ARCHITECTURE AND ETHICS: AUTONOMY, ARCHITECTURE, ART

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INTRODUCTION

This paper concerns the relation(s) between architecture and ethics. Perhaps needless to say, the intersections between architecture and ethics are manifold. Architects, for example, should not cheat their clients or endanger them by using substandard building materials. Nor should they take risky shortcuts or evade building codes. They bear certain responsibilities for the safety of the inhabitants of their buildings. Their structures should stand firm. They should not collapse under predictable pressures. If the client has paid for one kind of stone, the architect should not try to counterfeit it with a cheaper substitute.

Architecture intersects so often with ethical issues that it is plausible to suggest that there are more connections between architecture and morality than there are in the case of any other art form.

However, while conceding this, it may also be said that a great many of these relations do not have to do with architecture-as-architecture. Many, rather, concern architecture-as-business and the ethics thereof. Architects are business persons and, like all business persons, they should not, all things being equal, cheat their customers. Building Potemkin villages, for instance, is immoral.

But, if "business" sounds like too narrow a concept here, we might categorize the pertinent relations in question in terms of architecture-as-service. The architect is a provider – a provider of services – and her clients have the right to expect

that their contracts and their agreements with their architects will be fulfilled, including expectations grounded in prevailing social expectations, such as: that houses not fall down.

The relevant ethics here are fairly generic – deriving from the kinds of responsibilities any provider has to her clients, albeit with specific reference to the sorts of contractual relations and social expectations that bind builders to those for whom they build.

Nevertheless, admitting these connections between ethics and architecture-as-service leaves open the question of the nature of the relation (or relations), if any, between ethics and architecture-as-architecture. This is the question I will address in this paper.

ARCHITECTURE AS INSTRUMENT

In order to engage the issues of the relation of architecture-as-architecture to ethics, we need to get a handle on the notion of architecture-as-architecture. As a first approximation, let us think broadly of an architect as a designer who constructs places – a person who shapes or builds environments – by arranging material forms, enclosing spaces and opening them. Conceived this way, architectural activity as such is patently related to ethics in that architects can be seen to be organizing spaces for morally assessable purposes.

For example, designing airport terminals in such a manner that passengers are confused about how to find their way out of the shopping area in search of their departure gates is to be complicit in chicanery; as is designing shopping malls that effectively entrap the clientele so they keep circling the same stores, constantly tempted into buying something.

Likewise designing highway overpasses so that they are too low to allow buses carrying poor people to travel to the parks and beaches frequented by the better-off is another example of designing space for immoral purposes.

Of course, spaces can also be organized for eminently righteous goals as in the case of much contemporary green architecture. Similarly, Shigeru Ban's designs for emergency disaster relief habitats are creations of indisputably great humanitarian value.[1]

Thus, there can be no question that architects as designers of built environments can use their skills for good or ill, morally speaking. Nevertheless, those who are interested in the relation of ethics to architecture-as-architecture – or architecture *qua* architecture – will protest that these are not the sorts of examples that need to be explored. For, they

will argue that the relation of architecture to moral or immoral purposes is an external relation. That is, it is the *purpose* of the organization of the space and not the *design itself* that is subject to moral assessment. And, furthermore, that purpose is external to the practice of architecture *qua* architecture. This is not to say that the architect is not culpable if he/she is complicit in implementing an immoral scheme. But his/her guilt is not, so to speak, architectural guilt. Or, maybe a related, but somewhat different way of getting at this general point is to say that the moral wrong in this case is attributable to the architect and not to the structure – i.e., not to the architecture.

ARCHITECTURAL OBLIGATIONS

The very notion of architectural guilt brings to mind, and possibly implies, that there must be something like architectural obligations. If there were architectural obligations – commitments architects incur simply by being architects – they would secure an internal relation between ethics and architecture *qua* architecture inasmuch as these putative obligations would be internal to the practice of architecture as such. Part of what it is to be an architect, then, would be the responsibility to abide by said obligations. Any builder would have to live up to these duties and any building would have to meet the standards they imply. Failure to do so would be immoral. These obligations would constitute an ethics of architecture *qua* architecture. The rhetoric of such an approach is resonant in such phrases as "truth to the materials" and "structural honesty."[2] Some well-known candidates for alleged architectural obligations are:

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1) that architects should be "true to" or beholden to their materials.

2) that architects should practice structural honesty – that they should not mask the true structure of their constructions.

3) that architects should embody or articulate

the spirit of their age,

or even more radically,

4) that architects should by their buildings shape the spirit of their age prospectively.

Let us look at each of these proposals in turn.

The requirement that architects should be true to their materials appears to rest supposedly upon the moral principle of honesty. Don't try to palm off so-called crystal glass as true crystal, to cite an example of Ruskin's cited by Pevsner.[3] Of course, if your client is paying for true crystal, there is an obvious moral infraction here in terms of the ethics of architecture-as-business. But what are the grounds for suspecting that there must be a moral infraction from the perspective of architecture *qua* architecture? The worry seems to be that there is deception afoot. But suppose that it is freely advertised that it is crystal glass?

I suspect that those who maintain that architects are beholden to their materials will still contend that there is a breach of architectural obligation in this case. But what could it be? What are the grounds for this alleged moral transgression? Maybe it will be proposed that, even if it is widely advertised, many may still take the crystal glass for true crystal. But whose fault is that and, in any event, who is harmed and how? The "true to the materials" line of thought sometimes makes it sound as though the materials have rights. Yet that's just superstitious.

Similar objections may be leveled against the appeal to structural honesty. This is the idea that the built environment should show forth its structure. It should not hide it underneath ornament, for instance. It should not suggest that it bears its weight anywhere other than where it actually does. But again, it is hard to identify who is harmed if the structure of a building is not evident to your average observer. Is one harmed if one takes the beams on the façade of Mies van der Rohe's Seagram's Building to be its central weight bearing structure rather than the beams recessed behind them?

One may call for foregrounding the structure of a building in the name of clarity, but it is an equivocation to equate a taste for intellectual clarity with honesty in the moral sense.

Moreover, it cannot be a moral transgression to fail to make manifest the structure of a building to outside observers since very often the structural supports are not visible to the naked eye – for example, the underground timbers upon which rest the Richardsonian Romanesque Trinity Church in Boston. Indeed, the view that there is a moral imperative

to reveal architectural structure appears to confuse a stylistic preference with an ethical concern.

Hegel began his grand survey of the history of art with what he called the symbolic stage, which was best exemplified by the great pyramids of Egypt. These structures, he claimed, revealed the level of Consciousness's self-understanding of itself at a very early stage, one whose lack of inwardness was putatively reflected symbolically in the limited interiority of the pyramids. At least since Hegel, it has become common for art historians to approach artworks with an eye to establishing the way in which they articulate the spirit of their age. Various architectural theorists have taken this role of emblematizing the spirit of the age as the brief of architecture as such.[4] It is not clear how this is a moral obligation, unless we endorse an extremely broad sense of the notion of ethics; perhaps it may be argued that when architecture performs this role, it provides a social good. However, if this is the idea, then it makes it seem as though architecture cannot but help doing good all of the time, since it is difficult to imagine the failure of any work of architecture to reflect its time. Even something like Horace Walpole's antiquarian fantasy Strawberry Hill reflected at least one strand of his cultural moment. That is, since even nostalgic architecture will reflect its times, it seems impossible to fail in this regard which would place all architecture *qua* architecture on the side of the angels. This not only seems too rosy an outlook, but also is too intellectually indiscriminate to be informative even on its own terms. Moreover, connected to the problem that all architecture reflects its time is the underlying fact that this is so precisely because there are so many different, often conflicting, tendencies going on during the same time period. It seems doubtful that there is ever *a* spirit of the age in the sense of a singular, all-encompassing theme. But if that is true, then the claim that architecture should articulate its age is an impossible obligation, since

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there is no singular spirit to embody. Thus, to the extent that "ought" implies "can," there can be no architectural obligation to emblematize the (one and only) spirit of the times.

Not only have some argued that architecture should reflect the spirit of the age. Some have gone further, contending that architecture should abet the development of the age prospectively, bringing supposedly positive tendencies in the present into fruition in the future by means of built environments that reinforce and guide those tendencies.[5] Much of the rhetoric of modern architecture sounds this clarion call. In this case, structural honesty is sometimes invoked as a commitment to the kind of intellectual clarity associated with the rationality of allegedly enlightened times. Truth to the materials of modern industrial society – like steel – is linked to the notion of being true to our times. Modern architecture, it was believed, not only reflects the emerging rational-industrial culture, but would hasten it as life in various machines for living and working would blossom into an enlightenment utopia, specifically a blue print utopia – to take advantage of a very useful notion introduced by Nathaniel Coleman.

(Parenthetically, there is a parallel dystopian story told about how this apotheosis of so-called rationality contributes to the tyranny of instrumental reason and neoliberalism.)

The notion of architecture's obligation to being on the side of history, of course, inherits the liabilities of its component parts, including the ideas of truth to the materials, structural honesty, and the emblematization of the spirit of the times. Just as there is no singular spirit of the times, for example, there is no privileged path to the future, no end of history to which the architect must be committed. As commentators like David Watkin have persuasively demonstrated, architectural modernism rides on the same faith in a teleological view of history that Karl Popper discredited under the rubric of historicism.[6] History has no preordained narrative and, even if it did, it is not clear how architects could know it. Consequently, it cannot be their moral obligation to realize it. Indeed, added to the epistemological limitation of not being able to discern the course of history, architects would also confront another epistemic roadblock, namely the lack of the kind of causal knowledge that would be required to influence the historical process in determinate, predictable ways. Think of all of the unintended consequences modern architecture has set in motion. So, even if architects knew where history was headed, neither they nor anyone else knows how to get there.

(This lack of causal knowledge also bedevils dystopians, although in a different way. Juhani Pallasmaa claims that the privileging of vision

in modern architecture leads to detachment and contemporary alienation.[7] But that is an immensely complicated causal hypothesis, one so complex that it is hard to know how to even begin to isolate the variables needed to test it empirically.)

Of course, so far I have only challenged some of the leading versions of the idea that there are architectural obligations. That does not conclusively prove that there are no such obligations. But it does shift the burden of proof to the friends of the conviction that there are ethical obligations internal to the practice of architecture. So, in the absence of a creditable proposal from their side, it may be useful at present to pursue another tack in an effort to establish an internal relationship between ethics and architecture *qua* architecture.

ART AND ARCHITECTURE

At this juncture, I propose to parse the notion of architecture *qua* architecture in terms of architecture *qua* art. Architecture is a matter of building environments but not all built environments are architecture. What makes a building architecture? I suggest that it is its claim to art status.

> "AT THIS JUNCTURE, I PROPOSE TO PARSE THE NOTION OF QUA ARCHITECTURE IN TERMS OF ARCHITECTURE QUA ART."

Of course, I need to say more about what is involved in a building's possession of art status. Nevertheless, it should be uncontroversial that it is by being considered art that buildings are *commonly* identified as architecture. That is, if a built environment is art, then it is architecture. Thus, architecture-as-art is one – perhaps the most common – way of satisfying the formula, architecture-as-architecture.

Moreover, if this is acceptable, it suggests a straightforward way of linking architecture *qua* architecture internally to ethics. Namely, architecture-as-architecture will be connected to ethics at least in the way or ways that art in general *qua* art can be connected to ethics.

However, this strategy immediately faces a challenge, namely the contention that art is categorically separate from ethics. Call this view autonomism. Obviously autonomism must be tackled head-on before we can take advantage of any putative link between art and architecture.

AUTONOMISM

Autonomism is a viewpoint that begins to take its modern form in the eighteenth century in discussions of beauty. Francis Hutcheson, borrowing the notion of disinterestedness from the Earl of Shaftesbury, characterized beauty as an immediate feeling of disinterested pleasure. "Disinterested" for Hutcheson meant "independent of personal advantage." To find a building beautiful was to take pleasure in the mere sight of it rather than, say, taking pleasure in it because it belongs to you. The disinterestedness of the lover of beauty, for Hutcheson, is just like the impartiality of a judge in a court of law. In both cases, they are required to issue judgments independent from their personal interests and advantages.

Kant took on board much of Hutcheson's conception of beauty – or what he, Kant, called free beauty – and argued that judgments of free beauty (also known as aesthetic judgments) were based upon experiences of disinterested pleasure. However, Kant expanded the range of pertinent interests to be bracketed for the sake of disinterest, encompassing purposes in general, including ethical ones, and reference to concepts, possibly, at least in part, because concepts are typically connected to purposes.

Subsequently, interpreters, or perhaps more accurately misinterpreters of Kant, erected a theory of art upon Kant's theory of free beauty. Stated crudely, it presumed that the function of art is to afford aesthetic experiences, experiences divorced from purposes, such as ethical ones, and that are instead valued for their own sake. This transmogrified into the *art-pour-art* (art-for-art's sake) slogan in France, popularized by Benjamin Constant and Madame de Stael and which also provided the impetus for nineteenth century aestheticism as practiced by Pater and Wilde, the latter of whom famously denied the relevance of morality to literature, maintaining books were only well-written or not.

Of course, if art, properly so called, is divorced altogether from purpose, that bodes ill for architecture's claim to art status, since architecture is so wedded to serving ulterior purposes. This is why so often in nineteenth century hierarchies of the arts, architecture's status is typically demoted to the lowest art form on the totem pole, if it is not disenfranchised entirely. Under earlier theories of art, architecture suffered for not being imitative. Things did not get better under the dispensation of aestheticism, because

architecture was linked to non-aesthetic purposes and thus to uses and interests.

In the twentieth century, earlier art-for-art's sake tendencies were refined and worked into a theory called the aesthetic theory of art which we can regard as the contemporary form of autonomism. In rough outline, it holds that something is a work of art if and only if it is made with the primary intention to afford aesthetic experience, which nowadays is generally conceived to be an experience valued for its own sake and not for some other purpose whether cognitive, moral, religious, political, etc. This theory can allow that architecture is an art so long as and to the extent that it is made with a primary intention to afford aesthetic experience, such as contemplation of the visible form of a building. But, at the same time, this theory severs architecture-as-art from ethics. The aesthetic theory of art has been extremely influential among analytic philosophers of art. Even those who would never profess allegiance to it outright show themselves to be under its sway when, for example, they consult their "intuitions" and find that art and ethics are necessarily twain.

However, despite the authority of the aesthetic theory of art, it fares badly empirically when weighed against the history of art. Most art historically was and arguably continues to be made with primary intentions other than affording aesthetic experiences. Commissioned by churches, rulers, guilds, aristocrats and so forth most art has been made with the primary intention to serve religion, politics, cognition, morality and so on.

Catholic painters for centuries composed their devotional pictures with the primary intention of engendering reverence. They would have considered it blasphemous to suggest that their work be contemplated primarily for the disinterested pleasure it imparted to viewers.

Similarly, the Maori of New Zealand have a war

dance called the Haka in which they stamp their feet ferociously, bulge their eyes, stick out their tongues and wave their arms aggressively for the purpose of scaring off intruders. Were the enemy to sit down and savor a Haka for the sake of contemplative pleasure, the dance would be self-defeating, since it was made with the primary intention of driving away invaders in terror.[8] Nor can the aesthetic theory of art be repaired by dropping the requirement that the intention to afford aesthetic experience be primary because that will make the theory too broad. For example, almost every commodity in the industrialized world today is made with some intention to support what are called aesthetic experiences. Yet no one mistakes the cereal aisle in the grocery store for a modern day art gallery.

So, the aesthetic theory of art, at least as characterized thus far, is dubious. For our purposes, that removes a major barrier blocking the strategy of extrapolating the relation of architecture *qua* architecture to ethics via the relation of art to ethics.

ART AND EXPRESSION

To model the relationship of architecture *qua* architecture to ethics on that of the relation of art to ethics requires saying something about how we understand *art*. Obviously I cannot elaborate on a full-scale theory about how to identify art in the middle of the already large project of exploring the relation of ethics to architecture. So allow me to cut some corners.

Let us say that pronounced expressivity is a pretty reliable symptom of art status. By this, I do not mean to be defending some version of the expression theory of art. I am not claiming that art is necessarily expressive; some art, like Duchamp's readymade canine grooming comb, is not. Nevertheless, pronounced intentional expressivity is a fairly reliable symptom of art. It is because the Haka projects such an intentionally pronounced and coherent aura of fearsomeness and male aggressivity that we are provisionally disposed to classify it as dance art.

Interestingly, from our point of view, pronounced expressivity is also frequently cited as a mark of architectural art.

Paul Goldberger says: "Architecture begins to matter when it goes beyond protecting us from the elements, when it begins to say something about the world…"[9] As is well known, Nelson Goodman thinks that buildings are architectural art when they *mean*. He writes, "A building is a work of art insofar as it signifies, means, refers, symbolizes in some way."[10]

For Gordon Graham, architecture as such ideally expresses its function; he observes of Marble Hall in Holkham Hall in Norfolk, England, that its elegance expresses its function, i.e. to display the elegance of its owners.[11]

And Paul Guyer argues that Kant holds that all art, including architecture, involves the expression of aesthetic ideas. For example, by way of illustrating Kant, Guyer notes "that a (Protestant) church must keep its décor simple to induce the proper mood of humbleness."[12]

Not all of these characteristics of the art of architecture amount to exactly the same claim, but they agree broadly in taking some measure of pronounced expressivity, albeit understood in different ways, to be a sign of architectural art. For example, it is the pronounced expressivity of the curving colonnades, reaching out from St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome, that prompts us to regard them as architectural art. For they gather together and embrace the crowds in the plaza in their "arms" in a way that is welcoming.

Or consider the majestic central staircase in the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Its majesty marks with heightened significance and drama the experience we are about to have of the museum's magnificent collections. August and ceremonial, the stairway expresses the pride appropriate to the holdings it introduces.

> "SO, THE AESTHETIC THEORY OF ART, AS LEAST AS CHARACTERIZED SO FAR, IS DUBIOUS"

Perhaps pronounced expressivity may even be an ingredient in a sufficient condition for architectural art status. However, be that as it may, it is enough for my purposes that there be a recurring internal relation between architectural art and pronounced expressivity. For inasmuch as certain expressive properties are ethically charged, their architectural projection will be ethically assessable.

For example, the façade of the Georgian doorway at 16 Bedford Square in London with its fanning window by Thomas Leverton radiates the

most energetic hospitality, bursting with cheerful amiability, epitomizing the virtue of sociability.[13] Or, for architectural art on the dark side, consider the narrative relief in the palace of the Assyrian King Ashurbanipal which was designed with the express intention to celebrate the king's wanton cruelty.[14]

Thus, we see that architecture *qua* architecture maybe related to ethics by way of expression. The case goes like this: some art, including architectural art, is expressive. Some of that expressive art, including architectural art, is ethically charged. If some architectural art is ethically charged, then that architecture is potentially ethically assessable. Thus, the relation of some architectural art to ethics can be internal because it is rooted in the nature of architectural art. Consequently, there is at least this one way in which architecture-as-architecture is internally related to ethics.

MODERATE ARCHITECTURAL AUTONOMISM

Undoubtedly the autonomist will be suspicious of the preceding maneuver. Thus far the autonomist has been represented as claiming that art is categorically divorced from purpose and use, including ethical purposes. This is a very radical position. But the autonomist, upon hearing the previous arguments, may retreat and regroup, counterattacking with a position that we can call "moderate autonomism."

The moderate autonomist concedes that art may be made for many purposes, not only affording aesthetic experience, but also commanding reverence, advancing ideologies, bringing consolation, promoting virtue, rallying the troops, etc. Call 'affording aesthetic experience' the aesthetic dimension of art. This dimension is allegedly distinct from the others just mentioned. Though these others can be considered legitimate features of art *qua* art, they contrast with the aesthetic dimension. The former features of the artwork are artistic features of the artwork, but they are not aesthetic features. The aesthetic dimension is comprised of properties, like form, that afford aesthetic experiences thereof and which are valued for their own sake.

Furthermore, the moderate autonomist maintains that only those aesthetic affordances are relevant when considering architecture *qua* architecture. If there is an argument here, it probably relies upon severing aesthetics from purposes. And that will putatively segregate categorically the aesthetic properties of the artwork from the artistic ones, including the ethical ones, in the process of distinguishing mere building from *pure* architecture or architecture as such or architecture *qua* architecture. In this way, the moderate autonomist may recoup at least part of her position in

the face of the considerations that I raised earlier.

MODERATE ARCHITECTURAL MORALISM

According to the moderate architectural autonomist there is a categorical distinction to be drawn between the aesthetic dimension of the architectural work of art and the ethical dimension. The ethical dimension may be a legitimate part of the architectural artworks *qua* art, but it is not ever part of the aesthetic dimension which is putatively the only dimension that counts in considering architecture *qua* architecture. One important corollary of this view is that an ethical defect in a work of architecture will never count as an aesthetic blemish in architecture *qua* architecture because the aesthetic properties are categorically distinct from the artistic ones, including the ethical ones.

This is autonomism to the degree that it asserts that there is a domain of pure architecture *qua* architecture where moral considerations never play a role. It is moderate autonomism because it allows that things like ethics, religion, politics, etc. are legitimate concerns of art. They are just never aesthetically relevant where aesthetic relevance is what determines the domain proper of architecture *qua* architecture.

Moderate Architectural Moralism is the rejoinder to Moderate Architectural Autonomism. The moderate architectural moralist contends that some works of art, including some works of architectural art, feature moral defects that are also aesthetic defects, specifically formal defects. Thus the moderate moralist argues contra the moderate autonomist that the aesthetic dimension and the ethical dimension of the arts, including some architectural art works, are not absolutely cleaved, since sometimes there can be an internal relation between the ethical dimension of a given artwork and its aesthetic dimensions as evidenced by the possibility that sometimes an ethical defect in an

artwork can also count as – i.e., be identical with – an aesthetic defect.

The moderate moralist might proceed defensively, questioning whether the moderate autonomist's argument for the categorical separation of the artistic properties and the aesthetic properties can be advanced without begging crucial questions. However, the moderate moralist may also propose a positive argument on behalf of his conclusion.

The first step in the moderate moralist's argument is his definition of form: the form of an artwork is its ensemble of choices which realize the point or purpose of the artwork. Formal features then are choices that contribute to the point or purposes of the works. Architectural theorists should be familiar with this conception of form, since it echoes the architectural slogan that form follows function.

Next the moderate moralist points out that the point or purpose of many artworks is to engender emotional responses. The point of a comedy, like Shaw's *You Never Can Tell*, is to elicit comic amusement. Characters, situations, and plot coincidences are designed to that effect.

Clearly architectural artworks often have the purpose of provoking emotional responses. Both the interiors and the exteriors of Gothic cathedrals are predicated upon instilling awe by means of their vaulting spires and naves. They are literally designed to take our breath away and to reduce us to hushed silence. Often the mood or emotion we identify as expressed by a building is connected to the feeling it arouses in us. So in the case of the Gothic cathedral, we say the cathedral is awesome.

The emotions aroused in us by artworks do not arise by happenstance. They, like all emotions, are governed by certain conditions of appropriateness. The appropriate object of fear is perceived danger. If an object does not appear threatening to us, it is not an appropriate object of fear, and if we are sound of mind, it will not be frightening to us. One of the conditions for awe is that the object be perceived to be of great size or power. If the object does not meet this condition, the object will not be experienced as awesome.

These observations about the emotions have obvious applicability to the arts, including architecture, since artworks are often in the business of eliciting emotional responses. Horror fictions, for example, are in the business of provoking horror, a compound emotion of fear and disgust. Thus, horror fictions must design characters to this end. Were one to present as the monster a figure like Casper the Friendly Ghost in what is intended as a genuine horror fiction that would be a failure in design because Casper is too nice to be scary and too clean to be disgusting. Casper would be a design choice that would be a defect because he

would fail to realize the purpose of horror fiction. That is, the choice of Casper would be a formal failure. Similarly to build out of papier maché an architectural structure such as a triumphal arch, meant to project strength, would be a formal error since it would dissolve in even a mild rainstorm.

But, what has this to do with ethics? Simply this: many of the emotions are related to ethics either because they involve moral conditions – as anger is concerned with justice being done to me or mine; or they are moral emotions on their own terms, like righteous indignation. Eliciting these emotions requires meeting certain ethical conditions. If these are not met, the intended emotion will not take hold and the artwork will fail in its purpose.

For example, with respect to an Aristotelian tragedy the central character cannot be an evil, truly reprehensible character because we will not feel tragic pity for him, but joy at his being dealt his just desserts. To present the historical Hitler as the protagonist of a play intended to elicit tragic pity in the Aristotelian sense would be a design error – a formal defect – because it involves the choice of an element not suited for – in fact at odds with – the purpose of the work. The audience is more likely to shout "well done" when calamity befalls Hitler than to shed a tear for him.

Moreover, notice that the formal error here is rooted in an ethical defect. Tragic pity depends upon an object that is morally undeserving of the calamity that befalls him. The historical Hitler does not meet that condition. He deserves whatever he gets. To attempt to mandate tragic pity will encounter imaginative resistance on the part of morally sensitive audiences. The creator of our abortive Hitler tragedy has a morally defective understanding of what is required for tragic pity. Thus he makes the wrong design choice in constructing the protagonist of his play. But this is simultaneously a formal error, precisely because it

is a moral error. Thus, sometimes a moral defect in an artwork is a formal defect just because it may block the audience's intended emotive uptake.

A similar possible scenario can be sketched with respect to architectural art. Imagine a memorial constructed after a bloody civil war between the As and the Bs. Made of granite, it is divided into two equal halves that formally mirror each other. On the left slab are listed all of the names of the fallen As. On the right side are all of the names of the fallen Bs. The structures are enormous, granting each side enormous gravity. Each side looks the same. The only differences appear when you get close enough to read the names which differ from one side of the monument to the other. Otherwise, neither side of the memorial diverges in appearance from the other. Neither side receives special architectural accent or emphasis. Architecturally the two sides are equal and the design calls upon viewers to feel sorrow equally for and to admire or honor equally the dead of both sides of the civil war.

But, in point of fact, one side – let's say the Bs – were guilty of horrible atrocities, bombing civilians with poisonous chemicals, employing rape to demoralize and subdue villages that showed sympathy to the As, and worse. Many of the names of the fallen Bs on the memorial belong to known war criminals. For the morally sensitive viewer, the two sides of the civil war are not deserving of equal sorrow and honor. The Bs don't merit sorrow at all. Thus the morally sensitive audience will resist the architectural rhetoric of the monument.

For that reason, the choice of presenting the As and the Bs as equal visually is a formal error because it is a design choice that fails to realize or to implement the purpose of the memorial. But it is simultaneously a formal defect because it both exhibits and mandates a morally corrupt point of view – one that equates war criminals with the honored dead who opposed them. Thus, the uninflected handling of the two sides of the memorial represents a formal, aesthetic flaw, exactly because it embodies a morally defective viewpoint that undermines the purpose of the work by thwarting audience uptake. Consequently, moderate architectural autonomism is false.

A BRIEF SUMMARY

We began with the challenge to ascertain whether there might be an internal relation between architecture *qua* architecture and ethics. Although there may be more, we identified at least one such relation by construing architecture *qua* architecture as architecture-as-art. We then modeled the relation of architecture to ethics on the relation of art to ethics,

specifically with reference to art as expression. This led to the conclusion that architecture can be ethically assessable as architecture when it projects properties expressive of moral import.

We then considered how a moderate architectural autonomist might respond to this conclusion and disputed that response by mounting an argument on behalf of moderate architectural moralism, the position that maintains that in some cases a moral defect in a work of architectural art may be constitutive of an aesthetic defect.

"IN SOME CASES A MORAL DEFECT IN A WORK OF ARCHITECTURAL ART MAY BE CONSTITUTIVE OF AN AESTHETIC DEFECT."

ENDNOTES

1. See Dana Goodyear, "Paper Palaces," *The New Yorker*, Volume XC, Number 23, August 11 and 18, 2014: 66-75.

2. See: Joan Ockman, "Ethics and Aesthetics after Modernism and Postmodernism" in The Hand and the Soul ed. by Sandra Iliecu (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009), 45. Quoted in Stefan Koller, "Architects on Value" in *Ethics, Design and Planning of the Environment* ed. by Claudia Basta and Stefano Moroni (Dordrecht: Springer, 2013), 59.

3. Quoted in David Watkin, *Morality and Architecture Revisited* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977, 2001), 108-9.

4. See Sigfried Gideon, *Space, Time and Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941); Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of the Modern Movement* (London: Faber and Faber, 1936); Karsten Harries, *The Ethical Function of Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997).

5. Pevsner, op. cit.

6. Watkin, op. cit.

7. Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin* (Oxford: Wiley, 2005).

8. An alternative account of the Haka was offered

at the conference on architecture and ethics in Delft in July of 2014. An audience member argued that the function of the Haka was to present rivals with a performance that they assessed in terms of how formidable the dancers appeared. However, even if this, rather than the account offered above, is the correct account of the Haka, it remains clear that the dance was not created with the intention to be valued for its own sake. Moreover, the same could be said about much of the armor designed for European knights. It was made to strike terror in the hearts of the enemy and not to deliver disinterested pleasure.

9. Paul Goldberger, *Why Architecture Matters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), ix.

10. Nelson Goodman and Catherine Z. Elgin, *Reconceptions in Philosophy* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1988), 33. See also: Remei Capdevila-Werning, *Goodman for Architects* (London: Routledge, 2013), 13.

11. Gordon Graham, *Philosophy of the Arts 3rd edition* (London: Routledge, 2005), 178-182.

12. Paul Guyer, "Kant and the Philosophy of Architecture", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Volume 69, Number 1 (Winter, 2011), 15.

13. See Alain de Botton, *The Architecture of Happiness* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), 99.

14. See Noël Carroll, "Art and Recollection" in *Art in Three Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 171.