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The Everyday, Building, and Architecture

Reflections on the Ethos and Beauty of Our Built Surroundings

I want to look at the various roles that different kinds of buildings serve in our everyday environment. I will start with some of Karsten Harries's poignant observations regarding building and architecture, and the tensions in our encounters with architecture: "like all building, architecture too should make us comfortable, while, like all art, it should make us uncomfortable, fill us with dreams of a better world, of genuine community."¹ More than Harries, I will emphasize the importance of the everyday and its routines, taking a lead from Heidegger's notion of *Alltäglichkeit*, everydayness. Heidegger writes:

1 Harries 1997, p. 282.

Das Dasein soll im Ausgang der Analyse gerade nicht in der Differenz eines bestimmten Existierens interpretiert, sondern in seinem indifferen-ten Zunächst und Zumeist aufgedeckt werden. Diese Indifferenz der Alltäglichkeit des Daseins ist *nicht nichts*, sondern ein positiver phäno-menaler Charakter dieses Seienden. Aus dieser Seinsart heraus und in sie zurück ist alles Existieren, wie es ist. Wir nennen diese alltägliche Indifferenz des Daseins *Durchschnittlichkeit*.²

2 Heidegger 1967, p. 43.

Great works of architecture may often "let us take a leave from the everyday"³, but most of the time, we encounter them in the "Indifferenz der Alltäglichkeit". Even in their everydayness, architectural constructions have an important role in creating stability, reliability, and structure in our environment. The reliability, *Verlässlichkeit*⁴, of our world depends to a large extent on the existence of cul-turally significant objects, of which works of architecture are prime examples.

3 Harries 1997, p. 281.

4 Heidegger 1960, p. 24.

I will argue that even while architecture mainly serves as a factor in cre-ating stability, it has an aesthetic role, too. Not in the sense of taking us some-where else from our everyday, but it is exactly by being a stabilizing factor that architecture makes possible the rhythms of the everyday. From an aes-thetic point of view, architecture has a double role: both the comfortable and the uncomfortable have an aesthetic aspect to them.

1

Everydayness is one of the most fundamental characteristics of human existence; it is as unavoidable as death, with the exception that we encounter death first-hand only once while the everyday is present all the time. On the ontic level, manifestations of the everyday can be almost anything. Think about the everyday existence of an art collector: it is filled with works of art. Think of the everyday of an astrologer: it is filled with planets, stars, and galaxies. Think of the everyday of a theologian: it is filled with God's grace. Or that of a Holocaust survivor? The list is as endless as human activities, interests, beliefs, hopes, desires, and sufferings. The manifestations of the everyday point out the complexities of the *Lebenswelt*, of the human being-in-the-world. My everyday is my closest ally, of yours I can only get a glimpse and an inkling.

Artefacts, including architectural constructs of all kinds, are very much in the center of human everydayness. We need shelter, and we want to have a shelter in which we feel at home, in which we can dwell. In harsh natural conditions, the shelter can be a primitive one, but for any lengthy dwelling, something more is needed. The place in which a human dwells is very much a part of that human being. Heidegger has pointed out that we are in-the-world, but not in the sense of living in some kind of a container called the "world", but in the sense of identifying ourselves by the world—whatever is "in" there—and being parts of the world. What each of us is, as a human being, is defined by the world, by the complex relations in which we find ourselves and which we keep creating until the moment of death.

Here is a well-known passage from *Sein und Zeit* in which Heidegger characterizes the special nature of *Dasein's* "being-in-the-world":

Das In-Sein meint so wenig ein räumliches "Ineinander" Vorhandener, als "in" ursprünglich gar nicht eine räumliche Beziehung der genannten Art bedeutet; "in" stammt von innan-, wohnen, habitare, sich aufhalten; "an" bedeutet: ich bin gewohnt, vertraut mit, ich pflege etwas; es hat die Bedeutung von colo im Sinne von habito und diligo. Dieses Seiende, dem das In-Sein in dieser Bedeutung zugehört, kennzeichneten wir als das Seiende, das ich je selbst bin. Der Ausdruck "bin" hängt zusammen mit "bei"; "ich bin" besagt wiederum: ich wohne, halte mich auf bei [...] der Welt, als dem so und so Vertrauten. Sein als Infinitiv des "ich bin", d. h. als Existenzial verstanden, bedeutet wohnen bei..., vertraut sein mit [...] In-Sein ist demnach der formale existenziale Ausdruck des Seins des Daseins, das die wesenhafte Verfassung des In-der-Welt-seins hat.⁵

⁵ Heidegger 1927/1967, p. 54.

We know the world, we have become familiar with it by living "in" it, doing different things, acting and creating relations with our fellow humans as well as with all kinds of non-human beings, especially with tools of various sorts. The nature of everydayness is perhaps best understood through our encounters with tools, pieces of equipment. They are closest to us in our everyday existence—the laptop with which I am writing right now, the table on which

it stands, the chair on which I sit, and so on. Heidegger stresses that in our normal encounters with tools, we do not pay attention to them, they are there to fulfill a purpose. They become transparent, invisible in a sense. Their materials, of what they are made of, likewise disappear. As Heidegger puts the matter in *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*: "Der Stein wird in der Anfertigung des Zeuges, z.B. der Axt, gebraucht und verbraucht. Er verschwindet in der Dienlichkeit."⁶ With the tools we are using, we are taking care of things;⁷ they make our daily activities possible.

6 Heidegger 1960, p. 34–35.

Heidegger's characterization of a tool is well-known but still worth quoting. In this passage, Heidegger has captured not only the nature of *das Zeug*, but also an important feature of everydayness itself:

7 Heidegger's terms are 'besorgen' and 'Sorge'; Heidegger 1927/1967, p. 57.

Ein Zeug "ist" strenggenommen nie. Zum Sein von Zeug gehört je immer ein Zeugganzes, darin es dieses Zeug sein kann, das es ist. Zeug ist wesenhaft "etwas, um zu [...]" ". Die verschiedenen Weisen des "Um-zu" wie Dienlichkeit, Beiträglichkeit, Verwendbarkeit, Handlichkeit konstituieren eine Zeugganzheit. In der Struktur "Um-zu" liegt eine Verweisung von etwas auf etwas.⁸

8 Heidegger 1927/1967, p. 68.

Our everydayness consists of numerous "in-order-to" ("Um-zu") structures. We create them all the time. It is in our very "nature" that we operate in these structures, and the world offers us building blocks for their creation. I am writing this essay in a city, Málaga, which is not my home town, Helsinki. In order to be able to operate in a new place, the first thing one must do is establish a whole bunch of these "in-order-to" structures. In a matter of hours, the basic constituents were, for me, in their places: I had become acquainted with the apartment in which I am living, got something from the grocery store, etc. In a matter of days, I had become acquainted with some parts of the city, and was able to find my way and move around without much special effort.

All this familiarizing is a process of establishing "um-zu" structures, and by the same token, creating my world, my Málaga-world, which certainly overlaps with and resembles the worlds of those having lived in the city their whole lives, but is in many respects simpler and poorer. I do, however, have my routines in their places, I have my routes in the city, I am accustomed to the soundscape and to the immediate visual sights. From time to time, an aura of strangeness still lingers there, when I walk on the streets, pass buildings and people, but for most of the time, a comforting familiarity has taken over. The human home-building characteristic has won.

2

Let me continue with the notion of the everyday. Ben Highmore is not a phenomenologist, but the description he gives of the everyday is both vivid and accurate, and exemplifies nicely, in my view, how a useful and illuminating phenomenological analysis is done:

Somewhere a clock is ticking like it always does, you are getting hungry like you always do, the telephone is ringing like it always will, and the TV is playing in an empty room. Someone is dying, someone is being born, someone is making love; somewhere a war is being fought. Midwives and morticians, paupers and princes, go about their everyday lives. Everything can become everyday, everything can become ordinary; it is our greatest blessing, our most human accomplishment, our greatest handicap, our most despicable complacency.⁹

We are the everyday; there is nothing to be ashamed of in that; nothing to be avoided. Even the most extraordinary of humans, Oscar Wilde in his times, all the wanna-be-famous people in ours, all have their normalcy, their routines, their ordinary existence, however extraordinary it may look in our eyes—or however extraordinary it is portrayed to be. As Highmore points out, the everyday cannot be defined by a certain set of objects, actions, or events. For a midwife, a birth of a child is a daily routine, for a mortician, human death. In a war zone, danger is always present; however stressing and unpleasant it may be, it constitutes the everyday of people living there. Perhaps the most easily graspable features of the everyday are, to refer to Highmore again, the most insignificant events and deeds: a clock ticking, the noise of the traffic, a common object—like a TV set—simply being there. The simple presence of the walls around us, the houses in the neighborhood, people—whoever they might be—walking on the streets, this is the everyday environment for most urban dwellers; like myself at the moment.

The building I am in, is, most of the time, also a piece of equipment, serving a purpose—giving me shelter, a place to work and sleep. In *Sein und Zeit*, one of the few references to building is precisely in the context of tools:

Zeug ist in seiner Zeughaftigkeit entsprechend immer *aus* der Zugehörigkeit zu anderem Zeug: Schreibzeug, Feder, Tinte, Papier, Unterlage, Tisch, Lampe, Möbel, Fenster, Türen, Zimmer. Diese "Dinge" zeigen sich nie zunächst für sich, um dann als Summe von Realem ein Zimmer auszufüllen. Das Nächstbegegnende, obzwar nicht thematisch Erfasste, ist das Zimmer, und dieses wiederum nicht als das "Zwischen den vier Wänden" in einem geometrischen räumlichen Sinne – sondern als Wohnzeug.¹⁰

As a "tool for living", *Wohnzeug*, the room and the house and the whole neighborhood disappear in their usefulness. Even the most magnificent work of art, the most glorious building, the most breath-taking natural site, all these and much more can become ordinary, mere bricks in the fabric of the everyday. Again, this is not something deplorable, not a situation of which we should try to relieve ourselves, but rather, as Heidegger put it in one of the quotations above, "a positive, phenomenal feature of this being". It is fact of human existence: this is how we construe our worlds and live "in" them.

There have been attempts to define the everyday in terms of certain kinds of objects and activities. One of the most recent attempts is that by Thomas Leddy. In his view, works of art, for example, can never be everyday objects, whereas certain human activities, like going to a grocery store, are always everyday activities:

What is everyday aesthetics? It would be a mistake to take the term *everyday* too literally. A musician who practices and plays every day can justly say that her everyday aesthetic experience is mainly connected with music. A naturalist could similarly say that his everyday aesthetic experience is of nature. Yet when we talk about everyday aesthetic experience, we are thinking of aesthetic issues that are not connected closely with the fine arts or with the natural environments, or with other areas that form well-established aesthetic domains, for example, the aesthetics of mathematics, science, or religion. We are thinking instead of the home, the daily commute, the workplace, the shopping center, and places of amusement.¹¹

11 Leddy 2005, p. 3.

Even though I can see the motivation behind Leddy's approach—the field of philosophical aesthetics divided neatly into sections by reference to objects of study—I cannot but disagree with his account. It simply does not reflect our experiences of the everyday. Going to a grocery store for the first time in a foreign city—Málaga for me—is not an everyday experience, it is something which I have not done before, something which requires my full attention, something which might even raise aesthetic considerations of a traditional kind: it all looks, and is, so different from my local store in Helsinki. But once I have done my shopping long enough, the newness disappears, and I take the store into my everyday existence; it does not require any more special attention.

As both Heidegger and Highmore emphasize, the everyday is a relational matter. Heidegger's term is "Verweisung", Highmore writes that "everyday life is a thoroughly relational term."¹² This relationality means, to quote Highmore one more time, "the ordinary is never set in stone: ordinariness is a process (like habit) where things (practices, feelings, conditions and so on) pass from unusual to usual, from irregular to regular, and can move the other way (what was an ordinary part of my life, is no more)."¹³

12 Highmore 2011, p. 2.

13 Highmore 2011, p. 6.

The procedural character is an important feature in the everyday: depending on your life conditions, things and events shift from one mode to another, and perhaps back again to the "original". Life is always filled with changes. There are seasons, weather conditions, buildings are being renovated and torn down, new constructions are being built, etc. The everyday is a flux, in the ontic sense that there is the movement from extraordinary to ordinary in an individual's life. How deep the changes are is contingent on the living conditions of the individual. Changing places, moving from one location to another, always requires adapting and a tolerance of uncertainty, until one has familiarized oneself with the conditions of that particular place.

Let me now try to pinpoint the crucial features of the everyday. The everyday is, ontologically speaking, closest to us: it constitutes our existence, we are our everyday. I have thrown my existence out into the world, and made some parts of it, my world, a Heideggerian "Umwelt." At the time of the internet and virtual realities, the "extended" self goes well beyond the boundaries of any physical limits, but through our body we are also part of a physical location, the extent of which, again, varies a lot depending on the individual.

The everyday is the background; we have grown into it, it is within our skin, and it often requires a special effort, an act of reflection, to see for oneself one's everydayness; "nothing is really in the foreground of experience"¹⁴, as Highmore puts it. But when changes occur, then we notice; when there is a disturbance; when there is the unfunctionality of our favourite tool:

¹⁴ Highmore 2011, p. 2.

Das eigentümliche und selbstverständliche "an-sich" der nächsten "Dinge" begegnet in dem sie gebrauchenden und dabei nicht ausdrücklich beachtenden Besorgen, das auf Unbrauchbares stoßen kann. Ein Zeug ist unverwendbar – darin liegt: die konstitutive Verweisung des Um-zu auf ein Dazu ist gestört. Die Verweisungen selbst sind nicht betrachtet, sondern "da" in dem besorgenden Sichstellen unter sie. In seiner Störung der Verweisung – in der Unverwendbarkeit für [...] wird aber die Verweisung ausdrücklich.¹⁵

¹⁵ Heidegger 1927/1967, p. 74.

Ontically, for every individual, the everyday is in flux. There is constancy, otherwise it would not be the everyday, but periodically there are changes in details and sometimes even in the whole system. My coming to Málaga was a "system change", my leaving Málaga will be another one. It is not a shattering experience, not a peak-experience in the sense of a life changing experience. But it is something which leaves a trace in my existence, and accordingly in my essence.

3

Let us return to building and architecture. Karsten Harries asks:

Given the shape of the modern world, does it still make sense to privilege one building task over all the others? Is there still and should there be an architectural type capable of establishing or reestablishing a communal world as the Greek temple on Heidegger's interpretation was able to do? ¹⁶

¹⁶ Harries 1997, p. 288.

Heidegger argued in *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes* that the temple was a kind of focal point in the Greek world, and even more than that, that the temple established a world:

Das Tempelwerk fügt erst und sammelt zugleich um sich die Einheit

jener Bahnen und Bezüge, in denen Geburt und Tod, Unheil und Segen, Sieg und Schmach, Ausharren und Verfall die Gestalt und den Lauf des Menschenwesens in seinem Geschick gewinnen. Die waltende Weite dieser offenen Bezüge ist die Welt dieses geschichtlichen Volkes. Aus ihr und in ihr kommt es erst auf sich selbst zum Vollbringen seiner Bestimmung zurück.¹⁷

17 Heidegger 1960, p. 32.

The temple established the structures and meanings of the Greek world. As Harries points out, this is the world of meaning and values, not a simple collection of things. This kind of world makes dwelling possible, not just simple residing: “To dwell is to feel at home. Building allows for dwelling by granting a sense of place.”¹⁸ The sense of place is based on familiarity. When we have made a place our own, we have a sense of it.

18 Harries 1997, p. 154.

Architectural structures, such as the temple in the Greek world, have a dual role. On one hand, they make the everyday possible, they create stability and order, in which humans can dwell. On the other hand, such structures are culturally and aesthetically significant in themselves; they are objects that stand out from the everyday, in Harries’s words: “Works of architecture refuse to fit into the pregiven context without speaking up. They stand up to that context and hold their ground.”¹⁹ And in further terms of the everyday: “Its (architecture’s, AH) very point is to let us take a leave from the everyday, if only to return us to it, now with eyes more open, with greater awareness of what everyday routines inevitably obscure.”²⁰

19 Harries 1997, p. 281.

20 Harries 1997, p. 281.

This is the dual function of architecture; this is the theme of this paper: “like all building, architecture too should make us comfortable, while, like all art it should make us uncomfortable, fill us with dreams of a better world, of genuine community.”²¹ As I pointed out at the beginning of this paper, everything can, and eventually will, become ordinary. Even the greatest of cathedrals, the most stunning museum building, the most massive shopping mall, all these and many of their kinds will eventually lose their captive force and sink into everydayness. But I do agree with Harries that they will retain the possibility of a surprise, of taking us momentarily away from the everyday routines, and, perhaps, “fill us with dreams of a better world.”

21 Harries 1997, p. 282.

In the Western societies, however, it is seldom that sacred architecture has this kind of role. When I visit the Cathedral in Málaga, I am certainly impressed by it; as in so many other cathedrals, the size and the height create an aura of grandeur, sacredness if you want, which emphasizes my smallness and insignificance. But, being a faithless person, there is no way I can get into the world of the work; referring to the Augustinian priory church in Dießen, Harries writes: “Still, like so many of the great churches of the West, for most of its visitors this church, too, has become an aesthetic object, a museum of sorts.”²² I would add that it is not necessarily an aesthetic object in the sense of simple surface beauty, sensorial admiration of visual patterns and colors. The historical knowledge adds to the experience and deepens it, indeed historical knowledge may be a prerequisite for the aesthetic experience. But despite

22 Harries 1997, p. 266.

all this, my experience remains an experience of an outsider. It may open up a world form, but there is very little in that world to which I can connect myself. It does not speak to me, or rather, the language it speaks is not my language. Where should we look to find the kind of buildings that would have the same role as the temple for the Greeks? Harries refers to Nicolaus Pevsner's *History of Building Types*, and to the types of buildings Pevsner mentions. Here are only a few of a long list: governmental buildings, museums, railway stations, market halls, department stores.²³

23 Harries 1997, p. 289.

As a suggestion, I want to take a closer look at two: railway stations and department stores. Railway stations embody the modern ideal of movement, travel and freedom. It suggests the possibility of changing places, of extending your horizons. For many of us, the place in which we dwell is geographically scattered in the sense that there are several spots which we occupy, and we cover the distance between them, for example, by train. As buildings, railway stations often have a special significance: Grand Central in New York, Victoria in London, or indeed, although in a much smaller scale, the Helsinki Railway Station designed by Eliel Saarinen. All these are monuments of a sort, claiming an artistic status, but at the same time, they are a very crucial part of people's everyday surroundings and structure their worlds. They also serve as tools: I go to the railway station in order to go somewhere. When I am concerned with my traveling, I hardly pay attention to the building itself—I navigate it in order to catch the train.

The same goes for many department stores: KaDeWe in Berlin, Selfridges in London, Printemps in Paris, El Corte Inglés in many Spanish cities, Stockmann in Helsinki, and so forth. These buildings embody, for better or worse, crucial western values: consumerism and the shopping experience. They are places most people know; people go there to spend time, to meet friends—and to shop. Whether this is *the* dominating ethos of our times may be debatable, but it is certainly *one* of them, and for many people it is the guiding ideal.

One could claim that it is a sad and deplorable fact that railway stations and department stores have—for some people at least—taken the place of temples and churches. Should we take a normative position to find the real ethos of architecture? Or, should we simply accept the facts, and live accordingly? Isn't it the case that in our post-modern societies there simply is not a single set of values, not one piece of architecture that would gather people around and establish the world? When in Helsinki, my world is structured by the university buildings in the city center. The Cathedral is next to my office, but for me, it is mainly present as a visual sight. Still I tend to agree with Harries when he writes:

If, as I have suggested, the opposition between building and architecture is essential to the latter as it has traditionally been understood, then architecture will have a future only if the place once occupied by temple and church can in some sense be reoccupied.²⁴

24 Harries 1997, p. 324.

The sense of a community, living together with other humans, is central and crucial for human existence, and if the sacred cannot fulfill this function any more, there must be other cultural activities and architectural constructs that do.

4

There has been a world-wide tendency in past decades to give different kinds of cultural buildings a special role. A lot of effort and expenses have been put into, e.g., museums and opera houses. Examples are numerous: the Guggenheim in Bilbao, the Jewish Museum in Warsaw, the Opera House in Oslo, the new Whitney Museum in New York, the Kiasma Museum in Helsinki. Could it be that museums and opera buildings have taken the role of temples and churches? Or, are they also only decorations in the city structure?

Before considering these questions further, I want to introduce one more distinction that Harries makes. This is the one between decoration and ornament.²⁵ In Harries's view, only ornament has the role of articulating "communal ethos", decoration is simply an aesthetic surplus. Harries writes: "all genuine ornament carries the promise of an integrated way of life, a promise of full humanity and thus also of genuine community."²⁶ This relates closely to what Harries calls the "ethical function of architecture"²⁷. The task of architecture is to create meaningful environments and to contribute to the communal ethos.

25 Harries 1997, p. 48.

26 Harries 1997, p. 60.

27 Harries 1997, p. 102.

Neither architecture nor art is purely aesthetic pleasure. Both architecture and art—one is tempted here to take a normative position in the Heideggerian sense and talk about "great art"—have a communal role to play. Literature is the prime example of an art form that articulates human concerns both local and global. Should literature be only for entertainment, without any social, societal, or more generally speaking, human concerns, it would soon become futile. Art for art's sake is not a viable stance.²⁸ In all the arts, we should give up decoration and go for ornament. But the ornament does not have to speak a universal language, and most often—I am thinking here of all the arts—it does not. A work and a piece of architecture can create a small opening, speak to a fairly small community, but still create a communal ethos.

28 Harries 1997, p. 125.

There is no one world towards which we should be aiming. Heidegger's *Spiegel* interview was entitled "Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten", "Only a god can save us." In the interview itself, this was almost a casual remark, but it has certainly received a lot of weight and attention ever since the publication of the interview in 1976. But maybe gods appear in the plural like the Greek gods. There is Aphrodite, but also Apollo; there is Athena, but also Dionysus. Different gods allow different openings, and draw together different people in different occasions. Jeff Malpas, in respect to this line of Heideggerian thinking, makes a relevant point as regards both works of art and philosophies,

Art and poetry always work, of course, within and through particular spaces and places – with respect to particular "works", modes, and practices. The same is true ... of the thinking of place that Heidegger

attempts, and, indeed, of any such thinking. The thinking of place that is to be found in Heidegger's work is thus a thinking that [...] occurs in and through the only "place" it could for Heidegger: in the places and spaces with which he was himself familiar and in which his thinking was embedded—not only the village of Messkirch, the city of Freiburg, and the locality of Todtnauberg in the Black Forest, but also the particular "topos" of the lecture hall, the seminar room, and of the philosophical essay. [...] thus the poetics of Heidegger's thinking works through a certain philosophical tradition and vocabulary, through a particular way of doing philosophy, through a historical and topographical heritage that belongs to the South German landscape in which Heidegger was born, grew up, worked, and died, through the language and images that belong to those places and to that landscape.²⁹

29 Malpas 2006, p. 313–314.

The gods we are looking for today are different from those of Heidegger and his era. We have to acknowledge the flux and changes not only in the individual life worlds, but also in the larger cultural worlds into which the individual ones are embedded. As Charles Spinoza, Fernando Flores and Hubert L. Dreyfus have argued, there are several ways of disclosing new worlds, and the worlds themselves can vary in size and significance. There are "disclosive spaces", such as the Heideggerian totalities of tools. There are "subworlds," such as the worlds of theatre, medicine, politics, etc. And finally, there are "local worlds," subworlds interacting with each other and forming more complex structures, such as big international companies, states, and organizations of various sorts.³⁰

30 Spinoza et al. 1997.

These openings create communities in which meanings and values are shared. Architectural buildings also create openings, the size and significance of which clearly vary. At best, a piece of architecture can be a symbol for the whole city, a landmark which is known not only by those living under its spell but also by those visiting the city. It would not be "a museum of sort," to use Harries's phrase, but something more significant, perhaps giving us "a promise of happiness"³¹, and filling "us with dreams of a better world, of genuine community."³²

31 This is the title of Alexander Nehamas's Tanner Lectures on Human Values, delivered at Yale University in 2001.

I am an optimist as regards the kind of cultural building referred to above. They do tell something about the ethos of our times. They are not decoration on the surface of the city, but an ornament having at least the possibility to create a community to a significant amount of people.

32 Harries 1997, p. 282.

5

Now it is time to start weaving the different strands of this paper together, and to point out where the ethos and beauty of the everyday environments are to be found.

Human existence is mostly existence within the everyday, and accordingly, should be understood "in seinem indifferenten Zunächst und Zumeist." The dominating feature of our "Alltäglichkeit" is the useful routines: we carry on

our daily existence in the various “um-zu” structures that the world offers us, and to which we always adapt ourselves. This also means that architectural constructs are, “first and foremost,” seen through the lenses of functionality, as tools or simple backgrounds in the flow of the everyday.

I have argued elsewhere that there is an aesthetic aspect in everydayness itself, and it is exactly within the flow of routines, and in the familiarity and reliability of everyday structures.³³ The beauty of architecture is both in the very everydayness, in the routines and rhythms of the everyday, and in the power to draw us out of the everyday. The beauty of the everyday is a silent beauty, it does not require our attention. We notice it when the structures are disturbed, when something in the functioning totality breaks down. The beauty of the strange and noteworthy might be regarded – as is, I think, the case with Harries—as more important than the beauty of the everyday, but I see a role for both of them. There may not be any compelling reason to rank them.

33 Haapala 2005.

What makes architecture a special case is the fact that it occupies a place in our everyday world. Unlike in most arts, we do not have to go to a special place—museum building, concert hall, theatre—to encounter architecture. A construct is there, in my world and in yours, drawing us together into a shared experience. It may be an experience of traveling, it may be an experience of buying and spending time together. It may be an art experience.

Architecture and ornament can go beyond the everyday and its routines, and in this way remind us of the importance of the *Alltäglichkeit*. At the same time, architecture forces us to think of the everyday; not everything in the everyday should be taken for granted. Totalitarian societies are a grim reminder of everyday structures and routines that have gone seriously astray. As Harries points out, architecture can also possess totalitarian tendencies. Architecture is very much a part of the society, and is involved in its making. A critical and reflective attitude should always be kept alive. Harries writes:

The affinity of certain tendencies of modern architecture to totalitarianism is instructive. For me, it teaches us not to expect too much from the architect. The answer to the question of dwelling should never be entrusted to one person, no matter what his or her genius. --- The rights of the individual must be recognized alongside and in their inevitable tension with the rights of the community. And that is to say also that the rights of building must be recognized alongside and in their inevitable tension with the rights of architecture.³⁴

34 Harries 1997, p. 339.

This is the challenge and fascination of architecture: it is two things at once: comfortable and uncomfortable; familiar and strange. Does this make architecture the greatest of the arts?

Author

Arto Haapala received his Ph.D. in Philosophy at Birkbeck College, University of London in 1988, and his M.A. in Aesthetics at the University of Helsinki. He has been Professor of Aesthetics at the Department of Philosophy, History, Culture and Art Studies, University of Helsinki since 1995. He has been a visiting Professor at Temple University, Philadelphia, Lancaster University, UK, University of Murcia, Spain, and University of Málaga, Spain, and a researcher at Universities of Freiburg and Bochum, Germany. He has done research in different problems in aesthetics, particularly in ontology and interpretation, as well as in environmental aesthetics and Martin Heidegger's philosophy. His most recent interests are in the aesthetics of the everyday environment. His publications include *What Is a Work of Literature?* (1988), *The End of Art and Beyond* (ed. with Jerrold Levinson and Veikko Rantala, 1997), *Interpretation and Its Boundaries* (ed. with Ossi Naukkarinen, 1999), *Aesthetic Experience and the Ethical Dimension: Essays on Moral Problems in Aesthetics* (ed. with Oiva Kuisma, 2003), and *Ympäristö, estetiikka ja hyvinvointi (Environment, Aesthetics, and Well-Being)*, ed. with Kalle Puolakka and Tarja Rannisto (2015). In 2010 he founded a journal entitled *Aesthetic Pathways* together with Gerald Cipriani; in 2014 the journal was relaunched under the title *Journal of Aesthetics and Phenomenology*.

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