

Immanent Through Architecture

“How may the embodiment of immanence be approached through the stimulation of architecture?”

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Abstract

This essay endeavors to unveil how the mechanisms function that are responsible for the fundamental awareness of one's physical presence in the world. The capacity of architecture to contribute towards such a state of being, is a major theme. The essay does this in three consecutive parts. In the first part, the subject's bodily experience of the world is laid out. It reveals how the body finds vibrant stimulation in the world. In the second part, the thoughtful understanding of the world is discussed. This reveals the subject's dependency on the mind for active sensibility. In the third and last part, a synthesis between one's active awareness and its bodily stimulation is presented. This leads to the embodiment of immanence. In this state of being, the turbulent world becomes a symphonic one. The subject may understand the felt, as well as that it may feel the understood. Clear and sharp appreciation of the world around becomes possible. As a part of this world, the subject is actively aware of its own presence too. Through this, one connects to its physical being and one is grounded inside the body and world. Architecture can help ground by revealing the relation between physical stimulation and the understanding that makes it sharp and clear. As a result, the symphony of the vibrant world is revealed, and the subject may dance along.

*Architectural Philosophy - Affect Theory - Active Awareness
Embodied Immanence - Beatitude - The Grounding Act*

Table of Contents

Part 1	<i>Feeling the World</i>	pages 3 - 11
	<i>1.1 Expression</i>	<i>pages 5 - 6</i>
	<i>1.2 Reception</i>	<i>pages 7 - 8</i>
	<i>1.3 Immersion</i>	<i>pages 9 - 10</i>
Part 2	<i>Understanding the World</i>	pages 12 - 20
	<i>2.1 The World of Definitions</i>	<i>pages 14 - 15</i>
	<i>2.2 The World of Intensity</i>	<i>pages 16 - 17</i>
	<i>2.3 The World of Relativity</i>	<i>pages 18 - 19</i>
Part 3	<i>Being with the World</i>	pages 21 - 33
	<i>3.1 The Paradox</i>	<i>pages 23 - 25</i>
	<i>3.2 Embodied Immanence</i>	<i>pages 26 - 29</i>
	<i>3.3 The Treasure Map</i>	<i>pages 30 - 32</i>

Feeling the World

Part 1 of 3 in Immanent through Architecture

By Teeken, R. F., 2022

Introduction

This Part endeavors to unveil what it is to feel. The exploration presented will give understanding to the physical side of our sense of being. How one *feels*, depends on two main phenomena: the live world and the sensitive individual; together constituting the symbiotic formula for the perceptive subject. In the three sub-chapters, the respective shares of the whole idea of *Feeling the World* will be discussed. It starts off with the expressive world, where the vibrant and turbulent qualities of the world we inhabit are discussed. Here, the perceptibility (and its fundamental importance) of the vibrant world will be the central theme. Thereafter, the receptive individual will be discussed, focusing on the bodily internalization in the equation of feeling. In this section, the individual's ability to perceive will be focused on, elaborating on the role of the sensuous body in feeling. Finally, these two separate phenomena of *Expression* and *Reception* will be fused together as an interactive symbiosis in the third chapter, which centers around the *Immersion* of the receptive body in the expressive world. The fusion results in a formula for the sensation of *being alive* that one feels. By means of an analysis of the perceptible world, the architectural discipline is addressed by being part of this world, implicitly as well as explicitly.

Expression

Extension could be considered meaning solidified into matter. Through extension, the world is revealed. Extension exhibits the world's physical composition. Without extension, the actuality wouldn't expose its corporeal character and its tactile complexions. It wouldn't showcase its resilient matter. For extension to be revealed, exhibited, exposed and showcased, it needs to be expressive by nature. For Professor Jane Bennett this makes sense. She believes that everything in the world is alive and therefore extension is not just solidity, it is pure vividness turned into shape. Vibrant matter, she calls it. According to her, matter possesses a radiant and expressive essence, and for backup she quotes Spinoza in her book: *It is never we who affirm or deny something of a thing; it is the thing itself that affirms or denies something of itself in us. - Baruch Spinoza, Short Treatise II.*¹ Through Spinoza, Bennett points out that the physical world expresses itself, radiating all its complexity explicitly outwardly. Extension could be considered a realm; the realm where the body resides, the realm of the sensuous, the realm of the turbulent. In this realm, things are constantly being absorbed in, warmed up, pushed down, shun away or else. It is the vibrancy, the vividness, within extension that is responsible. "[T]oday we might call them atoms, quarks, particles streams, or matter-energy,"² and like the diversity among the building blocks of our universe, every other bit of extension possesses different vibrant qualities. In this chapter a worldview of expression and physicality will be discussed.

The world of extension is the dusty soil beneath our feet, the silky air through our hair and the crusty flesh of a tree's bark against our back. It is physicality in its full haptic presence, revealing of every tangible aspect of the extended substance. The term hapticity is particularly appropriate for the comprehension of the world's tangible character, in terms of tactility and strength. Jane Bennett calls the world of extension the "*eccentric out-side*"³, which stresses the differential plenitude of the extended plane, possessing a countless number of physical qualities detectable. In Pallasmaa's words, the world "*exhibits a muscular and haptic presence, [...] His elaborate surface textures and details, [...] create an atmosphere of intimacy and warmth.*"⁴ The world of extension is a place of intimacy for the fact that it reveals itself, and with that it welcomes one inside the physical environment that one may call mother nature.

Jane Bennett is an explicit advocate for vibrancy within matter. The way Bennett gives definition to the turbulent character of our material world, allows one to regard things and matter to possess a nearly subjective personality, with more expressive character than what is commonly recognized. Bennett realized such a character resided in the inorganic when she once felt highly drawn towards a composition of things on the sidewalk that one could otherwise consider as mere trash. She describes it as having "*caught a glimpse of an energetic vitality inside each of these things*".⁵ After, Bennett found that this vitality resided in all of the extended physicality, taking metal as an example. She lends an analysis of vibrancy in metal from Deleuze and Guattari's 'A Life', where "*they say that metal "conducts" (ushers) itself through a series of self-transformations, [...] a tumbling of continuous variations with fuzzy borders.*"⁶ By showcasing that even metal incorporates a form of vibrancy, Bennett intends to prove "*Spinoza's claim*"⁶ that all things are "*animate, albeit in different degrees*"⁷. Spinoza calls this essential

1 Bennett, Jane, (2010). *Vibrant matter*, p. 0

2 Bennett, Jane, (2010). *Vibrant matter*, p. xi

3 Bennett, Jane, (2010). *Vibrant matter*, p. 5

4 Pallasmaa, Juhani, (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 76

5 Bennett, Jane, (2010). *Vibrant matter*, p. 5

6 Bennett, Jane, (2010). *Vibrant matter*, p. 59

7 Bennett, Jane, (2010). *Vibrant matter*, p. 5

character the Conatus, or life-force; “*the power or conatus by which it [the thing] endeavours to persist in its own being, is nothing but the given, or actual, essence of the thing.*”¹ This Big Bang-like idea of all matter being driven by a push, or will, accounts for the forceful though irreducible vibrant actuality of our physical world.

The transformative essence that is fundamental to extension entails multiple qualities. Firstly, the fact that the world differentiates constantly, extension only expresses itself instantaneously. An instant later, the extension has already changed and therefore expresses a different world. In other words, extension resides in the present. However distant the present may have become, vibrant expressions will always lead one back to the now. Secondly, for the fact that extension can merely show the current state of itself, it is limited to the actuality of the present. For it is only in the now, vibrancy will always lead one back to the present moment. However, for all matter is vibrantly expressive by nature, it is inevitable that everything will, unquestionably, expose. As a result, extension is forced to vibrantly express all of itself, yet only itself. This painfully reliable quality forever reassures that everything is, in fact, as such and in no other way. Thirdly, due to its transient nature, extension will reveal life lived over time, making tangible the simultaneous birth and death of everything, “*it is time turned into shape.*”² Eventually, the vibrant world of extension is all about making detectable the actuality. It renders a stage on which the life is displayed, the live happens and the lived leaves its traces.

The discipline of architecture situates within the realm of physical extension. Therefore, it bears the responsibility to consider the vibrant, transient, and physical qualities that have been discussed. Only then will architecture express its lively quality within the realm of extension in full. Pallasmaa emphasizes this responsibility of architecture by saying that “*In my view, the task of architecture is ‘to make visible how the world touches us.’*”³ This phrase also proves his allegiance to the perspective of the world as being expressive. He has done so by explicitly positing the world as an active agent that touches us instead of the other way around, just like Spinoza and Bennett. In short, architecture reveals itself through the world of extension, so it must incorporate this quality most extensively to be as lively as it possibly could.

In conclusion, the world of extension is where the physical actuality resides. One may approach this world as an expressive place, which establishes a tendency that is more tolerant towards worldly turbulence and vibrancy. Regarding things and matter as a vibrant expression of this life-force, opens up a perspective that reveals the actuality in its haptic and vibrant presence. It leads one back to that place where everything finds its origin: the physical here and the temporal now.

1 Bennett, Jane, (2010). *Vibrant matter*, p. 5

2 Pallasmaa, Juhani, (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 62

3 Bennett, Jane, (2010). *Vibrant matter*, p. 5

4 Pallasmaa, Juhani, (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 38

Reception

The domain of extension is the place of the vibrant and the physical. It reveals the world and facilitates life. For the individual to feel, the central theme to the part *Feeling*, this vibrancy needs to be received. Fortunately, our body is made for this job. The process of internalization grounds man's relation with the world, it situates. By means of the "aggressively"¹ sensitive body, man becomes receptive to its energetic environment. Without a receptive body, the vibrant realm of extension would never be felt. In light of this, Merleau-Ponty points out that "[o]ur own body is in the world as the heart is in the organism: it keeps the visible spectacle constantly alive, it breathes life into it and sustains it inwardly".² In other words, the reception of our vibrant environment is fundamental to life. In fact, the vibrant environment grounds us in our sense of feeling through these sensitive stimuli. Without those, we, the *heart of the world*, would float inside a void of nothingness. The mechanism of affect will be discussed to further develop the idea of internalization of the vibrant world. All will be accounted for in the light of receptivity through our bodily sensibility.

The notion of affect is one that has its roots in Spinozan philosophy. It centres around the internalization of external stimuli and lays out the fundamental role of the expressive world for the receptive body. Spinoza puts clearly that "[t]he human being knows itself only insofar that he knows the ideas of the affects of the body."³ In this sense, Spinoza talks about the term *affectio*. An affect in this sense is a bodily sensation that is recognized actively; it is the principle to making one feel. For affects are the primal confirmation of one's own being, the body is aware of itself only through the external stimuli of the vibrant world. Constant interaction strengthens and even articulates one's sense of presence. This results in a sense of being, noting that "[s]ensory experiences become integrated [...] in the very constitution of the body and the human mode of being."⁴ The idea that the roots of being finds itself in the susception of an expressive world, is once more emphasized in Pallasmaa's book: "*Homogenization of space weakens the experience of being, and wipes away the sense of place.*"⁵ which warns the reader that environments are not always life-enhancing and could weaken one's sense of being.

In Pallasmaa's *The Eyes of the Skin*, Merleau-Ponty is discussed thoroughly, making explicit the crucial role of the individual body in reception. The philosopher focuses on the inward version of the world, or more appropriately *our* world. In a way, one *is* one's world. More and more proof is being added to the collection that the mind is as dependent on the body as it is the other way around. Pallasmaa shows explicit gratitude towards his colleagues for unraveling this during his career, quoting Edward Casey who "*even argues that our capacity of memory would be impossible without a body memory.*"⁶ The second form of affect is called *affectus* and it delves into this interior world, where the external stimuli have been internalized and make an image or idea from them. Merleau-Ponty would call it *perception*, which accounts for the reality of the individual, instead of the actuality of the universal. The perception of the world is made up of the internalization of stimuli from the vibrant and turbulent external actuality. In this world of perception, the body is central. The body's ability to register the vitality of the environment, decides the intensity of one's own liveliness. Therefore, for the sake of one's sense of liveliness, the exterior world of vitality should be communicated with the body as exhaustively and optimally as possible.

1 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 45

2 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 44

3 Spinoza, B., (2017). *Ethica*, (Van Buuren, Trans.) p. 94

4 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 44

5 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 50

6 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 49

To optimize the ability for a body to feel lively, one needs to consider the nature of our physical sensibility. In its essence, the body “*makes us aware that things extend away from us in all dimensions.*”¹ This means that bodily receptivity of the vitality in the world requires directed expression, so that the sensible body feels addressed by the vibrancy. When an individual senses an impactful bodily affect from its surroundings, “*space, matter and time fuse into one singular dimension, into the basic substance of being, that penetrates our consciousness.*”² One feels alive. Such a pivotal conception of the receptive body allows for a sense of self, or a consciousness. Namely, it is when reaching out for one’s body explicitly that when self-aware thought arises. It makes us “*aware of our fundamental solitude.*”³ The body establishes a relationship with the world, where the individual’s sense of presence is dependent on the world’s capacity to express its vibrancy towards the individual’s body.

Merleau-Ponty stresses this relationship as having an osmotic character; “*Merleau- Ponty saw an osmotic relation between the self and the world – they interpenetrate and mutually define each other.*”⁴ Because of one’s relative life, every individual encounters the world differently, resulting in a *personal world*, differentiated from everyone else’s world. The idea that one’s sense of reality is made up from the knowledge gained from individual bodily perception, implies that the person’s specific relativity to the world is infused into one’s being. Pallasmaa notes that “*The world is reflected in the body, and the body is projected onto the world.*”⁵ A sense of being within this reality results from the constant bodily interaction between man and world. These bodily sensations shape one’s sense of reality dynamically, strengthening or weakening one’s sense of being and self momentarily as well as accumulatively.

In terms of architecture, a responsibility can be detected. Namely, “*We transfer all the cities and towns that we have visited, all the places that we have recognized, into the incarnate memory of our body. Our domicile becomes integrated with our self-identity; it becomes part of our own body and being.*”⁶ Architecture, as being a part of the world, interferes with the osmotic relation between the self and the world of the individual. Considering that bodily experience is the foundation for being alive, it is the fundamental duty of architecture to appeal to the senses. Pallasmaa writes that “*What is missing from our dwellings today are the potential transactions between body imagination, and environment*”⁷, also arguing for a more conscious attitude towards the possible transactions that one’s body and the world can perform in order to create one’s vibrant world.

Conclusively, as Pallasmaa, Merleau-Ponty and Spinoza have attempted to make clear, the body is the essential figure to experiential existence (or self). Another thought of Pallasmaa considers “*the role of the body as the locus of perception, thought and consciousness, as well as about the significance of the senses in articulating, storing and processing sensory responses and thoughts*”⁸. It makes clear that to be alive is to feel, so stimulating the senses enhances one’s existence, grounding one’s physical actuality. To feel oneself feeling results in awareness of one’s live being, which brings one back to the heart of our world, (to paraphrase Merleau-Ponty’s metaphor). As Pallasmaa describes, “*A powerful architectural experience silences all external noise; it focuses our attention on our very existence, and as with all art, it makes us aware of our fundamental solitude.*”⁹ It proves that, like me, Pallasmaa believes in architecture possessing the ability to make one aware and to bring one home.

1 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 46

2 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 76

3 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 55

4 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 23

5 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 49

6 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 76

7 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 44

8 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 11

9 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 55

Immersion

The vibrant world expressing itself on the “*eccentric out-side*”¹ and the “*aggressively*”² sensitive body on the “*in-side*”³ are two complementary halves to leading to an experiential being of man. The reciprocal relation of these two halves results in an experience of both. It is through affective transactions, meaning it involves this mechanism of internalization, that a person feels itself being grounded in one’s physical world. It is like a surrender to the vibrancy which the body undergoes. An immersion of one’s body takes place, one is absorbed by the actual which brings about a perception of incorporation within the present world. Through such immersion inside the turbulent world, one’s perception of being-in-the-world is reconciled and one’s sense of bodily presence is strengthened.

An existential moment of *being* typically occurs when one feels the life, that being the bodily appreciation of the world expressing its forceful and lively character. “*Standing barefoot on a smooth glacial rock by the sea at sunset, and sensing the warmth of the sun-heated stone through one’s soles,*”⁴ is when Pallasmaa feels reconciled with the world beneath his feet. A clear memory of thorough physical awareness comes to mind when reading this passage, when in the middle of a long hike in Yosemite Park on a hot summer day, the two of us sat down along a creek. The cool bedrock, smoothed by periods of higher water, was welcoming to the touch. Prior to the creek there was a small waterfall, creating a soft mist that washed the heat off our skin. There was nothing we can do but lay down and fall asleep to the soothing sound of the water flow. The feeling of being in full harmony with the life of one’s [surroundings](#), makes one let go of everything, leaving the person with nothing but the simple sense of being; together with the world.

Pallasmaa believes that such bodily surrender to vibrant expressions is primarily responsible for our sense of existence, claiming that “*existential understanding arises from our very encounter with the world and our being-in-the-world – it is not conceptualized or intellectualized.*”⁵ When the first rays of morning sun touches your face and you feel the cold stiffness loosen up in your shoulders, it is not the thought of it that makes you feel existential. No, when one has had a cold, long night and the radiant sun shines its vibrant rays on your cold skin, the sun shows you life by the performance of it. The active, expressive, role of the physical world manifests the incarnation of the actual. Simultaneously, this incarnation of the actual manifests one’s bodily experience too, for only through the vibrancy in the world is the body perceived.

As for the discipline of architecture, there lies a responsibility to be configured as such that “*[a]rchitecture strengthens the existential experience, one’s sense of being in the world, and [...] is essentially a strengthened experience of self.*”⁶ The body is reliant of the expressive world to experience its existence. The architect is burdened by this knowledge because architecture resides in the vibrant actuality. It therefore responsible for the life that its visitor experiences. For instance, architecture does an expression of the forceful world through the bearing of its structure. Furthermore, of a marble floor expresses its solidity when one feels the cold blocks of stone drain the heat out of one’s feet. Even the embodied forces of its metamorphic past show in the marble’s grains. Moreover, one can appreciate the squeaky fibers and the aged smell of forest in a panel of wood like a vibrant story of its being. On the contrary, a plastered inner wall covering the beauty of the reality of architecture,

1 Bennett, J., (2010). *Vibrant matter*, p. 5

2 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 45

3 Bennett, J., (2010). *Vibrant matter*, p. 5

4 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 62

5 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 23

6 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 45

drains all possible vibrant expression of the building. If a work of architecture does not express the vibrant character of the world, one would not 'be' in that place. Arguing that nowadays, due to societal developments, much architecture has become more shallow than ever, Pallasmaa warns by saying “[t]oday the ‘depth of our being’ is on thin ice.”¹

Through immersion, a sense of vibrant incorporation in the world begets the individual. The sensation of the expressive world on one’s skin, retina or tongue reminds one of what is home. It is like a continuous existential caress that reminds the individual of its being-in. A warm, bright, and savory breakfast environment on the terrace during spring one could be-in, for instance. Our sense of existence, however shallow the world may become, will always remain fully dependent on the affect-based mechanism of internalization. The richer, as in vibrant and forceful, the affects are transmitted, the deeper one’s existential experience will reach. Pallasmaa even claims that “*Sensory experiences become integrated [...] in the very constitution of the body and the human mode of being.*”² Therefore, feeling the vibrant life in the world as intensely as possible, becomes a rather fundamental purpose to human life.

¹ Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 45

² Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 44

Conclusion

The subject matter of this chapter might be considered as an account on what it takes for a life to *feel alive*. It concerns the first out of two types of activities that are necessary for being. All we know has come through our body and all we can know is within the world. The expressive world on the one hand and the receptive individual on the other hand together constitute a complex interplay of one's reality and self. This personal reality of which the self is at the heart, altogether founds a state of being. This personal world is differentiated from everybody else's world. Nevertheless, due to the interpersonal nature of the world's vibrancy, everybody's personal world do find its roots in the same source. Therefore, more than one perspective needs to be considered as to what it takes for a being to feel alive. On the one hand, the world should address the individual's body in a most adequate and perceptible manner, while on the other hand, the, interpersonal, vibrant world needs to be expressed most elaborately too. For an architecture to make feel, these two perspectives need to be at the center of its purpose. Only then will architecture safeguard the *depth* of the individual's sense of being.

Understanding the World

Part 2 of 3 in Immanent through Architecture

By Teeken, R. F., 2022

Introduction

Understanding the World is a notion that concerns the capacity of the individual to form ideas of the vibrant world, which is full of information. In this part, the thoughtful side of being will be explored. The capacity of reception is required for the living subject to form an idea of itself as well as of its surroundings. For the human body, the vibrantly physical world serves as the only source for a gain in understanding. The more understandings one apprehends that are clear and sharp, the more the individual becomes sensitive to the vibrant world. Sensitivity of the body is the founding brick for the activity of *being*, so a more sensitive body results in a larger *being*. In other words, understanding one's bodily affect is of essential value for the sake of *being*. The first chapter discusses a type of knowledge that may be considered the mental construct that gives definition to the ideas of *self* and *world*, so that one may become able to distinguish the internal from the external. The second chapter discusses knowledge over bodily affects, based on detection and distinction. The world begets subtleties. The third chapter delves into the relativity of all vibrant qualities, by the means of which they reveal similarities and differences. This type of understanding unveils common rules and logical underlayers may become understood. To wrap up, understanding the world makes us more susceptible of the information that it exhibits, and this increases the awareness of our own presence as well as the presence of our surroundings.

The World of Definitions

A smart lady once believed in an idea that stood against the capitalist society of individual success. She believed that it wasn't the heroic notion of hunting that launched civilization, but that the idea of the carrier bag came afore. Ursula Le Guin underwent a paradigmatic shift after which she felt like she belonged for the first time, to us as a fellow human. Now the world didn't seem to care only about the gain in power compared to others; the care within us had become a more primary characteristic of our grounding nature. In a way, one could consider architecture to be a bag as well, "*home being another, larger kind of pouch or bag, a container for people*"¹. What the boundary line of a sack is to a number of peas, may be how architecture could be considered in relation to people: it distinguishes the defined from the rest, and makes it appreciable. The notion of a bag could be considered a metaphor for the defined, which is a tool that enables one to unravel the complexity of our world in a constructive manner. The role of definition in understanding the world will be discussed and the discipline of architecture will be understood within this context.

Baruch Spinoza posits that the pure affect an individual receives from one's environment is unreasoned, for the boundless sensory input is yet to be distinguished. "*The ideas of the affect of the human body are, as far as they relate to the human mind, not clear and defined sharply, but confused.*"² A mental construct of ideas can help make comprehensible this infinitely complex reality. Spinoza gives an account for such comparative generalizations of worldly knowledge, explaining that the definitions of "*Man, Horse, Dog,*"³ and even "*Being, Thing, It*"⁴ helps the human mind "*think in an orderly manner*"⁵. These definitions have no place in the physical world and are therefore not compatible with bodily experience. However, they are highly suitable for a person to direct one's engagement in our complex reality and prevent us from getting lost during these bodily experiences. In a way, a definition is also a bag, a bag of knowledge that contains information distinct to that definition. Through this, the body can distinguish affects and focus sensibly on specific worldly expressions to "*observe the things in a clear and sharp manner*"⁶.

A definition does not always remain in the mental realm; "[*W*]*e need the architectural geometry of a room to think clearly*"⁷ shows that a contextualizing definition can sometimes enter the physical world. Referring to Merleau-Ponty's words that the world and self mutually define each other, one could consider architecture a physical exhibition of this mutually defining relation. Pallasmaa writes that "*the fundamental task of architecture [is] the mediation between the world and ourselves*"⁸, defining the relation that man has with respect to the world. In such a sense, architecture can be considered a corporeal expression of the understanding that expresses our (thoughtful) presence. It might even be considered a defining act, for actualizing an architectural body requires the act of situating, which relates it to the world. Martin Heidegger substantiated this defining quality of architecture through a linguistic analysis of the origin of the German word *bauen*: "*The old word bauen, to which the bin belongs, answers: ich bin, du bist mean: I dwell, you dwell. The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans are on the earth, is Buan, dwelling.*"⁹ This passage explains that to perform architecture (to dwell) is to *be*, of which the architectural intervention becomes the materialized expression of *being*. Heidegger would call the place where one dwells the *locality*, which offers navigational and gravitational definition in a world of the undefined. Architecture becomes the navel of one's world.

1 Le Guin, U., (1986). *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, p. 5

2 Spinoza, B., (2017). *Ethica*, (Van Buuren, M., Trans.), p. 96

3 Spinoza, B., (2017). *Ethica*, (Van Buuren, M., Trans.), p. 105

4 Spinoza, B., (2017). *Ethica*, (Van Buuren, M., Trans.), p. 105

5 Spinoza, B., (2017). *Ethica*, (Van Buuren, M., Trans.), p. 138

6 Spinoza, B., (2017). *Ethica*, (Van Buuren, M., Trans.), p. 98

7 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 48

8 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 108

9 Heidegger, M. (1971). *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*, p. 2

Architecture, also a bag, is in a way a worldly definition of containment. Architecture informs people of itself as the container and informs people of themselves as the contained. Due to its servitude to man, architecture centers the world around human life. It becomes a place with the world around. Aldo van Eyck is a major advocate of this power within architecture, saying that “*Whatever space and time mean, place and occasion mean more.*”¹ He means to explain that architecture should offer shelter in a world of infinite space and endless time. In order to create a people bag, one needs to consider “*a welcome of each door, a countenance of each window*”². In other words, architecture should focus on its human scale: “*Get closer to the shifting center of human reality and build its counter-form*”³. This notion of counter-form concerns directed proportionality, facilitation, et cetera. Architecture that expresses the human form explicitly, possesses the ability to provoke a powerful sense of a worldly homecoming.

The framing capacity of a definition, facilitating thought within the boundaries of an idea, becomes literally framed in the geometry of a room. Like the boundary line of a sack, architecture contains the human idea of being. It makes the world relative to the individual and allows for appreciation of what is around. The power of architecture to create a place of reference becomes a defining act, allowing for explicit appreciation of one’s surroundings. “*Architecture is the art of reconciliation between us and the world*”⁴, which may be realized through the explicit gesture of a place. Through that, we reclaim our belonging in the world.

1 Van Eyck, A., (2008). *Collected Articles and Other Writings*, p. 471

2 Van Eyck, A., (2008). *Collected Articles and Other Writings*, p. 471

3 Van Eyck, A., (2008). *Collected Articles and Other Writings*, p. 471

4 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 77

The World of Intensity

However informative the defining quality of architecture may be, it does not account for vibrancy. Even more so, neuroanatomist Jill Bolte Taylor claims, one's ability to define is separate from intensity. Due to a rare type of stroke, this doctor has had a glimpse of what life is without definition, not being able to reach her language centre. She elaborates: "I existed in some remote space that seemed to be far away from my normal information processing, [...] I stopped thinking in language. [...] All I could perceive was right here, right now, and it was beautiful."¹ Furthermore, "In the absence of the normal functioning of my left orientation association area"² she claims to have been liberated from the confining mental world of representations. "When we are hooked into cognitive thoughts and running mental loops, technically we are not in the present moment"³, she says. By the absence of this, she could now only be in the present moment. She felt pure vibrancy, able to distinguish intensity alone. In order to reach this present state of being, one would have to return to their residence in the physical world, namely their body: "I find that paying attention to sensory information as it streams into my body is a very helpful tool."⁴ Stimulation of the senses results in a physical state of awareness, evoking a sense of existential wonder like "how does it feel to be here doing this?"⁵ Architecture, a particularly sensible discipline, is rather capable of addressing the senses. How a person understands intensity of vibrancy and the potential contribution of architecture to this will be discussed.

"The body knows what the head can't say,"⁶ Harry Francis Mallgrave concludes from a study that shows how a person tends to think. As an embodied thing, man understands primarily through the body, meaning that physical understanding goes above mental comprehension. Baruch Spinoza posits that "[t]he human mind knows itself only insofar that he knows the ideas of the affects of the body."⁷ This perspective argues that man's sole source of knowledge is the physical world. Moreover, he claims that "The human mind knows an external body only as existent through the ideas of the affects of one's own body."⁸ All knowledge initially enters our world of understanding through our physical body. Like Bolte Taylor describes, his aware sense of being is a bodily activity and not the mental idea of it, the latter being confined to some "ethereal realm of symbolic meaning"⁹. To illustrate this, Mallgrave points out that "When someone plays a cello [...] the cellist is not aware of her playing, but her awareness is her body playing."¹⁰ Comprehension of one's bodily sensations can be achieved through the act of practice. The abilities to detect and distinguish vibrancy make the individual more able to engage with the world. Spinoza puts it like this, "The human mind is capable of extensive observation, and it becomes more able as its body becomes more skilled."¹¹ Through close and frequent sensible contact with the vibrant world, the individual may become more skilled in grasping the knowledge within the world.

To admit this type of bodily cognition, the individual needs to be unified physically with its vibrant reality. Knowledge over the specific intensities in the vibrant world allows for directed understanding of the turbulent affects. The body will feel approached and addressed by its surroundings. In such a situation, an understanding of belonging and incorporation can land upon the individual. Architecture is a discipline that is capable of such unification, a phenomenon which Heidegger would call the "admittance of the Fourfold"¹². This notion concerns a gathering of the four disciplines of world around architecture. Through architecture, the individual is gathered into a union with the skies, the earth, and the spirits. Heidegger considers *being* to be the active interaction with

1 Bolte Taylor, J., (2006). *My Stroke of Insight*, p. 133-135

2 Bolte Taylor, J., (2006). *My Stroke of Insight*, p. 132

3 Bolte Taylor, J., (2006). *My Stroke of Insight*, p. 306

4 Bolte Taylor, J., (2006). *My Stroke of Insight*, p. 307

5 Bolte Taylor, J., (2006). *My Stroke of Insight*, p. 308

6 Mallgrave, H., (2013). *Architecture and Embodiment*, p. 108

7 Spinoza, B., (2017). *Ethica*, (Van Buuren, Trans.) p. 94

8 Spinoza, B., (2017). *Ethica*, (Van Buuren, Trans.) p. 95

9 Mallgrave, H., (2013). *Architecture and Embodiment*, p. 108

10 Mallgrave, H., (2013). *Architecture and Embodiment*, p. 108

11 Spinoza, B., (2017). *Ethica*, (Van Buuren, Trans.) p. 88

12 Heidegger, M. (1971). *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*, p. 5

each onefold, rather than a dogmatic vacuum of stillness. Architecture should be about the activity of dwelling, a notion he substantiates to be the equivalent of being. Dwelling is about an aware sensibility; the digestion of vibrant intensities into an informed understanding of one's incorporation in the fourfold. Man achieves this through the conscious perception of worldly expressions such as "*the massiveness and heaviness of stone ... the firmness and flexibility of the wood ... the hardness and gleam of the ore ... the lightening and darkening of color ... the ringing of sound.*"¹ Living as understood in the form of *dwelling* is a primal responsibility of all architecture. It keeps us related to the world.

The World of Intensity comprises the interactive field where our body reads the vibrant world and becomes informed of the multitude of quantitative characters as well as their qualitative characters. Understanding of intensities comes through exposure and practice. It is through practice that quantitative and qualitative differences become recognized. This informs of the specificity of the environment that one is in. The richer the environment is, the more information it possesses that may be digested by the individual. It is about a fourfold of different disciplines that interact with each other on the stage created by architecture. Incorporation within a world of vibrant intensity is understood. Vibrancy can be experienced directly and focused on specifically through exposure and practice, learning the ability to detect and distinguish the multitude of intensities in our expressive world of turbulence. A skilled receptivity requires an attentive body and mind. Aiming towards the elegant skill to distinguish and recognize subtle differences between sensuous qualities and quantities, directs the individual to a life rich of experience.

¹ Heidegger, M., (2002). *Off The Beaten Track*, p. 24

The World of Relativity

The two ingredients discussed in the previous chapters form a foundation for understanding. In the World of Definitions, the guiding ingredient of classification is described. This allows for the individual to realize one's relative place in the world. The self gains definition, grounding the individual in the vastness around. In the World of Intensity, the receptive body is addressed by the expressive character of the turbulent world. This invites one's body to be informed with the world's vibrant knowledge and feel alive. Once a place has clearly defined one's bodily existence, and the vibrancy of the place is expressively addressing one's corporeality, relative structures between things may be discovered. Think of relative differences between vibrant expressions, or relative transmission of vibrancy between Pallasmaa argues that through sensuous verification of such knowledge, "*We feel pleasure and protection when the body discovers its resonance in space.*"¹ According to Spinoza, this knowledge of embedded logic can be achieved through "*the simultaneous contemplation of multiple things, committed to gain understanding of their parallel, diverging and opposite qualities.*"² In other words, getting to the knowledge is done by comparing the relative. One could argue that such a capacity of knowledge should possess some type of genuine truth. Spinoza calls this type of knowledge *intuition*, a knowledge that is embedded in our being, waiting to be unraveled. Once one has come to the understanding of such a fact, it cannot be questioned; such truth is inherently correct, "*Just like how light reveals both itself as darkness, truth is the norm for both itself as untruth.*"³

Baruch Spinoza argues that all knowledge is within the world. Everything is embedded within the actual and the vibrant, just waiting to be uncovered. One could consider the realm of knowledge as a mirror image wrapped up inside the physical reality. It is like an infinite puzzle of expressions that awaits to be inspected by the attentive individual. In our dynamic reality, one may conceive this immaterial realm as the syntax of our world, an equative framework supporting and coordinating the symphony of life. The logical and essential existence of Spinoza's God radiates through every worldly expression, for every interaction necessarily "*acts forcibly due to a specific cause, which in turn is caused by another cause, and so forth into infinity.*"⁵ This logical underlayer of the turbulent world makes sure that all can be understood, because "*In nature nothing exists [or acts] accidentally, but everything is by the necessity of the godly nature forced to exist and act in some particular way.*"⁶ Due to the necessity of this syntax, all the expressions can be traced back to their cause, making everything relative by nature. All the relativity, such as cause and effect, reasons for- and clarifications about- can be reduced. It is through the sensation of relative vibrancies that the logical is detectable. Through this act of reduction, the vibrant unfolds and the logical is unveiled.

As noted by professor Peg Rawes, Spinoza describes affects as "*generat[ing] discursive geometries that are characterized by intensity*"⁷, illustrating once more that all the knowledge is contained inside the relative intensity of our vibrant world. The world of the individual begets a sense of clarity and coherence when such knowledge is obtained through the act of reduction. According to Spinoza, it is the goal of human existence to unravel the worldly syntax, so that a state of restful joy may be attained. This state is founded in recognition of one's bodily sensations. The world of the individual becomes richer after it is able to recognize the vibrant impulses one is subjected to, for the individual becomes more receptive to them specifically. The body starts listening instead of

1 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 72

2 Spinoza, B., (2017). *Ethica*, (Van Buuren, Trans.) p. 98

3 Spinoza, B., (2017). *Ethica*, (Van Buuren, Trans.) p. 106

4 Spinoza, B., (2017). *Ethica*, (Van Buuren, Trans.) p. 33

5 Spinoza, B., (2017). *Ethica*, (Van Buuren, Trans.) p. 43

6 Spinoza, B., (2017). *Ethica*, (Van Buuren, Trans.) p. 41

7 Rawes, P., (2008). *Space, Geometry and Aesthetics*, p. 69

hearing, starts looking instead of seeing, it starts touching instead of only feeling. Appreciation becomes involved. It is through the recognition of bodily sensation, that a sharp and clear world is conceived around. The conception of a world around the individual's body is in a way the opposite direction of reduction. It is through the afore-mentioned notion of resonance between the world and the individual, that such an act of informed conception leads to restful joy. By means of reduction, one practices understanding. Through conception, the world becomes a place of mutual harmony.

Architecture is a discipline where the logical understandings and the turbulent world meet in a rather expository sense. Namely, due to its creative nature, architectural environments are contaminated with the world of thought and understanding naturally. On the other hand, it naturally bears expressive qualities. Expressed through physicality and vibrancy, one may come to understandings of the story lines of the life, the lived and the living. "*Instead of the disembodied Cartesian idealism of the architecture of the eye,*"¹ one should consider understandings within architecture to be rather incorporative of vibrant expressions, for the intuitive logic is not found within abstractions, "*but is based on sensory realism.*"² Alvar Aalto's architecture can be considered exemplary of this notion: "*Aalto's architecture exhibits a muscular and haptic presence. It incorporates dislocations, skew confrontations, irregularities and polyrhythms in order to arouse bodily, muscular and haptic experiences. His elaborate surface textures and details, crafted for the hand, invite the sense of touch and create an atmosphere of intimacy and warmth.*"³ The architecture speaks in terms of affect, where vibrant force and materialized expression engages with the individual's experience. This concerns a type of realism that challenges the individual in comprehension of the logic behind life itself. It contains a quality that admits the individual to unravel the world through bodily sensations of the understandings that express themselves through physical vibrancy of the architecture.

The relativity between vibrant expressions is the means by which the human body is able to detect a logical syntax within the turbulent world of expression. For this detection, exposure to these relative vibrancies and practice of recognition are primal demands. The affected body needs to be understood clearly and sharply. Such a relationship between knowledge and sensation leads to two joint activities. On the one hand, a reduction of the vibrant makes our expressive reality into recognitions of understanding. On the other hand, a conception of the understood makes the recognition of things into a vibrant reality. These two activities are in mutual reliance, the one side facilitating the structural constitution and the other accounting for the dynamic manifestation of this harmonious expression. For understanding the world, the individual needs to pay close attention to the vibrancy in the world, which carries the logical structure our world is subjected to. In turn, recognition of this syntax within makes sense of the vibrant interplay of forces. For comprehension of either, the practice of both is required.

1 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 76

2 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 76

3 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 76

Conclusion

The *World of Understanding* has attempted to give an explanation as to how one grasps life. This concerns the other necessary half of engagement with the world. Making ideas of the vibrant affects that one undergoes is the central theme. By understanding the vibrancy, one is able to detect and distinguish specific sensible content from the vibrant world that seemed an overwhelming flood of turbulence before. It is through this life-long process of idea-making, that one's life becomes more and more meaningful, for things can now become appreciated. Without the sensible influx of information, no knowledge would be, but without knowledge over the sensuous influx, no vibrancy would be appreciated. Through practice and exposure, a bodily understanding of the world may result into a worldview that is framed in a sharp and clear manner. Through reduction of sensory content, new knowledge may be internalized. Through conception of internalized knowledge, the body becomes more susceptible of specific sensory content. A feeling of peaceful joy overcomes the subject when such knowledge resonates between the individual and the world.

Being With the World

Part 3 of 3 in Immanent through Architecture

By Teeken, R. F., 2022

Introduction

In the former two Parts, two opposing ways of worldly understanding have been elaborated on. On the one hand, the physical realm is responsible for the incorporation and radiation of all the knowledge susceptible. On the other hand, the thoughtful realm is responsible for the internal organization of the necessary structure. Together, these two realms make up the union that may be called *reality*. The individual resides on both sides of a coin, but the unity of this whole coin seems to be hard to grasp. In this third Part, the paradoxical relation between the World of Understanding and the World of Sensations will be discussed. Their supposedly mutually exclusive relation will be compared with their supposedly mutual constitutive relation. The immanent quality of the world may be the answer, and the embodiment of this quality may result in a subjective unification of the coin's sides. The power of such a unification will be discussed, plausibly generating grounding and agentic qualities within the individual towards the world. How architecture can contribute to these goals is the main purpose. This part is where the architectural key to a peaceful and joyful state may find its lock to open the gate to *being with the world* to the full extent.

The Paradox

Two sides of a coin, a metaphor introduced in the former chapter, is something that keeps reoccurring in the discipline of architecture. Aldo van Eyck calls them dual phenomena, concerning a paradox of scale; “(part-whole, unity-diversity, large-small, many-few)”¹. Alvar Aalto writes that “*In every case one must achieve a simultaneous solution of opposites,*”² which Pallasmaa uses as proof to substantiate the tension between “*conscious intentions and unconscious drives*”². Through Merleau-Ponty, Pallasmaa even describes a horizon from which understanding and experience grow. Louis Kahn describes these two worlds as *two brothers*. A manifest bearing the title *The Paradox of Architecture* by Bernard Tschumi evaluates on this twofold reality of the architectural discipline, defining it as “*the paradox of ideal and real space*”³. This architectural thinker elaborates that architecture has always been a struggle over alternatives that appeared as opposites, “ – *structure and chaos, ornament and purity, permanence and change*”⁴. The opposite characters of architecture are here described as *ontological form (the Pyramid)* and *sensual experience (the Labyrinth)*, and Tschumi admits their interdependent relationship. The twofold division of Thought and Extension in the Spinozean universe is reflected within all the theories of the above-mentioned architectural thinkers. It will be discussed how the chapters *Feeling the world* and *Understanding the World* are codependent and together form the foundation for being with the world.

The Swiss-born architectural writer Bernard Tschumi dove deep into the age-old dispute between the superiority of ratio or emotion over the other. Just like how the Baroque came after the Renaissance, or how Romanticism came after the Enlightenment, the emotional side of our being would always be countered by our rational side and vice versa. Tschumi regards these two personalities of our reality paradoxical. He defines the two sides of this paradox as the Pyramid of Concepts and the Labyrinth of experience. The discipline of architecture deals with both principles rather necessarily, due to its man-made yet physical complexion. An architecture of concepts, “*freed from reality, [...] architecture that describes itself – becomes a syntax of empty signs*”⁵. Therefore, the *sensual architectural reality* is required to include “*an immediate and concrete human activity – as a praxis, with all its subjectivity.*”⁶ Nonetheless, “*for it is only recognizing the architectural rule that the subject of space will reach the depth of experience and its sensuality*”⁷, the Labyrinth doesn’t work without the Pyramid. They are complementary elements that work together for the sake of architecture, the one offering *system* and the other *excess*. Unfortunately, “*architecture constitutes the reality of experience while this reality gets in the way of the overall vision. Architecture constitutes abstraction of absolute truth, while this very truth gets in the way of feeling.*”⁸ In other words, the two sides of the coin that form our reality together “*form the inseparable but mutually exclusive terms of architecture.*”⁹ Only through an imaginative projection of their synthesis, they may ever meet, Tschumi suggests.

However mutually exclusive the paradox may be considered, it may be considered mutually constitutive as well. Aldo van Eyck’s dual phenomena don’t appear separately. One major dual phenomenon is his idea of place and occasion, which originates from his fascination for scale; how scale can serve the experience of feeling home in the world. He argues that “*time and space remain frozen abstractions*”¹⁰ if they haven’t yet been realized in

1 Van Eyck, A., (2008), *Writings and other Articles*, p. 317

2 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 32

3 Tschumi, B., (1974). *The Architectural Paradox*, p. 50

4 Tschumi, B., (1974). *The Architectural Paradox*, p. 43

5 Tschumi, B., (1974). *The Architectural Paradox*, p. 37

6 Tschumi, B., (1974). *The Architectural Paradox*, p. 50

7 Tschumi, B., (1974). *The Architectural Paradox*, p. 50

8 Tschumi, B., (1974). *The Architectural Paradox*, p. 48

9 Tschumi, B., (1974). *The Architectural Paradox*, p. 57

10 Van Eyck, A., (2008), *Writings and other Articles*, p. 317

Human terms. Van Eyck argues that to humanize space and time, they need to be scaled into place and occasion, “*for space in the image of man is place and time in the image of man is occasion.*”¹ Provision of place is concerned with terms such as *anchoring*, *transitions* and *in-between domains*, words that lay stress on definition and relativity. Moreover, provision of occasion is concerned with terms such as *participation*, *movement* and *spontaneity*, words that lay stress on experiential engagement. Taken together, “*place and occasion constitute each other’s realization in human terms.*”² A paradoxical relation between place and occasion can be discovered, for as place requires a separation (through relative distinction) while occasion requires union (through appropriation by agency). By this paradoxical twofold phenomenon a human reality is realized; the world becomes one’s home, and one’s home becomes the world. Van Eyck explains what architecture needs to be in terms of this dual phenomenon: “*a city-like house, and a house-like city. [...] A house, therefore, should be a bunch of places, and the same applies no less to a city.*”³ It is the purpose of the world of architecture to unite mankind with its world by means of an endless number of separations from this world. The formal quality of Van Eyck’s architecture, Tschumi’s Pyramid, can be considered as distinctions by means of the definition of necessary opposites, such as the relativity between the individual (small) and the world (large). This is place. The sensuous quality of Van Eyck’s architecture, Tschumi’s Labyrinth, will be the stage it sets for the sensuous interaction between the individual (small) and the vibrant world (large). This is occasion.

Like no one else, Louis Kahn creates architecture of eternal quality, which he calls *spent light*. Light, in this sense, is the power to conceive, for both the individual as for the universe. Spending this light results in “*silence, [...] the eternal quality in a great work of art that is recognized by all human beings.*” (Tyng, 1984). It is through this train of thought that Kahn approaches architecture primarily as a discipline that works from the realm of thought towards extension, enlightening people with architectural exhibit of conception. Architecture, as a manifestation of this light, is in this sense an eternal being of thoughtful form in the shape of matter. In other words, architecture is posed as the physical actualization of the world of thought. The realm of thought is unrestricted by place or occasion, which connects the individual to everywhere, and to forever. His architecture is therefore characterized as *spiritually fundamentalist*, which entails a thoughtful primacy above our bodily existence. The world of thought, i.e. light, becomes tangible, i.e. spent light, and can be experienced bodily as an inspirational silence; “*I sense a Threshold; Light to Silence, Silence to Light – an ambiance of inspiration, in which the desire to be, to express crosses with the possible.*”⁵ The character of Kahn’s work could be considered as a quest for the realization of Tschumi’s Pyramid, where this spent light, or inspirational silence, may evoke a sensuous feeling of understanding the architecture.

The architectural works of Alvar Aalto, on the other hand, show an opposing primacy within architecture, “*[h]is buildings are not based on a single dominant concept or Gestalt; rather, they are sensory agglomerations.*”⁶ This architecture is clearly more concordant with Tschumi’s Labyrinth-side of architecture, where the sensual experience of our physical body is central; “*Aalto’s architecture is based on sensory realism.*”⁷ For Aalto, the experience of being is the activity of living, which lays a primal focus on the performance of the body. Aimed at architecture to arouse bodily, muscular, and haptic experiences, Aalto’s architecture “*incorporates dislocations, skew confrontations, irregularities and polyrhythms*”⁸. The architecture engages in a dynamic conversation with its user, which places the individual in the here, and in the now. His architecture is “*conceived to be appreciated*

1 Van Eyck, A., (2008). *Writings and other Articles*, p. 317

8 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 76

2 Van Eyck, A., (2008). *Writings and other Articles*, p. 317

9 Heidegger, M. (1971). *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*, p. 2

3 Van Eyck, A., (2008). *Writings and other Articles*, p. 317

4 Tyng, A., (1984). *Beginnings*, p. 135

5 Kahn, L, (1969). *Silence and Light*, p. 145

6 Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 76

7 Pallasmaa, J., (2015) *Alvar Aalto’s Synthetic Rationality* 24

(Lecture, 01:19:35)

in their actual physical and spatial encounter, 'in the flesh' of the lived world, not as constructions of idealized vision."¹ The haptic character of Aalto's architecture evokes *an erotic atmosphere*¹, where one is seduced into movement and sensuous involvement with Aalto's architecture. One becomes entangled within the labyrinth where life opens up fully to the receptive subject, one experiences the here and now in its absolutely vibrant presence. Within such sensuous architecture, people may come to understand their feeling. A synthetic worldly rationality can be understood through one's sensible body, which may include psychological, physiological, ecological knowledge etc. This type of knowledge is exactly what Alvar Aalto was all about, according to Pallasmaa's lecture on Aalto's *Synthetic Rationality*.

Our reality consists of one whole coin (that is inseparable), of which man can only see one side at a time (for they are mutually exclusive). This results in a paradoxical duality. On the one side, *Feeling the World* is located; on the other side, *Understanding the World*. The Pyramid of Concepts is how the discipline of architecture resides on one side of this coin, while the Labyrinth of Experience is how architecture behaves on the other. The mutually constitutive, interdependent relation becomes tangible by means of observation of this reflective agreement. Namely, we may come to understand our feeling if we are addressed experientially. Otherwise, we may come to feel our understanding if the conceptual form gives an informative instruction to do so. As such it becomes clear that knowledge which originates from one side of the coin, will necessarily exist on the other side of the coin. Mirroring one side results in knowledge of the other side, a process of mutual confirmation of the full reality of our world. The rule of the systemic syntax affirms how the sensible world behaves, and the behavior of the sensible world affirms the rule of the systemic syntax. Expansive engagement on both sides will develop a profound understanding of our coin's expressive and intelligible world.

¹ Pallasmaa, J., (1996). *The Eyes of The Skin*, p. 76

Embodied Immanence

A paradox by itself, the notion of embodied immanence involves the embrace of our paradoxical being in the world, as described in the previous chapter. Through internalization of worldly knowledge, one's body becomes more receptive to this knowledge. This goes the other way around as well. According to Maarten van Buuren, Baruch Spinoza regarded our process of internalization of information as a triptych. On one end, the expressive world resided, waiting to be rationalized. On the other end an innate intuition resided, waiting to be exercised. In the middle plane, the worldly information from one side and intuition from the other would meet. This middle ground is where our being solidifies into something we can grasp. It is through the fusion of extension and intuition, that our being becomes legible and both sides gain substance. The manifest of Tschumi remains relevant, due to the clear division between two types of knowledge in the world on the one hand (mutual exclusion). Van Eyck's fascination for dual phenomena remains relevant as well, for both types of knowledge necessarily appear together (mutual constitution). The fascination among architects for this twofold originates from the particularly physical way this discipline thinks, which incorporates both sides of the paradox at once. Feeling on the one hand makes one capable of living life. Understanding on the other hand makes one capable of making sense. The fusion of these two make it possible for one to make sense of life lived, which unlocks the sense of being.

The notion of immanence is a quality that Spinoza ascribes to his idea of God, i.e., the Universe. It is the foundation of a harmonious unity that underlies the infinite ways the expressively extended reality may manifest. To be clear, the immanent world is not an abstract idea of the world without any place in the actual world. In fact, immanence is the constancy that our actual world experiences, it renders the world an entity. This constancy supports our world's ability to manifest in an endless number of possible realities over an infinite amount of time. Due to this all-encompassing character, it is considered eternal as well as infinite. It can be considered the essential core around which a transitive reality revolves into infinite different versions of itself, eternally. The harmonious unity that contains Spinoza's universe is substantiated by a deterministic causality, a logical system of necessity. The articulation of immanence in the world is not through extension, but it may be detected through the interconnected causality that leads back to the undisturbed reality of a pure harmony. In its most elemental state, immanence can be imagined like an infinite and eternal dot of perfectly balanced power, or like the *plane of immanence*. "*This plane of immanence or consistency is a plan [...] it is a plan in the geometric sense: a section, an intersection, a diagram.*"¹ Deleuze argues that the notion of immanence offers consistency to the extended world, by means of its geometric character it acts like an explanatory section of the extended world.

On the one hand, internalization of immanence requires what is discussed in the chapter *Understanding the World*. Namely, the immanence of the world is the syntactic necessity that guides the course in which the world is heading. Developing an understanding of it, turns more legible and manageable the forceful trajectory that the world and man share. "*As the mind understands the things as more necessary, he will have more power over his affects, which means that he will endure these less passively.*"² It can be considered a liberation of one's burdensome servitude if one understands the actuality of things. Namely, through this knowledge, the turbulent reality will crystallize into clarity. "*The best conceivable cure we possess in the struggle against apparent occur-*

¹ Rawes, P., (2008). *Space, Geometry and Aesthetics*, p. 191

² Spinoza, B., (2017). *Ethica*, (Van Buuren, M., Trans.), p. 318

rences is within the truthful knowledge of the actual occurring situation”¹. If one can understand the informative turbulence with more clarity, one becomes more receptive and aware. This skill improves one’s ability to interact with the world. It is through practice that one may become more able to involve with the necessary world. One becomes able to interact with it in terms of active response and adaptive prediction. In a way, the determinative world takes man by the hand. If the individual pays careful attention, one may learn to dance along skillfully. Such a synergetic relation between the world and the individual exhibits the harmonious unity that the immanent reality consists of.

On the other hand, to untangle the paradox of embodied immanence requires what is discussed in the chapter of *Feeling the World*. The understanding of one’s immanent character inherently requires the sensible appropriation through the physical body. A quote by Spinoza that has passed before explains: “[t]he human mind knows itself only insofar that he knows the ideas of the affects of the body.”² In fact, the actual embodiment of immanence is not even an achievement of the understanding mind. Even more so, one’s understanding of it can even become confused through thinking, as Gilles Deleuze explains by the hand of a baby’s smile: “These little ones “are traversed by an immanent life that is pure power, and even beatitude ... the indefinites of a life.”³ Instead of a primacy of understanding immanence, it is primarily through sensible engagement that one is affirmed of the coherent clarity in the world. For that reason, a baby’s smile may be more understanding than thoughts of an adult. By the hand of sensible engagement, one’s understandings of the world may rest assured again. This brings the individual a great sense of joy, like a baby. Sensible contact with the world, the source of all knowledge, brings about nothing else than utter synthesis, i.e., the incorporation of man inside the immanent unity. Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor, the woman who had a stroke where she “learned the meaning of simply “being.”⁴, describes exactly this realization: “My entire self-concept shifted as I no longer perceived myself as a single, a solid, an entity with boundaries that separated me from the entities around me.” Instead, she felt a sensible unification with the world: “my perception of my physical boundaries was no longer limited to where my skin met air. [...] Finer than the finest of pleasures we can experience as physical beings, this absence of physical boundary was one of glorious bliss.”⁵ It is all about sensing the harmony that is within the world. Everything around us responds to our agency with exactly proportionate reactivity (i.e., the laws of physics), reminding us of our harmonious incorporation. Think of a sudden breeze that cools down the skin that has been heated by the sun. Such dynamic interplay of forces makes sense, and it is somehow reassuring. If one listens closely, the world sings in harmony. If one feels carefully, the world gives and takes in equal amounts. By looking out the window, one perceives a specific luminance, which in turn is a precise impression of the incoming radiation from the sun. Everything will always be in immanent balance, and we are part of this equation. Sensible awareness for the symphony that we and the world play together, demonstrates what it is to embody this immanence.

As described in the two paragraphs above, active awareness of the reality within the world goes two ways. One can dance along with the world and play one’s part in the symphony. On the one hand, the understanding of the necessary coherence of this logical reality results in the awareness of a harmonious mutualism between the world and the individual. On the other hand, this understanding is distilled from sensory engagement with our vibrant reality. It is man’s source for appropriation of this understanding, as well as the source for reassurance. The

1 Spinoza, B., (2017). *Ethica*, (Van Buuren, M., Trans.), p. 318

2 Spinoza, B., (2017). *Ethica*, (Van Buuren, M., Trans.), p. 94

3 Bennett, J., (2010). *Vibrant Matter*, p. 53

4 Bolte Taylor, J., (2006). *My Stroke of Insight*, p. 142

5 Bolte Taylor, J., (2006). *My Stroke of Insight*, p. 140

thoughtful understanding of one's physical incorporation in the immanent harmony of our reality is like a mindful return to the physical body. The physical sensation of one's incorporation in the necessary trajectory of the world is like a bodily return to the understanding mind. The place where one finds truth is the journey of reassurance between body and mind and vice versa. It is about the translation between knowledge of the mind and experience of the body. The frequency of the passage between the two sides of the paradox is accountable for embodying immanence.

Embodied immanence concerns the embodiment of the knowledge that all is necessarily in a harmonious state of unity. Spinoza argues that this type of understanding is the sole purpose of our existence, "*The internalization of real knowledge is an activity that transforms the apparent, yet confused, ideas of our perception into [concordant] agency, meaning into directions towards how to act. Reason is a horseman who guides our desires and emotions in the right direction and prevents from being led astray.*"¹ This type of understanding allows to establish an aware synergy with the world. Such coherent understanding of the actuality of things brings about pure happiness. As Spinoza explains: "*The more one excels in this type of knowledge, the more he will be aware of himself and God, which means that he is more fulfilled and therefore joyful.*"² One may reach peaceful joy by the means of understanding because the individual knows that things will unfold as expected. There is no longer a discrepancy of confusion and surprise. Instead, the body can perceive the truth and act in an informed and adequate manner. The individual gains effective agency in our reality, from which a determined and intelligible attitude resides inside the individual. By the hand of this knowledge, one's individual character will align with the immanent world. As such, one becomes incorporated in the chain of causality, for both trajectories face the same way. This synchronizes the will of the individual with the will of the world: the embodiment of immanence. The realization of such a synthesis leads to a peaceful and carefree state of mind, that man calls joy, or beatitude.

It can be considered a primary goal for the architectural practice to guide its users towards the realization of embodied immanence. Due to its physical nature it highly engaged with the actuality, from which the notion of immanence can be experienced and recognized. For architecture to stimulate joy or beatitude through the embodiment of immanence, the ideas of legibility and vibrancy are vital. Legibility within architecture, on the one hand, concerns the instruction into a sensation. Place may instruct the individual into a sensation of presence, which can be in the shape of one's own presence, that of a group, that of occasion, that of history. In all examples, architecture instructs the world of meaning to be sensed. The legibility of such instruction is vital to its susceptibility, admitting a passage along the crossroad of being. One is allowed a concordant experience, unifying the individual and the world. Vibrancy within architecture, on the other hand, concerns the evocation of an understanding. The forceful and turbulent actuality is expressive of nature, of which the quality may be susceptible within architecture. In the presence of architecture the receptive subject may be evoked to understand its bearing qualities, its material tactility, climatic forces, ecological dynamisms. Through reception of these sensible qualities, one's incorporation within the vibrant actuality may become understood. This is also a passage through the same crossroad, where the individual is informed by the world of sensations. By the hand of the exposition of these qualities, architecture reassures the individual of its alliance within the world. The individual is affected with joy, for it is brought home to the actuality of its body within its reality.

¹ Spinoza, B., (2017). *Ethica*, (Van Buuren, M., Trans.), p. 394

² Spinoza, B., (2017). *Ethica*, (Van Buuren, M., Trans.), p. 335

Immanence is a notion that accounts for the deterministic unity of the world, which unfolds harmoniously in infinite versions of itself, into eternity. On the one hand, it concerns the logical syntax that founds the rule of the natural world. On the other hand, it concerns the vibrant forces of the necessary course of reality. Through sensation of the forcefully necessary world, the syntax can be distilled. Through understanding of the syntax, the vibrant world becomes legible. The embodiment of immanence is the truthful understanding of the relation between mind and body. The active connectivity between them constitutes being. Through concordance between bodily experience and the knowledgeable understanding of it, a particularly joyful being can be realized. This is how the paradox of embodiment and immanence are related within man. One may achieve a state of delight through solving the equation of a particular sensation, or through the physical sensation of a specifically understood knowledge. It goes both ways, with the premise that it must indeed *go*. Tschumi argues that the two sides of the paradox aren't unifiable, but it could be argued that embodied immanence is exactly that impossible achievement. Think of it as the crossroad where knowledge meets sensation. In such a moment, one senses one's understanding, and one understands one's sensations. It is where one hears the symphony of the world, and one dances along in harmony.

The Treasure Map

Being with the world: the subject's realization of a unity between one and the world, resulting in a synthesis of will. It is such an interaction of concordance that brings joy and beatitude, for it is a grounding act. One becomes aware that the world is generous to those who pay attention to the actual, for only upon the necessary, thus detectable, can agency be founded. In other words, the generosity of the world is dependent on the receptiveness of the individual. With the concordant knowledge of our coherent reality, sensations of peace and harmony reign when facing the world. Facing the world is the activity of bodily reception of our expressive reality. A subject that makes sense of the vibrantly expressive world, professes agency upon it through the act of acknowledgment. One may argue that being in its most elemental sense is facing the world in a state of mutual acknowledgement. A *reconciliation of the world and self*, as Pallasmaa calls it. It is in the nature of being to be acted out, over which agency is gained when done so concordantly to reality. So far, concordant acts of being have primarily been discussed as of receptive nature. Nevertheless, by the hand of such concordant knowledge, reality becomes a legible map where the pathways toward treasures of joy are revealed. Such pathways are potential developments within the world, which resides in between and beyond the world's actuality. They account for the process of becoming in our reality. The detection of this potentiality allows an individual to project potential actualities and by that perform agency. It allows for the ability perform, or to acknowledge, willfully in symbiosis with the will of the world. It is being with the world through the capacity of agency. In what sense joy and beatitude may be realized through a power to perform will be discussed in this chapter.

The French thinker Gilles Deleuze was a major voice in the debate on the contribution of potentiality regarding the knowledge within the world, considering it to be like a landscape. He called this landscape the *plane of immanence*, which could be considered like a blueprint to the physical reality and all interconnecting or self-defining structures. What is called *the virtual* in his vocabulary accounts for everything that is in between and beyond *the actual*, together making up the plane. *The virtual* is like an intensity about the actual, and in turn *the actual* is like the extension out of the virtual. In relation to the plane of immanence, Deleuze describes them as such: "*The actual falls from the plane like a fruit, whilst the actualization relates it back to the plane as if to that which turns the object back into a subject.*"¹ In other words, the relation between the virtual and the actual is deductible. Spinoza would say that this plane is in plane is in "*synthetic harmony*"², perfectly coherent as such. If a subject deducts knowledge concordantly, one internalizes this particle of perfection: "*When we say that an adequate and perfect idea is in us, we say nothing else than that an adequate and perfect idea exists in god [...] and consequently we say nothing else than that idea is true.*"³ Spinoza argues that the individual's power of thought and action may be increased by a gain in concordant understanding of the world, but it may be decreased by a gain in discordant understanding of the world. He concludes that gaining perfection brings joy as such: "*By "joy," therefore, in what follows, I shall understand the passive states through which the mind passes to a greater perfection.*"⁴ It is through critical deduction of the actual that the concordant virtuality of Deleuze may unveil itself.

This virtuality reports the potentiality that is within the forceful world, which Deleuze would define as "*multiplicity and becoming*"⁵. Less dynamic terms like the One and Being are replaced by the multiple and

1 Deleuze, G., Parnet, C., (1977) *Dialogues II*, p. 150

2 Rawes, P., (2008). *Space, Geometry and Aesthetics*, p. 76

3 Spinoza, B., (2017). *Ethica*, (Van Buuren, M., Trans.), p. 107

4 Spinoza, B., (2017). *Ethica*, (Van Buuren, M., Trans.), p. 137

5 Deleuze, G., (2001). *Pure Immanence - Essays on A Life*. p. 84

process, which are deemed more suitable for the conditions within the forceful actuality. Deleuze emphasizes the vibrant, the forceful and the turbulent nature of our world; he judges it as joyful too: “*In the affirmation of the multiple lies the practical joy of the diverse.*”¹ Nonetheless, Deleuze does not purport the existence of a reality without system. His immanent worldview goes against this even, which maintains the reactive and harmonic unity of it all. Instead, Deleuze tries to make clear that nothing will ever be solid, even though it will always be contingent: “*The same doesn’t come back; only coming back is the same in what becomes.*”² Clearly, the likeminded Spinoza and Deleuze both believe that joy may be found in the harmonious concordance of the knowledge in the world. The dramatization of the virtuality into a forceful, even aggressive, actuality becomes tangible. The future becomes a place of plausibility, where potentiality is grasped, and possibilities are created.

In a reality like that, where potentiality is legible, the subject employs agency. According to Spinoza, willful agency is not the ability to change the necessary course of events, but the true knowledge of the world’s necessity and its determined course, according to which the subject may find peace of understanding. According to Deleuze, willful agency does include the ability to interfere, such as the creation of things or situations, as a form of affirmation. By the hand of Nietzsche, Deleuze claims that “*affirmation becomes the essence of the will to power itself*”³, of which creation is the physical evidence of man’s active engagement. The act of affirmation entails awareness and acknowledgement, which are key elements of being willfully, “*Affirmation is the highest power of the will.*”⁴ The ability to acknowledge the actual is empowering. It admits creation by means of affirmation. The ability to acknowledge the virtual, on the other hand, is where Deleuze breaks away from Spinoza. Deleuze namely believes in willful agency, describing it as the thunderbolt to lightning: “*like the lightning that announces and the thunder that follows, what is affirmed – like the total critique that accompanies creation.*”⁵ The power that resides in such ability supported by Deleuze is twofold. It involves active comprehension of the actuality on the one hand, whereas it involves the ability to engage on the other hand as well. The symbiosis of will between the world and the individual becomes a fact, in the form of a negotiation about the unfolding of potentiality into actuality. The responsibility that this capacity entails is the perseverance of one’s intrinsic value as an agentic being, “*the power or conatus by which it endeavours to persist in its own being, is nothing but the given, or actual, essence of the thing.*”⁶ The performance of one’s conatus brings joy, for it grounds the subject in its essence.

The ability to acknowledge and create is located right in the middle of the crossroad of being. It is as a vantage point, looking out on the valley of potentiality. This valley can be regarded as Deleuze’s plane of immanence, where the virtual and the actual reveal themselves as one whole reality. The ability of the subject to gain agency is dependent of both mindful understanding and sensible reception, which is typical for the crossroad of being. It results in an affirmative or negative attitude towards the sensation of the emanant world. An act may follow, although the act of acknowledgement is primal for agentic being. On the crossroad is where the mindful body resides, and it is where it finds the resources to act accordingly. Here, the subject feels empowered, having been reassured that the world is indeed understandable and understood. The legibility of the coherent reality informs the subject of the actual. By that it affords to become involved. It must be this sense of knowledgeable power that Spinoza addresses when he speaks of the kind of knowledge that brings joy and beatitude; “*The more some-*

1 Deleuze, G., (2001). *Pure Immanence - Essays on A Life.* p. 84

2 Deleuze, G., (2001). *Pure Immanence - Essays on A Life.* p. 87

3 Deleuze, G., (2001). *Pure Immanence - Essays on A Life.* p. 83

4 Deleuze, G., (2001). *Pure Immanence - Essays on A Life.* p. 83

5 Deleuze, G., (2001). *Pure Immanence - Essays on A Life.* p. 83

6 Spinoza, B., (2017). *Ethica,* (Van Buuren, M., Trans.), p. 108

one masters this type of knowledge, the more he is aware of himself and God, which means that he is more fulfilled and joyful.”¹

The vantage point of being is what architecture should aim to be. The admittance of the individual to be in a state of affirmation leads to embodied immanence. The admittance of the individual to feel empowered leads to active engagement. The agency that this implies, makes of the informed subject a fruitful force within the actuality. It is through the susceptibility of potentiality that a subject may be stimulated to be involved. For the realization of such an agentic state of being, architecture should afford engagement. It should not only reside in the realm of actuality, but in the realm of virtuality as well. It should incorporate opportunity. Such dynamic quality of a place will admit occasion, which is the creation in human form of situations within the world. The subject may not only hear the symphony or dance along. Instead, the subject may play a part and set its own steps. Conceived as such, architecture may afford the performative manifestation of being, allowing the subject to be aware of its own vibrant and legible qualities. The incorporation of the individual within the immanent world shouldn't remain spectative; it should go beyond and become interactive as well.

On top of this hill, looking over the valley of reality in a state of affirmation, the world becomes a treasure map. To affirm the actuality of the extended world admits the subject peace of understanding, by means of the recognition of its coherence. The capacity to affirm the actuality makes the intensity of the world legible, from where it unveils its interactable potentiality. The empowerment of the subject to be involved with the projected course of the world follows. This is what active agency feels like: the sensation of physical peace through the power of understanding. By this knowledge, the subject will be fulfilled with joy and beatitude, for the act of affirmation of one's reality works grounding and reassuring. By this agency, the subject will feel empowered, and rests assured that one may achieve through action. The vibrant conversation between the individual and the world proves the existence of both, reconciling the mutual relationship between the world and its resident. The subject's reality has become one's home and symbiotically the two will be forth, together.

1 Spinoza, B., (2017). Ethica, (Van Buuren, M., Trans.), p. 329

Conclusion

The two sides of the coin that makes up our reality consist of *understanding the world through reason* and *feeling the world through experience*. Making sense of such duality of two realms within one single reality requires careful attention and much practice. Namely, the paradoxical nature of man's existence in the world of thought and extension is prone to cause confusion and oblivion. Understanding is like a key to the lock of feeling and together they may solve the paradox and open the gate toward the embodiment of immanence. On the one hand, coherence within the subject's reality may be affirmed by the individual through an instruction into sensation. Such acknowledgment paves the way from knowledge to experience. On the other hand, vibrant qualities within the world may be affirmed through an evocation of understanding. Such acknowledgment paves the way from experience towards knowledge instead. Both pathways pass the crossroad of being, which is where an embodied type of immanence resides. It is the aware state of understanding a sensation, or of the experience of an understanding, where being resides in its full glory. This passage from one side of the coin to the other stands for the act of affirmation. The ability to affirm the actuality of things admits agency, which empowers the individual with the ability to engage. Peace of understanding is what follows, where a synthesis between the individual and the world is established. Architecture should facilitate these types of being by exposing the reality of the world, both its vibrant as its informative qualities. It should expose this within the actual and the virtual, and it should do so legibly. Realized as such, architecture unveils the world. Embodied immanence becomes a real and durable state of affair, leading to a grounding sense of being with the world.