How do we feel redness? Is it through the network of associations we build? Is it that redness is seen as significance? And as significance is a response to experience, might we not call the seeing of something that has significance as a feeling? So it is not the red that is felt, it is our response to its significance that is felt. That is legitimate and *feels* right. A quality is so to speak, *the situated specification of a*

feeling. And the feeling is our response to our relations with our environment in situated events.

When Spinoza demonstrated how every specific emotion in man is reducible to two *basic* emotions, namely sadness and joy, a division into primary and secondary feelings appeared self-evident. Sadness and Joy are primary feelings and everything else arrived at through recipes with these two ingredients, is secondary or even tertiary. After all such a reduction suggests that the secondary qualities are *composed* of primary ones. But you could also turn that around. Such secondary qualities seem to suggest a more generic layer underneath which is deducible from specific instances. All this is no more than continuing abstraction. What is the phenomenology of feeling? My body has feelings. They often reside in my stomach and my head and sometimes in my chest. Confusion, anger, sadness, joy, threat, preparedness, triumph, focus, concentration, loss, humiliation, pity, self-pity, I know these feelings. How do I know them? Well, I feel them in certain situations. The feeling is my response to a situation. Others may well respond differently. I have trained my body in a certain way. Some people might well respond the same way, but it is very unlikely we all do. That is what makes us situationally specific. When the going gets tough, *the tough* get going. The tough differ from the not so tough. They respond differently. How did this happen? Nature? Nurture? Both! When I have done something wrong, my whole stomach turns over; when I have an argument with someone my whole body reacts. When I am irritated, the surface chemistry of my face causes itchiness. What is this feeling? It is a bodily reaction to a situation, its causal network and its ring of consequences. We describe the feeling and in that description we focus on its significance to us: "Oh, you irritate me!" That is no different for redness. Redness is *an observation which has significance*. What that significance is, needs to be determined, the significance needs to be actualised. Redness is a quality actualising itself in specific significance, for this the redness needs to be part of a fuller portrait of *a situation*.

All descriptions are abstractions of experienced behaviour, reductions of it to an essence. An essence is never the thing it is an essence of it is just one more bead in the infinite necklace of signs, but it at least hangs around the neck of the person whose meaning it fulfils. The essence defines the significance of things. We must not make the mistake of hypostatizing these abstractions by giving them a reality beyond a virtual reality *as abstractions* as reductions into essences. Virtual realities are real in the consequences of our behaviour and use of them as instruments of our

thought in the planning and design of our actions; real in the sense that their description of behaviour appears to fit behaviour itself, thus acquiring a predictive power. They give us control, or its semblance, but they are never more than representations; and a representation is the world presented to us in our understanding of behaviour.

Words as representations of the world are abstractions, they create a virtual world of relations based on contiguity and difference, partial overlap and perspectival distortion. In the end words form a language, a grand self contained tautology attempting to correspond to universe of observable behaviour that it is meant to describe. They do not exist in a world of forms, as Plato suggested, although he did not get it far wrong, they exist quite mundanely in a culture of practices and ways of looking and doing things, a culture that helps determine our behaviour as it furnishes the tools with which we assault the world and makes us take a stand on issues it throws up in conversation. For my mum and dad to have taught me to call a certain quality *red* they had to be part of a culture in which such a description was valid and useful: potentially full of significance waiting to be actualised in concrete situations. In giving me redness, they gave me a tool to understand the world and behave well in it.

Virtual reality is not divorced from the actual world. On the contrary, abstraction is part of the actual world. Virtual reality does not float about in some *other world, a world of forms*, it is very much part of what the body is capable of. There is no dualism in positing a virtual reality and an actual reality. Abstractions as acts performed by words and thoughts are themselves the product of a tectonics of behaviour: a word is breath and vibration, it is code and message, it needs two people connected in some act of assimilation, in a situation, in a culture of agreed signage. An idea is, in its actual form, a behaviour of our bodily nervous system working together with the environment of which it is a direct part. It is the body doing its thing. An idea can be expressed in words or images or numbers, or indeed any kind of expressible code. That is the power of memory. There is nothing numinous in an idea, there is only the tectonics of behaviour whereby significance is captured by the person seeking significance. An idea comes about through the action of matter and energy (which when we talk about them are themselves abstractions of whatever behaviour they help to describe usefully) This ability to make relations in memory and reflect upon them, is used to describe behaviour. Forming and idea is behaviour used to describe behaviour. Abstractions constitute the ingredients of a behaviour (reflection, discourse) that helps to qualify

behaviour. Their *nature* as abstractions as inaccessible as *das ding an sich*. All we can do is study their behaviour in language, in the process of thought. We can study the behaviour of abstractions, of virtual reality.

To institute abstractions and order them into primary and secondary qualities is fine, as long as one realizes that one could also just as easily describe the world differently. The interesting thing about abstractions is that their allocation of space, is not just the task of a surveyor. The surveyor of meaning makes sure each word gets its allocated lot within the landscape of meaning. But that is not enough. Who decides where that lot should be, how big it should be who is allowed to go next door?

Abstractions are subject to a politics of significance. That politics works in a very similar way to the politics of governance. We have ways of legislating, prioritising and controlling meaning. A first principle in this governance of language is use. We have to, first and foremost, serve the purpose of language. In describing the world, the challenge is not to find the only true possible categories. That search is pointless. What we really want is abstract categories and descriptions that describe behaviour well and can be used. And these descriptions need to be revised with every change in our perspective, every increase in the resolution of our image of the world. Ockham's razor helps keep the economy of abstractions manageable so that any jargon or distinction that is not needed needs to be refuted or will fall out of use. Creative descriptions are allowed to explore experience for further meaning while their cogency can only be determined by the quality of their simulation of experience.

That is what I believe the Pragmaticists meant with the problem of truth. The best we can hope for is that a description of a quality can give us predictive power, i.e. that it works, with which is meant that it appears to correspond with experience of behaviour. With physics that is relatively easy to achieve through the well practised protocols of verification and falsification; both of which must play a carefully circumscribed role in the establishment of authority.

What Spinoza was doing was to describe situated bodily responses in terms of generic bodily responses, which, however, only ever achieve meaning relative to a specific situation: jealousy or diffidence in terms of sadness and joy. They only ever achieve significance in a situation. He showed us how rich our range of emotions can become when our limited range of possible bodily responses are situated and thus directed to qualify a specific set of relationships. Emotive responses of the body are limited in

their range, but acquire a near infinite range of specificity in their situatedness. That philosophical encyclopaedia of human emotions has never really been improved upon significantly without reaching for psychological explanation. Psychology, however compelling and important, lies outside the scope of this book.

Qualities are descriptions of situated behaviour, that is, of relations, using abstractions between me and the thing giving me that quality in the form of a feeling. A situated relation is never static, it proliferates and grows offshoots and bulbs and roots not unlike the Rhizome as described by Deleuze and Guattari, a directionless growth through simple binary operations into an infinite complexity.

The description of a relation by being laid down in language, by being codified begins to lead its own life. I mean this in a very literal way. An object can be said to lead its own life, like an organism. Although its life is confined to the use made of it by other entities. Things live through other things, which live through other things *ad infinitum*. So a representation of an object or organism does too. A work of art leads its own life in the uses made of it. As Marcel Duchamp pointed out, its interpretation does too, and becomes a work of art in its own right. When written down or described in conversation a description acquires a strange stability: a life, to be used. A stability that is not static but is subject to virtual or actual growth. A description written down, or memorised becomes coded in culture. By being stored, thought on the subject is continued by using that description as a plateau to build upon. As far as the description itself is concerned thought on the subject might be interrupted altogether by the author. At one point, for example, I shall stop writing these essays. At that point they will supposedly represent *what I think* about a certain subject. The chance that I have really interrupted or stopped my thinking about the subject is small, unless I die of course. But what exactly will this essay then represent? Well, it will not be *my thought at a certain instance in time*. I took a long time to write these essays. The gap in time between the first compulsion to write a sentence and the last sigh of relief when the whole project is completed will be sizeable. I have been thinking about this subject and reading up on it and talking about it for all of my adult life, which is extending at the rate of 12 months per year. The reader also takes his time to read this text and will eat lunch, and see movies, kiss boy- and/or girlfriends and sleep and do all sort of other things while being busy with this text. In terms of time, a book then represents a strange kind of *movement in space*. The space may not change much but what is done in

and with it and how it is looked upon will change with each person entering it. After all you can shut this book and put it back in the bookcase and never look at it again. When your great granddaughter finds it and reads the first sentence, it will say the same thing but be received very very differently. She will belong to a different culture in which things mean different something else.

What does this say about description? A codified description orders us to think about the facet of the world it describes. I might have said that a description orders one to think about a facet of the world it describes *in a certain way*. But I am not sure such a position is tenable. I am often surprised and occasionally rather alarmed at how my thoughts, as described by me are read by others and appear to have completely transformed themselves into angels or demons *by them*. My intention is to deliver descriptions that fit the world of behaviour I am trying to describe. They do so for me when I feel *I have got things right*. But when another reads them they appear to alter; they fall into a different *bed of understanding*. In my description I describe things the way I see them, when another reads them, I more or less force onto them words that they have to make sense of and can only do so in terms of their capacity, effort and desire. So where they are cogent descriptions *to me*, to someone else they are imperatives to see the world as ordered by the words on the page. But their precise interpretation I have no control over. You the reader are rewriting my book in your understanding. I am trying to help you see the world in my way but communicability is problematic. In the reader's ears my descriptions are orders for the world to be seen with these words. It is not at all certain that the words make sense. We improve our chances of communication if we often talk to each other; if we are precise with our words and take care with our sentences, keep to definitions given us in standard dictionaries etc. A description is never neutral, it never merely describes behaviour; first of all it describes behaviour that is itself situated and it describes it from a perspective, which can also be described as situated. There is opportunity for infinite permutation. Descriptions codified in written language, or committed to memory describe behaviour from a certain point of view and from the basis of a certain understanding and then throws it to the wind. When read or heard descriptions have acquired the character of an imperative, an order, rather than just a well meant earnest and sincere attempt to fit description to experience. This fact requires anyone confronted with a description to develop an attitude to it, to take a stand.

When experience is codified in description and thereby interrupted in its continuity, the descriptive imperative achieves a measure of stability, a plateau. As a stable imperative, saying *a thing is such and such* will not just describe behaviour in the neutral way intended by the well-meaning author but will do more. It will affect the way a relation is actually experienced. That means something fundamental. Description of experience, having started to lead its own life, begins to affect that experience. We measure our own experience against the imperative description of experience issued by the author. Reading Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy have changed my life but not in a way that could have been foreseen by them. My reading of them has started leading its own life! The stability offered through the transformation of a description into code and thereby forming an imperative comes at an obvious cost. Experience legislates within our ability to describe, the resultant imperatives legislate within our ability to experience. It is an expression of the classic problem of power. The legislating king is powerful only in so far as his power is acceptable to the people over whom he legislates. As soon as the two diverge, a problem appears. The gap between the two will eventually widen, destabilize and lead to unforeseen consequences. This is where the ontological facet of aesthetics flips over into the ethical facet of aesthetics. It might then be *a good idea* to attempt to exercise one's description of a qualitative relation well. It might be a good idea to understand the behaviour of descriptions so as to be able to take account of their curious side effects. Experience needs description to measure itself and description needs to measure experience in order to be able to expand the possibility of experience.

Aesthetics, as such, is a kind of calculus to make sense of the continuous and dynamic structure of experience by way of descriptions of qualities. These descriptions do more than reproduce the world in the form of abstractions with which simulation of behaviour becomes possible, they represent it; that is, they present the world again in our grasp of that world and allow ourselves to measure ourselves relative to the experience. A number of factors play a role in that grasp: our own personalised configuration of selected and interpreted relations, our bodily condition, our taste as a more or less coordinated set of attitudes, our willingness to grapple with the new, that is our willingness to think and more. We have looked at description, and we shall return to description again later, but if aesthetics is the description of quality then: What is a quality? I have already argued that a quality is *whatness*, that it is a description of situated behaviour, but can we do better than that? And what can this say about

the continuous structure of experience? And how do we arrive at the idea that a quality might be desirable or undesirable?

what is a quality – quality is a what

The English word quality arrived in the 13th century from France, *qualite* in Old French and later *qualité*, which in turn comes from the Latin *qualitatem*. *Qualitas* was said to have been coined by Cicero to translate Greek *ποιότης* or *poiotes*, from *qualis*, "of what sort," *Qualitas* means *a property, nature, state, condition*. To me that boils down to *whatness*. When I answer the question: *what is this?* I qualify what is being pointed at or referred to in terms of its observable properties, the way it behaves etc. That act of qualification is what is at issue here. To give something a property or to attribute to it a nature is problematic. We have to be more sincere about our involvement in that act of qualification, with which I mean that we should question the activity of qualification itself as we perform it and try, through discussion, to remove from consideration anything that we cannot legitimately claim about that activity.

Aesthetics has generally tried to isolate various strands of the aesthetic experience, tried to *purify* our conception of it by removing it from every day experience and placing it completely into a world of abstract thought which, itself became further and further removed from *what happens in my body when I enjoy something*. That is not to say that this exercise has not been extremely useful to get a clear hold on various possible strands in the aesthetic project. It has also made aesthetics insincere about our involvement with the world. It has enriched our conception of the paths that can be followed. But it has also made us count angels on the point of a pin. After all is said and done, we have to put aesthetics back where we found it, in our being human. I cannot help being a human being, all aspects of my experience of life as I lead it tend to be highly infectious. If I try to separate out my various duties my various feelings, my various activities, I become organised, but only if I give everything a place. When this act of organisation fails everything becomes part of everything else again, madness takes over. It would seem that my life as an organised organism is an act of will, *to get things done*. It is an act of artifice, the institution of a fiction to help establish values, norms and especially priorities. It is this artifice that is my humanity. At the same time, it is an artifice. And my creativity resides in my ability to separate, make hierarchies and then to find controlled links between the various strata of

my act of organisation. This keeps madness at bay, but allows things to take account of each other.

How can I sincerely claim to be able to set aside my mood of the moment in a discussion of a work of art? Perhaps the discussion will change my mood. How can I claim to filter away the context in which I view something? In that process of filtering, in this artifice, I merely create yet another view. How can I fail to admit that I have had to learn to drive my appreciation of things by listening to others and reading books and seeing other things and making those matter in my experience of the right here and now? That is not to say that an exercise in thought in which a particular line of flight is retraced is not useful, but it can never be either complete or completely sincere. It is limited by our sensibility, but above all by our ability to describe. And language, for all its glory, remains a rough instrument.

A description has an effect which is not really equal to purification: any description, even if it tries to *single out*, in fact *enriches* future experience by allowing that view. It gives an altered context with which to deal with that experience. This means, that unless we want insincerity, making aesthetics do things which it cannot really do and pretend to ourselves that it has done it nevertheless, we shall have to acknowledge the chaotic manifold nature of our experience of quality. We shall have to acknowledge the infectious nature of thought and experience. We shall have to acknowledge that whatever we say or write it can be no more and no less than a portrait of the whole world with a small part of it turned towards us and made visible in that particular portrait and that this part may not have an existence beyond the possible or the virtual, the wished for.

This does not mean that experience is chaotic in the sense of unstructured, but that the level of complication achieved by just a relatively small set of determining factors is near infinite.

If you consider that all our attempts at describing the world are just so many abstractions of what is accessible of the world through its discernible behaviour, then all we can do when describing is to acknowledge that we are attempting to paint a portrait of something. We organise the world relative to us with concepts that are or are hoped to be useful. Portrayal is useful with regard to situations and it is situations we have to deal with. The hermeneutic problem is, in fact, a good example of a description of the world that ends up being a non problem within another way of describing

the world. The hermeneutic dilemma concentrates on the problem that the part is unknowable without the whole and the whole is unknowable without the parts. But the whole is too large for us anyway, there are only parts that are accessible to us. Part objects waiting for us to delineate their boundaries on the basis of our use. We are freed from understanding the whole, because all we every get to see is parts whose boundaries have been instituted by us on the basis of our experience of behaviour.

The aesthetic experience, the undergoing and describing of an experience is constituted and intimately personal. It is communicable, but only on the condition that the reader, as it were, *meets* the writer and they negotiate meaning. My writing all this here, forces you, the reader to take a stand on the issues I bring up. It will not be my stand, I am sure of that. It will be yours and it will differ to my image and should we ever have the chance to discuss things I am sure you the reader will be able to change my mind on certain topics. This book is an epistle, seeking friendship, seeking discussion. I wrote it down because discussion also has its drawbacks. It is hard to ruminate, and I am a slow thinker.

The aesthetic experience is a complication (a folding, a manifold) of determining factors and is made into a thing by the person isolating that experience as something special. The aesthetic experience engages life as we are living it and makes some things into Sunday-like things and others into Monday-like things. It is an all encompassing experience, which acquires shape in our reflection. This reflection can take account of whatever it wants to: the sophisticated and the banal. It is in that way intimately personal.

The aesthetic experience is full when it engages our full bodily capacity for thought and feeling. It is poor when it has little to go on or one does not take the trouble *to make* something of it.

The question that would be interesting to ask is, when describing the aesthetic experience, what are we exactly portraying? We are portraying, in a very real and literal sense, the world as a whole by selecting but a part of it. Every description engages the world as a whole, but so turned that only part of it is in focus. But that is not what we are portraying. The question we really have to ask is to what extent our portraits can transcend heterotopy or faciality: the problem of what you see other than some aspect of your *self* reflected in the other.

describing a quality

The description of a quality is never a neutral activity. It may try to be *objective* but that is not the same thing at all. I take an *objective description* to mean a description where a quality is described without reference to our interest and desire. A description cannot be any more objective than that. We are limited to our perception of the object by the instruments with which we can study its behaviour. Our calling it an object is, as we know, highly problematic, because the object is part of the world. So our description of objects *always confines itself to what we can perceive* of it and relies on our ability to define its boundaries. Therefore the only thing that is special about an objective description is that it is a description without reference to our interest and desire.

Perhaps we can do one better than that. Let's take an objective description to mean that a quality is described without being shaped and thereby transformed by our interest and desire. But that does not make the description neutral. On the contrary, it is negatively charged to a high degree by our presence: a consciously disentangled presence to be exact. An objective description is a description that carefully stages our absence. An objective description is *pregnant* with our absence. That it is a highly problematic when you take account of how I shall define quality, but not without interest...

Ironically, the attempt to describe qualities by disentangling our presence, that is, without reference to our peculiar interest and desire, makes the description of that quality all the more compelling, interesting and desirable as it gives things that allow such a description, a general validity. A general validity is a validity we agree upon after negotiation. An apple falls to the floor when dropped. Such qualities are easily communicable. It makes the imperative and the descriptive pertaining to that quality align in such a way that they no longer are divided. They inhabit the same space.

The fact is that we are extremely well served by descriptions that are not *corrupted* by what we want to hear. A good description is the outcome of a disciplined protocol which is clear about its own position and remains unaffected even by our most ardent wish. Science has such a protocol; it describes the behaviour of things without reference to our interest and desire. In the same way a *good* king is best served by an *honest* adviser. Well described qualities serve our interest and desire by appearing to offer dependable prescriptive descriptions. So when we try to describe qualities *objectively* we increase their potential for interest and desire, because they

do something special. Good descriptions allocate their loyalty very carefully. They are loyal not to the imperative or the prescriptive but to the descriptive, i.e. to the alignment concept and experience through careful observation and thought and by allowing critique with regard to the redefinition of the boundaries of a concept within the landscape of meaning and the possibility that the causal network at work on an event might hold the unforeseen. A theology wants to see the world constituted in a particular way and assumes that this way is correct and explores the avenues opened out by this perspective. A theory does essentially the same thing but then as a working hypothesis. So a good description removes the wish for the world to be so or different. It carefully removes the contaminating effects of interest and desire for a theological stand so as to serve our interest and desire all the better.

We cannot help having interests and desires. Those interests and desires pertain to qualities. Qualities are the relationships we build with our environment. Some of these are desirable and interesting, others not so. In order to serve our interests and desires well, we need descriptions of qualities which are not shaped by those interests and desires but then these have to be given their proper place. They have to be shaped by our ability to capture behaviour well in whatever descriptive language we are using, whether it be mathematics, Chinese or Dutch. Only by being described in such a way that the description works well, i.e. appears to be able to capture the observed behaviour well, does it begin to serve our interests and desire. In such a way we hope to get *cleaner* descriptions that are useful to us because they behave according to our expectations. That is not paradoxical; it merely means that we want qualities described in such a way that they do not metamorphose and change shape or put their best leg forwards in the description in such a way that we are misled. We want to have the ability to appraise qualities critically.

a quality is a description of a relation

A quality is a description of that which is thought to relate at least two terms within the context of a determined situation. Redness, for example, is an event whereby a surface colours red in my registration of it under certain conditions. Intelligence, to take another example, is an appraisal of someone by someone else against a culturally determined set of criteria. Within the culture of biology, intelligence refers to the ability to adapt to a situation. Within the culture of snobs or violent idiots it means the ability to think like the person who calls you intelligent; a dubious honour.

Beauty, one of the most complex qualities is really what I call a *metaword*, sort of like a veil or vessel or even a place. As a veil it bellows to the dictates of its own material nature obeying the light pressures from within and without. It shrouds that which it covers and is sensitive to breeze and slight movements. By covering its object with curiosity lust and love, it creates value and reshapes itself constantly. To declare something beautiful is to issue an order, generously but without further comment. If the beautiful is a vessel, the beautiful thing the word contains is also shaped by it: it conforms (con-forms = mould, to be shaped with something else) to something. The use of the word beauty is equivalent to maintaining a pregnant silence, while the breeze plays with the veil, revealing just too little, or showing the vase without the contents. This because the quality beauty predicates is unstable, often liquid, difficult to grasp; the attempt to cup that quality with your fingers, with words, causes the uncontrolled mobilisation of a full but hopeless string of arguments, the unravelling of the dense and labyrinthine knot of connections. Good luck to that! Know thyself better, I would say! As such beauty, when used as such in a sentence, is a go-between; it accepts this string, this knot, quietly, personally, unconditionally and then covers it by a thin cloth and proclaims an irreducible love to the world. That love is not loyal, it changes with the wind. Let's face it, the word beauty cannot lose its currency or be usurped without being supplanted by a word just as incapable and powerless, as potent and suggestive. At the same time its power to suggest a belonging to the gods makes it subject to semantic jealousy, hatred and worship. We have only one option and that is to take full responsibility for our capacity for beauty. When something tells you he finds something beautiful he has given you the beginning of a long and arduous conversation. So beauty defines a set of qualities, a set of relations which can hold just one or an infinite number of relations, depending on when, where, how and by whom it is used and in what situation. As such beauty is not much more than the indication of a place: *here is beauty to be found*. But when somebody uses the word they have said nothing yet. Nothing interesting except perhaps that they like whatever they are covering with their veil, or holding in their vessel.

Kant's aesthetic and the tectonics of behaviour

Immanuel Kant revolutionised the way we thought about the world and ourselves by positing the idea that the world *meets* the person undergoing it. Man, he argued, is not a passive perceiver; he is an active agent in his own perception. This agency is performed by faculties that *legislate* in our

thinking. Our *understanding*, with which I mean our ability to understand something to work or behave in a certain way, legislates in our ability to reason. Our ability to form judgements, with which I mean to decide what is best for us in a certain situation, legislates in our understanding of the world, which justifies that decision with the help of reason. Kant called this structure of things, his *aesthetic*. I like his use of that word. An aesthetic, a sense of the structure of the world in terms of behaviour and the qualitative description of that behaviour relative to our interests and desire, lies at the basis of every enquiry.

The world, Kant argued, is unknowably and therefore perhaps even infinitely rich in possible information. We meet the world by *selecting* that which is accessible to us: its behaviour relative to our sensory/cognitive apparatus. That which is accessible to us conforms at least in some way to the structure of our way of undergoing the world even if only in the way that a key fits a lock, or a molecule of scent fits the sensitive tissue of our nose to fire a code through our nervous system to our brain. What space and time might be outside of us cannot be said, but what is certain is that we use *the feeling* of space and time, or our capacity for spatial and temporal reception to *order* our being in the world. That makes sense. Kant called a version of this his Copernican revolution after the great German Polish astronomer who made us realise that it wasn't the sun that turned around us, but that the earth, with us on it, was in fact hurtling around the sun. That was shocking because it displaced us from the centre, an idea the Church was not keen on at the time. Kant put us back at the centre, but not in a way anyone might have expected or the church been particularly happy with. He put us at the centre of a home-made reality, the reality we appear to be making for ourselves by the apparatus we have developed to access the world out there. He essentially said: we are responsible for the way we see the world: we *remake the world we see*. We *represent the world that is presented to us*. Now this does not mean that if we stop perceiving the world stops existing. That was Berkeley's idea which was, however instrumental in helping Kant conceive of his explanation.

However Berkeley had a point. Take the example of sound. Sound, or what we hear as sound, are in fact vibrations of a medium. For us the preferred medium is air although when we are in water that medium works too. The vibrations made by a string make the air vibrate and the vibrating air makes our ears work in their grand and mysterious way and the ear makes our brain work etc. The question to ask then is: Would sound exist if a tree

in a forest fell and there was no hearing creature to *make a sound of the vibrating air*? That is a problem indeed. It means that we do not so much make the world as make something of the world we perceive with the materials at hand, namely that which we are able to perceive of the behaviour of the world out there *in the way we are able to perceive it*. As perception is no passive receiver but a selector, interpreter and orderer of information, we cannot assume that the world we make in our perception of it, where memory, experience and perception come together in the activity of perception, coincides completely with the world out there, which is unknowable in its fullness.

This actually makes sense in a very everyday sort of way when you manage to explain it properly. A myopic man *makes* a myopic world of the world given him in perception. Similarly, a man with good eyes *makes* a sharp world. A colour blind man *makes* a black and white world, a blind man *makes* a world organised exclusively by touch, smell, sound and taste.

The world out there behaves. Things move; bump around or stick together and get in each other's way. Collisions occur. The world is subject to what I like to call a *tectonics of behaviour*. When two materials meet, when two structures meet, they behave relative to each other, and this behaviour has meaning for those able to perceive that behaviour and put it to some use. A rubber ball will bounce on concrete but float in water and become like porcelain when submerged in liquid helium. The process of light hitting a wall, reflecting from that wall and hitting our retina so that our optical nerve can send a coded message to our brain which then gets all excited, represents a chain, or rather a network of tectonic shifts, where energy, mass, space and time reconfigure in ripples of cause and effect. And what the eye sees as colour is in fact the product of the way lightwaves work on our sensitive tissue. What we perceive of that tectonics of behaviour is all that will reveal itself of *das ding an sich* or as Nietzsche wanted to call it *das dingende an sich*. In order to *react usefully with regard to the knowledge that is accessible to us* we need to know how things behave.

In fact the verb *to be* is a verb that constantly puts us on the wrong track. Things *are* how they behave and what we make of their behaviour. Or at least that is all we will ever get to know about them. That is why our judgment legislates in our understanding and our understanding legislates in our ability to reason which both inform our ability to judge. That in fact appears to me to encourage a radical empiricism as discussed in the first essay of this bundle.

a quality can never be neutral

Kant's work spawned disciplines like psychology and phenomenology where people went in search of the structures of our mind to discover the way we shape the world as its behaviour is received by us into the structured mind in the form of sensory experience. If it is true that we select from the quite possibly infinite richness of the world, only those things that we have the machinery to perceive and process in our minds then surely it is clear that no description of a quality can be neutral, it must, by definition, always be charged with our perspective on things, our ability to make something of the world given. This is something that became a central feature to Nietzsche's thinking. We never get to know the full story of what we see. Even the most scientifically adequate description of some aspect of physics is limited by our ability to study its behaviour. Nothing we know of as yet can change that. The full story of the world out there is what Kant called *the thing in itself*. The thing in itself, *das ding an sich* is that which is out there and from which we select what we are able to perceive and make sense of in our mind by ordering the information in space and time, into possibility and impossibility, into virtual and real etc. We only get to know what we have been able to draw from our senses and work upon with the machinery of our mindful body.

In the light of this it is fair to say that any quality, that is any predicate of a sentence, ultimately refers to and describes the relationship we make between us and the object the quality is, for the sake of convenience, attributed to. However, this thankfully still makes objective description not only possible but highly desirable. But there is a trick involved. We speak as if things *have* a quality, but what we should mean by that, is that *this thing and our perceptive technology behave in a certain way when brought into relation to each other under specific circumstances*. A relationship can, as such, be defined in terms of the behaviour generated by two terms being brought into relation with each other as well as the stand taken by either term with regard to that relationship. To specify an example I used a little earlier, a tomato is not red, it colours red when looked at by us in daylight. OU eyes and brains are machines for turning certain light waves into the colour red. And when we point out the colour red, we cannot be completely sure that others experience that red in the way that we do. After all we have learnt to identify redness from a coincidence in the structure of the thing that makes light behave in a certain way and our apparatus for seeing which makes something observable of those reflected

light waves and our mothers and fathers who were so kind as to train us in calling the resultant effect red.

Leaving this quirk of cultural conditioning aside, even the most scientifically clinical description *necessarily* takes account of our limitations as it is only ever able to study behaviour that we are able to perceive with the help of whatever aid and prosthesis. Physics, Chemistry and Biology are the disciplines that explore the edges of our being often using mathematics to describe what they see and to work out what they should be seeing. They have achieved a level of communicable validity with their protocol of description, verification and falsification which is extremely exciting. Occasionally they appear to jump beyond the edge of the allowable when they start thinking about more than three dimensions, but that may just be a trick of the eye. It may be that we do not fully understand the nature of a dimension in proper philosophical terms. Perhaps the true nature of a dimension is the idea of quality. And the way I am defining quality as a relationship would allow the need and possibility for an infinite number of dimensions.

To take something into one's thought is to establish a relationship with it. Let's test this assumption. Take the sentence: [iron can be rusty]. That would appear to be quite a neutral statement. Surely it would be fair to state here that we are not concerned with our relationship to the iron by merely pronouncing these words. The sentence is about a material and its condition. We appear to be irrelevant in the equation. However, as a material, *iron* conjures up a world in which it plays a role relative to us. Its condition qualifies that role and perhaps limits it and suggests more specific possibilities. The question we really need to ask is this: Why would I be talking about rusty iron if I was not attempting to engage with its role in my world in some way? I wouldn't. Even when I merely *use* iron as an example in this text, its relationship to me is what is at issue. Even if someone else brings the subject up by accident, they force the issue onto me; I have to take a stand. I appear not to be able to escape this ironbound rule. I cannot myself think of an example where this is not the case. Anything that impinges on my attention in whatever way, thereby establishes a relationship with me, and is *used*. Any sentence I utter or any thought I entertain determines itself, either publically in conversation, or privately in my own thought-world, relative to me. Therefore we can say that a quality (a whatness) *is a description or representation of the behaviour of something in a situation made relative to us*. A quality is a description or representation of behaviour at a scale of observation

accessible to us. Any act of description is an act of engagement with that quality. A quality is the description of a relationship: a relationship as the product of behaviour on which a stand has been taken.

a quality = a relationship

If a quality as described by us cannot be neutral and if it always describes a relationship linking us and the object, partial object or assemblage so that the quality {iron} and the quality of {its rustiness} relates something to me and my use of it in the situation I find myself in, we can see that a quality is the relationship itself conditioned by the behaviour of the two terms when meeting in that relationship. It is where the world in its possibly infinite richness meets my limited, or to put it in a kinder way, structured way of undergoing that world, whereby I make something of it. And that kindness is not just a kindness, after all structuredness gives us the freedom of its possibilities relative to us through the limitations it provides which channel the possibilities. We can then say: "It is useful not to use rusty iron to make a satellite telescope." Or, rusty metal is useful to Richard Serra when making a work of art. Our structuring gives us the possibility of undergoing something at all, and what we undergo we undergo relative to our use of it.

A quality cannot therefore be fairly attributed to the thing described nor can it be fully attributed to me but it comes into presence in the way we meet, in the tectonics of our behavioural network: a possibly infinite richness meets limited, structured machine for undergoing and processing sensory experience resulting in tectonics shifts called behaviour. My eye behaves as a visual receiver, my brain behaves as a processor of thought and feeling, the rusty iron behaves as a hard cold grainy object against my skin, etc. I could have described the rusty iron by focussing on different qualities. Its shape, its appearance at a magnification of x 300,000 would have made it appear very different and would have made its relationship to me conditioned by that extra information. If I were to call the rusty iron *a hammer*, a whole new world of significance would be opened up of more immediate possibilities (and limitations) of use. That new world of significance would nevertheless still relate the hammer to me, the person talking about it. I cannot escape a relationship with it in the form of a quality or set of qualities. I meet the hammer with the selecting structure of my ability to undergo things and it meets me with its possibly infinite richness, which I reduce to what I can take on.

But this is not enough. We can go a step further. Not only could this thing that meets me be infinitely rich and be reduced by me to that which the structure of my mind can cope with, but it is even further reduced, and greatly so, by my limited experience of life and by the level of my *athleticism* in exercising my faculties able to process experience. Heidegger believed that *familiarity* caused the hammer to become silent, to fall away in its being relative to me. This is useful. Being familiar with a hammer can make it fall away, fall silent in my consciousness of it; however it can also allow me to explore it in ways that its newness to me would not allow. If I am unfamiliar with hammering, I have to learn how to do it. As I practise, I become good at hammering and the hammer becomes part of me and falls silent or, more interestingly, becomes in a certain sense part of me in the same way that my leg, well practised at walking, is part of me. I can, in my familiarity with it, choose to explore it for new possibilities in a way I would not have been able to do if I was *unhandy*.

I think I am right in believing that this opens up for us a curious thing about whatness. What is a hammer to me? It is many things, it has infinite dimensions, only a handful of which have been properly explored.

analysis and synthesis

Kant in his aesthetic, made a distinction between analytical judgments and synthetic judgements. This is an interesting distinction, no longer used very often, properly discredited by Quine, but certainly worth pausing at for a minute. Analytical judgments are judgements whereby what is being said about a thing is supposed to be given in the concept of the thing itself. There are lots of analytical judgements one can make about things. Take for example the idea of {*a man*}. If I say: "{a man} has {a body}", I would be making an analytical judgment. The having of {a body} is one of the many things necessary for something to be {a man}. Having {a body} is necessary for being {a man}. Something couldn't be {a man} without having at least {a body}. So an analytical judgment dives into what the concept holds by itself in order for the concept to function properly in our understanding. An analytical judgment takes something apart and reveals the parts it necessarily has to be composed of in order to be what it is. The problem with this is that any concept we use has a history. In other words an analytical judgment says more about the way we look at the world than about the world itself. If we take what I said earlier seriously, namely that every description is a description of the world as a whole but with some specific feature of it turned towards us, and if all we ever have access to is

the part, partial objects, we can see that a concept is such a portrait of the world with a specific part of it turned towards us. A concept is itself *a part object*. So if we draw a figure which can represent our boundaries for a particular concept, then an analytical judgement goes into the fractions to reach for the parts making up that concept as defined by our boundary. But we know that concept to be a. Part of the landscape of significance and b. Surveyed by us within our limited capacity to access the world. A concept has come to be through our limited grasp of the world in its behaviour has it not? Not just its behaviour by itself, but also the scale at which we can observe behaviour. We have just argued that we in fact make something of the world we perceive from the bits of behaviour that are accessible to us from the world out there. On top of that we cannot be expected to reinvent our language with every new exciting philosophy or scientific discovery that comes along. That would be too cumbersome for our poor overburdened brains to cope with. The concept of {a man} is a rather old concept, thousands of years I should imagine, it is also peculiarly adapted to our size and ability to perceive. The philosophy of Kant is rather recent by comparison, just two hundred and something years old and has achieved a level of abstraction that the concept of man was not even meant to serve. If Kant had been allowed to, he may have conceived of {a man} very differently indeed. A phenomenologist would certainly have wanted to. Heidegger called {a man} *Dasein*, a being whose prime quality is being somewhere, namely *there*. There, meaning a spatio-temporal place with an attitude on his being there and a sense of direction. We discussed something like this in the section on ontology. Heidegger's concept of *Dasein* seems already less sure of its need for a body or at least appears to have related the need for that body to the need for an environment to be in. If Heidegger had kept to the concept {a man} a man would not only have been his body but also his environment and the stand taken on the relationship tying the two together. The possibilities open to analytical judgement are as such very much dependent on the history of our way of speaking about the world. If our eyes had the power of the microscope we might well have defined {a man} very differently, so that an analytical judgment about {a man} might have excluded some things that are currently implied in it, and included others. All I am trying to say here is that analysis presupposes a whole to be analysed. But a whole is an abstraction, itself a part object. Everything is a part of a whole called the all or whatever (a singularly unhelpful concept because it is inaccessible). Everything we can say that is implied in the whole we have defined is necessarily an analytical judgment. But as a whole is merely an abstraction, it is not clear how this helps us, except to affirm the fact that we like that

abstraction and want to keep it whole. The concept man is perhaps the most interesting abstraction: a portrait of the world as a whole with that part of it which is man turned towards us. But do not make the mistake of giving our concept of man autonomous existence. He is part of a larger structure, without which he becomes as nothing.

A synthetic judgment then goes beyond the boundary set by us and adds things to the concept and qualifies it in relation to other things around it. The sentence [This man is fat] is such a synthetic judgement. Fatness does not necessarily belong to any man, or indeed to the concept of man. His capacity for fatness might, but not his actual fatness. Fatness belongs to the possibilities open to a man: [IF] {a man} [THEN] {the possibility of him being fat}. That is an analytical judgment. [IF] {this man} = called {John} [AND] {John} has always been {fat}, we might be able to make a case that the sentence {John} = {fat} is an analytical judgment. But it wouldn't be a very strong one as {John}, even though he is {fat} now and always has been {fat} and even though his {fatness} is somehow part of the way we know and have known {John} all his life, he might go on a diet. That would perhaps shock us the first time we see {John} as {thin}, but we would get used to it. So synthetic judgments qualify things in relation to other things, bring concepts into relationship with other concepts. In fact they merely acknowledge that all we have access to is part objects.

What about the sentence [this man exists]? {Existence} is necessary to the concept {this man}. Even though the sentence [this man does not exist], is quite possible and makes sense in an everyday sort of way. What this second version really means is that {this man} does not exist as {a body with flesh and blood, organs and a history}. He exists only as the phrase *this man*. That is a legitimate form of existence, if rather *thin*. Kant wanted to be able to say [God exists], but then in such a way that the existence of God was more than just a phrase conjuring up God's existence as an idea. This is his famous synthetic judgment *a priori* with which we shall not concern ourselves. Although you can possibly guess what it means. It means that we can say things about things that are not analytical, not given in the concept itself, but nevertheless *necessary*. Kant felt that the statements of mathematics were such synthetic judgements *a priori*: we can say new things about the world using mathematics, which are nevertheless implied in the very structure of mathematics itself. Such a position is not at all hard if we use the distinction between analytical and synthetic as defining a man-made boundary of abstraction. After all we then get the following situation whereby we can say: The world is as it is.

This world in its totality and as it is in its fullness is inaccessible to me. But I have access to its behaviour as this is observable to me through my perceptive apparatus. Admittedly what my perceptive apparatus makes of that behaviour cannot be tested against the real thing, but it is communicable and can be made useful to me and my kind and reveals some of the structure of being through the observation of behaviour. That revealing is similar to the idea of a synthetic judgment *a priori* even though that concept can only be used within very strict conditions.

We shall ask ourselves an interesting question. Say that {having a body} is an analytical judgment about the concept {a man}, so that the concept {a man} would be meaningless without the concept {a body}. Could we devise a concept which would include all characteristics of man, except his having a body? Surely this would be easy. We could call it {a man_{-b}} so that {a man_{-b}} = {a man in everything except the having of a body}. He might well approach something like Heidegger's *Dasein* or perhaps even the memory of my father. My father remains a man for me, even though he has long since passed away.

We might also approach the problem in a slightly less expected way: where does a body stop? Bodies mix themselves imperceptibly with their environment. When we point at a body we are only pointing at something that is a unit in only a rough sense. We constantly exchange fluids, gasses and solids with the environment we are a part of. By studying the processes of metabolism we can see the sense of this. In the case of an accident or prosthetic surgery the body mixes with aspects of its environment in a rather radical way. The border between the body and the environment is extremely busy. It is quite reasonable to call into question the autonomous nature of a person's body and not rely on it quite so heavily in devising the concept of {a man}. This means that the mechanics of analytical judgment when addressing concepts that are constituted of unstable aggregates is precarious at best. The body is really a privileged centre of the environment. The {a man} could be referred to as a person (an abstraction) taking a stand on the relationship between an aggregate called {his body} and {the environment} (which he also calls his). This will no doubt get us into all sorts of trouble, but we could nevertheless conceive of a concept {a man_{-b}}. Such a concept would possibly require us to relinquish a number of other qualities that pertain to the concept {a man} but so be it. If we could conceive of such a man, we are forced to confront the question what the real difference might be between an analytical judgment and a synthetic judgment. The only difference is that

this difference says something about the way we look at things. And if the difference is only about the way we look at the world, it might be worth trying to explore other ways of looking at the world, which is precisely what we are attempting to do here. What is interesting is all the things you can say about things quite happily all of which qualify their existence in relation to you. It opens up a world of infinite dimensions. It also makes madness possible. We have explored that in the essay on logic. To say [I am grass] is an act of madness. But the question: [How are grass and I related?] is an extremely interesting one and it is really not all that different.

concepts as sets (of qualities)

A concept then is a set of qualities brought into relation to each other because they are felt to be somehow stable, creating a kind of stable subsystem a virtual simulation of the world. The concept {man} is such a subsystem, as is the concept of {evolution}, or the concept of {yellowness}. In terms of making up concepts, any set is possible, (even if not always useful) even the empty set. Stable sets appear more useful than unstable ones, but that might be prejudice. Bertrand Russell discovered the one set that he thought was impossible, namely the set that includes all sets, *including itself*. For how could a set embrace all sets and embrace itself, how could such a set be pictured? I think Russell's paradox depends on a tradition of picturing inclusion, so that I could even imagine a way of picturing inclusion in such a way that it becomes possible to have a set including all sets including itself, so that literally any set is possible, making the issue as to whether a judgment is analytical or synthetic subject to a sliding scale depending on the concept you are using. We tend to picture inclusion as containment, whereby the container is conceived of as somehow separate to the contained. But how does that, for example work for the human body? To say that the skin, which is the container of the human body is not contained by the concept of the human body gives us a very strange image indeed. But where does this stop? Is the environment that the body is a part of also part of the body? Well, yes, in fact it is; our separation of the body from its environment is in part given us by our perceptive machinery, by the scale we observe at. The body as a concept is an abstraction of the world as a whole a reduction of it to an essence. If we are part of the environment, the environment is also part of us. Make no mistake about it. In my thoughts, my virtual world, I am very large indeed, infinitely large; I can conceive of the furthest star. The useful question

regarding the existence of a thing is not *whether* it exists, but *how* it exists *in relation to me*.

As such aesthetics is the product of ontology. It describes things in terms of qualities in relation to me. While I am doing this, it helps me to chat to people and find out how they stand. Perhaps, with a bit of luck we might get somewhere, think something special together.

The difference between an analytical judgment and a synthetic judgment is then no more than an aspect of our way of speaking about things. It merely tells us that we have a tradition in making concepts of things that are thoroughly determined by *our experience* of things. And with experience I mean something that already takes into account Kant's revolution, namely the experience of the world as structured by our way of receiving and processing that experience. Concepts and qualities (I am not sure there is a difference here) have no life outside of our use of these concepts in maintaining and developing ourselves through discourse, thought or whatever other activity that helps in this way. Concepts or qualities are shaped and completely saturated by our way of operating in the world. Concepts are all of them abstractions, presentations of the world represented in our understanding by being worked upon by us, and the only difference between a synthetic judgment and an analytical judgement is that the concept was made on the basis on those scales of observation accessible to us and our experience of the world.

If this is so, there is no predetermined hierarchy in what information is more important. The making of hierarchies of values, which I call the art of economics and the making of hierarchies of priorities, what I call the art of politics are free arts. They produce their hierarchies relative to a situation. Their main concern is to manage and critique the accretions of cultural habituation and to begin again and again in a cycle of eternal return, without every throwing out that which is *good*, whatever that is felt to be in a certain situation.

To talk in terms of analysis and synthesis is still very useful as it tells us something very directly about the scale at which we operate. It tells us something about who we are and how we work. In fact our descriptions of other things describe an aspect of us, namely us-in relation to the thing being described. Everything we do and think mirrors us, faces us. The environment is our heterotope, the face we respond to with our face: it is the other that describes us when we try to describe the other. In this sense

it forms us. That is crucial in an aesthetic where we attempt to describe the world relative to us. And to describe qualities we should keep in mind this possibility of analysis and synthesis so as to get clear what we can and cannot say about qualities. I for one believe that it would be very difficult to say, for example, that there are qualities that we can experience that we can call *simple* or indeed *pure* without defining the criteria against which that simplicity and purity can be identified. Nothing is either simple or pure in its being towards us, after all, its being towards us depends on our description of that being. All qualities that we are able to experience and describe are in one way or another synthetic, subject to complication because they fold the object within our sensory and cognitive apparatus. They are synthetic in the sense that the world meets us in that quality and in that meeting a complex tectonic shift of behaviour occurs in order to become conscious of that quality. Every quality we experience is a synthesis of percepts, memories, neuron fireworks, movements, collisions, you name it. They constitute the behaviour we describe that results when things meeting our body and its instrument of perception. And the description in terms of the representation of that behaviour is part of the formula that produces *stand* on the issue.

How does this matter to us? As I said any quality in our discourse is in some way related to our use of it, that is, related to us as *using* creatures. And if quality is about relation, then quality is a question of relativism. A much hated word. I think it is so hated because on the one hand it appears unavoidable, it lurks under every stone we turn in our attempt to make sense of the world and build a comfortable house of thought, and at the same time it seems to stop us getting a clear foothold on the world. But our use of the word relativism here need not end in prevarication and vagueness of point of view. Let's look this relativism in the face and see if, instead of leading to an *anything goes* kind of nonsense, it can help us develop a clear picture of how we should and should not talk of things. In the end my argument leads to us putting our trust in our experience and in our concepts as far as these appear to simulate experience well, so as to be able to exercise our understanding and our judgment which will help our reasoning through a plan or design. I wish to encourage you to exercise your ability to experience so as to make the world richer.

a story about a quality: serenity

Not so long ago I was involved in a conversation with a student and her two other supervisors. One of the other supervisors did not like the facade

the student had designed. I felt rather sorry about this because I did very much like it and I know what a carelessly dismissive comment can do to a student: it often makes them change their mind against their own (better) judgment. Students tend to take their supervisors very seriously indeed and are, generally, more sensitive to criticism than to praise. So despite my protestations, which no doubt counted for something, I somehow knew that the next time I would see this student's elevations, there would be a different facade, one better geared to this other supervisor's *taste*.

This supervisor, who is by the way a very good supervisor, which is why I enjoy taking him to task over this, said something interesting, in a way often heard in design studio, he said: "why don't you instead design *a serene white box in the landscape*". This kind of sentence problematic. In a court of law it would count as leading. No doubt my friend knew this. Through the power of suggestion he began designing for the student. How? Well by attaching the quality serene to the product white box before this white box could have possibly proven itself serene. He placed the quality there as a carrot. What was he after, something serene? Or did he want a white box because he thinks all white boxes are serene? If the first, he should have said, "why don't you try to make the facade more serene?", if the second, his taste has been over-determined: he is a man who simply likes white boxes because he thinks of them all as serene. Put in this way I hope it sounds just as absurd to you as it does to me.

How do his ideas about white boxes and their relationship to his ideas about serenity work? Does he really believe that all white boxes in the landscape are serene? Surely not. Serenity is a judgment that follows the evaluation of a situation. One may intend to build something that is serene, but that comes to nothing if it is not judged so afterwards. That is what makes intentionality in design so difficult: How do we make sure that our intentions are fully realised? The answer is that we don't. All we can do is be proficient in providing as many of the necessary conditions for the quality to emerge as possible and hope for the best in the judgment of other people. Serenity is certainly not a necessary quality of white boxes, in the way a body is of a living man. Why did he not say: *why don't you make a serene box in the landscape*? Why the white? That would at least have conveyed to the student that she should go in search of a quality and its tectonic makeability, at the same time he would have left it open as to how to achieve it in detail. Why did he suggest that white was the means to serenity? It sounded very convincing to the student, who would surely not make the mistake to think she now had a direct path to his approval.

Unfortunately I had really liked the facade as she had designed it. It was *friendly*. It was not white, not serene. White facades can be judged friendly. They can be judged serene. The current facade, the way it sat in the landscape, its detailing, its use of materials, would have made it a building that would have, I believe, enriched its surroundings. I said as much. I tried to picture her building as a white box in the landscape and I trusted her to be able to detail it and use materials in such a way that the quality of serenity that my colleague had in mind would appear in the final product. I pictured her other supervisor visiting the building after it was built, smiling and saying: "that is indeed a serene white box in the landscape". But then I thought of others coming by. Would they use the word serene to describe this building? How is this serenity part of the building? Not only is every instance of {white box} not necessarily an instance of {serenity}, it is quite possible for someone to judge it as serene and another to judge it completely differently, without either of them being incorrect. This is what we mean when we say that such judgments are subjective. Subjectivity is the stirring of interest and desire relative to a situation; it is the stirring of perceptivity and sensibility. The viewing subject succumbs to the quality, falls for it; his task is to build an intimate relation with whatever is at issue, to take account of its interest and desires and to build a relationship with it on equally sincere terms. In this sense the objective and the subjective are still useful abstractions. Not because one of them engages the I and the other does not, which is what used to be thought was the case. Both inevitably describe the world relative to the person observing the world, but one achieves desirability and interest by steering clear of such things in the description, so that the description becomes communicable and generally applicable. And the other tries to maintain sincerity by putting its interest and desires at the very centre of the discussion. In the subjective approach someone, who takes a stand on things, lays claim to a quality, making that quality matter *to him*. Subjectivity lays claim to qualities it deems interesting and perhaps even desirable.

Serenity can be achieved through all sorts of means, not least by the selective attention of the person in search of it. Whatever you use to design serenity, the person undergoing the building will have to be able to perceive serenity, will select that quality from whatever else presents itself to his mood and his sensibility. He has to, at least, *know* serenity as a quality, even if he does not know the word. Not all of us do. And some of us have a very intimate kind of serenity on offer, that resides not in the object or in the subject but in the situation where both meet. I am not at all sure that {a serene white box} is easily achievable when measured

against my taste. Serenity for me is a delicate thing. Having read Moby Dick and long thinking it the greatest book ever written, white has become a complicated colour for me, the more so because for many years I lived as a *whitey* in a land of predominantly black people, where I had been very happy. Furthermore I associate white with the worst excesses of pretentious taste. That may well diminish me, but I can live with that. I can too readily imagine myself looking at the finished product and having a quite different qualification ready to hand: {cold} maybe, or {slick}, or {institutional} or {loud} whatever, but not *necessarily* {serene}.

Serenity is almost impossible to describe *objectively* in my definition of that word because it is so closely bound up with the idea of mood, with the idea of *stimmung*: the tuning of the body to his environment. I would quite happily describe a winter landscape as {serene}, if I felt it fitted *that particular landscape*. The fitting is however not a fitting of the landscape into just the concept, it has to fit *me*. I think a winter landscape, covered with white snow, quite quickly qualifies for serenity, perhaps many of us do, but as I am aware of the corrupting work of cliché-forming, I try to approach everything I see as freshly as I can, banning from me predetermined and habituated qualifications. Not all winter landscapes are serene, some are dull, others are frightening, and some are all things at once, depending on what I wish to select. I could describe lots of things as {serene} one moment and as something very different at another moment. And yet the word {serene} was crucial in the story with which the supervisor tried to convince the student. What was its role?

Well now, that is an interesting question. Did he believe that {her design} as a particular instance, would, if executed in {a white material} justify the qualification {serene}? Did he believe that serenity is communicable through the colour white? I think he did. He was not naive in this, he believed such a quality can become subject to intentional design and thus qualify this way for everyone. I would agree with him up to a point. I believe the *specific* quality is impossible to design. He no doubt realized as he said it, that this {serenity} lies not in {the object}, not in the colour {white} but in the way {the design} executed in {white} meets *his* way of looking at things. Some people appear to code their experiences quite heavily, they develop a sort of knee-jerk reaction to things. Having once labelled something they will stick by that label loyally. This is the mechanics of cliché forming, whereby the Mona Lisa always has a *mysterious smile*. I am not so loyal to my labels it seems, her smile to me is rarely mysterious and rarely a smile. It is, far more often when I look at her,

a serene expression. But it does depend on my mood. So Leonardo merely succeeded in creating or capturing a facial expression with which we then measure our experience of the world. Some will call it mysterious, some will call it serene, some will call it whatever, but whatever its qualification it receives our attention and, in the case of the Mona Lisa, even a certain devotional attention. What our supervisor wanted was this metaquality. He wanted her to design a facade that had a metaquality that deserved a kind of attention. He may well have liked to call it beauty, but he has been conditioned not to use that word. He felt that this beauty would reside in a uniformity that would be communicable and result in univocity: everyone saying the same thing in the same voice. He no doubt wanted something that had the characteristics of wholeness, of itselfness, of opacity perhaps even, something that would be and remain itself, challenging its surroundings to frame it. These qualities are easily designable. Squareness is such a quality, so is whiteness. We know when a quality does not need to say more, when it does not need to be a sign of a sign. Such qualities are easy to design. Squareness and whiteness are easy. Serenity is hazardous, its conditionality is radical. We know what things look like that stay very still and do not move and do not speak of things they cannot speak. They need us to say things they themselves, by themselves, cannot say. We know what things look like that do not speak, do not face, and are not merely absorbed, that are placed and in placing keep themselves to themselves. But it is the situation, the moment this meta-quality is claimed and made to matter in terms of interest and desire that it can become serene.

Serenity *cannot* be an easy and objective quality like squareness. It can however still be a real quality, in that it is made describable, in that the easy conditions for its appearance are laid down in the design, those conditions that need say no more than what presents itself without ado and the more difficult ones that are whimsical, subject to *stimmung* and tunefulness, that require us *to make something of the world* are indeed left to us to *find* in the situation, when we undergo that situation. Such qualities can only become communicable within the sphere of a culture of norms and values, of cliché labels and shared stories. Such qualities can only become communicable on the basis of authority. Authority codes them. In this way the smile of the Mona Lisa has become *mysterious*.

As {serenity} is a quality that is quite desirable to my student, she pricked up her ears and listened attentively and took note: Aha! {white box} = {serene}. Now, that is a grossly simplified version of the story. I know my

student reasonably well, she is intelligent. She was probably able to put her supervisor's enthusiasm for white boxes in perspective. She probably realised that {serenity} was not something like a free gift that comes with {white box-likeness}. She no doubt went away to detail and materialise her design in such a way that {serenity} became her focus and {whiteness} merely one of the possible means to achieve that end. Rather than seeing {whiteness} as an *a priori* analogue of {serenity} she will have realised that this would be too easy. She would probably go on trying all sort of things, doing all sorts of research until her own standards of serenity and those offered by her student friends were properly met *a posteriori* in their judgment of the design in question. And that would be enough of an authority. She would then feel satisfied about her design as an expression of {serenity}. Once she was happy that she had achieved her goal, we would see her again.

This is where the story changes. We did see her again. She tricked us cleverly. She left her drawings the way they were, improving on them where necessary but keeping the materials as she had originally designed them, and made her model completely white: very clever, a true diplomat in the fierce politics of taste.

object-tcejbus

We cannot usefully shape our qualifications by our interests, our desires and then speak about them as if they are categorical rather than relative. That does not work very well. Or rather it only works if authority plays a convincing role. In a subjective approach, where interest and desire play a centrifugal role where we impose our interests and desires on the world to hand, honesty about those interests and desires is the only way we can deliver descriptions free of a corruptive delusion, because we can see their workings clearly. But this requires sophistication. The difference in the tutor's advocacy of serenity and my judgment of the extant facade's friendliness is that he wanted a serene facade and, spoke in his absent-minded way *as if* a specific colour would necessarily provide such a qualification. Had the student done what he said and come back to him he may well have said: yes it is white, but it is not serene. I didn't mean you to do it like that! This all too often happens in design studio, where the student takes the advice literally and fails to fit the advice into a larger context or causal network. My judgment of the facade's {friendliness} was a judgment *a posteriori* that related my expectations and abilities to judge to a large set of interrelated features. I made sure I said: *I think it looks*

rather friendly really. And yet, if she had taken up her tutor's wish to build serenity and worked at the facade until it deserved to be labelled with that quality *for her, her friends and her tutor*, the building surely deserves the qualification {serene}. So what am I trying to prove? Well I think that I have proven that the subjective and the objective are, despite their unpopularity still rather interesting categories. Every description involves the thing described, the person describing and the situation in which something is described. That goes for the objective as well as the subjective. With the objective description, perceivable behaviour is described without reference to the wish of the person doing the describing for things to be the way they are being described, making the description much more valuable and desirable, while the other the subjective description there is a wish to be merely sincere, whatever factor forces itself onto the description. Objective descriptions are interesting and desirable because they are easily communicable: the message sent overlaps almost completely every time with the message received. Mathematics is a good language to make such descriptions, English or Dutch, or indeed any such language is rather bad in this. They are good in making subjective descriptions, in which interest and desire are in fact the starting point for description, where words presuppose the world they are attempting to describe. Mathematics does this too but in a way that we can forgive and even believe in: after all we can all count and counting has proved itself immensely useful. The qualities described using the subjective approach become communicable as imperatives: each sentence should be, for politeness sake, be preceded with the phrase: I invite you to see the world in my way which is.... Whether that invitation is taken up is then left up to person addressed. Objective descriptions are not so much imperative or prescriptive, they are more fully descriptive, they have no hang ups about what they mean, no urges to take account of. After all whiteness is not so big a deal. It can later be used to mean all sorts of things when related to the full portrait of a situation. Serenity is different, she wants her portrait full.

Behaviour and the description of that behaviour accord, every time regardless of the person reading the description, as long as that person understands the language in which the description is made and finds it holds with regard to himself, his person. Subjective descriptions are mostly imperative but can, with the authority of acculturation at least achieve a semblance of descriptive power. But one has to be careful...the accord that lays at the basis of this, the act of assimilation it requires, is authority. We invest things with authority.

To give one kind of description precedence over the other is absurd except with regard to a perspective. Objective description is extremely limited. To design a square for its squareness is never enough. You have to like a square. Why do you like squares? Why did Donald Judd like cubes? In what situations do they provide the right conditions, and for what? We function in an extraordinary wide variety of situations, in those situations some qualities are attractive others repulsive, even squareness, which by that time means much more than simple squareness, it has become the sign and the condition for other qualities. Meta-qualities, extremely hard to describe because they determine themselves only with reference to interest and desire. They are, objectively speaking, undetermined qualities, like beauty or goodness, or whatever. They have to be laid claim to by interpretation and specification. And an interpretation is sensitive to context.

use, less, full: useless, useful

I have been very kind to Kant so far. And there is good reason to be, seldom has a more revolutionary way of looking at the world been proposed; seldom has such a way of looking had more influence. He is certainly one of the three or four most compelling philosophers of all time. No one can get around him. However, in one instance he made a mistake. Kant thought he had cleared up the mess of aesthetics by instituting an aesthetics of disinterested interest, an aesthetics of purposiveness without purpose. He made the mistake to think that beauty lay in the disinterested. Here you have it: a paradox as an aesthetic ideal! Beauty without interest! It sounds like the kind of promise a bank would make.

Why do we look at art? Why do we find it important for a culture. Why do we visit museums in our millions? Why do we become devoted to works and experiences? Kant wanted beautiful things to be beautiful only if we could look at them disinterestedly and note their beauty at a distance as it were. Nietzsche laughed at this, and rightly so: an aesthetics without interest and desire, purposiveness without purpose, what utter nonsense! Imagine instead of a painting of a naked woman, the real thing hanging there on the wall, happily gazing at us in an inviting sort of way. Imagine all the men trying to behave as if it were the most normal thing in the world. Sure we would have to behave ourselves, we should not show our barbaric depths too often, but it would take some investment of effort and determination. Actually the Kantian school refused to see aesthetics as all that interesting. It is the first two critiques that generally get all the

attention, with the third seen as something of an afterthought, a loose end that had to be tied up *pro forma*. It wasn't until Gilles Deleuze came along, who himself did not even particularly like Kant's dusty philosophy, to point out, incontrovertibly in my view, that the third critique, *The Critique of Judgment*, should be seen as the very foundation stone of the three Critiques, the basis for a system which is otherwise incomplete and unstable. The aesthetic lies at the heart of Kantian philosophy.

In this view aesthetic judgment is the preparative exercise of judgment, it comes about through free thought, the free exercise of our faculties. Aesthetic judgement is the free harmonic play of the faculties. I interpret that to mean that aesthetic judgment forms itself by trying things out, by practising possibilities and thus developing *a taste*. This is something very different to the Don Quichote of disinterestedness Kant's defenders made of him. Sure he may have said that aesthetics is about disinterestedness, but in the same way as I have just described objectivity. It is a disinterestedness that makes interest all the more binding. It is a disinterestedness for the sake of exploration and seeking. As such aesthetic *play* makes all our faculties relate to each other, the imagination to the understanding, the understanding to speculative and practical reason. Nevertheless it was the Platonic urge that won out, the urge to see the world in terms of a carefully stratified social hierarchy, subject to the idea of a *higher* and a *lower*. His disinterestedness came to stand for *higher interest*, that is interest without base purpose and utilitarian interest. Perhaps that is justified, after all there are base purposes and selfish interests and they are never very pretty outside a novel or story. And yet in a novel and in a story they can achieve extraordinary poetry. So there is something not right about this social order of beauty. It does not work. It encourages an anaemic aesthetics, an immunised aesthetics, it encourages snobbery and hypocrisy. Kant is certainly not free of a grammarology of thought, that is, of silently instituting a social order through the way he expresses his thought. Thought is the ordering of relations. All order infects social relations. But his aesthetics is far more interesting when seen from the perspective suggested by Deleuze. My interest in it here is very narrow so I shall not repeat the whole argument, but it is the preparative and exploratory exercise of judgment whereby the imagination, our understanding and our reason play freely with each other that lies at the heart of aesthetics. That gives all scientific exploration and all artistic exploration its freedom to seek and find. And what they find measured against experience helps form a more generous understanding; helps form a large and accommodating taste. This exercise allows the preparation of a

style of being, informed by a taste for using things and ways of doing. This way of looking at aesthetics suddenly makes things fall into place. Remember, I am not in the least concerned with the question whether Kant really meant it this way; I am not here rewriting the history of aesthetic thought. Kant allows my interpretation of him. It is consistent with his writings That is what is significant. The great revolution in this way of looking at things is that it repositions aesthetics in relation to the idea of use.

a good use

The most unfortunate thing of the Kantian tradition of interpretation, the narrow tradition of interpretation, is that it instituted and declared sacred an aesthetics of the *somehow* useless, in fact instituting a social hierarchy of use with the useless occupying both the lowest as well as the highest strata's. The concept of use has become the great windmill of aesthetics. The useless, its supposed opposite, became that which is Platonically higher, an ideal, free of value and such nonsense and the lowest that which was not worthy of value. The Utilitarians tried bravely to reinstitute utility at the very centre of their thought but did so in a disastrous way, unwittingly, unintentionally and only by virtue of an extremely unkind and ungenerous way of interpreting what admittedly lay implicit in their thought, laying the conditions for a cold and unconcerned liberalism a dictatorship if the majority with the standing invitation to the devil to take the hindmost, a morality that regularly resurfaces when its counterparts such as mercy, generosity, tolerance and so forth are in fact most urgently needed. This sportsmanship occasionally gets hold of our fragile society and makes it heavy to bear so that only the greedy and harsh can bear it. The idea that use and interest can only serve our baser instincts and our more worrying character traits is philosophically unsound. The Utilitarians, or rather the tradition of interpretation that gathered around them, made the idea of utility look even dirtier than the Kantians made it feel. We still like to think that the useful is something dirty, something unclean. When we say something is useful we appear to be narrowing it in our estimation to that use and denying it its fuller expression of being. This is not only a great shame but completely unnecessary. The effect of this grammar of use is merely a view of the world in which philosophical thinking has given way to social pressure. Thinking becomes subject to cultural authority and its theology rather than the authority of sound argument. The philosophical project, from Thales to Derrida, has always been to try to make philosophical thought autonomous of such social grammar, to make

it aware of the role that interest and desire play and to document their roles carefully because we know their power. It is, I contend, socially useful not to see the useful as dirty, as socially unclean, as intellectually inferior or whatever. It is instead the idea of *bad usage* which should be the focus of our concerns, not use itself. It is *good usage* we should be looking for, channelling our interests and desires to a world view in which we can co-exist, perhaps according to the vision of John Rawls' designs for a fair society.

Use, as I have already argued, is a necessary consequence of our socialisation as organisms. Use cannot be done without, ever. Use lies at the basis of every act of our existence, however microscopic. We *make use* of the world in everything we do. It is even useful to declare something useless that is not worthy of our attention or which needs to be punished by being thought of in that way: "you useless idiot!" That is where a more compelling meaning for Kant's aesthetics comes to the fore.

Our objective in life must be *to use well*. It is the objective of aesthetics to know what that means. This is not obvious because situationality is so extraordinarily complex. The free exercise of the faculties, keeps the world undetermined while it practises determination. It practises purposes without choosing one or other, gradually forming a sophisticated image of the world, preparing ourselves for *a good use*. It composes and recomposes the world allowing possibility to reign without determining that possibility in irrevocable actions. It practises judgment and in doing so gradually builds up an image of the world which can achieve direction and orientation. Kant's three critiques showed us the way to perform a *theoria* thoroughly. That is useful: building, maintaining and exploring an image of the world, a portrait of the world, our environment, whatever detail of it is turned to face us at any one moment.

Aesthetics is useful precisely because it allows us to experiment and practise our faculties freely. Making utility something dirty comes at a great cost. It creates a warped and ultimately insincere way of talking about things and institutes a very strange kind of normative basis for society. It is as damaging as that foolish quip of George Bernard Shaw, (who I am sure would not have liked his wit to have become so damaging) that those who can do, and those who can't teach. With that joke, and the easy target that teachers are, by virtue of their role in the youth of every person, the whole profession was dismissed as easy as that, the good and the bad together and that while education is the basis for the forming of a

generous and sophisticated aesthetics and in that way the basis of a fair society. I would retort to that that those who can't teach should perhaps learn to do so. The same can be said for usefulness. Those who would have aesthetics privilege the useless should learn to see how useful Kant's preparative judgement really is. Should learn to see how everything we do, our being, doing and having, are all expressions of use.

description as creation

Disinterested beauty is absurd. What we should be doing is to carefully document and map our interests. Give them their place responsibly. In order to document our interest in something we need a reflective capacity. We need to institute a distance in ourselves, a core of nothingness as Sartre called it, like a cloister garden in a monastery, a field with nothing but the view on ourselves in our environment. Kant was interested in the possibility of aesthetic judgment grounding his revolution in thought, grounding speculative and practical reason in the weird world of the understanding. We need the freedom to exercise our faculties and try out descriptions to see *how* our interest and desire are involved in aesthetic experience. That is the purpose of reflection. We need to find out what happens when their presence is made emphatic through, for example, their surgical removal in objective description or what happens when they are allowed to steer the very course of reason. We need to document every movement. We need to describe how our desires form the basis of taste and how we leap from this taste that determines our finding (in the sense of opinion) and our action.

Descriptions can, through their free exercise of the faculties, suggest new ways of experiencing something. Description speaks and in speaking creates new ways of seeing. Ways that were not there before. In this sense description is the truly creative art. It is what an artist does through his medium; it is what a person undergoing a work of art does in reflecting upon it. It is, above all useful, it generates life. Use is the basis of our every engagement with the world. It is useful to see things as useless as it allows us to make situationally determined hierarchies of the useful: situations require hierarchies, they require priorities, norms and values. But with each situation hierarchies can change, priorities can switch, they need that flexibility. Situations require us to portray, that is make compositions in which the urgent and the important both struggle to take centre stage. I have argued that objectivity is useful, interesting and desirable because it describes things in the emphatic absence of interest and desire and I have

described subjectivity as a way of describing things from the point of view of the centrality of our interest and desire. It must be clear that both complement each other and in fact form a single system of search for quality. Their separation is an act of abstraction. In any situation our interest and desire must be what is at issue, whatever their organisational diagram. Both ways of describing attempt to achieve a situational validity so as to allow the proper placing of our interest and desire in a particular situation. An objective description focuses on patterns of behaviour in which the versatility and wilfulness of human finding and action plays no role. The subjective description takes that wilfulness, that versatility in opinion and action as its very starting point. In other words both begin at the possibility of the free play of our faculties. The one seeks to bring sanity by looking at the world by studying the behaviour of things that appear to not have that freedom, and the other studies that very freedom itself.

The reason why one needs to be careful with abstract categories like the subjective and the objective, is that we have not as yet established what that freedom, often called free will, is, nor how it relates to the tectonics of behaviour that we observe in the world of atomic structures and folding surfaces. The only plausible explanation is that of Spinoza, namely that what we call free will, is really a curious feature of a deterministic universe. This is important to establish because we cannot truly say where the body starts and the environment finishes. They mesh so that the words objective and subjective are ultimately no more than grammatical functions that pertain only to the *I* as the most fundamental abstraction, the knot tying body and environment together in a set of attitudes, and the relations it builds between the world of body-environment and itself.

Ok, so uselessness is merely a different qualification of use. The useless is that which we turn away from, that which shows itself useful by being the periphery, the background of that which needs to be placed central in that situation. In the case of Ruskin the useless, where he believed he could find beauty it denotes *higher use*. If you want to be Platonic about it, that is fine. I am sceptical about hierarchies that transcend situations above and beyond their relationship to other situations, which at least I know to form a continuum of experience. The word higher institutes a social thinking, a thinking in social strata's. I am not only sceptical about them, but highly suspicious. Hierarchy and priority is useful in a situation, in the dynamics of change. It never has a transcendent validity. It is never more than relative to a situation. Even recently I read a philosopher, much respected by many,

including myself, who tried to hold that philosophy *is not useful*. No, he said it is of value but not useful. What utter tosh! So why does he do philosophy if it is not useful to him in some way? Where exactly does its uselessness reside? Philosophy is useful, it helps us take a stand, it helps us build an attitude to the world and to ourselves in it. Art is useful because it explores possibilities and limitations endlessly, radically and freely without being determined by the threat of consequences, even though it may generate consequences. It is useful to turn yourself away from that which needs no attention. It is useful to prioritize that which needs urgent attention, it is useful to question things. Theoretical science is useful because it does exactly the same as art, namely to explore the world, even if it does so according to its own beautifully perfected protocol. Aesthetics cannot get around its own problems by ignoring them and positing some social hierarchy upon its own thinking. Hierarchies are useful to people in situations. As soon as these hierarchies solidify and harden, undergo a process of philosophical sclerosis, and thus lose touch with the world of situations they are useful in, they become subject to resentment: they turn back on themselves and destroy their own generators. It is important that we should not let go of our interest in things. Our interest is what makes it possible to explore our own possibilities and limitations in undergoing the world and making that world richer in our experience of it.

So rather than trying to remove our interest in what we find beautiful and desirable let's try a different tack. Let's own up to our interest and let's try to describe it not by trying to get rid of our interest but by keeping it in the forefront of our thinking, either by looking at the world objectively or subjectively, or indeed situationally. Let's be *honest* about it in the sense that objectivity is a method to be honest about the world we encounter enforced by strict protocol.

An honest description is more interesting than a dishonest one transformed by other concerns than the issue at hand, a description that has been tainted by undisclosed interest. Paradoxically, the aesthetics of the disinterested as evolved in the Kantian traditions had the opposite effect: it became an interest to appear to be disinterested. It was too open to subversive action. Aesthetics was never so impoverished as when we had to behave ourselves according to such rules. It is in our interest to be honest, rather than being dishonestly disinterested. Let's try to describe our interest worthily. The philosophies that have come close to this, in my view, are phenomenology, existentialism, constructivism and above all pragmatism.

If we can say that serenity, or blueness, or fearfulness, or prettiness, or sadness, or smoothness is not a necessary quality of a thing but arises in a situation determined by the factors making up that situation can we also turn it around? Could we say serenity or any other quality is a possible quality of anything? So that serenity may, after all, be a necessary quality of white, but only in a particular situation, in such a way that it is part of the infinite richness of everything and needs to be selected out in order to appear. At the same time it can only be selected out of it if the person undergoing the object is capable of selecting that quality from whiteness. This brings me to the formula that:

{Any quality} can be ascribed to {any object} by {any person} undergoing or describing that quality in a specific situation.

However this {any} is very quickly narrowed down by experience and the contractual obligations of language, by our taste, by a growing body of knowledge about what is helpful and what is not. To be more specific the {any} is narrowed down by

Experience of the way the world meets our gaze and becomes a sign of the tectonics of behaviour

The limits and possibilities of the binary operations of our imagination, reason and understanding

Our interests and desires. Not all qualifications are useful to focus on, or very compelling or interesting.

The conventions of language: to call something blue when in fact we usually use the word yellow to denote that colour is to commit linguistic fraud. It tends to place the perpetrator outside of society.

The fact is however, that the above restrictions are all *a posteriori*. None of them are necessary except from a social point of view. That is crucial. Every thing is, in principle, rich enough to give rise to any quality. The thing under discussion has an infinite number of perspectives from which it can be made part of a situation. As such it can be part of a causal network of any quality. In a certain type of light, a tomato looks blue, not normally, not in our *normal* light, but that makes no difference to the principle under discussion. For the redness of a tomato to manifest itself, a range of conditions have to be met.

Many qualities are either irrelevant, need not be considered useful or interesting or overstep the line into madness. Some qualities are beyond our grasp, beyond language, or beyond our limited ability to perceive. Many are unhelpful with respect to the use that is sought of an object. Many are sensitive to the network of factors determining a situation. It is conceivable that the quality white gives rise to the quality serenity in me. But the quality white can give rise to a lot more as described so beautifully by Herman Melville in his *Moby Dick*. Having said that some qualities are simply not supported by experience, and are not current in discourse so that you either place yourself outside of society by claiming such a quality to describe something in relation to you, or you are making people see something that was always there, but they have never noticed before.

Descriptions are creative. They recreate the world in our image, make something of the world that is there, we create a world, the world as it could be seen in relation to us: a virtual world of relations. So again, the adage is, trust experience but try to broaden and deepen it. Experience and our ability to explore our limitations and possibilities is generous enough to hold a great deal more than has been offered until now. This is what makes poetry, art, design and (theoretical) science such important disciplines, for they make the world grow in our conception of it. They feed the free play of our faculties, merely to see what is possible. They provide new ways of looking at the world and our place in it. Don't tell me that is not useful. Man is a machine for scouring the environment that is presented to him for use. He has, with the capacity for reflection, been able to change the very objective of evolution from mere survival to fulfilment. He has managed to increase the useful space of his environment a thousand fold.

The above does not constitute a usual description of either quality or the discipline of aesthetics, but it is a compelling and useful one. I would resist the temptation to invent a separate discipline, by some called meta-ethics, to define qualities that are desirable or undesirable. It muddles the clear task of ethics, which is to explore a specific question How to act [IF] {a}. Aesthetics explores the question: [IF] {a} [THEN] what do I desire and to what end?

Aesthetics is a discipline that describes all qualities and brings them in an appropriate relation to us. Aesthetics describes qualities that could be seen as desirable and undesirable in relation to us and it can describe qualities

that are generic or specific, objective or subjective. However they are described they always take a stand with regard to our interest and desire.

The more carefully we observe, the more our world differentiates into a high resolution picture with nuanced differentiations. Iris Murdoch calls the words needed for this further differentiation secondary words. So we have Good and Bad, good and bad, beautiful and ugly, joyous and sad, desirable and undesirable as primary words, dividing the world into black and white and then we nuance these blacks and whites into their infinite range of greys, pinks greens, blues, and yellows by secondary words such as bumptious, fickle, cantankerous and personable. This is no different to what Spinoza did in his aesthetics of feeling, (the word aesthetics had not yet come into existence when he was writing) where the whole gamut of possible feelings was built up of situational descriptions of sadness and joy.

taking responsibility

In aesthetics we have to take responsibility for our desires. Responsibility is answerableness: we have to answer for our desires and the choices they lead to. Elsewhere I have argued that we invest authority in reasons to do something. The investment of authority is, as such, an important process, worth the reflection it requires to make it go well. How that investment works is dealt with elsewhere. Here I assume it to be the case that whatever we invest with authority, it is we who do the investment and therefore remain answerable for *the performance of that investment*: we win or lose, make a profit or make a loss, we have an effect on our environment and ourselves on the basis of what we desire (aesthetics) and how we go about realising that desire (ethics). Deciding what to invest your authority in is, as such, an important activity. In making choices we select for and build *a taste*.

We build our taste with regard to everything. We build a taste in scientific theories whereby we find some more compelling than others because they answer our criteria of cogency and consistency. We build a taste in law measured against our experience of what works and what doesn't, what is just and what isn't, what is cruel and what isn't. Honesty, to taken an example of a virtue that has a big impact on the functioning of a society, is a worthy quality, but not in itself; without the context of society and socialised behaviour or the need to survive in an environment whose signs you need to be able to read well, there would be no need to prefer the truth over the lie. This begins to matter when our relationship to others

start to matter. In a society where we have to rely on one another, trust is set at a high value; on it we can plan and build, we can communicate usefully about the environment and rely on those communications. At the same time many of us find lying useful. Countless animal species try to build up their life through elaborate strategies of disguise and camouflage, trying putting other animals on the wrong foot. Lying, disguise and camouflage constitute successful strategies in some environments or in some situations. Where do we go from here? We muddle along to get it right. We build our taste on the basis of the economics of value, we devise political systems to establish priorities and executive systems to get things done and judicial systems to control and correct. We preach this virtue over this vice and hope for the best. We muddle along, try to get things right; only experience can tell us when we do.

In building a taste we acknowledge that we are thereby practising our constellation of relationships to the world. So our taste never loses its dynamism. Even when we feel something is wrong, our taste never stops moving, it merely corrupts, becoming stagnant and neglected. Rot is another kind of dynamism. We have learnt to operate in the world, we have learnt to operate our bodies in the environment and we explore the relationships between them. As children we do not find this difficult: presents, sweets, attention, it is all stuff children desire and their taste is sweet. When we grow older, our desires and the taste that represents them in the form of theories and experience, become just slightly more sophisticated, but not by much. Only people who are critically concerned with their desires and their taste achieve a richer perception of the world and manage to find ways to resist the tsunamis of cultural pressure to conform to the common denominators of accepted taste. However, that very act of resistance has the disadvantage of placing one outside of things, outside relative to much that is both horrible and wonderful about society. If only society were a place where we just make sure everyone can have a place to pursue their own sense of good and receive a fair share of goods.... If only we were allowed to just muddle along and get things right, learn and practise being together. Learn the strange workings of the virtues and learn how they translate into *good desiring* and *good behaviour*.

As it is necessary to take responsibility for our desires then let me attempt a list of things that I desire of a design. Let me give you my taste as it stands. My taste presents itself as a list of things I like and dislike. The foundation of that like and dislike is sedimentary. The grounds for liking things and disliking things changed over time, it has a geological topology

and is still subject to quakes and erosion. That goes for the list itself. Having said that, things are stabilising, I must be getting old.

The relationships that the items on the list establish amongst themselves and with things not on the list are constantly changing being pruned by selection and rearranged by portrayal. As a young child the list was relatively short, its authority lay with my child-like concerns, my complete acceptance of the world as a given, with the stories told me by my parents, my play with siblings and friends and my precious but small trove of owned experience.

As I grew up the list expanded, folded, crumpled, tore; some of its elements were reflected upon at length and on the basis of the exercise in awkward, tentative and sometimes overconfident thought on narrow premises, rejected or affirmed, more securely grounded. As I learnt to think, and practised thinking the list became more securely argued, it began to spawn relations, as yet unexplored, creating *families of likes and dislikes*. Items and paths were neglected, went unrecognised for their full potential, others were flogged to exhaustion. Affiliations of likes and dislikes began to project expectations with regard to things subject to some family likeness, sometimes very superficial, banal and at other times surprising and profound.

When I started to take my taste seriously as a philosophical project my world began to border on madness. Now I started to map relationships, ask questions as to why I liked things, how I disliked them, what the basis was of my likes and dislikes, what liking or desiring means as an activity. I started looking for the boundaries of the possible, the acceptable. I began to experiment with my likes and dislikes. I began to practise liking things that are difficult to like, that require real conceptual sophistication. I started to try to dislike things I liked to see how far I could get. Some of these exercises were dangerous, their consequences unexpected and real. I tried out describing things in ways so that my likes and dislikes would rearrange themselves, spawn different relationships, find analogies that to most appeared *just silly* but to me held extraordinary secrets and real depth. I began holding conversations with others about their likes and dislikes and testing the grounds for these. I began to like being absorbed in this project of radical reflection. I became athletic in my thinking about liking things. I found that liking some things that were truly horrible is possible but requires so much effort, so much confidence, or such *narrowness of being* that, on becoming exhausted from the exercise, I

would *relapse* and return to a deep-rooted dislike. It has been the most wonderful time.

At the same time, it becomes clear that my list of likes and dislikes, the actual landscape of my desire is and has to be peculiarly my own. I have invested this list with my authority and I have struggled with it personally to make it what it is. It could never be someone else's list *even if it were identical*. For if someone else were to take over this list wholesale, it would be a different list. Or rather, it would perhaps look the same but as soon as we would start questioning the portrait it makes, the universe that portrait discloses would be completely different. My portrait discloses the story I just wrote and could be elaborated with endless detail. The same list claimed by the person who would be happy to invest his authority wholesale in my taste would have a different story tell. His story would be the unlikely story of "I like Jacob's taste". That would be a very thin story.

So, the object of this game, of presenting you with my list, is not to impose my desires, my likes and dislikes on others. Fat chance of that! No, what will happen here is what happens with all good thinking about our relationship to our environment and therefore extremely important to describe. What will happen is that each item on the list will form a point around which discourse can assemble, around which the thought of the reader can assemble. He or she will then reflect and take their own stand on the issue. And that stand will have a strong autobiographical perspective. Presenting this list is therefore useful not as a list of prescriptive laws, even though that would be possible, but hardly desirable, it is useful in that the structure of desires that I build as my taste can be taken as a given so that you the reader can take a stand on these issues for yourself and practise your desires with or without reference to them.

So my taste, in the form of a list, (I could also try to present it as a mind-map or a graph, or a matrix or any other way) is here submitted as a sounding board. Let's take it from the largest scale of the built environment to the smallest. Or the other way around. And do not overestimate its veracity, I may be lying...

I enjoy, like, love, desire...

the touch of a doorknob, I like feeling it move with just enough resistance to make me understand something is happening.

doors that I have to push open so that I can feel their weight and initial resistance give way to a smooth swinging movement

doors that open automatically like guards standing to attention, however they have to react quickly enough, sprightly and well within the margin of my speed so that I can sail into the building like a ship.

doorhandles and the hinges and the arcs drawn over the floor to tell me which way to open the door, whether to pull or push.

being surprised when I turn ninety degrees after having entered a space

seeing through a door, or a narrowing of the space to the next space

doors to tell me whether lights have been left on.

to feel the cold or the warmth and the texture of the material

for the door and its frame to tell me if the space I am entering is a special space and even how it is special.

a window to be clear about whether it is to let in light or to let a view out; whether to keep the outside out or whether to allow it in. Each country has its special windows. The Dutch window is large, to lessen the weight on the soft building ground and to let in as much light as possible during the sombre months, it is also divided into a shuttered lower half and a coloured upper half to colour the light that comes in, and to allow privacy. English windows are small so that rooms are not flooded with light but the light helps to differentiate the internal spaces. Indian and Egyptian windows try to cope with the relentless sun, creating mosaics of light and shade. French windows create a link between the garden and the room as do the Japanese Shoji screens. I like all such windows but you need to know when to use which.

my walls to live. I must confess to a preference for walls which have character, (the Greek word for scratched) have been etched by use and made by hand. Failing that I want my walls to celebrate their materiality, to be unashamedly that which they are and proud of it, even if they have been plastered, let them enjoy their plasteredness and if they are cavity walls let them not mind. And if they lie, let them lie well and if they cannot

lie well, let them lie badly. I don't really mind, walls are infinitely fascinating, whatever they do.

ceilings to celebrate the fact that they are never touched and as such allowed to be free in their limited way. I like them being whatever we want them to be: cinematic spaces of miraculous flight, ordered universes of ornament, ascetic sheets of blankness, moments of status, surfaces of pathos. There are times when I want nothing of my ceiling, just a plane, but there are also times when I want the ceiling to hush my voice, to make me look carefully at the person I am talking too, to make us both aware that something is happening. If I bend towards the person I am talking to over the table, I like my ceiling to press me into conversation. When I sit back and expand about the world, I like my ceiling to expand with me. At night my bedroom ceiling shows the paper lampshade against its surface like a distant planet palely touched by the white light of a distant sun.

floors that are silent in the noises they make as you walk over them. We have practised walking so hard. Some floors are special, like Persian carpets, diagrams of gardens, celebrations of existence; some floors are silent, others, like those of the emperor of Japan, whistle like birds, warning gaily of a dangerous approach. Some floors are organograms, some floors tell stories of quiet habit. I don't have to choose between them, I want them all offered to me whenever it is appropriate. When that is? Have you no imagination?

ornament or the lack of it to decorate the special and to differentiate space into the everyday and the not everyday. It is a curious thing that we imagine that not decorating a space gives us a non-decorated space. It is merely decorated with its emptiness and emptiness is just another form of fullness.

material. Materiality gives texture, colour, the behaviour of light and shade, it has acoustic, visual, tactile and even olfactory dimensions to it. Materiality is the richest of design tools, use it well, but how can I say I love marble and not at the same time fear the world turning into marble or brick and the whole world turning into brick. I would like to say: I don't like buildings looking like bathrooms, but even that, my favourite dislike of the moment, is a situationally determined dislike, one that will pass.

structure that takes centre stage, that claims its glorious possibilities but, in its time also structures that quietly support other concerns, such as route and the *mis en scene*.

structure when it helps me perform, help me practise space, helps me enjoy my movement to and through the building.

the underneath, the overhead, the above and the along, the in, the out, the through to be considered as I walk.

the outside of a building when it belongs to the building but is given to the city, presented to it with grace in the same way that a face belongs to the person writing its but is given to the person reading it: A white screen with black holes. Do I always want to know from the outside what is inside? No, not really. Sometimes it is handy, but not always. Honesty is a great virtue, perhaps a greater virtue than politeness and very occasionally it is even necessary to be rude. But only very rarely, otherwise things become so brutal.

all cities. Some just make me work harder to enjoy them fully, but the investment is always rewarding. Do I then also enjoy the poverty in cities? No of course not! I don't enjoy the poverty although I do enjoy what poor people sometimes manage to make of their city and I enjoy observing the way the city responds to people's behaviour, even though I do not enjoy the behaviour itself.

all landscapes, although some are so much easier to enjoy: rolling hills with the architecture of a fears long past, flat lands and hollow lands in their struggle against the water, in their strange perspective, landscapes of arrogated power punctuating the views, cities built as harbours and approached by sea

the border between the private and the public when it is intelligently designed so as to be practical and so that it affords the freedom an privacy of the occupant of the building and the adventure or comfort of the pedestrian

motorways as a miracle, when I have the patience for them

aggressive infrastructure as long as I don't have to live alongside it, I think

bridges that astonish me, for whatever reason. There are many reasons why a bridge might astonish me

the baths of Caracalla, early in the morning, canyons of brick

spaces that call into question our senses

spaces that speak clearly to the senses

spaces that speak of that what I am looking for, comfort, you name it.

spaces that offer a good meeting of faces

spaces that offer differentiation, movement and adventure, that whisper of possibilities.

That is my taste. What is yours?

Finding Beauty, a Spinozan approach to good use

The aim in this section is to arrive at a discursive and *athletic* concept of beauty. The argument is built upon the premise that Spinoza's concept of freedom and the consequences that flow from it are consistent with experience. I shall argue a familiar case, namely that beauty is a function of both the concepts of truth and the good. My conclusion however will be that all three are *a matter of exercise in the skill of finding them in our relationship with things* by testing or measuring our conceptions of something that is beautiful, good or true against our metaphysical understanding the world. Metaphysics I define along the pragmatic advice of Charles Sanders Peirce, as a discipline that concerns itself with finding useful ways to conceive and talk about the world.¹⁷ Beauty, Goodness and truth are thus *produced in our measurement of things*. By measurement I mean something quite straight forward, namely the act of conceptual placement: placing concepts and ideas relative to others and relative to oneself. The metaphysical model provided by Spinoza in his *Ethica* of 1678

¹⁷ Peirce, C.S.: 1960, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, 6 vols., Charles

Hartshorne & Paul Weiss, (eds) Cambridge Mass, V. §122.

is still extraordinarily compelling and has, so far, not been contradicted by or been shown to be inconsistent with modern science. Spinoza provides science with an adequate and sophisticated metaphysical framework and relates this framework to our thinking and doing. Spinoza moreover, long before Darwin, was the first to properly argue through a non-anthropocentric universe, denying the idea of design and diminishing our obsession with final causes, thus doing the groundwork for Darwin's paradigm of natural selection.

Plato implies the interchangeability of the notions of truth, beauty and goodness.¹⁸ The question is how his version of this interchange might work. About that he says little. How would the one be an attribute, mode or aspect of the other? Or to put it into the language of process, how would one be a way of *producing* the other? There are two statements about beauty dating from the middle ages that are relevant here. The first is that *Pulchrum et perfectum idem est*, that beauty and perfection are identical.¹⁹ Taken at face value this statement means unequivocally that anything that is found perfect must be found beautiful and anything found beautiful must necessarily be perfect. Beauty is the perfection of something and perfection is the beauty of something. The second statement says that beauty is *the splendour* of truth. It indicates the presence of truth much as the last two lines of John Keat's Ode to a Grecian Urn: "Beauty is truth, truth beauty, That is all ye know on earth and all ye need to know."

¹⁸ Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz (1972) *The Great Theory of Beauty and Its Decline*, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Winter, 1972), pp. 165-180 In which he argues rightly that the Greek concept of beauty was more like our concept of goodness. Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz (1980) "The Aesthetics of Plato," in *History of Aesthetics*, Vol. 1, p. 114. The triad is referred to in the *Phaedrus* and the *Philebus*. See also the chapter 10 "Where the Beauty of Truth Lies", in Levin, David Michael. *The Philosopher's Gaze: Modernity in the Shadows of Enlightenment*. Berkeley: University of California Press, c1999 1999. <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft896nb5sx/>

¹⁹ The source of this quote is elusive. W. Tatarkiewicz, (1980) *A History of Six Ideas*, p. 123 calls it a mediaeval dictum. Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica* Beauty demands (...) integrity, or perfection. *Summa theol.* I q. 39 a. 8.

The relationship between truth and perfection, beauty's constitution as it were, is as interesting as it is self-evident; how can a truth that is a truth, not be a perfect truth? Confining ourselves to the way both words work in any intelligible discussion would make any other conclusion absurd. The nice thing about truth is that it functions like an on-off switch. Something is either true or it is not. What we call half-truths are whole truths that tell only part of the story; that is different. The same holds with perfection. A thing is either perfect or it is not so. However, in contrast to truth, perfection has a very curious way of behaving itself, as we shall see below. The important thing for the moment is that neither truth nor perfection allows a gradual or partial homecoming. This has implications for the idea of beauty. Is beauty also an on-off switch? That would seem to follow from the premises, however, we speak of things being *quite* beautiful and *more* beautiful than something else. This ability would appear to contradict such a position. This apparent contradiction needs to be resolved and it can be, perhaps with reference to Peter Sloterdijk's notion of spheres. But more of that later.

Taking the two statements from the middle ages, we might venture to complete Plato's model, in whose theory of forms the concept of the Good occupied the very apex, by saying that truth is what comes to presence in beauty, beauty being an experiential quality, so that the finding of beauty in experience leads one to the finding of truths about our experience of the world. These truths are however no more than ways of conceiving the world well, and this way will then lead to the good, which is where experience and conception come together in action and being. After all, as Spinoza would immediately concede, no-one willingly makes a bad decision, no-one willingly believes in false ideas. All three concepts, beauty, truth and goodness are then expressions of a perfection that makes the one the measure of the other. The one brings it to presence, the second makes it intelligible and the third shows us a way to be in relation to what we have found.²⁰ If I find something that is good, I must also be able to find beauty somewhere relative to that good and vice versa.²¹

²⁰ W. Tatarkiewicz, "The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas," in: History of Aesthetics, Vol. II, Medieval Aesthetics, The Hague, Mouton, 1980, 246

²¹ The repeated use of the first person singular in this essay is deliberate. The philosophical struggle cannot be decontextualized; it is a personal activity dependent on an acquired and probably unique frame of reference which is personal and must be negotiated when shared with others

This does not at first appear to rhyme well with daily experience. Many of us find different things beautiful. I know myself to find things beautiful that others profess to find ugly. Or at least they tell me they do. How do we deal with these problems? It would be too easy to take this messiness as an indication that the interchangeability of truth, beauty and goodness is false, or that we could only decide the issue by instituting a standard of beauty that we all obey. Those strategies have been tried and not been found completely satisfactory; the problem remains. We have, instead, to take Keats at face value: truth is beauty and beauty is truth. The question to ask is: what am I able to find beautiful? How do I produce beauty in my experience of my environment? How good am I at finding beauty? Beauty is the product of the causal fabric of relations, putting my body through a process. There can be no single cause for beauty because beauty is the product of my relationship to some aspect of my environment. Beauty is what my bodily experience produces in some of its relationships with the environment. Spinoza, who himself thought that beauty was a product of the imagination of the body, felt it could attach itself to anything in God, with which he expressly meant anything in nature. We shall see that this is consistent with his concept of the world's perfection. In any case, beauty is produced by my body meeting its environment within what we might call the climate of a culture and the weather of a situation; beauty is the product of embodied experience: the capacity to bring something into a special relationship with me.²² I know from personal experience that I learn to produce beauty by concerning myself with it when undergoing my environment, I look for it and *find* it. It is produced by my negotiating the answers to three fundamental questions: what do I want and how should I go about achieving it and what can I trust? This last question is crucial because it gives me my standard of truth and knowledge about the world in which I find myself. At the same time, knowing what or whom to trust presents me with a problem. Whose council do I accept, who or what do I learn from and what do I learn? Who or what helps me decide what is beautiful, good and true? Is it God? Is it reason? Is it me, you, my boss, my neighbour, my understanding of the world? Is it the culture I am part of,

through discourse. This is no less true in the attempt to formulate *an athletic* conception of beauty which is the forging of relations with an object of experience by a subject of experience through practise. Even though beauty is a product of reason and thus accessible to all rational beings, it is arrived at through personal struggle.

²² Johnson, Mark (2007) *The Meaning of the Body: Aesthetics of Human Understanding*. University of Chicago Press

my story? Is it perhaps the structure of the universe as it is made accessible to me? Is it perhaps the universe as I imagine or hope it to be? To answer this question I am condemned to freedom and have recourse only to my own experience that provides a frame of reference, my own ability to reason within it, my own inclinations that provide my ability to decide upon the issue. I am by necessity alone when I invest this or that person or principle with the authority to decide such things for me. Speaking from a personal point of view I have to admit that all of the above have at times served as authority for what I find beautiful: I have accepted and rejected fashions and still do; I have accepted and rejected gods, paradigms or axioms presented me; tried out independence and autonomy in reason, I have struggled with my place in society, listened to friends and people in authority and then made up my mind. An ability to find things and situations beautiful has depended on them all in discontinuous, sometimes opportunistic sometimes destructive negotiation with each other against the background of the place I take up in my environment measured against my story about myself, the way I look at my situation, at what is presented to me. In this way the emergence of beauty in my finding of it is the product of a complex and reflexive process that attempts to bind my existence in the world into a coherent image, attempts to form an understanding judged from a well-exercised and conservatively adjusted point of view.²³

The structure of the universe or whatever the cause of my existence may be, clearly allows me to form an idea of beauty and ugliness, loveliness and hatefulness. I am after all, a product of the universe as it is. That much must be obvious. But the relationship between this structure and the idea of it that I form is, to an extent that I cannot know, shrouded in ignorance and error. This knowledge gap is what Spinoza defines as freedom.

“men are mistaken in thinking themselves free; their opinion is made up of consciousness of their own actions, and ignorance of the causes by which they are conditioned. Their idea of freedom, therefore, is simply their ignorance of any cause for their actions. As for their saying that human

²³ For the importance of embodied context in thought see Hubert Dreyfus, *What computers still can't do : a critique of artificial reason*, Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, c1992

actions depend on the will, this is a mere phrase without any idea to correspond thereto. What the will is, and how it moves the body, they none of them know; those who boast of such knowledge, and feign dwellings and habitations for the soul, are wont to provoke either laughter or disgust.” (ethics, 2p35)

The fact is that I do not know myself well. I do not know what the body is capable of. The idea I form of the world around me and my place in it is not just personal. I appear to be able to share it or aspects of it with others whose bodily structure and use of their environment is comparable. After all we are able to talk, teach and learn from each other. It is also undeniable that the ideas I form of what is beautiful are capable of change: things I have found ugly in the past have since become beautiful to me and vice versa. What does this say about the truth they reveal?

Marc Quinn’s statue of Alison Lapper as unveiled in Trafalgar Square in 2005 presents a fundamental challenge in this respect. How is this sculpture beautiful? We have a number of ways of producing its beauty in our judgment. We have the traditional modes of judgment at hand. The sculpture may be beautifully made. It may also be a beautiful sculpture in the sense that the sculpture does what we like sculptures to do, which is to come to presence in the light as form, creating a focus for our attention, presenting textures, hues and colours, highlight and shade, and creating an image that is then free to become an infinite number of stories. We might even allow Quinn’s statue beauty as a piece of successful political rhetoric: a necessary and heroic celebration of the marginalised. But what about the subject? What about Alison Lapper who was born without arms and short legs? What about the body that *deviates from the Vitruvian norm*? How is the subject beautiful? Am I capable of overcoming my habituated norms and values with respect to what is tellingly too often called *the misshapen*? Marc Quinn and Alison Lapper show me a way, by presenting her like that, in her full glory, pregnant and dignified. If I can find *her* beauty there, in the sculpture, as a celebration of what she is, I will have achieved a road to finding beauty in places I have not had the chance to explore; I will, as Nietzsche advised us to do, have *overcome my self*.

In order to achieve this it might help to grapple with Spinoza’s strange concept of freedom and trace the way it emerges from his determinist position. Determinism is the ontological assumption that what happens in

time and place is a function of the mechanical nature of things. Nature behaves according to laws; it is rational, complex perhaps, but rational nevertheless. The consequences of this assumption is that everything must be predetermined. If the world functions according to laws, the future has to be at least theoretically knowable. Too often this leads to the fatalist and unnecessary notion that one cannot have any influence upon the course of the world on any scale, so that one might as well rest in one's lot, it arms itself with despondency: if we can't change the course of history, why bother with anything? Good point, although experience shows us that despondency and fatalism usually tend to make the situation worse. Things are more interesting than this naïve determinism. Spinoza in his *Ethics* arrived at a more sophisticated conception which starts on familiar ground, namely the logical assumption that if God-or-nature is perfect then his perfection must surely imply at least the theoretical possibility of complete knowledge, and what is complete knowledge if it is not an exact knowledge of the future? And if knowledge of the future is possible, well then the future has been completely determined. Any other conclusion would be absurd. At the same time, experience tells us that we are capable of learning, of making better decisions within certain familiar situations, especially when we take the time to think things through clearly. Does this contradict Spinoza's determinism? Surely if we can change the world, the world is changeable, making rubbish of its determinist workings. That is a nice objection but the answer is nevertheless no. Spinoza's determinism does not lead to fatalism: reason, practise and learning improve our power over ourselves and our relationship with our environment. This does not mean the world is after all not determinist; it means merely that determinism demands our acknowledgement that a fine critical mind in a proactive body willing to improve his lot is itself a necessary product of nature and part of its causal fabric. It is part of the working of the universe. The real problem is that the world's determinism is a matter of extreme complexity and our ability to penetrate it, still extremely limited. Nevertheless, the exercise of reason within the context of our daily lives, when carried out rigorously, avoiding distinctions that unnecessarily rupture the continuity of experience and impose untenable dualisms, which though useful for a while tend to get us into problems, teaches us to live in harmony with the world, which is a joy. Learning increases our power over ourselves and the situations we are confronted with but does not contradict Spinoza's determinism. In fact his determinism is backed by the experience of daily life: learning how things work is useful to us and makes us function better in our world, makes us use things better, more generously, makes us enjoy the world and allows us control over our

situations. So we are able to improve our lot *because* the world is essentially rational. The possibility for human progress is however localised in its own sphere. Although they are part of a perfect world, they themselves do not know how to dwell in that world. Ignorance cause hardship to them, but does not in any way imply that the world as a whole is less than perfect. Our ability to learn is an aspect of the perfection of this dynamic and changeable complex system we call the world. When we do things better for ourselves, or at least when we think we are doing things better, does not mean that the world or the universe as a whole is any the better for it. Progress for us is possible because we are fully situated in our environment, of which our knowledge is fragmentary and sketchy at best and it is the relationship between us and our environment, both of which change continuously, that needs response. Nevertheless, learning indubitably increases our power and at the same time appears to reinforce the fact that nature works according to laws.

If existence is the behaviour of substance subject to the laws of a physics it imposes on itself, our future is not just fully determined but the world can be described as perfect. Perfection means that everything in the world will follow its course as determined. Spinoza's God is nature, is the physics of motion, attraction and repulsion and the chemistry of coupling, the biology of attraction and repulsion, thought, reflection and judgment. If the world as it is, it is perfect itself. As a result beauty must be able to be found everywhere, in some way. However it might require us to leave behind our localised perspective, our grounding in the concerns of the moment and place rearrange them in a larger view that does not put us and our concerns at the very centre. However, we have to manage the larger view we are trying to acquire very carefully. We must avoid the trap of becoming disdainful of humanity and its concerns; that would stop us playing the game properly. Taking on a more distant view should not make us more distant to the concerns of our body as was the case with Christian dualism where the soul was privileged over the body. We are part of the world and so are our lives and the relationship between our lives and the universe is what is at issue.

The flux of interlacing processes governing the universe as a whole is so complex and reflexive that predictions with our current knowledge of nature's processes are impossible to make with regard to the things that really matter to us: such as which number will come up in the lottery, what the weather will be like in Cornwall next summer, why I like this dinner and why you did not, etc. We shall only ever be able to approximate the truth

in our simulations and mathematical descriptions of the world. This is consistent with Peirce's Pragmaticist view of truth which assumes that a complete grasp of the truth is, to say the least, ambitious. There is, as the next best thing, a useful way of looking at a problem by trying to simulate reality as compellingly as possible. An objective truth is, as Kant also recognised, too large and strange for us.²⁴ The true structure of the universe is unknowable in its entirety as things are only knowable in relation to us. The Truth with a capital T is masked and at the same time represented by a succession of paradigms, each of which constitute a working theory about the world, which in turn services the production of beauty when we measure things and ideas relative to them. Truth in our picturesque world of localised and embodied perspectives, as an absolute and all-encompassing thing can only be *approached* by devising descriptions of the world's behaviour with the help of our *knowing that*, though language and mathematics and our bodily *know-how* which tries to cope with the world it is part of. Using these tools of our understanding we can never be completely sure when or where we have arrived regarding the truth. Mind you, when a theory *works* in that it appears to capture the behaviour of some aspect of the world and makes an event predictable, such a theory becomes extremely compelling and certainly a cause as well as an object of beauty.

Freedom in one's choice of actions and opinions is, according to Spinoza, another way of describing our ignorance. The universe is far too complex to be able to see, never mind put to immediate use, the determinism that Spinoza accepted as ruling it. All we can do is approximate its structure in our understanding through reason and self-knowledge, knowledge of our situated body. If freedom is to do what you want, then Spinoza would want you to think very carefully about what you want. We are free to struggle to get things right, trying to avoid bad decisions, to avoid holding false truths and to exercise our understanding of ourselves. Determinism is there, it shows itself in the relatively straightforward, artificially isolated systems studied in physics and chemistry, (which certainly have a compelling beauty) but when things get really complex, when, for example, we want to describe the delight of a good dinner, or the beauty of violence, the problem spirals out of hand and we are forced to revert to the only system we have successfully developed to cope with complexity, namely discourse, using everyday, ordinary language which is great for approximations and generalising metaphors but only ever as good as our grasp of words and

²⁴ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, A256/B312, P27

nuance. An existential position with regard to freedom is then not incompatible with that of Spinoza: freedom is no joy in itself, it is what we are, in Sartrean terms, *condemned* to, as we never know what is right in a particular context or situation, which is always in some way unique; freedom is our narrow perspective on the world set within an anxious-making, oceanic ignorance, which nevertheless helps us as we go, struggling to get things right. The joy comes when we do indeed appear to get things right and learn to love the attempt of understanding our world by exercising our power to act well upon that understanding. Spinoza's advice in the face of this unassailable complexity is *to learn* to love nature *in its perfection*. How is it possible to look at this vale of tears and consider it perfect and, assuming we manage to do that, how does his determinism affect us, what can we do?

Perfection is a strange concept. As a predicate it either comes down to the judgment that something is *good* the way it is and cannot be improved upon because it is itself, perfectly. Or something would be perfect if it were to fulfil a set of *imaginable* criteria. These two ways of looking at perfection seem to contradict each other. The first perspective is ontological and circular: something is perfect in being itself perfectly. In this sense everything that is itself is also perfectly itself, we could call this kind of perfection *autonomous*. The second is clearly *heteronomous*, it engages final causes: use and purpose; something is perfect if it *performs* well in the play in which it has been cast; if it does what it is supposed to do and does it well in the eyes of the judge. In the first perfection is categorical. In the second perfection is hypothetical, a culmination of qualities residing in the relationship between it and the rest. The clearer we are with respect to the purpose of something, the more unequivocal our view of the good and its logical extreme in perfection. A door is a good or indeed a perfect door, when it does its various jobs as a door well, or even perfectly. To be a good or even perfect door would appear to be not very difficult. But to call a door perfect is problematic: it is perfect when it is judged so by something or someone else. Such heteronomous and anthropocentric perfection is of course not exactly fair to the thing that is being described as perfect. It is a judgment imposed by an *other*, who dwells in his own sphere, with its own truths, goods, purposes and beauties, on something that is claimed as part of that sphere but does not necessarily or exclusively belong to it. It is measured against specific desires over which the object has nothing to say. We might call this a heteronomous as well as a teleological perspective, one that might be

defined as constituting a portrait of ourselves in our world against which we measure our actions.

Having had the example of the door, let's try to expand this teleological perspective or point of view further. We might say something like: this person is *a perfect member of the community*. This communitarian approach to perfection is no less teleological than the example of the door but widens the point of view from that of the purposes and desires of a single individual body negotiating a door to the assumed or projected purposes and desires of a more abstract body such as a community or institution.²⁵ A perfect member of the community is one who presents in his bearing and actions the norms and values that a particular community cherishes. Is it possible to widen the perspective even further? Things become very strange as we attempt to do so. Ask yourself the question: what is a perfect human being? Teleology now begins to lose direction like the needle of the compass near the north-pole. We have to ask the question: What is the purpose of humanity? And if we cannot answer that question without resorting to explanations that fall well outside of what is acceptable to empirical science, we expose ourselves to the risk of going beyond the reasonable into the unverifiable and the fantastic, which is not a place I want to go. We might then be tempted to ask ourselves what the purpose of evolution is and consider this to be the ultimate question possible in the light of our current knowledge. The purpose of evolution is, surely, to allow genes to adapt their vehicles to changing situations through selective behaviour and thus to ensure their survival in reproduction. In that case any human being who has done that might be considered a perfect human being. But in fact this purpose is too narrow and would appear to exclude a group I *want* included in my view of the world: all those organisms that haven't managed to pass on their genes but nevertheless have lead their life. In my experience of humanity, people are more than mere vehicles for selfish genes, even if they did not, perhaps, start out being so. Who cares what they started out being? Now we are creatures that are happily trying to transcend our status as vehicles for our genes. In any case this obsession with final causes is restrictive. If one were to say that humanity has a purpose in itself, which is to exist and make use of its capacities, whatever they are, then everyone who is human and exists and makes use of their capacity is also a perfect human being. But

²⁵ This argument follows Kant's two expressions of the hypothetical imperative in the Groundwork of the Metaphysic(s) of Morals, 1785.

when do we know we are making full use of our capacities? At this point the case of Alison Lapper, as a person, a model in both an artistic as well as a moral sense, begins to claim my attention. Her autonomy in being the being that she is helps me to adjust the coordinates of my view upon the world. Her perfection, once we strip from our judgment our own narrow obsession with final causes, is indubitable. And where there is perfection, beauty can be found in some way, and when we have found beauty somewhere, we have found truth.

As we shift the dial from a narrow and heteronomous purposiveness to an autonomous and indeterminate purposiveness, or, if you like, to an ontological perspective on perfection, allowing any product of nature its perfection, its own being, our sense of beauty similarly shifts from that which is driven by use in our intentional universe restricted by our anthropocentrism, to that which drives use: our infinite capacity for finding possibilities within our bodily limitations. Ugliness becomes our inability to grasp a thing's beauty. Beauty becomes a function of understanding. When it is only from the point of view of a narrow purpose and use that we define good and bad, the perfect and the imperfect, we in fact debilitate the use and purpose of understanding. When our inchoate view is directed at everything and we are able to transcend our narrower interests and look upon ourselves as part of a partially understood whole, indeed as an expression of the whole, the composition, maintenance and enjoyment of *our portrait of the world itself becomes our purpose*, what Aristotle in the tenth book of the ethics called *theoria*, or divine contemplation. That is how we can rediscover the continuity that relates the two kinds of perfection we have identified.

The attempt to love nature, in its perfection as a whole, through reason, learning and practise, gives us power over ourselves. To love nature's perfection is to love the whole, for it is perfect as it is in its entirety. We lose power when we fail to understand Nature as a whole and we gain power when we increase our understanding of it and put that understanding to good effect in our actions. In this, Spinoza's *Ethics* is the metaphysical manifesto for Science as well as an existentialist and pragmaticist approach to the world. This power is not the power to intervene in and alter the course of nature, for God is never surprised by His own products. In fact God is never surprised at all; He is, after all, perfect: Nature is perfect and by extension all its products, including what we naively set up as its opposite, namely the so-called artificial also participate in its perfection. The power to understand what is happening

will help us develop adequate techniques for coping in that world, live in harmony with it. Everything that exists is perfect ontologically, as itself. Only when we claim the world as our own, as made for our purpose, does it *appear imperfect*. (ethics 1pAppendix) There is no free-will involved, even though power sounds very much like free will. But this is where Spinoza's psychological axiom comes into view: Who would possibly make bad decisions if they knew what a good decision was? Who could possibly accept a falsehood when knowing the truth? We are not free, we are geared to the finding the useful, the good and the true and it is the finding of beauty that helps us in our quest. So Alison Lapper *is beautiful* and if we cannot find her beauty it is our ignorance our flabby unathletic approach to the world, our lack of training that is to blame. It is however useful to find her beauty as it helps you on your way to love this world in its perfection. Rather than finding objects that are consistent with our settled and comfortable idea of the beautiful, nicely sharpened to our sense of final cause, the onus is on us to exercise, explore and make sophisticated our sense of beauty. We do this by increasing our understanding. Free will is not free, it is the pursuit of understanding and in that understanding the furtherance of our power to work in harmony with Spinoza's God, Nature. If like Hegel, you then believe the problem of evil and ugliness has not been dealt with, then think again. It has, although the brevity of this essay will not allow me to explore that particular issue here. The problem of evil and its possible relation to beauty is easy enough to solve. Evil does not need to be beautiful as beauty resides not in things or events but in our relationship to them: we find beauty in building a relationship to things around us. Even healthy people can find beauty in the way evil is responded to by good. While those who find beauty in evil itself can be shown quite easily to reason from a frame of reference that is flawed, narrow or both. This frame of reference is crucial.

Spinoza's concept of perfection begins with a narrow teleological perspective but ends in what can only be described as an existential indeterminacy: If what there is, is itself, and therefore by definition perfect, we have to make sense of our lives by trying to understand what there is and act according to that understanding. The world is perfect in the sense that it is what it is and the reason we experience our being as a vale of tears is down to the fact that we do not understand our being, too often taking a narrow purpose for the whole, getting things wrong, getting ourselves into a muddle, not getting it right.

Coming back to our statue of Alison Lapper, it is not enough to say that Quinn's statue celebrates the marginalised and adjusts our political spectacles. It does that and is very successful at it: by celebrating Alison Lapper as a human being the sculpture demands dignity for all members of society which is surely a good thing when seen from the fact that modern societies are predicated on the just allowing a pluralism of the good. Alison Lapper presents a greater problem, not just one of tolerance of the deviant or a celebration of the marginalised. She is a human being, not a door. She demands her dignity as a human being, she commands respect as an emblem for a political struggle to gain recognition etc. But again that does not touch upon a fundamental problem. The question is: How is she beautiful? Is the answer that she is beautiful as a human being, as herself and as what she is? Is she beautiful in her humanity, in its fragility, its persistence, its courage and its need for courage? How do you measure the beauty of a woman? How athletic are you in finding beauty in her or in anything else for that matter? Do we measure that beauty against the standards of fashion; do we measure it personally against our own private desires? Do we measure it against Platonic ideals? Remember that Plato had all misshapen creatures killed at birth in his supposedly "just" state. We know what misshapen means, it means deviant from the norm. It turned Shakespeare's Richard III against the world that loathed him. The norm shows us how we are situated. And although a situated and embodied context is indispensable in finding anything, in thought itself coming to a decision, in pure reason coming to judgment, it is also at the same time the very boundary we need to overcome in our thinking. And Alison Lapper certainly deviates from the norm from a number of possible perspectives: she has no arms and strange legs as she sits there with great dignity on the pedestal. Do not fall into the temptation of using compensatory arguments and say things like: well, her body is certainly not perfect but she has lovely hair... Do the supposedly ugly require our sympathy? Why exactly? Do they require it because they are ugly, or because the rest of humanity cannot screw its perceptive sophistication up high enough so that it can find beauty where one's sense of beauty requires hard exercise and training? We tend, in these times of ease, towards a flabby and passive sense of beauty. Understanding the nature of Alison Lapper's shape helps: careless science, commercial eagerness and our hatred for small discomforts gave her what she got, a fact that must have haunted her mother. Her shape demands behaviour which also deviates from the norm, but as soon as we understand that we can also cope with this deviancy. Removing our biological fear of the misshapen will already help us qualify the misshapen in terms that are not just politically

but also conceptually correct: differently shaped. The word *misshapen* assumes a correct shape. A correct shape assumes a determined purpose. But this is our wonderful position: we cannot be sure as to our purpose. Our purpose is ours to define. Our own purpose is not of much consequence within the limitless perspective of existence. Once we have dealt with all these issues, what is left of her ugliness? Is she bitter? Is she unkind? Is she vulgar? I don't know, I do not know her personally. In any case these things are not relevant, she is herself and perfectly herself. Her beauty is there to be found. As an entity that works hard at being and maintaining an entity and developing herself as an entity, she is the most beautiful Alison Lapper. If beauty is the sign of truth and truth leads to goodness, then every truth has its beauty, and can lead to goodness. We learn through philosophical exercise and constant practise to love the world in its perfection. Taking the interchangeability of the three transcendentals as normative, means giving up on any hope of a standard that lies outside discourse. Discourse and its practise does not provide a standard of truth or beauty with a stability that lies outside discourse. To that extent both truth and goodness are bound in culture, just as our methods of approaching truth. But let's make sure we know what that means. Culture determines how I allow my body to meet its environment. It determines my behaviour. It is not purely subjective, not objective but relational, it is the law I give myself, because I believe it is right on the basis of my experience and the authority I dispense to inform me.²⁶ I can overcome culture, without simply rejecting it. It is my task to find Alison Lapper's beauty in as full a way as possible. To love her, as Spinoza would say, in her perfection and her perfection is infinite.

²⁶ See Spinoza's Letter XXXV to Oldenburg, dated November 20, 1665: "I attribute to nature neither beauty nor ugliness, neither order nor confusion. For it is only in relation to our imagination that we can say of things that they are beautiful or ugly, ordered or confused see also Letter LVIII to H. Boxel, September 1674: If one considers things in themselves, that is to say, in relation to God, they are neither beautiful nor ugly.

Part VII: The question of ethics

the physics of good use

If you intend to read this essay in order to discover how you should act then I would stop right here. For such purposes there are countless very good management theories that are far more capable than I am of telling you this. This essay, if it helps at all, will help you think about action, particularly about the idea of using your environment to a particular purpose. It ends with a vague view of a working model for our decisions, but its only authority is its aesthetic beauty: its consistency, its practicality its reliance on a pragmatic view of human being and a phenomenological understanding of human being and the fact that it is happy to be the product of an existential choice: one could choose differently; there is no necessity to choose for this model over and above another, except that, as I said before, it is a rather beautiful and practical model.

The essay works on the premise that planning and design is a human activity and that there is no necessary way to bridge the gap between thinking and doing. Accepting that it also works on the premise that an environment ultimately comes down to each of us acting in it, and that this acting requires us to be responsible.

To discuss the ethics of design as a human activity by separating it from other human activities is, to my mind, an unhealthy approach. An ethics, again in my opinion, can be made specific to any one kind of activity only if it starts from, and carries with it all the way, a clear conception of what being human is about and what human activity entails when it interferes in the environment. There is a logically binding continuity between being a professional planner or designer and being a human being with a place in society. If we lose that sense of continuity we lose our place: we lose ourselves *as a place*; a place where all relations between our body and the environment come together in an *I*. If we divide our professional persona from our private persona we end up with two *I*'s. There is a word for that, it is called schizophrenia. Aspects of schizophrenia may be unavoidable, but it is generally considered to be a difficult way of living life. As such it is the continuity of being that interests me even though we know, from experience, that a good planner, a good designer does not necessarily have to be a good person, a good father, mother or a faithful friend. In fact the possibility of there being a discontinuity between these aspects of being, makes describing the manner of continuity that is necessary in being all the

more of a challenge. My challenge is to ground our thinking about ethics and action on a pragmatic and existential footing using abstractions vague enough not to make a mockery of our very real ignorance about all sorts of issues to do with the functioning of the human body in the environment and precise enough to help us think usefully about making decisions. I will not tell you how to act, because action is always specific to a situation, but I will tell you how you might want to think about acting.

The essay proceeds as follows: first of all I want to think about an earlier attempt to think about acting, namely that of Immanuel Kant. After that I will start again and begin to think about communication and its relation to the idea of community. After that we look at sameness and difference in order to find out how communication is possible, and how the continuity of being might take shape. After that we look at the relationship between communication and behaviour as ways of expressing qualities and a way of describing the laws of physics and the ways of describing the laws of a state to see how they relate. We then get down to the question of ethics and from that basis look at qualities in greater depth. We look at the relationship between evolution, socialisation and desire. After that we look at instrumentality and the idea of a simple and a complex or compound ethics. We then follow on with a look at what happens when we concentrate on intended action and what happens when we only look at the consequences of an action. I end up with a theory about responsibility.

questions about what we are doing

My body is the centre of my world. I have, however, learnt to see that there are others about who also claim to be centres of *their* world. It makes the world an interesting place. How do these many centres of the world relate? How do they act upon each other? Are all these centres unique in themselves? And if so, what makes them unique? Are there any correlations at all? Are they similar enough to make communication possible? Or do they each make their own mind up as to what is being said to them? When I talk and make gestures to my neighbour and behave in a certain way in his presence I appear to be communicating; what am I saying and what is he receiving, and how will he *react*? Is communication possible between a snowflake and my cat? What exactly constitutes sameness? Can communication help us to act well? These are questions that give us a way to think about ethics.

Ethics is the discipline whereby we find strategies and tactics to realise desired qualities. These strategies and tactics inevitably involve *the other*, i.e. that which is not your body. *The other* is probably going to take a stand on being used. Perhaps your strategies require the help of *others*. They too will take a stand on being used. In order to resolve these issues we need to talk. Communicability is necessary if we want to be able to live together in our shared world. In fact, communication *is* the activity of living together in a community. We all may be happily getting on with our own tasks, but in doing that we are communicating. This is simply a statement of: community is impossible without communication. Communication is the act of taking account of each other in whatever way.

communicating behaviour

It is impossible to look as far back as Vitruvius tried to do when speculating about the origin or architecture and society, but I wouldn't be surprised if something of a less dramatic version of what he dreamed up might have been close to actual events. He believed that architecture began with society, with our earliest ancestors being drawn to a fire, organising themselves into a circle and learning to exchange useful information and good tricks with each other, copying each other's behaviour to improve their lot.

Leon Battista Alberti, some 1500 years later, went on to suggest that the need for men to communicate amongst themselves caused them to separate themselves from the women. No doubt it was the other way around; macho conversations are after all a bit of a strain on one's patience. Whatever the case, the wall, he argued, was not just a climatic boundary; it was, from the beginning, a social boundary.

Both these mythologies of the origin of the built environment also delineate the origin of society, of community. When we talk about living together we are talking about how bodies *behave* in their environment, taking account of that environment which is filled with other bodies similar to their own and communicating that in their behaviour even before they have found words to abstract the experience into codes of significance. Communication is about language. Language begins with the body going about its business and being observed and interpreted. The behaving body carries information. Language begins with the behaving body being observed and ends with the most abstract form of reasoning. Ethics then, if it wants to devise strategies and tactics for achieving a quality begins with

observing behaviour and learning from it, imitating it, avoiding imitation. Ethics is about taking account of each other, about setting and testing boundaries and filters of sameness and difference. It is about selection, about encouraging some things and discouraging others so as to make possible a quality of being.

In buildings boundaries are grouped together, sandwiched: boundaries separating light and dark, noise and silence, good and bad, hot and cold are for the sake of convenience often sandwiched into one line, one division, penetrated only by controllable filters such as windows, doors and chimney flues. These boundaries make all sorts of qualities possible within a building. Walls are a good means to aesthetic qualities such as comfort, privacy, discretion, quiet, peace, fun, excitement etc.

When we focus on qualities such as privacy and discretion for example, the need for these divisions and filters affirms the fact that we give and take information in every gesture and every movement we make. This has a wider significance. It shows us that non communication is impossible; everything has the potential to acquire meaning when observed. As such we need to keep some things for ourselves.

The fact that we communicate does not tell us anything about *what* we communicate and what effect this might have on others. To what extent can we talk usefully about ourselves and others in relation to the environment we live in? What can we sensibly say about what communicability means? What actually happens when we communicate? Communication is the basis for communal activity; it is the activity of being a community. All aspects of living together are also aspects of communication. Communication surely requires us to have something in common. In fact the word communication comes from the Latin *communicationem* (nom. *communicatio*), which itself comes from *communicare* "to share, divide out; impart, inform; join, unite, participate in," the literal meaning being "to make common," from *communis* which means "in common, public, general, shared by all or many," from Proto Indo European *ko-moin-i* "held in common," which is a compound adjective formed from *ko-* "together" and *moi-n-*, suffixed form of the base *mei-* "change, exchange" hence "shared by all." The second element of the compound also is the source of the Latin *munia* "duties, public duties, functions," those related to *munia* "office".

After all this I shall reiterate the question: How can we communicate if we do not have things in common? Commonplaces; shared topic and shared topos. What then do we have in common so that we can communicate amongst ourselves? Actually let's take it a step further: what do things we communicate about have in common with us so that we can communicate about them? We can say, with relative safety, that all of us are made of the same stuff. Science has borne this out, but so has daily life. It is possible to make generalisations about the human body such that, for example, *a good night's sleep does wonders*, or *a paracetamol taken before you go to bed after having drunk too much, prevents your hangover from being too awful*. How would these generalisations be possible if we did not share a similar constitution? Our chemistry and our physics is limited and determined by the behaviour of matter and energy more or less accurately described by the laws we have devised for them. That much we can assume from experience. The stuff we are made of may vary slightly in each body in terms of precise ingredients, amounts and distribution, construction and configuration, and these minor variations may affect our behaviour to some extent, but it is safe to say that we are made of the same stuff: call it energetic matter or substance, the name is of no great importance at this stage. Stones and people are made of the same stuff, but forming radically different compounds. Sand is almost all silicone; the amount of silicone in a body is not necessarily very great. Furthermore we are all of us are living on the surface of this, our earth, with all the consequences that this entails. But that is where sameness begins to thin. Even though we are all made of the same stuff, we all occupy our own unique place in space and time. That is also safe to assume. In this sense, although we share the stuff we are made up of, we are also all of us unique. And as we already hinted at, the stuff we are made of is, in each of us assembled in slightly differing configurations and concentrations. Considering the number of molecules atoms and strings we may be made of, it is something of a miracle that all human beings look so much alike and behave so similarly. However miraculous the similarities we are all in what we might describe as our own unique situation.

It is this complement of similarity and difference that makes community both possible and useful. If we were all exactly alike community would be very different. In fact it might not even be useful. If we were all completely different it would certainly not be useful. What makes things interesting is to see where we are the same and where we differ. That is what makes communication and ethics exciting.

sameness & difference

I shall put that in clearer terms: in attempting to formulate rules for action so that we can take account of each other and our environment we need to take account of what makes us the same and what makes us different. Not to put too fine a point on it, we need to discriminate; we need to determine what sameness and difference means in terms of the behaviour we are able to observe and learn from. Being made of the same stuff does not mean that that stuff is configured in exactly the same way in each of us. The wonderful thing about the stuff we are made of, energetic matter, strings or whatever, is that it combines and synthesises into formidable aggregates of stuff. Particle Physics turns into chemistry and both turn into biology. These three stories about our being have to dovetail seamlessly.

The combinations of stuff available to us are, like Lego, able to create near infinite variations of difference. Sameness is a prerequisite for differentiation. They are not opposites, but to use a word popular in deconstructivist thought, they are *complements*. The configuration of our stuff is, just like our position, an issue for space-time, their structure and movement allows differentiation. But this difference is a difference of combination, of placement, orientation, configuration, structure, not of the stuff. In the end there is the Lego block. When stuff combines and forms aggregates, form-specific behaviour results when configured stuff is confronted with other configured stuff. When aggregates are as large as living creatures, gigantic molecules working together in a coordinated way, their behaviour is emergent, more than the sum of its parts, it begins to show what we often like to call *freedom*. The debate between the determinists and the freedom of choice people remains undecided. I have to admit that I am decidedly in the camp of the Spinozan determinists, which essentially means that freedom is not an illusion but a way of describing the possibilities and limitations of complex behaviour. The interesting thing about this is that such a position, however impossible to prove scientifically, does have immediate implications for ethics. Spinoza argues that we are not so much free, but able to learn and practise. The idea that we would happily make a *bad* decision is absurd. As we learn and practise our decisions become more attuned to what we want while being able to avoid the unforeseen side effects. We become better at desiring and we become better at adapting means to ends. Spinozan determinism doesn't prove get rid of choice, doesn't actually even get rid of free will, it merely defines its terms and thereby demonstrates the need for learning and practise. In his view of determinism which is quite different from the

more naive views, we have to make decisions *and* take responsibility for them. A bad decision means that the situation is too complex and we do not fully understand it or, we haven't done our homework properly. So the behaviour of humans finds itself at one extreme of a spectrum. At the other end of that spectrum water molecules happy to live together, sharing their gentle electromagnetic attraction and other forces, negotiating their place when and external force is applied by means of those forces. Carbon molecules positively love being diamonds and never want to change. Cats and snowflakes have a lot in common, despite their rather obvious difference. They take account of each other, the cat by means of his curiosity, the snowflake by melting on the cat's nose. All this surely implies not only a continuity in behaviour but that difference presupposes sameness. Difference works on the basis of sameness in order to construct itself into variations. Sameness and difference are not opposites, difference is in fact the product of sameness, or, to put it in another way, sameness, being part of a shared set of qualities, is a precondition for differentiation: sameness *allows* differentiation.

How is this important? The importance of this, in a rough and ready sort of way, is that differentiated sameness is the precondition necessary to allow perception and communication. Spinoza's argument about substance and its attributes is a logical demonstration of this: Things have to be made of the same stuff to inhabit the same world and thus to be able to get in each other's way. There may be other worlds in which attributes other than space and time determine the stuff things are made of, but that world would not be accessible to us, because we do not share its attributes, its qualities. But all this is logical cleverness. A simpler argument will do just as well: A sound wave to be able to convey significance to a body has to be able to make an impression on that body, which in turn must be capable of receiving that impression. In other words they need to be able to react to each other; in order for them to do that they have to obey the same *physics*. That tectonics of behaviour is commonality enough for communication. If something does not behave according to the same physical restrictions and possibilities as our machinery for perception, we surely cannot observe it. The idea of sameness is presupposed in the idea of things reacting to each other. It is this umbrella position that science has adopted in its slow advance towards a theory of everything, a theory that presupposes a continuity at the basis of all being. It is my choice to find that an attractive theory; I hereby invest it with authority to *inform me*. It is my choice to feel impressed by science and to allow it to hold its plea in the court of my judgment.

All we need is the admission that our machinery of perception is capable of registering stuff. It may not register and probably does not register a whole lot of things that are nevertheless out there, but which my sensory apparatus, embodied or prosthetic, is not able to perceive. Who knows? We are certainly extending our prosthetic sensory apparatus all the time. That which does not react with us is unobservable. Now you might want to be clever and say that if my hand hits a large stone, the stone does not react, but that is wrong. It reacts very well; it resists our hand by stopping it instantly on its course, thereby telling us not to try that again! So let's leave behind all the logical finery and simply admit that for communication to be possible some correlation between sender, sent and receiver has to be present. We only need to admit the ability for things to behave relative to each other. That is a very small admission. A snowflake and my cat are different but the difference consists in a different configuration of much the same stuff. Cats are made of water plus other stuff; snowflakes are made of crystallised water. It is the fact that water and the other ingredients to make a cat are in turn all made of the same stuff, differently configured, that makes communication possible between my cat and a snowflake. Both the cat and the snowflake live (or exist) observably in the same environment, are subject to the same game rules for this universe and the cat is extremely curious about snowflakes. The snowflakes communicate their ticklishness and coldness and their ability to melt and become water which is lickable. The snowflake reacts to the cat's nose by melting almost immediately. That is the difference: we are made of the same stuff, according to different recipes and react to each other according to our make-up.

expressing & behaving.

It actually means very little in practical terms precisely because it means so much. We should not forget Heidegger's observation that existence is relation. And relation is expression in quality, which is the product of behaviour. The world expresses itself as behaviour, which is significant, and this significance is what we call quality. I put my hand in the water, withdraw it and say that water *is cold*. We take account of the world. The snowflake by reacting to a wet warm nose; the cat by registering ticklishness and coldness and I register a funny scene in the garden as our young cat explores this mysterious stuff we call snow and you, my reader, register a story about all this, which in some way is supposed to be relevant to an argument. Behaviour then is already communication in that it is the expression of a relation in a quality. Instead of communicating

about something, much behaviour communicates simply in behaving. Only very complex aggregates of molecules called living creatures have become adept at virtuality and learnt to communicate in abstractions, in virtual actions. The most wilful of the living creatures able to do deal with the virtual, human beings, have even managed to conquer the subjunctive! They are able to express wishes and possibilities. We are able, through our abstractions to compare situations, making generalisations possible. Behaviour as an aspect of form and giving significance in quality gives us the full context in which we operate, reduced to the level of our ability to understand it.

Our ability to communicate and receive communication from things around us behaving certainly does not mean that devising universal rules for wilful or *free* behaviour is easy. Communication allows us to generalise (compare situations) and formulate rules, but we are quickly made aware that rules are extremely sensitive to situation. Comparing situations is actually very difficult, partly because it looks so easy. It is precisely the situational uniqueness of all being in terms of structure, configuration size, place and orientation in space-time that makes being differentiate and behave differently in every situation. A snowflake hitting a cold concrete floor behaves differently to one hitting the warm, sensitive nose of my cat. We may be able to communicate because we are at least within the same universe, but each of us occupies a different place in that universe and the precise ratio of what is stable and what is dynamic creates a strange and warped movement in our being so that we can, with Heraclitus, indeed say that the river we enter again *is and is not* the same river we entered a few hours ago. Where it is the same it allows us to refer to it generically, where it isn't, it warns us to be careful about generalised statements on the authority of which we might act foolishly.

It is precisely our unique and dynamic situation that makes universal rules and categorical imperatives at our scale of existence behave so strangely. We might with ease agree that universally held values exist, but we will soon start disagreeing about their applicability in a certain situation. To take an example: Murder is surely *always* wrong, or is it? Murder is a form of manslaughter, but not all cases of manslaughter constitute murder in a court of law. Murder may always be wrong but there are cases of manslaughter that could be forgiven in a particular situation. In fact it is often the situation that dictates whether something should be seen as murder. Immanuel Kant believed that lying should be subject to a categorical imperative: all lying is thus seen as wrong. But in our culture a

lie is, very occasionally, a necessary evil, and even a kindness. We need have no difficulty in condemning child abuse and rape. Definitely, but where exactly are the boundaries we should respect? What constitutes abuse and are these boundaries and ideas subject to historical change and development? How do they compare to behaviour in the animal world? Our challenge is of course to find examples of universal rules relevant to the design of the built environment. And in a following essay I shall discuss the case of Cradle to Cradle thinking in relation to two well established ethical theories, John Rawls' concept of justice as fairness and Immanuel Kant's concept of the categorical imperative. In another essay I shall also discuss the idea of being polite in building.

Situationality is central to ethics; situationality takes account of relations and how each relation in turn determines others. There is a relativism involved. Situational thinking is a kind of relativism and as such we must guard against the idea of things being relative to each other from being abused and descending into an uncritical *anything goes* kind of reasoning. That kind of relativism is not actually implied in relativism, it is merely a form of sloppiness.

laws describe and/or prescribe

Because of our situational uniqueness, because of our different place in space and time, because of our configurative and structural differences, because of the dynamic nature of being as an accumulative and selective plying of becoming, we have to be careful when formulating rules to live by. Rules are possible, but it is not always clear *how* they are possible. Universal rules are possible, but it is not always clear *when* they should apply and *how* they should be applied. In this sense the description of particle behaviour in the natural sciences is so much simpler, so much more straightforward: all we need is scientific protocol and adequate mathematics.

However, using physics as a blanket metaphor for ethics is not a good idea. Neither is the metaphorical use of chemistry, biology or evolution in ethics always a good idea. We can measure our ethics against our understanding of these disciplines, but ultimately ethics needs to rest on something altogether less concrete, less secure. Ethics rests on our own personal aesthetics, our satisfaction that something is good and desirable in a particular context. That is a matter of decision. How we reach that decision,

that state of satisfaction and authorise it, I have argued elsewhere. But we ourselves carry the responsibility for whatever authority we decide to trust.

The idea of a law, ranging from the physical law of particle behaviour to the laws of a state enacted by a parliament into rules for acceptable behaviour are correlated; they form a continuity; the laws of physics as written down in books and articles on physics, *describe* the behaviour of energetic matter whereas the laws of a parliament *prescribe* how we should (but do not always) behave with regard to each other and the environment we live in. These latter laws emerge from the conditions of culture and our understanding of the way the world works and help to transform the conditions of that culture and attempt to attune ourselves to the world.

These conditions, be they economic, legislative or political, are not always stable. Surely the fact that we all are made of the same stuff should mean that we could formulate laws according to which we all should live, just like the *laws of physics*. The laws of physics are so attractive because they appear to be so stable. We have found ways of describing the behaviour of matter and it always behaves in that way. If it doesn't we try to find even better laws to describe its behaviour. In fact we can easily get the analogy between physics and social life to hold if we really want it to. We can formulate similar laws but must not forget that the laws of physics are just as situationally sensitive: Water when frozen behaves completely differently to water that has evaporated... Water drops in oil behave completely differently to water drops on marble.

I would not want to speak of an analogy between the physical world and our own; I would want to speak of *a continuity* between them. The laws of physics hold for human bodies just as much as they hold for water. It is just that human being-molecules or aggregates are so much larger and more complicated than water molecules. A human being molecule or aggregate is *an organism* it is an organised aggregate of many different compounds working together to a set of purposes that together and in synthesis could be described as life. The possible combinations in human being create the possibility of infinitely varied situations; the choice of possible reaction in behaviour is extraordinarily varied.

The continuity between physical laws and social laws hold but social laws need to take account of the situationality and conditionality of human being. A primitive calculus of social behaviour is beginning to become

possible with the use of extremely powerful computers. As such we are slowly approaching the possibility of artificial intelligence and as soon as we manage to give computers the ability to cope in diverse and dynamic situations and give them a taste to be able to direct themselves within those situations, the Turing test will become very difficult to decide.

Which brings us to the problem of prescriptive law. How should we act? We are surely right when we think: "if I live by this law, you should too"? And before we pursue this track we might also consider the difference between this statement and: "if you live by this law and it works for you then perhaps I should join you". We can see that the constitutive forces of these two approaches are crucially opposed. In the one we assume responsibility for the behaviour of others and in the second we assume responsibility only for ourselves. The one is an imperative, the other is conditional and imitative. These two questions are the foundational to any society. They lie at the basis of the ethical system that is elaborated and given concrete shape in the political, economic and legislative processes that give direction to a society. Do we force people to behave like we do, or do we make sure our laws, or at least the society that is the product of theory working is so good that people will choose to live by them?

We are of the same stuff and differently configured, we find ourselves in unique, dynamic, unfolding situations in space-time. This means that we could have single unequivocal prescriptive laws, just like the laws of physics, but they would only apply in particular situations. This is where difficulties appear: in which situations and to what extent and how should we take account of the difference between each situation? The potential for confusion and the temptation to relativate, give up in exasperation, or alternatively to become draconian and rule-obsessed is considerable; these are forces which always threaten any constitutional state, hence the need for constant and loving attention to any political, economic and legislative system.

the technical and the social imperative

We know man to impose laws upon his own behaviour. At the same time it is impossible to see man as completely autonomous. He is part of his environment in the sense that his body is dependent on that environment. A person is forced to make use of his environment for his own development and maintenance. Others will take up a position relative to that use. That is the basic premise underlying this book. In this way life is

shaped by the situations created by the way various users are engaged with their environment, of which we ourselves might form a part. In order to understand these situations we construct stories about them. We call these stories *our culture* and they vary from the religious to the scientific, from the absurd to the deeply compelling. They offer us a background against which we can build our morality and prepare the reactions to deal with specific situations. The gap between this morality and the way we react is however unbridgeable by mere reason. It is bridgeable only when reason, experience and our taste, our perspective upon the world negotiate and come to some agreement that feels good, feels right. Making a decision, and acting upon it in a certain way is free, it is forced by the authority we invest in a view giving it the emotive weight that cuts through potentially endless deliberations and decides. Choices made are quintessentially existential: we can choose differently: what wakes us choose this or that? This existential freedom is a good thing, after all we are mobile creatures in a changeable environment. We need freedom to react to the different. No doubt our freedom is a product of evolution and of what mass and energy are capable of. There is nothing inherent about that freedom, nothing divine, or at least nothing more divine than the whole of creation. It just works that way for human beings and, probably to a lesser degree for other animals, who tend to be less flexible. So, the gap between our beliefs about the world and the way it works, between our wishes and our actions is to be jumped. The question is how should prepare for that jump, how should we plan it? There is no necessity in the relationship between belief and wish, no necessity in the way we jump the gap between them, there is only the need to jump. And there are an infinite number of ways to do that. The power of logic is limited and can never decide the issue. I am allowed to believe anything I like, I am allowed to wish for anything and can deploy any action I want to try to realise my dream. The only thing that gives me a foothold is that experience teaches me that some actions are more effective than others. There is nothing more.

The discursive process in which an action is prepared is always hypothetical, it is in that sense a virtual process: experiences are described using abstractions set within a privileged perspective. A wish for the future only ever exists in the form of a vision. Discursive practice is hypothetical because it always concerns the formula: [IF] we want {a} [THEN] we would do well to act according to manner {b}.

Immanuel Kant distinguished two sorts of hypothetical imperatives, a precise one, the so called *rules of skill*, and a less precise one called *councils of prudence*. Their difference is not great, in fact they can be described as the two poles forming a continuous spectrum. The one departs from the premise that some things tend to be very stable in our world, such as the action of gravity, friction, the ground beneath our feet, the strength of materials, that we have an average height of about 1m 80 etc. It decides things on the basis of these stable truths. And its decisions assume familiarity with the context in which they are made. They are routine decisions.

The other kicks in when things are less stable and more sensitive to situation: if you are not sure of your case it pays to be cautious. Take the following case. A client wants a building but he also wants the building to be imbued with a certain atmosphere. He wants an atmosphere he considers adequate to his purpose. Let's choose an atmosphere to make things easier. Let's choose something nice and vague, like *agreeableness*. From an economic and political point of view an agreeable place is very desirable, after all people behave well and enjoy going there. And where people enjoy going, life is good. If they didn't enjoy going there we could hardly judge the place to be agreeable. So the task for the architect is not just to design a building, but an environment which makes agreeableness possible. It goes without saying that the building has to function well on all levels. That is it has to be adequate for the activities it will accommodate and facilitate. Agreeableness is just one of the criteria against which the functioning of the building will be measured and judged: one of its desirable qualities. How you measure agreeableness has not been settled yet. All we can say at present is that agreeableness constitutes the atmosphere in which the activities that the building needs to accommodate are thought to work well. Agreeableness is more than the icing on the cake, it is one of the basic requirements for the client. It is the quality he needs to contribute to the building's success. Naturally the architect knows that his power is limited. The question becomes: what aspect of agreeableness is within his power to *design*? After all is it not the users who are to a large extent responsible for making a place agreeable? When we hear tell-tale judgments like: "it's quite agreeable here on a Friday night", it becomes clear that it is not just the place that is agreeable, but the place-time, and a large part of that agreeableness comes from factors that cannot possibly be influenced by the architect. However, all is not lost.

So what can he design and what can't he design? The architect knows that he can design the architectural conditions to make agreeableness possible. And for this he needs to know about the way humans interact with their environment, the way shape and behaviour work. In generic terms he can lay down the architectural conditions for agreeableness to appear when the non-architectural conditions of agreeableness help along a bit: we need people to want to go out for a good time. What are the architectural conditions of agreeableness? There are many. They range from expression to comfort. He can control the climatic conditions within the building. For this he has at his disposal the formidable frame of reference of the building physics people. Building physicists are aesthetes *per excellence*, they know the sensitivity of the human body to humidity, to light, sound, draughts and so forth. He also has use of the frame of reference of the installation engineers who know how to best implement the aesthetics of comfort in a building. He knows how to make the construction adequate, and perhaps even how to make the construction take part in the expression of the building to add to its excitement. For this he has at his disposal the construction engineers. He knows how to use materials to clad his building to best advantage. All this concerns what we tend to call technical knowledge. The word technical comes from the Greek word *techné* which means art or skill. So as soon as a technical decision is required we appear to need to answer the question *how should I act* using the first hypothetical imperative, the *rules of skill*, which, for the purposes of the argument here I shall call the *technical imperative*. Using the technical imperative the relationship between the what should we do and the how shall we go about it can be reduced to our simple algorithm: [IF] I want {a door that opens both ways } [THEN] I need {a particular kind of hinge} [AND] I shall have to make sure that {the door does not stick in its frame}. Such a formula constitutes a wisdom based upon experience, but it is a seemingly straightforward wisdom that is easily turned into a rule because the various factors relevant to the situation are stable and will generally react in a predictable way. *That* we want a door that opens both ways needs a minimum of deliberation, as such doors have proved themselves useful over time and have become the stock-in-trade of a particular design challenge. When technological advances come up with better hinges of new kinds of door the architect will soon be able to benefit from this advancement through the advice of his frame of reference. Technology determines a great deal in a building and one would imagine that for the purposes of design, the technical imperative could cover the whole process. But in fact this is emphatically not the case. All technical decisions are dependent on more complex reasoning. They are dependent on

perceptions and experience. Again when the study of perception focuses on the more stable aspects of human physiology, such as the body's system of temperature regulation, things stay relative stable and clear, but as soon as this system becomes involved with less stable aspects of human physiology such as mood and association, things become complicated, emergent. In fact it pays not to divorce these issues in one's design deliberations. All questions of perception and mood influence each other and form a continuous braid of reciprocal activity. As such technology is tightly woven into the production of social space and helps determine even the most complex aspects of aesthetics. Technical decisions can only confine themselves to the technical imperative once their role in the whole has been properly determined within the framework of the task to design an agreeable place. And if they do not form part of the vaguer more complicated deliberations the design becomes less holistic.

Where technology helps to produce social space we need the broader hypothetical imperative [IF] I want {a} [THEN] I shall do well to apply {wisdom b}. Wisdom takes as its subject man as an undetermined being, who in fact cannot be fully determined or indeed fully objectified. This would appear to throw up an insurmountable obstacle. If he cannot be determined in any way, how can we determine how to act to his benefit when trying to design a place agreeable to him? Well first of all we listen to what he says. And when he judges something we take him seriously. What we must not do is take that judgement as generally applicable. After all agreeableness should not be reduced to an aspect of agreeableness or a particular view of agreeableness. If that had been the case agreeableness would have had a far more precise definition than it has. Neither can you tell them they are using the wrong word. But you can question them. After all agreeableness lies in their perception of agreeableness. And in that way it simply is not measurable in a generic sense, with which I mean to say that its measurement delivers an unconditional fully generalizable quality. That means, among other things that should you try to quantify agreeableness fully, that is in more than just a physiological building physics way, you will not know what it is you are quantifying, what it is you are measuring. We know that a judgment is dependent upon a lot of factors. Design accounts for a handful of them and the way the designed conditions impact upon someone's mood or state of mind is impossibly elusive. So on this level the hypothetical imperative becomes vague because we need to take account of the sensitivity of a situation and the complexity of judgment. Design would appear never to be able to appeal to precise imperatives. After all the basic premise of this book is that man

is a mobile animal in a changeable environment. He practises, gets used to things, he learns to appreciate the fact that agreeableness manifests itself in different guises in different situations. Is it then impossible to find a way out of this mess? Well we won't succeed by trying to impose false categories and pretending everything is hunky dory when we reduce the rich business of design to a simplistic technical imperative. And if the word agreeable is too vague to use in design we might as well say that man is too vague and elusive to design for. That would be absurd. We need to go the other way. We need to become precise in the individual concrete case, need to penetrate into the darkest regions of judgment and seek out its story. How did *that* person, in *that situation* arrive at *that* judgment and what can we learn from that without generalizing that story to irrelevance? We need to make our buildings specific. Design for that person, rather than for the lowest common denominator.

However, as more stakeholders are put in the picture, the situation becomes increasingly less specific. Even so it is specificity that we want in design. Specificity that does not breach the principles of fairness. We do not want the neutral, the generic, we want (in this case) agreeableness. The fact that things become less certain is always seen as a problem, but in fact it is also what makes design acquire its special power. The social science of design needs to place undetermined and un-objectifiable man at the centre of his concerns. His undetermined state is his most valuable asset when confronting a new situation. He may be situated within his cultural construction but he remains free to impose his own laws upon himself. Every attempt to objectify him he will eventually escape if it doesn't suit him. So the architect uses technical know-how but cannot apply it without taking his wish into account. It is his wish that is the focus of our concerns. It is this which determines him, which specifies him and does so voluntarily. It is the wish that needs to be given shape, lovingly and with taste and expertise. A designer's technical know-how must never be implemented at the cost of man-in-his-environment. After all he is responsible for supplying the architectural conditions for the production of social space. How does he get to work? This is where we turn to the concept of experience, to the expert, the phronimos.

A special case of the hypothetical imperative is the golden rule with the help of which we can make someone else's concrete situation our own by way of a narrative displacement or empathic movement. Do not do unto others what you would not have others do unto you. Or in the more positive variation: do unto others how you would have others do unto you.

It turns out that ethically the golden rule is in fact our most powerful tool of design. It is able to bridge someone's wish, using your taste and expertise in a design. It is you the expert that needs to take responsibility for the wish of the users, all the users, not just the client. And with responsibility I mean quite specifically: the requirement to respond adequately. Taking the case of our commission to design an agreeable place, what in fact happens is that we are being asked as designers to go beyond our professional brief and delve into our own humanity and to use our knowledge and taste of our own humanity in the design of places. Our knowledge of humanity services our technical goal, that of designing a structure that puts in place the architectural conditions of agreeableness.

We must not make the mistake that agreeableness can be found in an average. The average of this person's idea about agreeableness and another person's idea about agreeableness gives us precisely nothing. Objectifying agreeableness is impossible, because agreeableness requires us to have bodies in a particular condition and properly situated in an environment. Take instead the golden rule. Now I can use my knowledge of my body in specific conditions and situated in hoped for situations. More than that, I can learn. I can look about me critically, read novels and watch films, talk to people, I can learn to identify agreeableness in concrete situations, leaving intact its complexity by envisioning it and allowing my body as a whole to learn what it means without reducing everything to just the abstractions of language. That is my responsibility. The process of envisioning in design is much better able to deal with complexity than our simple language and it only needs language afterwards to clarify issues, give descriptions and justifications, but not everything needs to be captured in words. A human being has his whole being to capture a quality, to analyse a concrete situation and this knowledge he can use. He develops a practiced gaze. He makes himself into an expert by listening well to every bit of information in whatever way it arrives. His art consists in the appropriation of good examples and precedents and to subject these to analysis so as to forge these into a new virtual situation, a design. That is his task and that is where he finds his response and his responsibility. When it goes wrong, society has found a more or less successful way of dealing with both success and failure, it is called reputation and fame, the good name. The client goes to that architect because he believes he will find what he wants. Taking both of these factors into account you can see how the golden rule is a strong moral ruler against which to measure action. Design is complex, we are concerned with putting people in their environment. Your own expertise in

being human and being professional is the fullest knowledge available to you as it is able to be stocked by a frame of reference that includes all of science all of philosophy and all of art as well as your own experience. Having said that, it is the designer's responsibility to take account of all these things to become practised and confident. The golden rule gives us our strongest means to bridge the existential gap between belief and wish through action. A man is unique because of his bodily constitution, because of his situation, because of his biography, because of the relations he forges with his environment. The golden rule allows us to cancel out differences in situation as we can imagine ourselves in other situations, especially if we open ourselves to the other and practice this empathic ability. And if we cannot completely cancel out situation, because of the fact that our different bodies behave differently in different situations and our different biographies impose themselves differently on different situations then at least we can begin to map those differences and assess their conditionality. That conditionality can be taken account of by instituting a margin of generosity that becomes part of the designer's expertise. In this way the design shapes itself in the sketch, a central part of discursive design. The sketch contains information that cannot be efficiently captured in words but about which we can form judgements using words. The golden rule shows us a way to make our environment our own in a full sense, how we need to listen carefully to others in order to benefit professionally ourselves by exercising his ability to wish well and act well upon those wishes.

a me-in-my-world imperative

A still more special kind of imperative was seen by Kant as categorical. In this sense categorical means: without reference to anything other than itself. We will see that it isn't that, but we shall come back to that later. The categorical imperative is comparable to the first hypothetical imperative in that it can give precise and unequivocal instructions, such as "do not lie" or "do not humiliate others" or "do not rape or abuse others". It is at the same time comparable to the second hypothetical imperative because it concerns wise council in unstable situations. It is wisdom reduced to a rule of thumb. The first two hypothetical imperatives, including the golden rule, focus on the end to which action is deployed: [IF] you want {a good door} [THEN] you will need to do {b}... [IF] you want {an agreeable atmosphere} [THEN] {do unto others as you would others have do unto you}. The categorical imperative has no goal apart from itself. The categorical imperative is concerned with the right action whatever the end

or goal. It is not about realising something good, it is about doing right whatever the consequences and assuming that this is good. The right is here made equivalent to the good. The means is its own end. In this sense it resembles Spinoza's idea that virtue is its own reward. This categorical imperative was called categorical because it professes itself not to be concerned with anything or anybody but itself. In this way it becomes rather close to Richard Dawkins's misnomer of the selfish gene which just does what it does, whatever the consequences. The only thing it is concerned with, is its own logic. The categorical imperative is the product and slave of reason. This is where we can show it up for what it is. The point is that the categorical imperative, if it were to truly deserve that name would be just as unknowable as *das ding an sich*. So what we call the categorical imperative is in fact an imperative based on man's expertise and knowledge, man's view of himself in the world. He wants it to be a universal perspective, but it isn't. It is always confined by his necessarily partial and fragmented knowledge. And even if that knowledge weren't partial and fragmented, we could never possibly know that, as we cannot ever be sure we are able to perceive all there is in the world. There. So what Kant called the categorical imperative, is in fact the hypothetical imperative at the cutting edge of our knowledge of the world conceived in the most integrated and complete way. It looks at humanity as being part of the world as a whole. As such it is not categorical but hypothetical from a transcendent perspective, in that it places us back into a larger whole. It really says: [IF] {the world is as I describe it} [THEN] it is always justified to act in a situation {a} according to rule {b}

We are concerned here with rules that are the product of human reason wrestling with itself and thus submitting this or that problem about being-in-the-world for discussion: [IF] {we seen man as a part of his environment} [AND IF] {the welfare of the environment as a whole is a condition for the wellbeing of man} [THEN] {the categorical imperative is the ultimate test for any action we undertake} Kant formulated three maxims for the categorical imperative: the first was: Act only according to that maxim whereby you can, at the same time, will that it should become a universal law. The second says Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never merely as a means to an end, but always at the same time as an end. The categorical imperative differs from the golden rule in the sense that you make your own will transcend the immediate concerns of your own body and its relationship to its environment. You go beyond empathy and human expertise to the perspective of humanity at large, as a whole, as a part of the world: you do

not just wish treat others the way you want to treat yourself, but you wish for everyone to act in a certain way regardless of immediate consequences. Does this mean you are allowed to use people badly. Well not exactly although conflicts in perception as to what is good might here become divisive. If Rawls' principles of freedom and difference are seen as categorical in the way I have just specified, for which there is a good argument. Then that would allow people to use people well but not to use them badly. And badly means, acting in such a way as to take away their freedom in my use of them and acting in such a way that I improve my situation to the detriment of that of others. Their dignity and freedom to determine their own goal must be respected: everyone is free to determine their own goals and this fact means that not all goals can be permissible. Goals that would take away the freedom of others to decide their own goals are not permissible. Everyone is free to impose his own will upon his own situation and must be free to do this. For Kant honesty was an example of a categorical imperative. Without trust, man is lost in quite a literal way. He cannot know where he stands. A professional person must act as a human-being-in-the-world and not exclusively pursue the objectified goal of his profession whatever the cost. A banker who earns lots of money is not a good banker from the perspective of the banking world if he makes that money by diminishing trust in the banking world. He cannot square his action with the test of universality. Should his action become a rule for universal action it would destroy trust and with it the world of banking. Now I am not at all sure whether that would be a bad thing. But the destruction of trust certainly is. So the categorical imperative puts our action into a very broad framework indeed, our place in the world as a whole. It transcends the more local morality of the golden rule, which however, works well for local issues. A final variation of Kant's categorical imperative confirms the above. It is that every rational being must act as if he were always a legislating member in the universal kingdom of ends. This sounds a little strange but essentially means that action should never contradict the careful deliberation between rational beings. I feel that this is giving rather too much power to clever people. I am not sure I have enough faith in their cleverness. But, the deliberation of well practised professionals who place their professional being well within their humanity is probably about as good as it gets. And if that is so, education, training, practise, learning is, in a society in pursuit of fairness, about as important as anything else. And what we must not at any cost forget is that all rational beings are situated. They have bodies that are situated in their environment, and that is what counts. So the critique of the categorical imperative stands, it cannot escape the formulation [IF] all rational beings

are {a} [THEN] we shall want to act according to rule {b}. Nevertheless it gives a an important role to a rather exciting perspective, namely the perspective of situated beings who have trained themselves in some way in looking at a particular challenge, situation or problem from a perspective which *transcends* their own small world. And that is what makes the categorical imperative worth looking at. The exciting thing is that the categorical imperative has its application in the world of design. If the categorical imperative places man in the world then the imperatives of Cradle 2 Cradle design can be seen as categorical: thou shalt not produce waste that is not also food. And there are more. In fact the classic virtues such as politeness, generosity, loyalty, truthfulness and so forth might well all be examples of the categorical imperative that are searching for their proper application within the world of design.

the idea of a community

The idea of a community is surely not one where people agree on the issues they are concerned with; it is rather one where people assemble for discussion *around* the issues that are important to them. Is that assembly around issues not what defines a community? And is ethics not about *the way* issues are approached and resolved within a community or indeed within the individual? A community is not defined by what it believes to be true, but by the way it deals with issues of belief. Is a community not a *good community* when it finds *good ways* to resolve its issues? And is a good community not a quality that requires our full aesthetic sensibility to describe?

and the problem of the future

Ethics is elusive and complicated. We make decisions all the time, often without having to think about them in any great detail. We appear to have practised making decisions to such an extent that we can act with great familiarity in this world. But this does not guarantee the adequacy of our actions. Short-term fixes are often difficult to reconcile with long-term consequences. That is especially true within the built environment. We need to think about what we do by not only considering our immediate situation but we need to take into account our understanding of future situations. It is always easy to criticise aspects of a stable society, and we should certainly keep doing so, at the same time, when societies destabilize, human being all too frequently shows itself from its worst side.

A society geared not only to keeping itself stable but prepared to do that by throwing all sense of justice out of the window and by keeping the powers that be in their seats regardless of whether they deserve to be there or not, is one of the main subterranean destabilizing forces operating on society. That is no paradox; it is a question of simple logic. A society that is seen as unfair cannot be kept stable through reason and the word, it resorts to force, the language that appears to do the job when words have given up, except of course that it doesn't do the job at all. Violence creates a dynamic all of its own which is frequently only brought to a stop by sheer exhaustion. But what has all this to do with planning and design? Everything. Planning or design decisions are (all of them) ethical decisions based on a taste which has been grounded on aesthetic reflection. The question to ask is: how far did that work of reflection go? Has it gone far enough? It is not difficult to ground a decision on a theoretical bedding that appears absurd in its naivety. We appear to have a problem. That problem is not that ethics is complicated or difficult; it is rather that its extraordinary simplicity has eluded us because of the finery of a social metaphysics, making our decisions often simplistic.

using well

For the purposes of daily life all of ethics can be contained by a simple formula. Ethics as I shall understand it reduces all of our actions to a form of use. The definition of the word "use" is, however, broad and entails any relationship between us *as a stand on issues*, our body and the world configured into a dynamic situation. So the full scope of ethics is the question as to whether something or someone is being *used well*, or whether something or someone is being *used badly*. But that is not the end of it. Rather it is just the beginning. How do we judge such things? Do we merely look at consequences? But what is then the role of intentions? How do we make sure that the word *good* is not being put to bad usage by those who pursue evil ends and use the word *good* instrumentally?

To answer these questions we cannot escape taking responsibility for the forging of a simple portable image of what society should mean to us in the form of a clear theory, perhaps based on consensus: an idea against which we can measure every single one of our actions and then decide where we can cut off our logical deliberations with a satisfactory emotive decision, one that *feels right*.

This image is something we shall have to make our own through discourse and personal struggle with its implications; that is how aesthetics and ethics take account of each other. A good image of a world, must not be allowed to get stuck in catechism, it must be kept fresh. All questions are old but answers are always new, because they are forced to take account of the context, the situation in which the question was asked.

ethics: the word [AND] the question

The word *ethics* has a special function; it asks the question: “How should I act [IF] {a}?” where {a} stands for phrases such as {I want to realise a particular atmosphere in my building} or {I want to die a happy man} or {I want to manage my company well} or {I want you to do something for me} or {I want to be seen as a good husband} or {I want to design fast cars} or {I want to design environmentally friendly systems for buildings} or {I want to sleep well at night} or {I want a wonderful boyfriend who will love me forever and ever and make me cups of tea in the morning}.

quality: ethics [AND] aesthetics

In pursuing life, guided by our desires, we realise qualities, which then achieve a certain stability or transform themselves. Ethics engages aesthetics because it concerns itself with achieving *a quality*, a stable one or indeed an ephemeral one, by making means and ends fit each other and their context. As we have seen, the description of the word quality and the descriptions and evaluation of qualities that are desirable or undesirable belong to the discipline of aesthetics.²⁷

The idea of evil might take on an interesting meaning here. Evil could be argued to stand for the pursuit of strategies to achieve {a} that take the

²⁷ There is a fashion to call this act of description of desirable and undesirable qualities meta-ethics but that unnecessarily creates another discipline; and an unnecessary distinction in philosophy where we give in to social pressure regarding the word beauty, which quite a few people like to treat separately to words like goodness and truth. I do not. We could decide to keep the word meta-ethics, however cumbersome, but that would mean that the word aesthetics should become redundant, I think that is unnecessary. Aesthetic is a good word, we should honour it with a well-argued field of study: quality.

world and everything in it as *a collection of objects*. An object as referred to in this context is something that has been determined in its use and reduced to a single use, and made subject to that use. A hammer is an object. A woman does not like being reduced to an object. A slave has been reduced to an object but will have his revenge. To treat something as an object is thus to use it for what it can do but not sufficiently taking into account that not all things in our environment want to suffer such determination. Slaves do not want to be machines, and although women like the idea of being sexy they want to be seen as full, undetermined, undeterminable human beings.

However that cannot be the full story of evil. There is also the enjoyment of evil pursuit. Evil as a narrow strategy is one thing. But evil as the enjoyment of other's pain and misfortune is quite another.

A quality is the relationship between you and that which is purported to possess a quality. As we have seen in the section on aesthetics, to possess a quality means something rather specific. In fact the word *possess* is rather misleading. It does not mean that the quality inheres to the object in any way, i.e. that the quality resides in the object or that it possesses that quality under all imaginable conditions. A quality is something that describes the relationship between you, the person undergoing that quality and the thing to which it is attributed in a situationally determined event. We merely say that the thing possesses the quality because we see ourselves as the measure of things and as such in a curious way neutral as we can safely assume that a quality is somehow transferable to another person who will also find that quality. We have found this to be true in enough cases to make assumptions on the basis of that expectation.

The character of the world, as we find access to it, is morphological. That means little more than that things have form. Or at least it is the form of things, their morphology that we have access to by studying the way that form behaves. Whether that form is the product of matter or energy, or whether the two are aspects of each other is for us less relevant than the fact that bumping your head against a doorpost hurts.

when $N + 1$ morphologies meet in behaviour...

Oxygen and hydrogen have the quality of being able to combine to make water. No other elements share that quality. The quality does not belong to oxygen, and it does not belong to hydrogen it belongs to them in

relation to each other in this universe. When they make water, there is quite a bit of the universe that is potentially affected by that water. When two morphologies meet and respond to each other in behaviour, that meeting has *a quality*. That quality only comes out in meeting something else. The morphology of water and the morphology and perceptive capacity of skin within the context of our spatiotemporal and thermodynamic situation, means that water *feels wet*. The wetness of water is only possible if we have skin to feel wetness, so to say that water *is wet*, is merely to see our skin as the measure of things that the water responds to when meeting. So that we say that water is wet, marble is cool and smooth and wood has a range of tactile and thermodynamic qualities.

A simple investigation shows us that we merely talk like that for the sake of convenience. Because we are all members of the same species, we find it possible to talk usefully about those relationships, they appear quite stable, so we perhaps come to believe that qualities inhere in a thing, but that is not quite right. The morphology of materials participate in the physics and chemistry of this world and they behave with regard to us in a certain way that we find interesting and useful in whatever way, but it would be wrong to say that the quality is in the thing, as the quality is too much a product of thing-in-relation-to-me. So we can say that a quality does not pertain to the thing, it pertains to the meeting of the thing with us, our bodily apparatus. It is the product of a tectonics of behaviour. A quality as experienced by us is *necessarily* relative to the body. A quality relates the user to the used, or indeed the observer to the observed, the person touching to the thing touched, the person smelling to the thing smelt. The measure of objectivity that can be safely attributed to a quality is relatively small. No doubt a smelly thing gives off molecules, and those can be safely objectified, but the apparatus for smelling and giving that smell a certain significance to our lives, is wholly ours. So a quality is the way the object and the undergoing subject relate through the act and the possibility of, say, smelling. We may all smell the same thing and attach the same significance to that smell, but we cannot be wholly sure of this, ever. We can merely attempt an approach through discourse, we can talk about the smell and share experiences and agree that what we both smell is either pleasant or not so pleasant.

qualities socialise

A quality is always relative because it constitutes a relation. The relation the word quality stands for bears significance to the person keen to

explore his possibilities within his environment. Because the body, in exploring its possibilities and making claims on the environment, constantly invading the environment around it, changing that environment, a body cannot help but affect other bodies. This is what we might call the socialisation of the body in its environment. The body's use of the environment socialises that body, makes it take account of other bodies for whatever reason, whether it is to avoid, appease or aggress. A quality is then the product of a socialisation of the body. It is produced by the body moving in an environment and thereby inevitably making use of other bodies. This socialised state put the judgment of a quality into a special light. A spider has to judge the vibrating of her web, and we have to judge the slope, smoothness and solidity of the ground as we walk but also the intentions of a mother-in-law when they declare an impending visit. A quality is a determination of the use / make of it, or indeed the use that is being made of me.

That determination is in fact an act of measurement. Quality is the product of the exploration of my possibilities when measured against a standard, a precedent or a wish. Because my fellow human beings and indeed all other forms of life, not to mention all chemicals capable of acting upon me, are similarly engaged with the establishment of qualities, the search for and the judgment of qualities socialises us. Now chemicals do not socialise themselves of course except in such a way as to elicit a response from us so that we make sure that, for example, cyanide is kept secure and hermetically sealed off, while water is allowed to run freely almost everywhere except through the roofs of our houses, while air is welcome everywhere. Chemicals are socialised by us.

In this way we take account of each other through discourse about those qualities. Discourse does not only consist of talking about qualities and how to achieve or avoid them, but can include gesturing, posturing, writing novels and philosophical treatises, making drawings, expressing one's feelings and whatever else somehow helps to represent information about qualities.

desire as an evolutionary mechanism

We can elaborate on this socialised state and seek out its mechanism. René Girard, for instance, argues that we have evolved an evolutionary trick whereby we apparently find it efficient to desire things that other people desire. That is crucially different to simply desiring a thing for its

own sake or for its use value. Instead of having to go through the process of having to make up our own mind on all sorts of issues regarding things in our environment, it helps to observe the behaviour of other people, like mum and dad, or friends and such. If they are looking for truffles, it may well be rewarding to start looking for truffles ourselves. If *you* are all excited about having found one, *I* might well focus my attention on that very truffle you seem to be so ecstatic about even though a truffle certainly does not look very interesting on first sight.

Other people's experience of quality carries authority: if you behave like that, then perhaps I should too. It may be useful to me. Mind you, even though it might be efficient to desire what other people desire, it also gets us into trouble. The advantage of it is that we can be onto a good thing very quickly, before we even fully understand the significance of the thing we desire, before we have had a chance to explore its qualities in relation to us. The disadvantage is twofold. It means that we do not always fully investigate our desires and the justification for them before we invest the necessary effort to get what we think we desire and secondly, it quickly gets us into a dangerous spiral of rivalry, jealousy and blame as the thing itself and its use value are no longer the issue. Instead these things become embroiled in a wider social dynamic of uses, where the use value of the thing has to compete with the use value of being one up on one's rival, or is used to confirm social status, or is used in a negotiation for something else. So you can see that use and desire socialise us because we are all bodies interfering with other bodies that make up our environment. Everything we use and everything we desire brings us in relation to others. For someone *I* respect as to their taste or experience to desire something means that it is probably a good idea for me to desire it. You never know. To have what is desirable affirms my position and makes me an object of attention. Desire, quality and use socialise us as animals participating in a living world in which qualities help us to exploit and fulfil our potential.

Just, justify, justice

Because of the nature of our socialisation, the pursuit of every desire and the realisation of every quality, whatever the nature of its possession, become involved in the problem of justice and justification. We do not, or at least should never have to justify our existence, but we do have to justify every activity that follows from our wish to maintain that existence and explore its potential. That is how we give our existence significance. So you can see that ethics as the discipline that asks itself, "How should I act

[IF] {a}?" as well as aesthetics, which asks "What qualities are desirable [OR] undesirable?" belong to the very foundation of our existence as the prime means of giving that existence meaning.

morality [AND] morals

If ethics asks the question "How should I act [IF] {a}?" morality can be seen as the particular game of ethics played by a particular society. A morality is a set of ethical habits, a *culture of practice* if you like. A morality is a kind of labyrinthine game of monopoly, a game you have to be familiar with if you want to function well within a society. You can stay outside of the game of course, but that also precludes you from its privileges, not least of which is company and its pleasures. Similarly you can get lost within the game and that means you are at the mercy of those who know the system well and play it confidently. You can also learn to play the system and become familiar with it and find your way about in it.

It always pays to keep a certain distance from a society's morality; otherwise you might forget that it is merely a way people have found to live together. It contains no truth as such; it is just a way *that appears to work well*. The word *ethos* actually helps us here, because it originally just meant custom and habit, a way of doing things. A society's morality is not by definition the only possible morality, nor is its precepts necessarily better precepts than those belonging to another morality. But they nevertheless have a considerable and justified authority, they are the customs and habits that have slowly been put into place and have created a constellation of issues around which people assembled and discuss the stand to be taken. Most moralities have the advantage of having been well-practised at least. Members of a society need not all share the same stand. Far from it, but they have developed ways of dealing with differences. That way is what constitutes a morality, a community: a way of dealing with differences. By assembling around the issues that matter to them and finding ways of dealing with their varying opinions man has learnt to live together and that living together has to be constantly practiced and reaffirmed.

Calling into question a society's morality can be healthy. No system of morality is able to withstand persistent large-scale abuse and subversive use and no system of morality has not in itself rules that lead to absurd behaviour; the unjustness that results from both needs to be addressed. At the same time destroying a society's morality is an act of destruction that

has apocalyptic dimensions. That has been shown time and again during the period of colonisation in which the European nations headed by the four or five biggest have destroyed untold cultures, driven them to drink, complete disorientation, or worse.

An attractive theory is that no society can or should see itself as superior to others. If within a particular situation or environment one society functions better than another it will no doubt beget imitators, but their ways need no evangelisation, need not be forced upon others. In this way the American, English, German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese as well as the Dutch, the Danish, the Swedish and you name it, have blood on their hands and exhibit an extraordinary arrogance in their moral history. They mistook their comfortable ways and their mirror image of themselves, so well posed, as well as their ill understood technological superiority for some sort of *real* superiority and forced themselves and their ways on others. Shit happens. We need to move on, but not without looking history into the eyes. Within the model of evolution this is just evolution doing its thing: self-aggrandisement works; it is, within that narrow band of evolutionary success that is defined by domination, a very successful trick. People do get impressed. Machismo, arrogance and depreciation work if you want domination but it does not work to create a stable and just society. For that we have to overcome some of our earlier hard won evolutionary tricks, like those supported by the machismo and self flattery that inform the wish for empire.

Nietzsche would, I believe, call the wish to empire a slave's version of the will to power. Mind you, empire creates wonderful monuments. That is indubitable. Enjoy them, but don't be fooled by them. Wonderfulness is also possible in a just society.

instrumental [AND] compound ethics

All ethics is instrumental. It asks an instrumentally strategic or tactical question: "How should I act [IF] {a}?" The interesting thing is that some actions are involved in ethics on a relatively simple basis. The question: "How should I act [IF] {I want to design fast cars}?" is a question that requires a vague sense of relative speed and a more specific and sophisticated technological know-how. We have to know what slow means as well as fast relative to some current standard or precedent or indeed wish, and we have to know what makes a fast car go fast. That last requires a lot of knowledge about qualities and the instrumental ethics of realising

them. An ethical question like that is relatively unambiguous. It is also blissfully unaware of wider concerns. Nevertheless the question “how do I build a fast car?” is an ethical concern. If we do not allow such instrumental questions into the realm of ethics we quickly arrive at the absurd. Instead of trying to see such questions as qualitatively different, we should see them as simpler. The simpler the question the simpler the ethics involved: In the above example it is exclusively about devising strategies to achieve relatively straightforward qualities, without too much concern for the wider implications of such a question. The ethics involved readily objectifies the ingredients of a fast car. It does not take into account the socialisation that such a question engenders. In a world where the speed of cars is not seen as problematic, or indeed the car is seen as a good thing, few problems arise and cars quickly become faster and faster. The realisation of those qualities defines *their good* in this case.

But we also know that the world was never that simple. Right from the start things were more complicated. People who asked the question how to design fast cars had to either take on and confront a much bigger question or pretend very hard that the bigger question did not exist for them.

In order to transcend the level of simple instrumental ethics we have to allow the questions that begin to whisper in your ear as soon as you ask a simple instrumental question: How should I act [IF] {I want to design fast cars} [AND] {I want few accidents?} or even more complicated: “How should I act [IF] {I want to design fast cars} [AND] {I want few accidents} [AND] {I want the environment to carry less of a burden?}” The challenge swells with every condition added to the first. The design task starts engaging so many fields of study that no single person can be expected to carry the full answer to these challenges in their relationship to each other, so that, use not only socialises but design becomes increasingly socialised, it becomes a socialised affair to make our world. We need to talk.

That is where ethics becomes interesting, when design moves from being simply instrumental to being complicatedly instrumental. Compound ethics is where we coordinate all our “How shall I act [IF] {a}?” questions into compounds of that initially misleadingly simple question. In fact, how shall I act [IF] {a} questions are never simple. Their simplicity is a function of our abbreviated way of speaking, an issue I shall come back to in a short while. So we have an interesting situation. The question, “How do I build a good building?” becomes infected with all the concerns that have something to

say about goodness within our culture. And it is the duty of our culture to see itself within the context of ever wider concerns, *global concerns*. A *good* building would have to be all sorts of things to all sorts of people without compromising on anything. That is pretty radical! The question: *How do I build a good building*, would involve considerations as to the way it works for:

- its occupants and inhabitants, the people using the building from day to day
- the people living or walking or otherwise moving around in its vicinity, that is the people who use the building as the furniture of the city
- visitors, who use the building as a place to meet others and as a set of coordinates for their day
- its owners who use it as an investment, to make an income, or indeed as inhabitants
- the architect and engineers and all those involved in the design and the building of it, who use it to build a reputation and so to secure a future as well as a place in society
- the maintenance crews and the cleaners (often a special kind of occupant) who use it to make an income
- any other living creature (we don't want legionella, bathroom fungus, or rats, but we do perhaps want guinea pigs, dogs, cats and plants) who use it as shelter
- society as a whole or subsets of that society who may use it in any way it can, for example for purposes of representation, branding, you name it
- our concepts of nature, architecture, the city, culture, justice, the good etc, who use the building to measure themselves by
- the building itself who uses all the above by proxy to further its own existence

intentions [AND] consequences

From the list above we quickly realise that the relationship between intentions and consequences becomes interesting to say the least. How can we possibly satisfy everyone? We can't. We shall have to decide on values (economics) priorities (politics) and justice (norms). We all have our desires, our wishes, and our intentions. We all learn to develop those desires and intentions. Different occupants have different uses for the building; the architect and the developer have different uses for the

building to the occupants. Before giving the issue up to economics, politics and legislation, however we should give design a chance, even though it has to operate within a culture where values, priorities and a sense of justice determine the climate of practice.

The question then becomes how our experience of uses, relate to the consequences of our actions in the attempt to realise our intentions and desires. The question “How should I act [IF] {a}?” posed in the light of that complication has a number of interesting avenues to explore. We could explore the intention pushing an action and its relationship to the consequences of that act. Any action surely has, as its main target, the intended effect, but every action exceeds that intention by the accidents and contingencies that an action entails or helps bring about. No doubt all of our actions have some form of collateral effect, unintended effect that can nevertheless be put to use in some way. My intention might be to impress my girlfriend by dancing enthusiastically with her, but I may step on her toes too often and spoil things. So we might explore that relationship using questions like: “Why am I doing this?” and “What have I done?” How did the situation I am in now follow from the action I undertook earlier? Did I misread the situation? Did I have too little experience with regard to the action I undertook? Did I perform adequately? Were there unforeseen circumstances?

There is also the problem of conflicting intentions. What do the intentions of the architect and developer matter to any of the other users of the building listed above? Surely they matter very little. The occupants have their own concerns. But that can be qualified. After all intentions matter in so far as they have to be somehow harmonised in a project. An architect designs what is wanted, or what he thinks is wanted, or what he believes should be wanted. A developer develops that which he believes will be of value. Things have value, as far as he is concerned, if they are wanted by those who constitute his target group. Society may have different ideas on this subject. Clients want what conforms to their wishes or which surpasses their expectations in a happy way. When any of the users feel they have been misled, when they were promised something which hasn’t been delivered or when people feel that the intentions of the architect and developer were forced upon them against their will, intentions matter as a force to react against. The architect’s client, whether the client is the direct client (the developer) or the indirect client (any of the other users), naturally hopes that the architect’s vision (that is, his assessment of the consequences of his intentions), measures up to the consequences of his

actions and those of his building team; that the drawings, specifications and pretty pictures correspond adequately to the finished product and the hopes of the client.

You can see that this is an issue for the idea of justice. A carefully planned intended intervention within the environment by one party thereby interfering in the lives of other parties engages the idea of justice to an extent that an accident cannot, and that an unintended effect should not.

use of critique

The measuring of intentions against consequences has another function, a more basic one. The measurement of intentions against consequences gives the critic, for instance, the ability to measure the architect's intentions against his achievements. This gives us all the potential to improve. That should be the function of criticism. At the same time, there are many subversive uses of criticism: careerism, rivalry, nepotism and self-aggrandisement being just a few of them. And, like architecture, criticism is frequently lacking in quality. That is a shame. On the other hand criticism, like architecture, is not easy. Each building, like each human being, possesses a unique configuration of qualitative potential. To elicit this from a study of the building requires the critic to display considerable skill in undergoing the building by putting that experience into compelling words. Criticism should help all users, whether they are architects who need to practise and learn how to design, or other users who need to learn how to use well. The other users, after all, have a different concern than that of the architect: they need to learn to live and cope with the product as it is, or consider changes to their own behaviour or to the behaviour of the building. That takes time and experience, especially when the building is in some ways innovative. Innovative buildings need to be practised. Innovations need to be practised by designers and builders and the products need to be practised by the users. The relationship between intention and consequence is interesting therefore for those who want to learn and those who want to evaluate and practise. The exclusive attention to consequences plays just as important a role, but is very different.

consequences [NOT] intentions?

When one focuses exclusively on consequences one can still learn something. One does however learn something different to what one learns when focussing on both intentions and consequences; the available approaches to a situation are both narrowed from one perspective and

extended infinitely in another. They are narrowed in that the consideration of intentions falls away and becomes irrelevant. Far from this having a limiting effect it frees interpretation up completely, frighteningly even, and allows it to surf all sorts of possibilities, creating any number of autonomous works of art from one object. This may need some explanation even though the argument for writing this has already been given in relation to other similar ideas in the previous essays.

things and their style of being

It is frequently thought that a work of art *is* the object. But this is, quite simply, a mistaken view. That is only how we speak about works of art: “Look at that work of art over there!” or “That is not a work of art...” But this way of speaking is, like all ways of speaking, a form of abstraction whereby we make language fit the world we perceive and conceive. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson call it a metaphorical way of speaking and I would concur with them although I would like to go a step further by calling it a form of abstraction, although the actual product is, most certainly, metaphor. An object comes into presence to us as something that has been made into a thing by us. We isolate it from its context, its environment by gradually learning its style of being towards us. We understand the thing as a thing that behaves relative to us: its behaviour in terms of its colour, shape, the way it feels when touched, the way it bounces or shatters when falling on a hard floor etc. We compare its behaviour with things in our experience answering to a similar style of behaviour with regard to its parts or its whole in a different environment or situation. So a thing is only a thing in relation to us. Just as it is mistaken to identify the *I* with the body it inhabits instead of seeing it as a carefully constructed and more or less coordinated assembly of attitudes regarding the relationship of the body to parts of itself and its environment, a work of taste as it were, made up of beliefs bolstered by experience and servicing technical know-how, so a work of art is a continually constructing and coordinating dynamic set of relationships between the object and the person undergoing that object. The work of art is a dynamic set of relationships better encompassed by the idea of an event or situation. In this way, when I look at a work of art, it is a special kind of reflection of the *I* as it stands embedded in its background selected by the frame of the mirror and the direction of the gaze. This means that a work of art is only ever as good as a person’s capacity to receive it as such. Even though something interesting happens when a work of art is made subject to magic charge when it is beefed up by reputation and consecration. I would

challenge anyone to deny me this point but let us accept it for now, without such a challenge. We can share ideas about the object we are calling a work of art and encourage others to accept the object as a work of art. A work of art brings something we have identified within the environment out of that environment as an object and into a partially predetermined relationship with me, the person undergoing it as a work of art. This process is identical to the process whereby I bring a utensil, appliance or indeed another human being into a specific use relationship to me when I see or experience them in my vicinity. I do not use a human being well if I use him or her as a utensil. Nor do I use a work of art well if I use it as a kitchen knife in anything but a metaphorical sense. Nevertheless, all these things are *objectified*, that is made into abstractions with a name so as to help predetermine their relationship to me and prepare expectations and select possible uses. Each time we have a different work of art in front of us, because we each of us undergoes it in our own private way. This we can communicate to each other only in the most inadequate ways, although Proust is better than most. In this way the people we carry about with us in our hearts are also each of them different. The Jane I have in my head and the Jane you have in your head are very different people made up of our separate experiences, our own understanding and imagination, inhabiting the same third person singular when we come across the body we recognise as Jane in the street. In the same way a work of art and even a kitchen knife is both personal and to some extent capable of being shared.

back to the consequences of things

Now we can get back to the argument. To focus exclusively on the consequences of an event or action means that one accepts a situation as given, which, as such, invites one to make something of it (a work of art for instance). I see something in front of me, which I gather into being *a thing* and I start work on it. I can do a nice quick piece of work on it by dismissing it, or I can work long and arduously without effect by failing to make something of it despite all the effort I put into it, or I can listen to others and accept what they make of it as that what I shall take it for (even though I have not thereby made that story my own as yet) or I can head out by myself and make something of it on my own steam. There are many more possibilities and usually a work of art as it is made by a person taking a stand on the object in front of him (yes a work of art is the stand taken on the object) is a rather eclectic affair.

Only through practise is it made into something *resembling* a whole in my mind. This making of a work of art, or the making of a utensil, or the making of a friend or an enemy is, for obvious reasons, an important aspect of ethics as self-technology, and becomes manifest in the appreciation of anything objectified in our environment, including aspects of ourselves.

It is now clear, I hope, that in the appreciation of a work of art, the consideration of intentions and the consideration of consequences create at least two autonomous works of art, unless they are subsequently made to take account of each other in discourse in which case there is at least a third. To appreciate art from the point of view of the intended effect gives us a foothold in an otherwise bewildering void of possible directions.

At the same time one must not fool oneself, that one has got hold of something decisive. The approach of art through intentions is, in itself, not a *better* or *worse* way of approaching art than one which focuses exclusively on consequences. The aesthetics of intentionality has the disadvantage of encouraging a mythology of the artist to develop, which leads to insincerity in much the same way as a mythology of experience does when departing from consequences. What can be said is that the exclusive focus on consequences, frees interpretation completely. Art becomes what the person undergoing it can make of it. This produces as much bad art as all the mediocre art produced by artists. But what constitutes bad art? Bad art is that which does not reward the undergoing of it. Now whose problem is that?

Exactly. Quality is relative. It has to take account of so many variable factors. This does not mean that relativism means that *anything goes*. The anything goes approach is uninteresting as it leads to madness and entropy which is as near to nothing as we will ever get. No, quality being relative does not mean that we have to start deceiving ourselves that we can do without hierarchies, structures and priorities or values in order to judge. On the contrary, we have to learn to see how the one is affected by the other and how the one is, more often than not, an aspect of the other, i.e. comes into being in relation to the other. It means that we can see time as an aspect of space, (after all what would time be without space?) we can see a body as an aspect of the environment, our *I* as an aspect of the relationship between the two. It means moreover, like Albert Einstein's theory of relativity, that the coordinates which constitute a thing's being as something in relation to other things, like a work of art in relation to us,

are variable with respect to each other. These coordinates are given by factors which in turn depend on each other for their being and which vary in their stability. A short summary of the possible factors classified according to their stability might help here.

A judgment of quality is at its most elementary level determined by factors which are relatively stable: the constitution and construction of our bodies, our biochemistry; the body's hardwired responses to the environment and its own processes, its sense of the neutral, of "nothingness" and the deviation from this neutrality into states of pleasure and or pain, pleasantness and/or unpleasantness, joy and sorrow, hate and love, jealousy, spite and malice over altruism, kindness and love etc.

Then there is the constitution and construction of our environment, its physics and chemistry, its patterned and to some extent predictable behaviour, its spectrum of responses towards us and our interpretation of them; the character of humanity as an evolved species having to cope with itself and its environment at its scale of existence. The responses themselves are what we are capable of and stable but their object is not always the same. As such there are the less stable factors such as our culture as it has evolved an aesthetics of attractive and unattractive, good and bad, a morality, a culture of power and authority as well as a set of languages from the expression of bodily feeling to highly abstracted formulas and conventions to analyse, speculate and compare.

There are our responses to the new, developments in technologies sudden crises. And then there are the increasingly unstable factors, such as our own personal experience of life, our intellectual and bodily athleticism, and lastly there are the extremely unstable factors such as the situation we find ourselves in, the mood we enter or impose, our wilful reactions to badly understood situations etc. All of these are interrelated, creating an infinite series of possible combinations loosely classified into patterns of possibility. As such interpretation, when concentrating on what is given, i.e. on consequences, is completely free in principle. At the same time it becomes uninteresting if it does not make music when making all or any set of these factors take account of each other. When interpretation does not make these relationships speak, but babbles on, spinning off into mere madness, it cannot maintain our attention. To become interesting interpretation needs to show structure and sophistication, it needs to tie things up, surprise us in unfolding the world to us, and give something to think about that might help us towards completing our *theoria*. As Alain Badiou rightly

said, thinking is always about the new. Interpretation gives us the new and art can give us the new.

But beware. We are not all at the same stage of our development. Everyone needs their chance at development, everyone needs to learn to undergo and practise their undergoing. What is new for me might well be old hat to you. New does not necessarily have to refer to a collective newness. The compass Albert Einstein was shown by his dad and which, because of the shock it gave him, launched him towards the limits of science, was itself an ancient Chinese discovery.

What is true for interpretation is also true for its mirror image, design. Art that bores is boring art in so far that the person undergoing the art is boring, unable to find something interesting in the art in front of him or simply not prepared to look. At the same time it is eminently possible that the artist felt it not worth his while to invest his critical capacity in his art. Or perhaps he did not invest enough in building and practising that critical capacity. Or perhaps he is not very good at finding ideas. Whatever the case, art and interpretation meet and when both meet at the height of what they are capable of, real magic happens. It is possible to make boring art interesting through interpretation and it is possible to make great art boring through bad interpretation.

Some art requires just too much investment to make the return worthwhile and some interpretation is just nonsense. Music happens when they strike a chord.

To sum up, we can broadly name two things that complicate matters in ethics.

The fact that instrumental ethics quickly broadens to become a compound instrumental ethics, taking in a wider set of concerns, determining itself through the coordination of relative factors when performing its instrumental and strategic thinking.

The fact that intentions and consequences are related through autonomy, they do not necessarily show a clean fit and need not take account of each other. Intentions may be naïve and as a result consequences may be unforeseen. Everyone has their own intentions and copes with consequences in their own way. An artist has intentions with regard to his art. An art-lover has intentions with regard to the undergoing of art. They

can take account of each other, but do not have to: madness and ennui threaten everywhere.

There is a third factor that helps to make things difficult.

life [AND] action//plier = to fold//complication = to fold up [AND] explication = to fold out

Ethics is the study action from Gk. *ethike philosophia* "moral philosophy," fem. of *ethikos* which means arising from habit and *ethos* which means "custom" or habit. The word also traces to *Ta Ethika*, title of Aristotle's work. *Ethic* "a person's moral principles," *ethas*, accustomed, customary, usual, *ethikos* arising from habit. Ethics arises from habit! Habit is habitation: in Dutch we have the words *wonen en gewoonte*.

While we may be busy deciding how it is useful to talk about the world and while we are busy forming a clear picture of what we want in life, we are already acting and trying to cope with the world as we find it. Our desire to act will not wait. Our wondering about how to talk usefully about the world and about what to desire are in fact ongoing activities in themselves! On top of that the three do not appear to have a necessary relationship. As discussed in the section on logic and the question of philosophy, any idea about the world, can lead to any desire which can lead to any action. In set theory, which is a branch of mathematics which is rather useful to describe and clarify such relationships, we can say that the three sets have no necessary correspondence. The need to act is incessant, it will not wait long. Not only are we constantly in action with regard to at least a number of our bodily functions, but our conscious actions are incompletely and often inconsistently based on clearly formulated ideas about what we are doing and why we are doing it. This is a function of the non correspondence thesis I just mentioned.

Having said all that, something happens while we act: we acquire ways to take account of what we think about the world and what we desire. We learn, through experience, that there are good ways of getting something done and less good ways; that there are good things to desire and that some desires turn out to be a waste of time and some are downright poisonous, but it is difficult to know all this beforehand, partly because parents, teachers and friends are not always trustworthy sources of knowledge and partly because people are themselves mistrustful and

stubborn and sometimes malicious. All this is an aspect of evolution, more particularly of the Baldwin effect and memetics.

At the same time it is quite possible that even misguided and untenable theories about the world can lead to effective action. Their usefulness need go no further than their confirmation in experience in whatever way. As Hume and the associationists had already pointed out, seeing an accidental or coeval effect happening in quick succession, the idea that there should be some relationship is quickly made. Magic and religion are more than likely to have started out on their weird and wonderful history with very practical if rather quick interpretations of the surroundings. Chinese Feng Shui has become a bit of a curiosity as it stands but its basic practical ideas are rather sensible and obvious; the same can be said for the ancient practice of reading livers before deciding on the place for a new settlement: A healthy liver from a sheep or cow from the locality clearly indicates a healthy environment. But knowledge is a useful commodity that is easily misused; it has great economic and political potential. Some cunning spark who quietly sets himself up as a priest, pretending to exclusive knowledge about these and other things can become very powerful indeed. However, that merely shows us that the technique has started leading a life of its own in society, it has become part of religious knowledge or magic and allows an exclusive group of people to wield power. It does not as yet say that the way they wield that power is *necessarily bad*. It is a question of use and subversive use, misuse and abuse. He may have misused his knowledge, but others chose to invest him with authority. He cannot do that. He can only be persuasive. It is quite possible to have genuinely good priests, who truly believe that their practices and theatre productions are for the good of their flock's souls. And the strangest thing of all is that this is not at all unreasonable. After all, why are there so many people who want and need religious activity? It is a wonderful world. It is not God who works in mysterious ways, man is quite capable of doing that without his aid. At the same time it is quite possible that they are all telling the truth. The problem is that I cannot rely on that, as I do not have access to their experience.

Ethics is about pursuing *a good use* and trying to avoid abuse. Unfortunately the way of doing this is not given in the relationship between what you believe and how you act.

We are in a flux of development, always learning and exploring possibilities, nothing stops us doing things that, with hindsight might appear absurd and

false ideas quite often go completely unnoticed as long as they *work*, or as long as there aren't any ideas that work *better*. This makes ethics difficult. We cannot force our three main concerns: how to talk usefully about the world, how to desire well and how to act in the light of that and other desires, into a neat sequential clarity. They braid and they fray, become part of impossibly complex rhizome-like networks of directionless connections and relations. If and when we have the luxury to withdraw and think about things, or even better, sleep things over for a night, then our three concerns fall into something like a sensible sequence, but every new experience might throw the whole enterprise into confusion and has the potential to affect any part of our treasure of experience and dearly held theories in the ricochet of reflexive movements.

Our engagement with the world is rhizomatic. All we can achieve is *a climate* in which action, thought, desire and judgment become usefully related through feelings, conjectures, suspicions and assumptions while our three concerns try to adjust and take a stand with regard to the weather of any situation.

Any account of ethics needs to take that braided simultaneity, and mad messiness very seriously indeed. To negate this complexity by substituting it for a simpler, narrowly conceived logical system, merely leads to a worse kind of madness: the madness of the absurd and the complementary cruelty that this engenders. Allowing ourselves to be intimidated by this messiness leads to inaction, passivity, the sense of being a victim, the relinquishing of responsibility and ultimately a living death.

Complexity can be dealt with by acknowledging that

ethical knowledge is personal and partially communicable

personal knowledge is fed, maintained and sharpened through social intercourse and discourse.

We think about things and act upon our beliefs, they are ours, but we learn from others and our interaction with the environment. By taking account of *the other* we shape our *selves* and do this on the basis of interpretations and experience. *The other* is the person, thing or situation we experience and interpret: he or it is to some extent our creation as a mirror for our face. Luckily most decisions aren't that urgent, most of our actions, except

for a few extreme ones, allow rehearsal, practise and time out for thought and reflection.

So now we have a third complicating factor. Desires are rarely singular so that our ethics is rarely simply instrumental; desires form additive networks requiring a compound ethics to deal with them. On top of that actions are rarely clear with regard to intention and consequence. A third complicating factor is that everything happens simultaneously, messily, so that it is extremely hard to sort out the cause and learn from it. There is a fourth.

causal web

As we mentioned briefly action is subject to strategies and tactics and is determined by intentions and consequences. Intentions are no more than expectations or hopes of consequences. This means that ethics is the story about what you can do with a knowledge of cause and effect to bring about qualities you desire. But the way we talk about cause and effect has everything to do with experience and very little with the world out there. We describe causality from our narrow perspective, we talk of it in terms of active ingredients and expected transformations. But what actually happens is far too complex to make sense of. After all everything works upon everything else. And when one thing shifts within the structure, the ripples effect events in space-time all the way through.

The knowledge that our actions appear to have a partially predictable effect is useful to us. The problem is that no single effect has a single cause; every effect is the product of a causal web, an immensurate rhizome of causal chains, ripples and rings in a situation where specific conditions obtain. Causality is not a very good word to describe what happens when something happens. We may say something like: "He hit me and now I feel pain" and feel justified in thinking that the hitting is *the cause* of the pain. But we quickly realize, and Aristotle among the first, that this is an abbreviated and abstracted way of speaking, ignoring almost everything that takes place and that has to be in place in order for the hitting and the feeling to become possible and related. Even when putting it like this we have said nothing about the metaphorical nature and social value of the words involved, words like he, me and I, of which we now know how strange they are, or indeed the word feeling and pain. Nor have we stood still at the unspoken history that led to the event. I feel sorry for judges and juries whose job is to unravel all this when considering their verdict

and the appropriate response in a court case. At the same time it has been made easier and more fallible by the conventions and game-rules such processes are guided by. But to get back to our point, it is certainly not necessary to deny that *I* have the faculty of feeling pain. How much pain *I* feel is dependent on all sorts of factors including my sensitivity. So *his* hitting *me* is only a small part of the whole network of factors that needs to be in place for *him* to hit me. My capacity and sensitivity to hitting is just as important. But because most of us have that capacity for pain and because our thresholds to pain are similar, we can take quite a lot for granted. However, the context of the sentence and its intonation can affect the meaning. Why am I telling someone about him hitting me? I could be trying to get attention from someone, I may have been saying this while an actor in a play, or while laughingly imitating some wimp I am being cruel to. This changes the meaning of the accusation and therefore the ethical considerations appropriate to the case.

To sum up, when we assign a specific cause to an effect such as in the sentence above, we are talking in telegraph style about things that are in every case far more complicated and far more sensitive to their situation than the sentence written down might suggest. Nevertheless those abbreviations, those metaphorical abstractions in the form of telegraphic predicates are useful. Imagine the extraordinarily cumbersome sentences we would have to use if every time we have to explain what really happened on every scale of observation. One small event would itself furnish enough material to fill an infinitely large library. Abbreviation is the activity of creating a portrayal of an event upon which an order, a hierarchy centring that which is felt to be important and banning to the periphery that, which, for whatever important reason, is felt to be unimportant.

But, however useful such a way of speaking about events might be, there is a price to be paid. It is not just the price of simplification and generalisation as hinted at in the example of the court-case, whereby we measure situations and actions against pre-established norms and values, or moulds of judgment, so as to be able to make punishment possible and at the same time as fair as possible. We also, and this is more serious, hypostatize them. There is nothing very exciting about that word; it simply means that we start believing what we say. We take our words as if they are real and not metaphorical abstractions fitting what we conceive to be the real world through the fact that these ways of talking appear to work. We take our words as if the description is not just a metaphorical

abstraction of what is accessible to us from reality, but we mistake the description for reality itself. This gives us the feeling that we are talking of the world as if it were an objective way of speaking. It is this problem that makes Gertrude Stein's famous phrase *a rose is a rose is a rose*, so resonant. The hypostatizing realist will take this sentence perhaps as a declaration of common sense, and a boring one at that: "of course a rose is a rose. That sentence is informationless, a neat one on one tautology." However, those who realise that words are not what they refer to, but abstractions of relationships between the object and the people talking about it will see in it a universe of complexity.

Realism, the position that our way of speaking fits the world out there exactly, ultimately makes the world more complicated, even though it would at first appear to make the world simpler. It certainly makes the first step simpler. Words would be taken to refer to real things, in their completeness. But if we start believing that the world we describe through language is anything but an approximation we soon get into real logical difficulties. When we start believing in our own metaphors and our own division of the continuous landscape of meaning unconditionally the world becomes too simple, too black and white and leads us quickly to absurd behaviour, especially at the contested borders of each word-thing. Because we talk about it in such an abbreviated way we also try to abbreviate our reasoning with regard to any action, so things quickly become misleadingly simple, horribly simple, and often, cruelly simple.

understanding understanding

This cruelty is often seen in people who have just one single story for another person or group of people. The story itself is simple, but its simplicity is false, or rather true on the basis of force: the force that sees things as simple when in fact they are not, it is what distinguishes the virtue of simplicity from the vice of the simplistic. We force the story to be simple either with subversive intentions or from genuine ignorance. "*He hit me*" means as much as to say, he did something to me intentionally which is not worthy of me and I want to tell you this for some reason. All the cumbersome baggage of the situation has been conveniently discarded. The world is reduced to a simple "*he hit me*", setting the stage for the next event: an expression of sympathy, a plan for revenge, whatever. The social physics of the event is never neutral. In my talking to you I am further complicating that physics. In our conversation an attitude is sought from

you to help me find an adequate response within the comfortable familiarity of our experience in these things.

If we leave it at a simple story our view of the world is reduced to a simple story and so I can apply simple symmetries in its ethics: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth or indeed of the sort: he is bad, therefore I am quite within my rights to humiliate and hurt him. This is a prevalent morality.

If, on the other hand we take our time to discuss all the issues involved, if we satisfy our causal curiosity to the full we become embroiled in a complex network of relativating factors, ending perhaps with Blaise Pascal's often quoted *tous comprendre c'est tous pardonner*.

What does understanding mean? Understanding surely means that we have unravelled the causal web: that we have properly mapped all the factors and conditions that need to be in place for something to happen. Where metaphysics is the discipline mapping the conditions that need to be in place for something to be the case and helping us talk usefully about the world we live in, ethics at its metaphysical feeding ground would have to gain a full understanding of the causal web of relations, knowing what needs to be the case for something to happen. Only on the basis of that knowledge would it be able to help aesthetics achieve what it has learnt to wish for in those self-same feeding grounds of metaphysics.

veracity, sincerity, honesty

All this is very nice, but in fact we are severely limited in what we can see of the causal web. We can only see *the tectonics of behaviour that is accessible to us*. With physics that is more than enough. But when we deal with humanity it becomes a little more problematic. We can see *that* a person has become hurt after being hit by another at the same time we can only imagine, if we have experience of such things how bad it is. We can similarly only *imagine* the reason for one person hitting another. After all people can lie and do. Our support for one or the other has to be a question of trust or loyalty. Loyalty is a problem all of its own. But if all we have to go on is trust then the issue becomes complicated by the question of sincerity. This makes things doubly complicated, because not only is hitting *wrong* but so is lying, and things become even more complicated, because doubting someone is also thought of as dubious and even disloyal and yet it is often quite legitimate. Moreover people do not hit for nothing. What did this person do wrong to elicit such a response? Or if it came out

of the blue, then who was responsible for this person's upbringing that he felt he could hit another for no better reason than that he liked to? What kind of aesthetics has this man given himself up to? What aesthetic quality or what network of qualities has he given authority to legislate in his practical reason?

So ethics is concerned with a special kind of cause and effect; it is concerned with the *intersections of perspectives* abbreviated into communicable chunks. The advantage is that when these descriptions work they *work*, they help. The disadvantage is that these wedge shaped chunks of communicated experience too often lead to misunderstanding and all that this entails, making an event one of the most difficult things to describe causally; something that our system of justice knows all too well.

Language might well describe reality out there in some way, but we can never know, except through our experience of behaviour, how well language *fits* reality. It is certain that some ways of describing the world fit better than others. But with all the subversive tricks at the disposal of intelligent beings, the world of intelligent beings drives one to distraction when trying to describe the web of causality. The only place this can be done with any feeling of certainty is in the world of the novel. After all, a novelist is allowed to decide things for his characters.

Nevertheless it is certainly not useless to try to describe the social physics of an event, to try to relate cause to effect so that we might adjust our ethics accordingly. As presented, our stories about the world may be shattered into fragments by the people listening to them and fitted together for purposes altogether inaccessible to others except partially to those who are *perceptive* and those who have the luck of talking to someone who is *sincere*. But in describing these events for your self and in reading about human interaction in novels one begins to develop an understanding of the ways of human being and even though we cannot predict each other's behaviour, which is the criterion of understanding in the world of physics, we can, *after the event* often give it a place and understand it in that forgiving sense that Pascal referred to or indeed as the basis for an evaluation about how things in like cases should be done in the future.

So it has been quite a task to make sense of things, to create compelling stories of things and events. The better stories accord with experience, the more valuable they become as the sounding board of judgment.

Our way of talking about things is geared to distilling specific kinds of relationships, namely those that relate cause and effect, both of which tell us something about behaviour. One thing behaves in a certain way and thereby is said to *cause* another thing to behave in a certain way *because the world is the way it is* and everything is in place for these two things to relate in this way. This last part of the sentence is crucial. All the conditions for behaviour and action need, after all to be in place for behaviour to have this effect. Social physics in all its forms: psychology, sociology and history attempt to say useful things about behaviour; try to simulate the causal web in language and diagram so as to help make social response adequate to a situation. Our way of talking about behaviour reflects our *experience* of cause and effect determined by the limitations and possibilities that our understanding affords us. It an economic, political and legislative activity in that each sentence centres value, places priority and follows or shifts norm.

a world reasoned

Ethics, as the activity of economic, political and legislative forces relates an event to the use (subversive or honest) that can be made of it on the basis of an understanding of behaviour.

Imagine the following scenario. We become so good at describing our experience of the behaviour of this world; we become so good at social physics that our descriptions of events in social space, that is descriptions of social intercourse in space, the descriptions of what happens with bodies mixing in their environment become as compelling and as full of predictive power as descriptions in the natural sciences. What would happen? It has been the dream of all ethicists especially since John Locke and Spinoza. It is also responsible for the absurd period in our history when we tried, despite numerous warnings from all sorts of people not to go that way, to make language and our descriptions of social processes behave according to the natural sciences by applying crude simulacra of the laws that appeared to work well in the world of physics. It is a way of looking at the world sometimes called scientism. Life had, above all, to be logical and the frame of reference in which that game of logic was played was narrow and quickly led to the absurd and the cruel. The film *Alphaville* by Godard is a beautiful exploration of that theme.

We could make the mistake of laughing here but the idea of a reasonable society founded on reason as described for instance in Spinoza's *Tractatus theologico-politicus*(1670) is very compelling. The idea that

humanity would overcome much of its own shortcomings if only we knew how to talk about things more precisely without creating constant misunderstanding remains a carefully tended wish. The false application of objectivity to complex behaviour may be labelled as a form of rationalism, but it is anything but rational. If we were able to talk about things more precisely, it would imply we have a better understanding of the way things work. And were we to have a better understanding of the way things work, we would be able to find better ways to make things work for us and among us, we would be able to use the world we are part of well. That would in turn, remove much of the need for, for example, dishonesty and subversive behaviour. In fact it would make all the virtues more or less dissolve in the self-evident and well-oiled machinery of mutual benefit in a fair and just society functioning in a well-tended environment. Wouldn't it? Virtues would be virtues or excellencies no longer because we would practice what they preach as a matter of course, they would become the norm, because the behaviour they recommend so clearly fits our image of our place in the world: as worthy parts in a great whole while the need of some of them would disappear altogether.

a world of virtues

But the world is not like that. And when I describe it like that an uneasy feeling gnaws at my stomach: the harmonious world I am describing sounds like a world without life, the world of physics without proteins. Life is struggle. To picture life perfected is to picture a quiet landscape. How long would that last I wonder.

Virtues will remain excellences for the foreseeable future: qualities we need to strive for, each for ourselves. This will help making society and our environment a better place. We do not behave virtuously *for* society or *for* our environment. We do not need altruism. We do so for ourselves and to do something for ourselves means to do it for our environment, our society. We form an inextricable part of that environment. That was the conclusion of our ontological enquiry. Virtue is, as such, in a very real sense its own reward: it makes our life *a good life*, a work that is worthy of us. And in that way it *contributes* to society and our environment, however small that contribution. Society is the product of our behaviour. Our environment is larger but it is at least affected by our behaviour. If we see society and our environment as an end we do so because it is an expression of our holism, our recognition that we are part of the world *as a whole*. As such society is not an end in itself; it is both the product of a life

lived and a means to live life. The environment is an end in itself in that it would be there without us, not as an environment for us, but as an existing thing and perhaps as an environment for other creatures. It is affected by our lives and a means to live our life.

Life, like the world out there, our environment, is an end in itself, the only end in itself that can withstand the assault of reason: existence is its own justification, because it cannot be justified with reference to anything except its existence. It simply is. Life is. Society is not by itself. It is the product of life. But does all this fine scholasticism help us? Well yes in a strange sort of way it does. It puts the emphasis on living life, of constructing a life and seeing that as our main task as planners and designers. We are required to plan and design an environment in which each person can live their life to the full within the limitations and possibilities given to us. It is the living and making of that life that takes centre stage. Anything less is unacceptable and leads to a life lived less well, to regrets and remorse to sadnesses.

Living life is difficult because of our rather cumbersome inability to *get things right*. If we let things take their course, life is no more than existence, or rather, subsistence, and if we meddle with everything life, as the pursuit of one's own good becomes impossible and life machinic, *merely* productive of someone else's good.

So what happens if we feel we know something to be universally valid, if we have a deep conviction that we *have got something right* and should act upon it: convince others, set up laws so that everyone is forced to act the same way. What if we legislate for others. Never mind how, let's not worry about what particular political system we would like to embrace: democracy, aristocracy, oligarchy, technocracy, bureaucracy, monarchy. Let's just keep to the idea of instituting a *rule*.

Immanuel Kant saw lying as subject to a categorical imperative. With that he took a short cut, he placed law *before* experience. He did not, as I shall be arguing in a later essay about Cradle to Cradle thinking and the concept of justice, argue that experience and law overlapped completely with regard to lying; he simply put law before experience, thereby saying, never mind about the fact that experience tells us that lying is sometimes useful, sometimes even *good*; we should never lie.

Usually prescriptive law comes after experience: if we feel that something does not work well in society, we change it by law. The legislative body of a society, usually a parliament, has the job of looking at society and adjusting its working through law. Kant, by declaring honesty subject to the categorical imperative, did not do this, he put law before experience. That is dangerous. All forms of dishonesty were by him dismissed as wrong *by definition*. We should always speak the truth. But, because *the truth* is, as he argued, inaccessible to us except through mediated experience and reason, we should always speak what we believe to be the truth. He had a very precise understanding of the world and if we were all like him I could perhaps understand such a move and even see its virtue. For even though his philosophy has been criticised and we now have a different view of the world, however much that view has been influenced by him, if we all thought like him, society would certainly look very different.

But we don't. And it is important to understand this. It is even more important to not wish for a world where everyone thinks like him. It is important to see the world as it is in its perfection so as to give everyone a worthy place in it, right now, without wanting to change humanity or our environment except through small adjustments to make our lives less of a struggle so as to give more space for our good qualities to come out. At least that is my theory. Otherwise we lose ourselves in arbitrary selection criteria, such as the strongest, or the most cunning, or the fastest or the blondest or the whitest or the one with blueest eyes, or the not-Jews or the not-Islamic or whatever. These are selection criteria that emerge from the absurd from a frame of reference that is too narrow to accommodate *life that needs no justification*.

If, on the other hand we give ourselves the task to see ourselves as a holistic part of an ecology encompassing the world as a whole, with all of us given the possibility of taking up a worthy place in that ecology, we create at least a clear view of our path and a sounding board of how to develop an ethics to get there. The choice to see that task that way, is an existential choice. *We could make another choice*. However, any utopian vision of humanity, whereby we change humanity in some way and need them to *be different* to what they are now, will mean our simply succumbing to an evolution driven by partial fictions and weird selection criteria. With this theory we have selection criteria that are geared to selecting for inclusiveness and holism.

To get back to Kant's imperative, dishonesty has to be seen as an inevitable part of society. It is inevitable because of our partial understanding of the way things work, because our language cannot be made simultaneously precise and light enough for our brain to cope with or indeed consistent and true at the same time, because our views and desires are ruled by abbreviated fictions which only partially simulate the working of the world making misunderstanding a constant concern. Dishonesty is a tool to cope with these things. But that does not by itself disqualify Kant's declaring honesty to be subject to a categorical imperative.

So let's imagine complete honesty in our present cultural climate... First of all everyone would have to disentangle themselves from their political being, a being whose task it is to negotiate means and ends, whereby some means are used tactically, that is for ends which they appear to be independent from and some ends are used as means for further ends, kept veiled or hidden so as to make our chance of achieving them more likely. Would we soon want to make a distinction between discretion and honesty? And what do we do with those instincts that have served us so well in our story of evolutionary success: rivalry, jealousy etc. What about our anxiety's that others might not be obeying the rules in the way we were. What about our feelings of inferiority, inadequacy and even more inadequate superiority, the weird working of excess and scarcity in our economics. What about the negotiation of misunderstanding that determines the exact shape of most of our conversations?

Honesty in our present climate would put people at a perceived disadvantage. It would in fact place any completely honest individual outside of society in the way the holy fools of Dostoyevsky are. The privilege of *Parressia* belongs of the court jester and Timon of Athens' *Apemantus*; it belongs to those who dare and do not mind being given a place with the mad people. They are heroes, tragic heroes, in Kierkegaard's terminology, knights of resignation perhaps and even knights of faith, at least if they keep themselves to themselves and just do the right thing without whingeing about it. In our present cultural climate complete honesty would degenerate into bluntness and burliness. And in fact it would start leading a life of its own, serving ends which are again difficult to see. Honesty cannot be subject to a categorical imperative by itself. It needs everything to change with it. At the same time it has a leading role to play in the transformation process. To put it forward as a categorical imperative therefore is ultimately a good move, even if it does mean we will need time to adjust to this new culture, even if it does mean we will

suffer some strange side-effects before the medicine takes effect. Honesty, even though it is not itself the truth, is like the messy processes of democracy, like the other virtues, *the best way forward*.

Honesty belongs properly to those who feel safe within a climate of fairness; they need not fear for their honesty and where that honesty would not be abused or misused. Only in a completely fair society would any use for dishonesty dissolve as it would simply no longer be particularly useful, it would serve no purpose. But for that we need an aesthetics that is able to think through the constellation of qualities and conditions we would need to have in place for fairness to triumph and an ethics with which we are given the concrete means to behave fairly.

That is not as easy as it sounds. Witness the history of the world so far. Mind you there has been progress. Some of us have discovered good tricks such as democracy, the rule of law, institutions to review the absurd edges of law, ways of dealing with minorities, rebels, free spirits. Technologies to make life easier so that we are given the freedom to develop our lives. We have found ways of dealing with criminals and so forth. These ways need to be learnt by everyone each generation over and over again, for they cannot go very deep. Civilisation is very thin and will remain so. It needs to be learnt and practised.

Honesty is a virtue, a great virtue, and one which is itself a primary condition for the creation of a fair society, one, that if corrupted corrupts our trust and with that destroys the possibility of a fair society. Tolerance, generosity, mercy, compassion are also great virtues. We need all of them, they are precious qualities. But because the world is the way it is, even the most ardently honest people will at the very least need discretion and diplomacy, which constitute the first steps to dishonesty. It cannot be seen as a vice to take at least some account of sensitivities in our world of ready misunderstanding. It cannot be wrong in a world dominated by a wilful aesthetics of *thinness* to be at least delicate in situations where people might be needlessly hurt by the wrong word, surely. Honesty need not degenerate into horridness.

Honesty is infectious. Honesty encourages more honesty; it also suffers abuse. We live in a world that is the way it is. Together with the other virtues, like kindness, gentility honesty would encourage the creation of a society in which we take account of each other so as to increase fairness. It would make living together easier and would begin to lessen the need for

rivalry, which is not an instinct that we cannot overcome. Without the other virtues honesty degenerates into the blunt and the careless. A society is determined by the capacity of individuals to act in that society.

Rawls' lessons in planning and design

John Rawls' view of society as outlined in his *Theory of Justice* is an attractive theory. One that minimises its need for orthodoxy, one that does not require us to be militant about inclusion or totalitarian in any way. Rawls arrives through a very interesting set of arguments which we will deal with elsewhere, at two basic design rules that must be given priority in any design task. They are the first questions with which to test any design decision. They come in a strict order of precedence. The first he calls the principle of liberty and the second he calls the principle of difference. The first allows *everyone* the freedom to pursue *their* good, and the second makes sure the distribution of goods is fair. That is all. Every design decision has to be tested against those criteria before it is tested against any other criteria more specific to the object or environment to be designed.

Compared to the heavy operating instructions for most political systems and religious movements, this *design method* seems positively minimalist. Nevertheless, it is all we need *to work towards* a fair and just society as well as a fair and just environment. What is the trick? It is a simple one: in order to allow *every* adult who has learnt and been able to practise life, the freedom to pursue their own good, that freedom is limited only by the fact that *everyone* has to be allowed that freedom.

Similarly, the demand that we make planning and design decisions that ensure the distribution of goods is fair, means that if someone becomes better off by acquiring a share of the goods, it should not be at the cost of someone else. That is all! In other words it is the program of seeking out a consistent win-win strategy in all matters of planning and design.

The wonderful thing about this simple political minimalism is that it allows difference and encourages spatial awareness. My freedom to pursue my own good brings with it the duty to make sure it does not prevent others from doing so. I can live unilaterally according to this rule I do not have to wait until others do so. I can lead by example. This helps newcomers and the as yet unborn. Nobody is born a Rawlsian man. And yet the compelling nature of a Rawlsian way of designing society and the environment is clear.

We have no universal rights only a duty to perform our pursuit of a good in such a way as to make sure we do not hinder others. If we profit by something, by all means do so, but make sure others do not bear the cost. It is that simple. Or at least the principle is that simple. Unravelling the complex causal web in order to plan and design by this principle is another matter entirely and requires systematic and creative research. (Systematic research constitutes inductive or empirical research, where theories are tested. Creative research is abductive research where possibilities are looked for and explored.)

This Rawlsian way of organising the planning and design of society is a way of instituting a form of self-organisation, in that it is unilaterally applicable. Rawlsian decisions can be arrived at individually even under the most horrible dictatorship. With that I do not mean to encourage dictatorship, but a person, living under its yoke, could keep himself as a person by living according to these Rawlsian tenets. Only when the dictatorship forces that person to perform cruelties in its name he will have to face a momentous existential decision. It is true that a dictatorship stops people from pursuing their good, although in fact it is only partly true. A good is for a large part defined by the situation given, by the situation one finds oneself in and has to cope with. We are given a time to live our life in and we are given a place. We can exchange the latter more easily than the former, although in changing the latter, one inevitably changes the former too in the sense that different places are experiencing different times, at least to some extent. We have to cope with the situation given us.

The existentialist position that lies at the basis of this view is that community is best served by serving oneself as a part of the community you are in. Its advice would be: Attend to yourself well. Make sure you think through what you mean by well. Pursue your own good well. Make sure you think through that good as a quality determining your place within the whole. Use the world well, use others well. Make sure you do not make it impossible for others to pursue their good. If you profit by a situation, make sure it is not at a cost to others. This goes for the professional persona you have made as well as for your private persona. In fact you should spend a lot of time carefully configuring their minimal difference.

freedom

It is the curious tension between selfhood and neighbourhood that lies at the basis of this view of ethics. The two are not incompatible. To attend

well to oneself affirms and strengthens that of which one is a part as long as that self is generously conceived. A self conceived in relation to others serves the self in concert with the environment that is the self's *possession* in the sense that the self's environment is the self's to use to further and maintain existence of the self. The slavish apathy of the last man embedded in his systems as described by Nietzsche is not a necessary consequence of technological development. A self is condemned to freedom. It cannot give up its freedom. It allows its enslavement because, in certain extreme situations for example, it prefers slavery over death, always hoping it will be able to escape. But even there the self is free. And as Kierkegaard very rightly emphasised, the self is always free to think itself. Freedom is used often as a gift: I give you my freedom. But that gift is a gift of the giver to the giver. It is a gift to oneself. The freedom does not disappear it merely becomes a gift of service to the other. Service is not enslavement, service is the activity of freedom being exercised as a gift to one's environment to serve oneself. Our freedom then is a curious freedom; it is the freedom to seek out use in a situation and in seeking out use it seeks out the self's responsibility in every situation (with which I mean the self's ability to respond to a situation). Instead of seeing a situation and denying that one has a responsibility there, instead of seeking to blame others and cleanse oneself of blame, the self knows his universal guilt, knows that, were he to understand everything he would want to forgive and get on with things. Participation requires the self to seek therein its own responsibility with the question: what can I do? To be able to do something means that one can do it without making the pursuit of a good impossible. In fact this *what can I do* might is part of the good the self is pursuing. The art is not to err in determining one's responsibility, not to err to either side, not to seek too much responsibility nor too little. The art is for the self to be honest, generous, kind, gentle, merciful, tolerant etc *and* active, decisive, vigorous, creative, full of energy and so forth an art that starts with behaviour. To behave like this it is essential to describe the situation well using the game rules (the behaviour) that these virtues institute. A situation needs to be described generously, honestly, with mercy etc. At the same time it needs to be responded to as if we are embarking on a new beginning without feeling the need to trash the past.²⁸

The question is whether it would help to talk in a less abbreviated way about cause and effect. Would a more elaborate description of a situation

²⁸ Cf. The essay on tradition by T.S. Eliot

make us more honest, or indeed, kinder? That would mean that honesty and kindness presuppose the sophistication of description. That would be a difficult thesis to uphold. Let's take the example of someone hitting another. I may well misrepresent the event of someone hitting me by describing it using a very basic vocabulary, or by describing it clumsily; but this does not mean I am dishonest in my description. It merely means that I am crude in my use of words whereby it becomes more difficult to get a grip on the situation. Similarly, I might not have been brought up to be familiar with all sorts of social niceties, but I can still show myself kind to others in my own way, even if that is misunderstood by the very people I am being kind to. The opposite is also true, however elementary and crude my conception of what is happening as captured in my description of it, this does not in any way diminish the political nature of act of description. All action and all description as a special kind of action, a reflective action, is political, in the sense of being open to articulation with reference to value, norm and priority. The actual description may not be very effective and some purposes might be extremely banal, and some consequences may be unforeseen. But all action has purpose and all situations afford action in that they show a configuration of conditions and qualities, meeting my experience and resourcefulness. It is not the situation that affords an action or a possibility for action, it is the situation meeting my experience that affords this possibility for action.

So what does a more sophisticated way of talking about our situation do? How does a sophisticated and sincere description of our social physics help? Talking about things in a very sophisticated way about cause and effect will certainly make social intercourse more elaborate, it will make our conversations longer. Imagine us all talking about the world the way Heidegger does, that would certainly slow the world down a bit: *It takes a long time to say something in Entish.*²⁹

One thing we cannot ever claim about the difference between the linguistically sophisticated and the linguistically elementary is that the one is not *in itself* better than another. It is only better [IF] it is effective in bringing about a desirable situation. To be able to talk in terms of superiority and inferiority one must have already made one's aesthetic choices and proceeded to actualise the desired situation. So we have to come clean. We have to lay down the ground of our ethical activity: we have to portray our aesthetic vision of where we want to go. What is it we

²⁹ J.R.R. Tolkien, *Lord of the rings*.

want? We need to practise wanting. I do not know whether what I want is what I would want if the situation I am in now were different. In fact I am sure I would want something else. So what I want is determined by the situation as I experience it now. What do you, my reader, want? What is it you would like for the world at large and your place in it?

[IF] we are sincere [AND] [IF] we manage to follow the protocols of good scholarship [THEN] we can use our more sophisticated way of describing things to simulate the causal web with greater sophistication. And this greater degree of sophistication does, indubitably, make possible a more nuanced ethical response to a situation. Great novels manage to do this. That is why the novel and the play are philosophical instruments of the first order.

situationality

Philosophy must not be allowed to reduce its activity to the development of concepts alone. It needs to work with situationality. A situation, despite the fact that the word somehow implies it, is never static. Situations are movements or durations in which the conditions and qualities obtaining in a situation relative to some perspective undergo a movement, a reconfiguration a metamorphosis, a metabolic transformation. That has been the field of expertise of the novelist. The novel works with description and narration rather than with concepts. The novels of the great Russians, of Proust and Brecht, Mann and Musil, of George Eliot, and Virginia Woolf to take just a few, manage to describe human action with an apophantic sincerity. Their descriptions use an active and current vocabulary and weave them into rich tapestries of situated events: of meaning that transcends the primitive landscape of objects and makes them all part of a larger narrative, which, even though it concerns the problems of a small group of people, nevertheless manage to encompass humanity as a whole. Novels have, in describing the intersection of space and lives, allowed us to dive inside the thought worlds of people interacting with each other and their environment. Their work thereby transcends philosophy and its focus on the concept by portraying the causal network of human interaction in the form of a situation. People who read novels are able to stretch and exercise their conception of humanity, of social space, they are given a broader view of the world to do with what they like. Novels are simulations of a causal web as it manifests itself in the narrative of a situation, and event. Causes need not even be made explicit in a novel, often the novel suffers when they are. It is the thinking and the

situation described that make the reader *write* his understanding of the novel within certain coordinates established by the author. The author writes the story, the reader measures it and establishes it in his world. Novelists make people aware that there is always more than one story, that the being of the world can only be modelled using all that the world has in it, so that the metaphor becomes the metaphor of itself, of that which it connects: a ship with a soul, a rough sea with a hard time.

Once we realise that our own fullness as human beings, our undetermined nature applies also to others, we cannot help but behave differently to these other creatures around us who we have got to know through a novel that has nothing to do with them.

Novels are exercises in humanity and situationality. They lead to an image of the world in which social structures working with values, norms and priorities are played out virtually from multiple perspectives. They help us transcend our narrow selves. Great novels, such as those of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky demonstrate what Spinozan or Christian love means; they show how generosity is possible by giving us the humanity squeezed into particular behaviour through situations through *ressentiment*, through luck, through cruelty, through misunderstandings, through whatever, a humanity moreover that can be so easily discarded in the judgment: he is bad, or he is good.

Furthermore they describe, often without doing so explicitly, what happens in what kind of space. They describe the production of social space in situationally.

So from a philosophical point of view they do not teach you what to do and when, but they provide a frame of reference against which to measure new situations, they provide the means to be generous by allowing you to switch perspectives, to imagine each deed done to you as the product of a larger history. This practise of perspectives, this practise of situationality that novels make possible is useful in planning and design. But how?

I have already spoken of Rawls' two principles to be used to test every design decision. I have not explained how he arrived at those two principles. He used what he called a design conversation veiled with ignorance.

He set up a conversation between people with the express purpose of *designing a fair society*. To do this he asked the participants in his conversation to remember that they are human beings. What are human beings? Well we won't go into that here. We know however that every predicate that might hold with reference to the description of a particular human being cannot be dismissed. So a human being is a being upon which all predicates that can hold with reference to a specific human being, could apply. We cannot say that a human being is always a body with two legs and two arms because we know that this only counts for most of them. Nevertheless, the having of arms and legs is something most of them have in common, while the not having of arms or legs, specifies a human being in that condition emphatically, but it cannot remove his humanity. We notice when human beings *deviate* from the norm. We are only now learning how to deal with that difference in a fair way. It has been a long road. In the same way we know that human beings can be: generous, weak, strong, nasty, horrible, greedy, generous, honest, dishonest, etc. So we ask the participants in the design conversation to keep their humanity in tact: we give them the advice: don't become altruistic unless you are so already, don't worry about the way you are just be who you are and make your decisions accordingly. But then comes the strange bit. Rawls asked the participants of his design conversation to *forget* their specific situation. That is not so easy. After all, I am who I am, partly because of my situation. Being a white male in his fifties living in a wealthy western country determines not just my situation but my whole being. It affects my ability to be generous, honest, etc. But never mind. That is what I have to try to do: forget my situation. So when designing this fair society I have to imagine myself all things, that is situationless. Then we can start our conversation. What principles would people in such a design conversation agree upon as universal principles for a fair society?

It is clear that a white man in his fifties has a different image of what is fair to a black man, or a woman, or a young girl or someone living now, or someone living in the future, a poor person or a rich person, a person in power or a person without. A fair society could only be one where everyone's concerns are taken seriously and allowed to influence the outcome equally. This led Rawls to come up with his two principles: the principle of liberty and the principle of difference. We could all agree that each of us should be allowed to pursue our own good as long as everyone is allowed that freedom and that aspect is enough of a limitation to the overambitious as long as the principle is then used to decide concrete action. The same goes for the principle of difference: we could all agree

that we could profit by our work so long as that work does not disadvantage others. Again that principle then needs to determine each concrete decision in a society.

The question is how this theory could then influence the planning and design of the environment? Well, planning and designing the environment is no different to planning and designing a society. Both form the context of social space, except that planners and designers of the built environment act in that society *and* give shape to its spaces.

This is where the novel and the unsituated design conversation come together. They speak in stories, scenario's, they switch perspectives and make different perspectives accessible to people whose own perspective is *embodied* in their situated existence. It is more than the nineteenth century concept of empathy, to which this approach is of course homologically affiliated and which has long been an instrument of design for political decision-making, commercial decision-making as well as spatial decision-making.

At the same time, the world has, since Rawls' publication, come to a new realisation. We need to take not only other people into consideration we need to take a whole ecology into consideration, the whole world. For this a new model of unsituated decision making has to be thought through, one where the veil of ignorance needs to cover not only our situation as human beings in a design conversation, but our situation as living organisms.

Imagining the other systematically in terms of their needs and desires makes possible the more careful tailoring of our actions to the realisation of the qualities we desire while keeping our concerns wide and holistic. By embedding concepts in a wider narrative, or indeed the ricocheting of discourse concerning possible scenario's in concrete situations, the designer as it were practises the relations from which these concepts ultimately derive significance. It furnishes a reasoned approach to the design of qualities we desire within the difficult world of the possible. In other words it would help towards a calculus of projective practice. (With which I mean solely the need for the designer to work by projecting his ideas into an unknown future, so that the specific needs and desires can only be stochastically approximated) This brings us back to the problem of the universal and the local, the dogmatic and the flexible, the categorical and the situational. It brings us to the question why situations are specifications of the generic, determinations of the virtual.

The reason that civilisation is a thin veneer is that civilisation is the product of the Baldwin effect. Civilisation is not hardwired in our being. Or if it is, it is only so in so far as our tendency to form tribes, to form families, to teach our children how to cope is hard wired. It is what we learn through culture that helps maintain civilisation and what makes it sophisticated. Human beings need to be able to adapt quickly, to different situations. Hardwiring civilised behaviour could do real damage to our evolutionary chances. There is a price to be paid if we change how we learn to be civilised. Overcoming our evolutionary being through learning, through what Freud called our Superego will further stimulate large gaps in our society, of those who pursue this track and those who do not. It is not a gap that will separate the rich from the poor. It is a gap that will separate those who wrestle, struggle and involve themselves with their aesthetic and their ethical make up and those who do not, who allow themselves to sink away in the world of social desiring so beautiful described by René Girard, where we desire not what we have thought through for ourselves, but that which others have, simply because others have it. Were such a personal struggle without aesthetics and ethics to become *universal*, it would threaten our economically driven aesthetics. But we need not fear such a blissful situation. Learning is hard. It is incumbent on those who undertake this journey of struggle to love and forgive those who know not what they do. At the same time such a course will place those who pursue the course of aesthetic and ethical struggle, like Dostoyevsky's holy fools, outside of society. It is the madness of oversophistication that makes the Spinoza's and Jesus Christ's and Ghandi's of which there are countless examples, to take up a precious place in society as beacons. So our ability to reason through ethics, will no doubt lead to an ethics not unlike that of Jesus Christ, Spinoza or Dostoyevsky, an all embracing, all-loving, all forgiving ethics in which compassion is the only verdict and the loving gaze and the kiss the only punishment. OK, so how does all this help us professional designers and builders and developers? It does. It requires us to take account of what they say and to act accordingly. It requires us to take our job seriously and be very aware of the level of socialisation that our interference in the world causes. We make cities, places and buildings, that people have to take account of, that take an active and controversial part in the world we live in. Those buildings have to work well and work towards the kind of society we want. For this we need a sophisticated knowledge of humanity, a sophisticated knowledge of social behaviour and its spatial conditions and a sophisticated knowledge of techniques, to mould our buildings to that knowledge. We must not require others to change, but we must require ourselves to change. And we must change to

make ourselves understand humanity, social space and the technology available to make social space well. We must learn.

We are animals that have the facility of being subversive. We can turn anything to what we imagine to be to our advantage. Trying to ban the subversive from ourselves is certainly our best bet for a just society. But justice and fairness is not everyone's game. But even without our delight in subversion, a delight that dominates the power games that assemble around specific desires, such as the desire for money, power, justice, health and any combination of these, this abbreviated, experiential way of talking about cause and effect involves us in the world at our scale of observation and with reference to those things that matter to us. In this way the total spectrum of action with which ethics is concerned is tiny when seen in relation to the total amount of action observable at any given moment. But that is precisely the problem. If we take all the consequences of our actions into account we might arrive at a more generous ethics, one which does not just take into account our social physics, but can take into account our ecological physics, relating us not only to other people in our environment but to everything in our environment. The advantage of this is that any concern for our environment as a whole reflects back on us and can be seen as pure profit in the most generous sense of that word, just as a realisation that subversion as a tactic in games for power money etc, merely creates powerful and rich and poor and powerless people, in which no one is any the better for it.

So this fourth complication of ethics, the abbreviated way we talk about our world is two sided, it makes it possible to become subversive in our relations to others and our environment, but it also give us the lead to develop a generous ethics, one whereby the untangling of the complication allows us to see how the causal web relates everything to everything so that we can trace the possible consequences of our actions by following its strands.

responsibility

This leads us to the question of responsibility. How do all these complications affect our responsibility for ourselves, our lives for our environment? Let's start with a crucial question: Do you carry the full responsibility for your actions? If you feel that you do, what does that

mean? And if you feel that you do not, what does *that* mean? Who carries the rest?

The question: am I responsible for {b}? Where {b} stands for any event, leads either to an admission or a denial when {b} is specified with phrases such as {the hunger in the world} or {my sister's crying} or {the fact that the balcony dropped off the building I designed?}.

Sartre held for a while the idea that a person is fully responsible for their actions. After all if your actions belong to you, they are your property, making you the person you are. You should carry responsibility for that which belongs to you. He argued that as you are completely free, as your existence is something that is given you to make something of, you must also carry full responsibility for your actions. That is a hard one. There are so many stories one could tell of concrete situations where this stand point is sorely tested. It is nevertheless an attractive way of looking at things, after all it gives one freedom to act. If all my actions are my responsibility, they are also my actions in the fullest sense of that word. They belong to no one else. But that does not feel quite right, after all I act within my environment and my environment is peopled by others who lay a legitimate claim to that environment, after all they exist in it. Furthermore I react to others in my environment. My acting in that environment is what makes my environment mine in a peculiar sense. I claim it for my use. At the same time that claim does not go uncontested. Furthermore my powers to affect that environment are limited. I am given my environment to act upon I cannot preform it to my wishes. I may select those parts of it that I find interesting and relinquish the rest to the unwitting effect of my activity, but nevertheless I can only decide what to do in the environment that is given me. I can perhaps try to control and modify my environment through selection once it has been given me, or rather once I have laid claim to it. But that act of arrogation won't go uncontested either. The habits I form together with others within my environment and the environments of those for whom I appear as one of the things to be taken account of, all these overlapping spheres of habitation methods of dwelling demand that I see myself as a part of something larger. I may consider myself sovereign, but I am sovereign over that which I claim and have to take account of it in some way. The way I take account of the world around me defines me and makes me, me. There are many ways to build a me. I could develop other habits, other methods than the ones I grew up with. The culture or morality I am a part of is the culture I was given to act within, to make my own and to take a stand upon. The fact

that I might be blind to the historical nature of my culture does not make these habits necessary. They remain habits, a method, a way of being that is deeply engrained in my culture. Because I am free, I am free to take a stand on the habits of that culture, that environment. I am free in the sense that I can overcome anything, even my upbringing and my instincts as a human being. I am the undetermined animal and can respond to the way I am determined by others. As soon as I know my enemy, or as soon as I know my obstacle, I can begin preparing the assault. So this would suggest that I am fully responsible for my actions. But that is not so. You are responsible for your actions only in so far you have power to act upon a situation. I am not free as to choose the situation I have to act in and cannot be held responsible for a situation which I had no part in creating. The situation I am given is force upon me. I cannot choose it. I can try to arrange my life that such moments are minimised. Even so, there is much in every situation, even the most controlled that I cannot determine. So responsibility cannot be full and unconditional. So what does responsibility mean in this more refined view?

Taking responsibility is quite different to being held responsible. To be held responsible is to become the passive object of a situation. To take responsibility is an action that you as acting subject *do*. One might contend that one should take responsibility for one's mistakes and I would concur fully. At the same time I would need to know that I have made a mistake in order to claim responsibility for it. And for this I perhaps need a fuller understanding of the situation I found myself in. Ignorance might not excuse me in front of the law, but it might well excuse me to myself. I cannot get full knowledge of any situation But I can get a fuller understanding, I can get a well abbreviated and instrumental knowledge of a situation. It is this fact, this limitation on my understanding that condemns me to freedom *and* makes me at first helpless. Freedom, as Spinoza, rightly in my view, pointed out, is what unfolds in ignorance and perspective: it is our faulty knowledge and our particular point of view on a situation that *forces* us into freedom and choice. Were we to have God's omniscient view of the world, choice would dissolve and everything would be clear and no doubt necessary. In other words our freedom is a freedom in ignorance and is given shape by the necessity of perspective, of a situated view. All views are wedge-shaped and never total. And when they pretend to totality, they become merely totalitarian, which is narrowness pretending to be something it is not. So freedom and helpless ignorance are two sides of the same coin. We are free to act and helpless in our ignorance. We can overcome our ignorance and as we succeed, the better

we become at making decisions. And where this is not so, decisions become a matter of crisis and blind choice.

We are all guilty of getting *it* wrong. What we need to do is, in the words of Iris Murdoch, get on with getting *it* right. We need to start looking not for blame, even though we should hold people who do wrong to account, but for a way of getting things right. I personally didn't really start thinking about such things as freedom and responsibility seriously until I was quite a few years into my life and had ironically been fully conditioned by my environment. When reading Sartre and being bowled over by him, I began on a long career to seek out my freedom by seeking my responsibilities.

That is what I felt Sartre really meant: we are not responsible *for* everything we do, after all we are part of a world in which each person owns and tends to his own environment, which, however overlaps into sociality. Instead the burden of freedom is to find our response to everything and every situation.

Societies have found a good ways of dealing with ignorance. They have made the rule that ignorance of the law does not preclude us from having to live according to its rules. That is a good trick introduced by legislators who realised there would be a problem if we were to allow the application of law only in such situations where knowledge of the law was adequate. This has had the result that the law sometimes deviates from experience and leads to curious forms of injustice and unfairness. But we are willing to put up with these until reform becomes possible, for a world where people can claim innocence through ignorance would make society impossible. Because we are ignorant we are free to act as we see fit. We are born into a culture and usually end up trying to make the society to which that culture pertains function as well as possible, because, perhaps, we realise after a long personal struggle that the habits and norms given us by that society are preferable to a thoughtless hand-to-mouth existence, which some people sometimes hold for freedom. When Sartre said we are condemned to be free, he might have said we are condemned to ignorance and choice, to the partial and situated view.

Although grown up people are condemned to freedom, to ignorance and to view, we cannot condemn our children to that same freedom. They need time to learn and practise. They are released from real choice, for their ignorance is too all encompassing. It would not be fair to hold them to account in the same way as we hold the fully grown to account. They

are allowed to practise their life until they are children no longer. This is a gradual process. It is also a philosophically necessary conclusion if we hold that there the grounding of our theories is as we have argued it is, as a complicating network, a sedimentation of thinking *that works*.

What does taking responsibility mean? How do we behave when we *take* responsibility? Here we have a rich tradition. Usually taking responsibility means accepting ownership of the consequences. It means taking the blame and behaving honourably and meekly in the face of retribution. It means paying for one's mistakes. It means *facing* the music. However it can also mean something less passive. It can mean getting things right the next time. Jesus Christ represented an extraordinary event in the world of ethics because of his willingness to take responsibility for the whole of faulty mankind. In this sense he was passive and suffered the consequences: crucifixion. But in taking responsibility he also told us to forgive our enemies, to turn the other cheek and to beware of throwing stones if your conscience is not completely clean. All three activities make us healthier. They stop us drowning ourselves in bitterness and resentment, giving ourselves over to revenge. Forgiveness makes us strong because it means that we refuse to descend to the level of the violent. It means after all that you are not like them who throw stones before thinking things through. Reflection tends to help stone-throwing to stop. Jesus Christ was an extraordinary social philosopher.

Finding my responsibility by finding the best response takes this ethical hygiene as its starting point. Stating that one is wholly responsible for one's actions is to ignore that every individual is a part of an ecological whole. It puts too much stress on the individual. On the other hand, Dostoyevsky's claim that we are all guilty, that is responsible as in blameworthy for *everything* is putting too much stress on the individual as part of a whole. The question, "Are we to be blamed for {b}?", can only be answered in terms of yes or no on the basis of faulty knowledge and perspective. So only if we narrow the perspective sufficiently can we be held wholly responsible for a situation, and only if we have full knowledge does our guilt with regard to everything become apparent. They are purely hypothetical positions. Such a stand point gets us nowhere.

Instead we should ask: how am I responsible for {b}? Let me try to find my responsibility, where do my responsibilities lay with regard to {b}? How can I respond to {b} adequately? These are the questions of people who

understand themselves as part of a whole, as individuals engaging in their environment.

And the {b} can again stand for any event, whether it be {the hunger in the world} or {my sister's crying} etc. With the question formulated like this we get a completely different answer. Suddenly it becomes clear that we have some sort of responsibility with regard to any {b}: we might have to retrace our steps if we have helped brought about a situation and rethink our action, or we might simply ask: how should I respond to this event of which I am somehow a part? The answer: "well I should do nothing as it is not my fault or my problem" would then articulate one's responsibility in a special way. Even so there are situations imaginable where the response, "well, I've got urgent problems of my own to deal with here, I need to narrow my focus for a while", might be judged legitimate. But this can only be given by experience.

By trying to find our responsibility the desire for retribution and punishment dissolves in the desire to reconstruct some aspect of society so that something that is cruel or unfair does not happen again, unless of course we cannot prevent it without passing laws that make the cure worse than the disease. Finding one's response, finding one's responsibility requires action; it requires reaction by engaging in one's environment: I have to take account of you, or him or indeed the world while in order to take account of myself. That makes things interesting.

Ethics concerns itself with intention, consequence, response and responsibility; It concerns the actor, the acted upon as well as the spatiotemporal environment acted within and anything affected by the action however far away in time and place. None of these should ever be seen in isolation but always in continuous negotiation with each other. Only when we see its complexity and its width can we *clean up our act* with regard to what we want. And improving our image of what we want requires descriptive sophistication. And finding effective means to achieve what we want requires sophisticated means of production. Whether we want to produce a sustainable environment or an awe-inspiring building, production of what we desire is the concern of ethics, to allow us to act *cleanly* or at least have a sense of the mess we are making by acting in the way we do.

balance

People will dream, will believe fervently and will continue to abuse everything and use everything in a subversive way. Every system needs active maintenance. The problem of ethics begins in a simple way: there are two possibilities, good use and bad use. No more. Good use is good because intentions and consequences, means and ends are fitted together in such a way that people take account of each other and their environment in the desire to be fair. Abuse results if the fitting of intentions and consequences to actions and experience have not been measured against such a full and generous conception of society and our world. That is all. There is no ground except experience; all the other stuff, reasoning included, is merely there to give that experience shape. We could decide to pursue a different idea and there are undoubtedly better ideas than the one put forward here. I have not found them. I have only found worse ideas.

We have a responsibility (an ability to respond) in everything and it is our responsibility to seek that response well. We can lead by example and encouragement. Pursue your freedom by being fully aware of other people's freedom. We can live like this unilaterally, it is after all our lives we are concerned with. We allow each to pursue their own good as long as it does not interfere with the good of others. This allows a pluralist society, in which we all do what we think is best but with a certain necessary modesty, quietly getting on with things ourselves, doing the right thing.

Freedom in the way Rawls formulated it, is a taming principle, allowing a wild and unconditional plurality of being: if everyone is left free to pursue their own good...then we cannot pursue a good that would stop others from pursuing their good. Similarly the difference principle allows a wild and unconditional plurality which is tamed by the idea of fairness: we allow difference between people, as long as that difference is not pursued to the detriment of others or the environment as a whole. Decisions have to be winning decisions for the whole, every time. To say that this is impossible is to be merely defeatist.

Those are useful principles from which to depart. An ethics can be usefully built if we agree that society is merely a way of living together, just as a city is a place where people come to live the good life and a house is one of the many non-necessary preconditions that need to be in place in order to make a home. There are other ways of making a home, but they are more difficult. Any normative definition of society, is merely that, a definition

that seeks to sharpen the idea of living together into *a specific way of living together*. We live in our fears and hopes, in our myths, we allow ourselves to be spurred into fears, rivalry and scapegoatism. We create these images ourselves and with them lay the conditions for their actualisation. And even when these myths are actualised through external forces or indeed our own action, we have the choice to be heroic, to become knights of resignation. And those of us who haven't the strength will be forgiven, probably. A society is not a conspiracy to oppress people unless we make it into one. It is our responsibility to prevent that happening, all of us, not just of our leaders.

Society as a way of living together in an environment is defined by the concerns around which we assemble for discussion to prepare action. Society is something we produce in our talking about it. It isn't there by itself. The nature of its existence is as a useful abstraction of what happens when we interact as human beings with others and our environment.

As a product society is not, as yet very sophisticated. It is not bad in countries where fairness appears to have been more or less achieved through the rule of just laws and the continuous process of adjustment and reform. Society is made by people acting within and upon it. That means that any system whereby we try to take responsibility away from people to live their lives is bound to create warped societies. Any system whereby we refuse each other help will also warp society. Any system favouring any single group over another group will also warp society. Will determine selection and privilege those that have been selected to succeed: the rich, the poor, the middle classes, whichever are being privileged.

We make rules, we create value and decide upon priorities and people use these to further their cause, their life. If we allow some to get away with too much, we tend to lose the balance. And balance is not the same as Aristotle's concept of the *mean*. Balance is a fine point at which one thing translates into the other and achieves equivalence. Balance is the = of every formula or equation. That is very different to a *mean*, it is a precise point that lies at the very basis of mathematics *and* being. In a capitalist society it is furnished by capital which is used to balance everything. Punishment is seen in terms of capital, and so is education, food, recreation, creativity. Every term on one side of the formula is balanced by an equivalent term in capital on the other and so everything becomes a question of economics, even punishment. In a communist state the idea was to minimize the effect of capital and make people into each other's

equivalent: all people are equal. Not just born equal, but their equality was what society had as its task to ensure. Unfortunately all societies calling themselves communist quickly became just another way to privilege a small elite. In a dictatorship it is the whim of the dictator that seeks its equivalent in the dictator's satisfaction. None of these are by definition or indeed in themselves wrong or bad, but they can all lead to abuse. There is no ground, there is no ideal system. There is only that which appears to work for a while.

Society according to the principles of John Rawls is a social space in which everyone works to ensure that they themselves are given a fair place, a place of dignity, a place worthy of the world by making sure they do not take that place away from the other. It does not give guarantees; there are no guarantees to give; there are good ways and less good ways, that is all, and experience teaches us which is which in a particular situation.

Part VIII: a manifesto on design

design and the endless questionnaire

This essay eventually becomes a questionnaire. At the same time it is an essayistic questionnaire as the questions are not *designed* to be answered; they are *designed* to make the person questioned reflect upon what is at issue here: design. Design appears to be both a relatively clear and straightforward activity as well as an all-encompassing one. The imperative *design a house!* is relatively straightforward as a command. An experienced designer will not have much trouble with it and enjoy the challenge. At the same time I hold that evolution and design are part of the same thing. Design is evolution with the benefit of experience. Design is an all-encompassing activity, it engages us with respect to every selective task that can involve experience, that can involve learning. So what is the difference between designing a law, a protocol, an experiment, a reaction to a proposal or a house? Because of the impossibility of making the boundaries between these different forms of design appear clear and self evident without reference to the object designed, I thought it would be a good idea to design a set of questions which might help us to commit ourselves to what design means *to us*.

the praxis of theoria

This questionnaire has grown too large. I have had immense fun in *designing* it as Aristotelian exercise of *theoria*. In the tenth book of his *Ethica Nichomachea* Aristotle introduces the concept of the *theoria*. A word that is charged with meaning for anyone involved with the built environment where theory plays an important and controversial role. Michel Foucault, a pupil of Pierre Hadot, remarked that theory is an aspect of practice and vice versa; every praxis has its theory. That is also true for Aristotle. With him theory and practice do not exclude each other, they are aspects of each other. To have a theory you have to practise theorising, and to practise your craft you have to have some sort of theory, however brief. People who are determined to hold on to the idea that “they don’t have a theory” merely have a theory about having theories. They are the truly vague thinkers even though they subversively claim to be merely practical.

Even the practice of questioning needs its theory. All three take account of each other. *Theoria*, in the original Greek means a passionate contemplation. In Hadot’s interpretation of it, it is the practice of a passionate and critical contemplation of our image of the world, that which we accept as a theory toughened by analysis and critique.

Praxis, or practice is a practising of living within the world as conceived. For Aristotle the practice and practise of philosophy come together in *theoria*. The game is a form of solitaire although it can be done in groups any size. It goes as follows: take your own collective and organised image of the world, the collection of concepts we collectively see as a unit called *our attitude to the world* or, if you like, *our philosophy, or theory*. Don’t try to grasp it in its totality, for it is too large and complex for that. Instead grasp it in such a way that a particular question comes to the fore. Taking that as your starting point, compare the question or problem that is in focus with other beliefs that make up part of your theory or philosophy. By comparing them, try to confront the inconsistencies you come across.

An easy example of a position where inconsistencies always appear is with the question: “am I a racist?” Well, most people would, I hope, deny that they are racists, even when they pose the question to themselves in the privacy of their own little world of thought. Fair enough. But is their behaviour compatible with that idea of themselves? Do those who profess to be non-racists treat those of another race truly as equals, or do they overcompensate by becoming positive discriminators, or do feel intensely

uncomfortable in certain situations where an issue of race comes to the fore? Treating someone as an equal is, in fact, extremely difficult, it takes practise and much thought. Anyway, the wonderful thing about this game of *Theoria* is that you play it with yourself, so you can be completely honest with yourself, surely there is no reason to lie to yourself? No one else need know your actual feelings. But say that you genuinely do not want to be thought of as prejudiced with regard to race or gender, it is this game that will discover the inconsistencies if you take it far enough and that will allow you to think of strategies to address those inconsistencies. I thought I was not a racist, I think so still, but there is a difference. This game was able to tell me in which situations I was acutely conscious of otherness; it made me confront those inconsistencies so that my sense of myself as a non-racist corresponded better with my behaviour and my feelings in certain situations. It helped me figure out what to do in certain situations. It made me call racism into question, made me explore its grounds and problems. My non-racism became a more nuanced and exercised concept, fit and athletic, able to confront situations in daily life. It made me reconstitute my belief as to what race means and how it impacts on daily life and action. I have designed my non-racism. I wonder if it is a good design. I have never had the need to test it to its limit. Thank goodness.

Everyone looks at an issue from a particular perspective, so you have to look for possible inconsistencies by trying as it were to measure the angle of your perspective and make up your mind about it and decide whether it is a real inconsistency or just a trick of perspective. If it is a real inconsistency you might need a distinction to resolve the issue, or you might have to relinquish one or more of your opinions, you might need to practice other behaviour. Often being conscious of a feeling is enough to overcome it. In any case *theoria* is a game whereby you measure and place your many opinions and convictions and try to see how they fare when thought through and brought into confrontation with each other. When trying to fit them together, decide upon the reason why and how a particular opinion should lead to a particular action. Fit them together actively. In this way theory is a philosophical practice, a vigorous form of exercise that will lead to a more consistent symphonic and syncopated image of the world, even if it remains flawed and incomplete. Remember also that dissonance can lead to fantastic music. Nevertheless it will lead to an image with which you can approach the gods and act in conformance with their wishes and perhaps even become one of them.

The questionnaire

So now to the questionnaire. Some questions are scherzando, others are dangerous and misleading and *designed* to help you catch yourself out in entertaining an inconsistent belief, but most of them are meant in a straightforward way. What I hope is that, in the most gentle way, you will come to question yourself.

What is design of the built environment? Design is an activity that.....(tick the boxes T for true and F for false)

		T	F
1	produces cities, neighbourhoods, buildings, constructions and building systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	produces plans for projects and logistical processes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	produces drawings that tell others how to do or make something	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	produces drawings to show what the finished product will/might/could look like	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	produces drawings to show what other want to see	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	produces visions of a desirable future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	shows how to realise such visions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	produces nothing but lies, lies and more lies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	produces designs for useful objects that are useful because they are strong and stable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	produces designs for useful objects that can be used for their intended purpose	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	produces designs for useful objects that can be used in more ways than their intended purpose	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	produces designs for useful objects that can be used for many things except their intended purpose	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	produces designs for useful objects that can be used as art	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	produces designs for useful objects that can be used to affirm society	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	produces designs for useful objects that pretend to be useful in one way but are really only therapeutic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	produces designs for useful objects that are useful because they make the designer, manufacturer and retailer very rich?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	tries to negotiate means and ends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	must never sacrifice means to ends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

19	Is allowed to sacrifice means to ends	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
20	Is allowed to sacrifice ends to means	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
21	is dirty, greedy, lascivious & omnivorous	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
22	consumes metaphors, similes, analogies, sympathies, juxtapositions, convenientias, and any description that gives a foothold	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

It is possible to design...

		T F
1	Buildings	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2	Hairdryers	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Good people	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4	Just societies	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	God	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6	Games	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7	Beautiful people	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8	Intelligence	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9	The natural world	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10	Beautiful buildings	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
11	Good buildings	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
12	True buildings	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
13	Cities	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
14	Generous cities	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
15	Kind cities	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
16	Horrible cities	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
17	Lazy streets	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
18	Silence	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
19	Character	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
20	Kind people	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
21	Better buildings	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
22	Better people	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
23	Better cities	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
24	Happy neighbourhoods	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
25	Communities	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
26	Borders	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
27	Buildings	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
28	Intelligent machines	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

29	Happy streets	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
30	Specialness	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
31	Hell	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

An urban planner, an urban designer, a developer, an architect, an building engineer and a builder can only become good at their job if they...

		T F
1	are also good people	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2	have a diploma from a university	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	have acquired the requisite skills for doing their job from working on the job	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4	concentrate on the job in hand	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	understand society and the way it works	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6	believe in God	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7	place their design task into the wider context of society	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8	question everything they do	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9	consider the impact of their design on society	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10	consider the impact of their design on the environment	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
11	Are good team workers	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
12	Are good designers whether they are good teamworkers or not	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
13	Do what is expected of them	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
14	Make people aware of the importance of what they do	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
15	Understand the wider implications of their actions in all spheres of their life	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
16	Believe in nothing	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
17	Believe in something but not God	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
18	Keep to what matters in this world	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
19	Keep to saying things about this world that can be verified by experience	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
20	Are prepared to listen to criticism	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
21	Do their own thing even when other people doubt their intentions and methods	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
22		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

What is a good design? What is a good building? What is good architecture?
What is a good city? What is a good system? A good design.....

		T F
1	satisfies the client even when his wishes conflict with those of the designer	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2	satisfies the designer even when his wishes conflict with those of the occupants	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Satisfies the occupants even when their wishes conflict with those of a fair society	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4	Satisfies a fair society even when its wishes conflict with those of the occupants	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	Satisfies society even when their wishes conflict with those of the client	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6	Is technically innovative	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7	Is innovative and therefore not fully developed and faulty	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8	Only makes use of well-tried building methods	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9	Only makes use of traditional building methods	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10	Is socially innovative	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

What is the role of the beautiful, the good and the true? Beauty.....

		T F
1	Is independent of usefulness	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2	Is a meaningless word and should not be used when talking about the built environment	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Is a sign of the good	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4	Is the good	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	Is the sign of truth and truth is the language of the good	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6	Is independent of exchange value	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7	must not be tainted by the interest and worries of daily life	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8	is always erotic	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9	is purposefulness without purpose	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10	is the useless	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
11	is what you get when you balance usefulness with stability and desirability	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
12	Beauty is not relevant to the built environment	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
13	Good	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
14	Ugliness can never be beautiful	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

15	is a property of the thing thought beautiful	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
16	Is a property of the subject looking at the thing	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
17	Defines the relationship between the subject looking at the thing and the thing presented to his sensory apparatus	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
18	Expresses truths about the world, also uncomfortable truths	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
19	Expresses the good in the world, even good things that might be bad for some	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
20	Beauty should have a single clear meaning to be useful	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
21	Should mean anything to anyone as long as people declare what they mean by it whe challenged	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
22	Is dangerous and should be avoided	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
23	Is useful	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
24	Makes things look more attractive than they should be	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
25	Is mendacious	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

is building an art or a science and does it make any difference?

What do we really want? What do we do it for? We design...

		T F
1	To become famous	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2	To become rich	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	To create a society where everyone is happy	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4	To be good at what we do	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	To be famous because being famous is a sign that we are good at what we do	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6	To be rich, because to be rich is a sign that we are good at what we do	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7	To make good buildings even when society no longer needs them	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8	To make enough to live on	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9	To create a fair and just society in which everyone can pursue their own sense of good	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10	To create a society in which everyone shares the same idea about what is good	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

How do usefulness, stability and desire relate to each other?

		T F
1	A useful building is a building that is stable enough to house the activity it was meant for	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2	A useful building is desirable if it is useful for housing activities	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	A desirable building is a building that is useful	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4	A desirable building is a building that is stable enough to be useful	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	A stable building is desirable	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6	A stable building is useful	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7	A useful building is desirable if it is useful for expressing messages	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8	A useful building is desirable if it is useful to the environment by enriching it	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9	A beautiful building does not have to be stable	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10	A beautiful building does not have to be useful	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
11	A beautiful building does not have to be desirable	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Function, form and fine-tuning their relationship...

		T F
1	Form follows function	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2	Function follows form	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Form and function adapt to each other	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4	Function concerns only the program of a building	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	Function concerns any use the building makes possible	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6	Form suggests function only if you have experience of both	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7	Functions suggest form only if you have experience of both	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8	Forms do not always have to have a function	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9	Beauty can be a function of a building	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10	Functionalism was a movement that did not understand the full significance of the word function	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

What does philosophy hold for the designer? Philosophy...

		T F
1	questions the activity of design	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2	Helps the designer form an attitude to the design task	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Makes the business of design questionable	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4	Burdens the design task with all sorts of unnecessary concerns	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	Is crucial now that design has become such a complex and environmentally sensitive task	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6	Cannot be reconciled with the problems of design	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7	Think of something yourself	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Decorum...

		T F
1	A building should express its function	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2	A building should be flexible enough to change its function	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	If a building changes its function it does not matter that it expresses another function	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4	A building should not express its function, it should be designed to make a good street	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	A space should always surprise	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6	A space should sometimes surprise	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7	Buildings can look selfish	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8	Buildings are buildings and cannot have human characteristics	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9	Whether buildings do or do not have human characteristics is irrelevant to the designer he has more important concerns	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Buildings are generated by ...

		T F
1	The wish to perform an activity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2	The wish to perform that activity in an environment	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

	protected from the elements	
3	The wish to perform that activity in a carefully controlled climate	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4	The wish to perform that activity in a well structured social setting	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	The wish to establish one's position in society	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6	The wish to leave something to posterity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7	The wish to become richer	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8	The wish to explore the limits of the possible	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9	The wish to become a famous designer	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
11	The wish to serve society	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
12	The wish to...	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

How do we judge buildings or the built environment?

We measure the quality of a building against...

		T F
1	The purpose it was built for	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2	The purpose we want to use it for	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Objective quality criteria	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4	Subjective quality criteria	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	Intersubjective quality criteria	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6	Their consistency in a system of logic	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7	Our experience of them after we have undergone them as...	
8	What tourists want?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9	What visitors want?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10	What the occupants want? (people who live and/or work in them)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
11	What the cleaners want?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
12	What the maintenance workers want?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
13	What the investors want?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
14	What the designers want?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
15	The wishes of society at large	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Can philosophy help us decide.....(tick the boxes Y for yes and N for no)

		Y N
1	what usefulness means?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2	what is authentic and what is not?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	which identity is preferable?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4	how to judge a building?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	how to judge an action?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6	what is beautiful and what is ugly?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7	how to judge beauty and ugliness?	
8	what skills we need to perform a certain job?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9	what tools we need to perform a certain job?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10	whether a certain task is useful?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
11	what style means?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
12	what authenticity means?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
13	how a parliament building might be organised?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
14	how a certain ask is useful?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
15	how to design a useful object?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
16	what identity means?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
17	what beauty and ugliness mean?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
18	what a parliament is?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
19	how a parliament should function?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
20	what style to build in?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
21	...	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Now answer the same questions substituting the word philosophy for experience...

When considering a design conflict the interests of one party are generally chosen above the interests of another. Considering the users of architecture: the client, the occupants (who live and/or work there) visitors to building (patients, guests, family visiting the patients etc) the cleaners and other maintenance workers, the builders, the designer, the developer, government, society, the people who live or work in the vicinity of the building, , the idea of architecture, which should win out in a direct conflict?... (tick the boxes T for true and F for false)

		T F
1	The architect over the client	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2	The client over the occupant	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	The government over the client	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

4	"Architecture" over the government	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	Society over the architect	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6	The occupants over everything else	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7	The passerby over the occupants (when it concerns the exterior of the building)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8	Maintenance workers and cleaners over the other occupants	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9	Visitors to the building (patients, old age pensioners, their family) over staff (dokters, nurses etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10	Architecture over the client	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Write: intention, interpretation design reinterpretation, production, interpretation = reading

If we say that writing is *sort of* like designing a building and that reading is *sort of* like undergoing a building by any of its users then...

		T F
1	Writing is more creative than reading	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2	Reading is just as creative as writing	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	A person interpreting the building is producing his experience	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4	A person designing the building has total control over the experience of the user	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	Writing is an activity where you try to achieve your intention	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6	Reading is an activity where you allow yourself to be surprised	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7	Reading is just as intentional as writing, you only see what you want to see	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8	Reading a building well is just as hard as designing it well	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Some things about a building are surely more important than other things.
That a building ...

		T F
1	does not leak <i>is always more important than</i> (IAMIT) whether it is technologically innovative	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

2	Looks good as an object in the city IAMIT the cost of a building	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	is efficient in its routing to perform an activity quickly IAMIT its orientation relative to the sun	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4	Thinking about light and dark IAMIT programmatic efficiency	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	Safety IAMIT programmatic efficiency	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6	Safety IAMIT comfort and convenience	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7	Safety IAMIT usefulness	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8	Healthy building IAMIT safety	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

A building is only beautiful if it is...

		T F
1	desirable for whatever reason	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2	a building that has an original shape	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	is well constructed	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4	useful to its occupants	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	liked by many people, regardless of their level of education	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6	liked by people who are well educated	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7	liked by experts	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8	liked by me	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9	liked by someone I respect	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10	a building that performs one or more of its uses well	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
11	old	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
12	new	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
13	Not made of concrete	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

How do we arrive at a judgment?...

	True or False	T F
1	On the basis of logic	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2	On the basis of emotions	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	On the basis of our experience of life	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4	On the basis of certain knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	On the basis of beliefs	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6	On the basis of logic weighted by feelings	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

7	On the basis of beliefs subjected to logical reasoning so that conclusion follow (deduction)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8	Compelling ideas acquired through experiment and exploration of experience (induction)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9	By creatively exploring possible relations between things previously unrelated (abduction)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10	On the basis of logic which is a combination of a binary operation [IF] {A} [THEN] {b} but whereby the terms a and b have to be filled in in such a way that they feel right	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
11	On the basis of axioms which cannot be proven but which appear to conform with our experience of the world	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

What do we need to justify as designers? ...

		T F
1	Our design decisions	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2	Our selections of material, building systems	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Our actions while designing	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4	The buildings we have designed	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	The ideas we use to come to a design decision	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6	The logic we employ when coming to a design decision	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7	Our beliefs regarding the role of the design in society	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8	The role of the finished product in society	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9	Our thoughts while designing	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10	Nothing, we do not need to justify ourselves ever	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

If design is an activity that produces a vision of a desirable state of affairs and shows how that vision can be realized then it is important to...(tick one box per question, 1 is not important 5 is extremely important)

		1 2 3 4 5
1	have a clear view of what is desirable	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2	know how the world works	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	know how society works	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4	know how people's bodies work	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	Know whether the god exists	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6	To know what the purpose of life is	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7	To know how bodies relate to the environment they	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

	live in	
8	To use language with precision	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9	That words can be very precisely defined	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10	That we have words for everything	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
11	We all speak the same language	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
12	Be able to draw by hand	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
13	To think logically	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
14	To think creatively	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
15	To think with reference to experience	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
16	To know about the traditions of design	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
17	To know about the history of design	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
18	To understand specific precedents	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
19	That everyone should know the same history	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
20	That everyone should know the same precedents	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
21	That everyone speaks the same language	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
22	Have the skill to present that vision	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Design and evolution are often seen as opposites. Test your own view:(tick the boxes T for true and F for false)

		T F
1	Evolution is blind, anything that manages to reproduce is "successful"	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2	Design is not blind, it is intentional, it is driven by a stated purpose	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Design uses experience in order to define intentions	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4	DNA as gene sequences, store the design specifications of an organism	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	DNA encodes the design of an organism	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6	Evolution is a process of selection	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7	DNA is a memory storage device	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8	We speak of a design evolving	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9	We speak of the design of an eye	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10	We speak of the history of design evolving	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
11	Any design that is used and survives over a period of time leading to new developments is "successful"	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
12	In order to have an intention in design you have to have experience of how things work	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

13	Design is a process of selecting that which is thought to work well in a situation	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
14	Consciousness involves a memory storage device	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
15	I know for certain that trees do not have something akin to consciousness	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
16	I know for certain that spiders do not have something akin to consciousness	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
17	Consciousness is able to affect human evolution through learning	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
18	Evolution and design are identical processes	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for filling in this questionnaire.

Now start again.

So how do we approach the work? How do we design? Directions that lay implicit in the foregoing must now be made explicit. I have given the evidence for these theses. Here they are without that evidence in a more or less arbitrary order.

1. each building should be designed with due reference to desire, use and structure
 - a. structure is concerned with hierarchies, constellations and networks of relations as well as constructions in both the literal and figurative sense. Do not be afraid to order your world and arrange it to your taste; just be aware that you are doing so and that this will have consequences for the social space you are part of
 - b. use is how any entity engages with the other to preserve and develop its identity as an entity, use transforms relations so as to give the entity a life. Do not be afraid of use; design instead for the possibility of poetic and enjoyable use.
 - c. desire is interest, attraction, the centring of our attention on things and the complementary fictions, beliefs and wishes that makes us move to find and make structures for our use. Do not be afraid to want something.
2. your mission as a designer, should you choose to accept it, is to build a carefully crafted attitude towards the body and its

engagement with its environment, to submit your desire for use and structure to critique

3. use your desires to structure your design
4. structure your desires to make them useful
5. build a well-considered aesthetics of *desired qualities* and maintain it with love and care, continually testing ideas *for* their logical consistency within a generous and inclusive frame of reference and *against* experience
6. build up an adequate and inclusive frame of reference of qualities and seek out their relations by portraying them well
7. practise portraying qualities through their constitutive relations
8. learn and practise the skills and strategies needed to realize desired qualities and avoid undesirable ones
9. learn to make sure that the means are adequate to the ends so that qualities are realized without unconsidered costs to other qualities of beings and thus turn back upon themselves thus becoming counterproductive and even destructive
10. overcome the gap in experience and expertise that professionalism imposes on society. Learn to design well for people with different concerns and desires than our own without thereby sacrificing your own concerns and desires
11. practise the consequences and test the consistency of any clearly held standpoint with regard to human being
12. be aware of your limitations when taking a position that can only belong to the realm of the possible but eludes experience. This point is especially important with regard to design in uncharted territory, when realizing the new and the unknown
13. things are always more than our determination of them in use. Take up the challenge to try to conceive in concrete terms what it means for your design when we say that a person is infinitely more than our determination of them in any one description. Learn to be generous with regard to being, learn to design for people who with regard to some activities want to be fully determined and with regard to others want no determination at all.
14. put people's worthiness and dignity at the very centre of the constellation of factors determining any design decision, and refrain from deciding yourself whether certain people or things are more worthy than others. That is not your decision to make, even when you use them to further your own ends. Beings have to decide this for themselves.

15. decide what it is you desire and relate this desire to its possible uses (i.e. not just to its conceived purpose)
16. understand the spatial conditions of behaviour and the behavioural conditions for the perception of space and their reciprocal nature
17. test a desire for its cost to other people and to the environment against experience, the extrapolation of experience into the possible and for its logical consistency within a well conceived frame of reference
18. structure one's use of things to take account of other people's desires, uses and structures as well as the desires, uses and structures of abstract concepts such as *the environment*
19. learn to use structures well with reference to our desires and our freedom to pursue our own good
20. learn about the production of social space, the reciprocal relationship between ideas and rules and the given limitations of the built environment forming behaviour; how social space is produced through occupation, the formation of habits and the activities of habitation
21. learn to make the use of spaces enjoyable, to make the activities of everyday special and the special wondrous. Poetic use is great use
22. understand how shape and form is made by light and shade, colour, texture and sound. Learn how the senses work together in the creation of experience, how the senses are tools of spatial exploration and how the body uses everything at its disposal to make sense of the space it is in adequate to its use and expectations
23. do not dismiss any of the senses and do not allow the primacy of one sense over another without having thought it through
24. learn to design by learning to undergo space well. What *well* means depends on the situation and the set of considered uses
25. allow newcomers and people with other concerns than the undergoing of space the time to learn and practise their skills and attitude with reference to the realised design
26. if a design is sophisticated and unfamiliar in its working, they will need help and even rules to help them
27. learn to desire well as a designer, be critical with respect to what you desire, attempt to unravel the braid of judgments and reasons that underpin your desire and be sincere to yourself at the very least

28. search out your responsibility in any and every situation and act accordingly.
29. choose clearly where to invest your authority for any one decision
30. realize that a design decision that works well in one situation does not *therefore* work well in another
31. everything has its uses, especially the useless
32. ask not *whether* we use something, but how we use it, we use everything
33. design by using things well, things only break with reference to the use they are required to work for
34. design by using bodies well, people do not mind being used well, they love it, they hate being abused and misused
35. design by using the environment well, you abuse yourself in abusing your environment
36. realise that machines and landscapes are delicate instruments needing love and care
37. realise that every decision with regard to one aspect of a building necessarily affects all others so that design is never a linear affair, but a process needing constant feedback
38. realize that there is no single good way of designing buildings, systems or cities
39. realize that there is no single good way of starting a design project
40. intentions are all very well but it is the consequences that matter
41. ask yourself whether the design you propose will work in the way you want it to work
42. ask yourself how else it will work, test it by asking the annoying questions that will show up its possible weaknesses
43. learn about and explore the possibilities of structures and constructions, as well as the behaviour of materials, light , colours, textures and sound
44. learn about desire as a social instrument and learn to test desires for the social conflicts they inevitably harbour
45. the social functioning of space is not an evil in itself. There is nothing wrong with wanting to present a good face to the world.
46. before you judge, think whether you need judgment or whether you simply need description
47. use precedents as instances of realised quality but take care that these realised qualities are situationally sensitive

48. learn to approach the design of qualities with reference to new possibilities and insights regarding the technology of building
49. what exists in our world needs no justification for its existence. Action upon what already exists is what requires justification
50. description and its critique helps design become sophisticated and geared to the authority we chose to invest in
51. buildings and all our objects participate in life, take that on board when giving them a face
52. with every design decision it is useful to ask whether it will impede our own freedom, that of others or other beings within the environment and take an appropriate stand on that
53. every design decision that passes the previous test has to be tested again by asking whether the beneficiary of your design decision benefits him at the cost of someone or something else
54. avoid putting law and rule before experience unless you know for certain that the law holds in every case and situation. Such laws are extremely rare and may only hold for something like Cradle to Cradle thinking and even then only in those cases where it has been shown to work
55. any question can lead to any answer and thus to any action. Test your fictions against experience and for their logical consistency within an adequate frame of reference
56. taking the consequence of your freedom to decide anything on the basis of anything can place you outside of society and make you behave without reference to experience. Occasionally this is a good thing, often it is not
57. your aesthetic stand or taste which forms the basis of your ability to judge is precious. Be careful who or what you invest with the authority to help you decide an issue
58. being sophisticated requires a lot of learning and a lot of practice. There will always be people who are not prepared to invest in themselves to the extent desired for the good use of a sophisticated design. They are just as deserving of dignity as everyone else
59. there is no short-cut to quality. Building good habits and traditions help, but they do not by themselves sanction their own existence. Action needs to be justified. I would suggest that you measure them against Rawls' principles of liberty and difference
60. There is a lot of false authority about; strange notions and beliefs as well as very mundane everyday notions and beliefs can be completely misguided. It is very hard to know what is what. The

only test for a notion or belief is to see whether holding it gives a useful way of looking at the world. When this can be answered in the affirmative it is prudent to ask exactly with reference to what or to whom it is useful and why

61. giving something or someone the authority to decide an issue does not mean you have relinquished your responsibility for having given that authority
62. try to find the qualities that lay folded within the materials, structures and systems your are using. Finding these qualities and making them work well in social space is the real challenge.
63. there is (unfortunately for those who have invested considerable effort in building and grooming their taste well) no bad taste unless it harms a body in its environment in some way. The dismissal of a style of building that is not harmful to human being *always* rests on inadequate reasoning
64. a sophisticated taste is, in itself, no better than an unsophisticated taste, the one is only *better* relative to the other, from a specific perspective

Glossary

Word	Definition
Abstraction	A way of conceiving the world in thoughts and ideas, or, more specifically, a way of reducing aspects of the world into virtually autonomous units of reference, entities or portraits and then to speculate about their relationship to each other.
Aesthetics	A discipline in philosophy concerned with the question of defining and deciding upon desirable and undesirable qualities.
Authority	An emotive weight or ground making a taste with which to make and justify decisions. We have to invest something with authority in order to allow a decision. Authority is the mechanism whereby qualities achieve stability and are given a direction. We decide to invest something with authority and on the basis of that decision let other decisions follow.
Bad	A word denoting something that is not or should not be desirable.
Behaviour	The way something reacts to something else. In this sense colour is behaviour as much as anger.
Being	Being as using: As entities maintaining ourselves in the environment of which we are an inextricable part we use the atoms we are made up of to exist. We use our ability to think and our body to take a stand. We use our position in a situation to define ourselves. Some use God to feel secure in their being. In order to maintain ourselves as entities within the plenum, the fullness of being, we engage with what we consider <i>the other</i> . Use is not peripheral to what entities do in order to exist. Entities can exist as entities only if they use that of which they are constituted and that against which they are constituted in order to maintain

themselves. To be is to use. And to use is to engage with the other.

Belief	A dearly held opinion or stand on a particular issue
Body	A body is not an autonomous thing in itself. If it is seen as autonomous then this is an act of abstraction. In fact a body is more like a special <i>organised</i> collection within a larger collection (the environment) and this special collection is subject to a process of continuous metabolic activity exchanging bits of itself with the environment, both virtually (ideas and thoughts) as well as real (tangible stuff)
Certainty	Very confidently held belief
Consistency	A correlation between abstractions constituting <i>a fit</i> .
Culture	A set of subjects around which people assemble and take a stand
Decision	A cutting into the flow of an event and thereby trying to change or otherwise determine its direction
Description	A method of making abstractions of parts of the environment using words
Design	An intentional and preparative selective activity using experience. A particular form of evolution
Deterritorialisation	Undetermining a particular relationship that had hitherto been determined
Discipline	A word defining a particular field of inquiry defined by game-rules
Doing	Doing is an instance of using, because doing is acting; acting is always an acting <i>upon</i> and acting

upon is a using of the other.

Environment	That which forms the operating and existential context of a body. It is inhabited by other bodies that take on a special place within the environment. The environment is a totality of which any body is a part, it is the sphere of which a body takes up the near centre and the I takes up the exact centre.
Ethics	A discipline in philosophy which concerns itself with the question of how to act in order to achieve a good use of something or how to achieve a desired quality
Event	A movement image in which interesting behaviour works itself out into a transformed situation
Evolution	The selective behaviour and reproduction of bodies allowing adaptation
Experience	What an I and its body-in-the-environment knows about the world
Form	the relationship a surface takes on regarding another form
Form-Behaviour	The relationship between form and behaviour is such that the one is an aspect of the other
Freedom	Any possibilities allowed by the limitations a body is subject to
Game	Any unified practice subject to specifiable limitations and allowing possibilities confined by them.
Generosity	A way of looking at an object or situation allowing a margin for the undetermined, the unknowable and the uncertain

Good	A word denoting that which is or should be desirable
Having	Having something is legitimately defined as <i>having the use of something</i> . The poet Jan Arends once said that no one has ever owned a grain of sand. And he is right. Ownership is a way to describe the fact that you have claimed the privilege of use.
The I or the self	A place or virtual surface of the body where the relationships between the body and its environment are taken account of and coordinated. Compare Heidegger's <i>Dasein</i>
Knowledge	A kind of believing or a confidence concerning experience
Learning	Gaining experience and belief
Logic	A discipline in philosophy concerned with investigating the nature of cogency
Metaphysics	A discipline in philosophy which explores how we can speak usefully about the world, it explores the conditions upon which the first two disciplines aesthetics and ethics can operate. It describes the landscape of experience (ontology) and makes it communicable (logic and linguistics) it sorts out that which is compelling enough to be believed from that which is flawed, so as to form a basis for desire and action.
Morality	A way of judging practices defining a culture Morality is where aesthetics and ethics meet. A morality is a set of judgments on practices that define a culture
Object	A thing made into a virtually autonomous unit through a process of abstraction so that it is ready for use. See also portrait.

Ontology	A discipline in philosophy concerned with describing the landscape of experience
Organisation	The structuring of the environment so that processes work upon each other and a coordination takes place regarding a specialised activity.
Perception	The way the body uses its sensory apparatus to determine significance. It is the process which of memory and understanding
Philosophy	A discipline concerned with questioning ideas and practices
Portrait	A better description of an object in that it allows the world to be conceived of as whole and continuous, whereby we have framed and composed a particular facet of it and turned it to our attention
Practise	Learning and refining ones bodily skills through doing again
Quality	The product or expression of a relationship that can be undergone or perceived
Real	Depending on the context: Sense 1. As opposed to virtuality: that which has been actualized and objectified in a way that it can be perceived as a unit (a body) by any one or more of our senses. Sense 2. That which can be said to exist. Everything we can dream, think or experience exists, but its mode of existence is not thereby determined. Virtual existence is a different mode of existence to real existence as meant in sense 1. However both really exist in sense 2.
Relation	A stand taken by an I whereby the I and the environment determine themselves

Reterritorialisation	Determining a relationship that had hitherto been determined differently
Situation	A set of factors bearing on an event
Society	A virtual place, or abstraction, in which bodies organise themselves and their environment so as to allow cohabitation
Style	When referred to an object: That which makes two objects the same or different. When referred to a subject: a patterned way of doing things
Subject	An I taking a stand on an object
Territorialisation	Determining a particular relationship
Theoria	An activity whereby we look at our image of the world as a portrait and try to work out the way things are interrelated relative to something that is centred
Theory	An answer to a question, a belief about the nature of something
Undergoing	The way a body experiences an event upon which the I takes a stand
Use	Any action, virtual or actual, which an I undertakes to maintain and develop itself and its body in an environment
Virtuality	All that that is a product of the behaviour of real stuff but cannot itself be touched, heard, tasted, smelt or seen but only thought. As such virtual space is space that obeys the rules just given, but can be reconstructed as a real space in our understanding. A painting of a real space is a good example. Any word or thought also obeys the same rules.

World	A totality of relationships relating the I to the environment
Responsibility	The ability to respond to a situation. We have an obligation to find our responsibility in any situation. This obligation we have towards ourselves on the condition that we want to live in our environment.
Social Space	The medium and its surfaces in which we human beings act upon each other and the environment.
Socialisation	The process whereby we learn to take account of each other and the environment to serve our selves
Human being	The activity of being a human being
A human being	An I relating a particular kind of body to the environment it lives in