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The Values of Architecture

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The Values of Architecture
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Contents

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Introduction

In the Western art tradition, painting, sculpture, music, literature, and architecture are classified as the *fine arts*. Although these art forms deal with different mediums, represent and express in different ways, and are used to different ends, the thought goes that they are essentially alike in the ways that count, which warrants their subsumption under a single conceptual umbrella. This use of "art" as a unifying idea is familiar to us. When we think about art, we assume that its objects have the same underlying properties regardless of the mediums in which they are created. If asked to name a paradigmatic work of art, we might identify the *Mona Lisa*, *Venus de Milo*, the *Suite bergamasque*, *Hamlet*, or Fallingwater; the fact that these works have different material forms does not affect our identification of them as art. This assumption that the fine arts are fundamentally similar has led philosophers to theorize about the arts as a unified body of objects. They have searched for definitions of art rather than of individual art forms, and proposed all-encompassing theories of artistic value in lieu of independent theories about the values of painting, sculpture, music, etc. In other words, the questions motivating the philosophy of art have been "what is art?" and "what is the value of art?"

However, a body of literature has recently emerged challenging the conceptual unification of the arts. The authors of these works posit that proceeding under the assumption that the same philosophical problems apply across the artistic board obfuscates many of the particularities of individual art forms.[1] Architecture, for instance, has essential non-aesthetic properties that distinguish it from the other fine arts. Unlike paintings and sculptures, buildings are public, site-specific, constrained by functionality, and immersed in everyday life. In the legacy

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[1] Noël Carroll, *Art in Three Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 6.

of Kant and Hutcheson and their emphases on disinterest and universal beauty, the norms for fine art appreciation have been shaped to require contemplative attention to the formal features of individual objects. Paintings, for example, are presented in frames that isolate them as individual objects inviting careful scrutiny, and allow viewers to grasp them in their entirety in a single view.[2] By contrast, buildings cannot be totally isolated from their environments, and the appreciation of architecture does not merely involve disinterested viewings of objects in their entirety, but immersive experiences of objects from multiple viewpoints. Unlike other arts that demand to occupy the foreground of our experience, architecture provides the backdrop to our lives, becoming part of our daily routine rather than, as Clive Bell put it, a means to lift us above the stream of life.[3] Buildings are not meant to be carefully contemplated at a distance, but entered, navigated, and lived in, a fact that challenges the applicability of the Western fine art framework to architecture. Indeed, it is an unfortunate result of unification of the fine arts that architecture has been largely neglected within aesthetics. Since other fine arts fit more comfortably within the Western framework, it has been easy for theorists to focus on those art forms and relegate architecture to the philosophical sidelines. In order to account for architecture and its differences from the other arts, perhaps we ought to shift the focus in aesthetics away from general questions about art and artistic value. A more meaningful set of questions might be "what are the arts?" and "what are the values of the arts?"

This thesis aims to rectify the inattention to architecture within aesthetics by examining the implications that arise when architecture is considered in isolation from the broader arts. The chapters will proceed as follows. In chapter I, I advance a theory of architectural value distinct

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[2] Arnold Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010), 162.

[3] David Goldblatt and Roger Paden, "Introduction to the Aesthetics of Architecture," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 69, no. 1 (2011): 1.

from artistic value. I survey the value-making features of architecture that are lost when architecture is subsumed under the umbrella of fine art, and argue that the framework of Western artistic value—with its emphasis on disinterestedness and contemplative attention—cannot account for all the properties that make architecture valuable. I argue that the non-artistic properties of architecture—its functionality, permanence, site-specificity, and publicness—create multiple perspectives from which a building must be assessed before its overall value qua architecture can be determined. I show that the norms of fine art appreciation in the Western tradition, which call for evaluation from a single perspective, cannot accommodate the perspectival plurality of architectural value. Under my theory, artistic value is determined by a single value judgment, whereas architectural value is aggregative, consisting in the sum of value judgments made about a building from all appropriate evaluative perspectives. Therefore, many values of architecture are obscured in the Western art framework.

Chapter I sets the scene for the two subsequent chapters, which investigate specific features of architecture that distinguish it from the other fine arts. Chapter II addresses functionality in architecture. Specifically, it answers the *problem of translation*: how knowledge of a building's function can alter the aesthetic qualities we perceive it to have. In some cases, knowing the purpose that a building is meant to serve, and then observing that the building serves that purpose well, can change an initial negative aesthetic evaluation of a building into a positive one. Conversely, observing that a building fails to perform its function satisfactorily may impel us to change an initial positive aesthetic evaluation into a negative one. A solution to the problem of translation must stipulate the mechanism underlying these shifts in aesthetic evaluation. I propose that our aesthetic judgment of a building changes once we know the function it is meant to serve because that knowledge helps us organize our perception of the building, allowing us to understand how its design addresses that specific function. My argument

shows that functionality—a feature that the Western evaluative framework cannot accommodate—has an impact on our aesthetic evaluations of architecture.

Chapter III investigates the moral questions that arise from architecture's status as a public art. Unlike the other fine arts, which are typically displayed or performed in private "art spaces", architecture necessarily exists in the public arena. Members of the public thus do not consent to viewing architecture in the same way they choose to visit art museums and expose themselves to the works inside. These facts imbue architecture with a moral weight. I begin by showing the publicness of architecture subjects architects to two conflicting duties. As artists, they are obligated to create works with integrity, satisfying their own artistic interests rather than pandering to an audience. But as *public* artists, they are obligated to prioritize the interests of their audience and design for public taste. These obligations are at odds because the taste of the art community and the taste of the public tend to oppose one another, with the art community favoring difficult, intellectualized art and the public preferring familiar, accessible art. I propose that fulfilling these conflicting duties requires that architects design bilaterally rather than parochially; that is, design buildings that appeal to both public and professional audiences, rather than to one or the other. I insist, however, the bilaterality is not a responsibility that falls entirely on architects. I show that the public, too, has a role to play in achieving bilaterality in architecture. I argue that the public has a duty to be receptive to the aesthetically challenging features of architecture, which distributes the burden of bilaterality between architects and the audiences of their buildings.

My overarching aim in this thesis is to address the limitations of the conceptual unification of the arts for architecture. In doing so, I partake in an emerging philosophical tradition that recognizes the importance of thinking about different art forms and their individual values rather than the fine arts as a whole. Dominic McIver Lopes' *Beyond Art* is developed

around the premise that the range of activities classified as art are too diverse to define neatly.[4]

Lopes argues that understanding what art is requires understanding what the arts are, and proceeds to survey the wide array of phenomena that constitute the arts. Peter Kivy engages in a similar project in *Philosophies of Arts*, where he identifies the problems that arise from the conceptual unification of the arts for literature and music as non-representational art forms.[5] In *Art in Three Dimensions*, Noël Carroll dismisses the aestheticism dominating art historical methodology, which he ascribes to the unification of the fine arts. According to Carroll, by rejecting the assumption that there is a single affective state or experience that every art form is meant to deliver, we can come to a clearer understanding of what exactly art is. My thesis addresses the same concerns laid out by Lopes, Kivy, and Carroll, focusing specifically on the problems that face *architecture* under a conception of unified artistic value.

Before addressing these problems, it will be useful to have an idea of how architecture came to be classified one of the fine arts at all, given its obvious differences from painting, sculpture, music, and literature. Despite its current prevalence, the use of "art" as a unifying concept is a recent theoretical development. Paul O. Kristeller has argued that the classification of fine art distinct from craft, science, and other human activities—that is, the modern system of the arts—did not develop until the eighteenth century.[6] The ancient Greeks, for instance, used art to refer to a range of activities that we would now call crafts or sciences: activities that require training rather than inherent skill. Thus, diverse pursuits such as rhetoric, statesmanship, medicine, carpentry, and metalwork were all considered arts. This thinking persisted through late antiquity and the Middle Ages, when the seven "arts" were subdivided into the trivium

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[4] Dominic McIver Lopes, *Beyond Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[5] Peter Kivy, *Philosophies of Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[6] Paul O. Kristeller, "The Modern System of the Arts," in *Renaissance Thought and the Arts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 163-227.

(comprised of grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic) and the quadrivium (comprised of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music). Surprisingly, not even the Renaissance saw a full unification of the arts despite being among the most critical periods in Western art history. While the visual arts experienced a rise in esteem during the Renaissance, they were still closely linked to the sciences; painting and sculpture were taught alongside mathematics, anatomy, and perspective. The decisive step toward the modern system of the arts was finally taken in 1746, when Abbé Batteux published his treatise *The Fine Arts Reduced to a Single Principle*, explicitly designating painting, sculpture, music, literature, and architecture as the fine arts. Although Batteux identified the single principle underlying all the fine arts as the representation of nature—a theory that has since been widely discredited—he laid the foundation for both the modern system of the arts and the philosophical task of defining art, which remains a central problem in aesthetics today.[7]

The upshot of this narrative is that the system of fine art that is now so familiar to us did not exist in antiquity, the Middle Ages, or the Renaissance. While this does not mean, of course, that prior to the eighteenth century there was no painting, sculpture, music, literature, or architecture, it does show that the unification of these five art forms is far from an intuitive grouping of activities that are importantly similar. Rather, the concept of art is historically conditioned, acquiring a certain meaning at certain places and times.[8] As it is used today, "art" is a term that enforces a conceptual and institutional unity upon a range of activities that actually have very little in common. The persistent effort of philosophers to define art in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions therefore seems misplaced, and the recent effort of

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[7] Kivy, *Philosophies of Arts*, 4.

[8] Dominic McIver Lopes, "Nobody Needs a Theory of Art," *Journal of Philosophy* 100, no. 3 (2008), 112.

philosophers of art to theorize about the arts individually rather than as a homogenous unit is long overdue.

Chapter I. On Value

i. The problem of architecture as art

Why does architecture matter? Since the Western art tradition classifies architecture as one of the fine arts alongside painting, sculpture, music, and literature, questions about architectural value are typically subsumed under more general questions about artistic value. This classification assumes, among other things, that the methods of evaluation in the Western art tradition are appropriate for identifying the value of architecture. The methods of art history emphasize formal analysis; by surveying the formal qualities of artworks, discerning their meanings and structures, and placing them in their art historical contexts, these methods are meant to draw our attention to the salient features of artworks that make them worth our care and attention.[1] But are these procedures as apt for identifying what is valuable about architecture as they are for the other fine arts? After all, it is unclear whether we value buildings in the same way we do works of art; that is, whether we value them as we do the *Mona Lisa*, *Venus de Milo*, the *Suite bergamasque*, and *Hamlet*. Some works of architecture certainly possess artistic value. The Taj Mahal, the Sagrada Familia, and Fallingwater immediately come to mind as buildings that are valued primarily for their formal qualities and for the aesthetic experiences they provide. However, confining our judgments about *all* works of architecture within the realm of art obscures many of the features that we find valuable about architecture. The value of most buildings does not stem from any remarkable artistic value they exhibit, but from their functional and economic virtues. The mass-produced cookie-cutter houses in American suburbs, for instance, may not amount to much as

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[1] Noël Carroll, *Beyond Aesthetics: Philosophical Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 5-6.

works of art, but they are successful works of architecture insofar as they have mass appeal, are produced efficiently, and facilitate the day-to-day activities of the families that live in them. Moreover, some buildings that possess extraordinary artistic value are not successful works of architecture. Villa Savoye and the Farnsworth House may be artistic masterpieces, but both are deficient in architectural value insofar they failed to meet the functional requirements that their patrons demanded: the structural defects of Villa Savoye required constant repairs, and the total transparency of the Farnsworth House's glass walls made it impossible for Edith Farnsworth to live there without paranoia about her lack of privacy.[2] The possible incongruity between artistic and architectural value has no analog in any other of the fine arts. How could a painting, for instance, succeed as art but fail as painting? The value of painting, sculpture, music, and literature are intertwined with artistic value to an extent that the value of architecture is not. This immediately suggests that architectural value is distinctive among the fine arts and cannot be articulated in terms of artistic value alone.

Perhaps the methods of art history are ill-suited for identifying the value of architecture due to the peculiarities of architecture as an art form. Unlike the other fine arts, architecture is public, site-specific, constrained by functionality, and immersed in everyday life. These features do not fit comfortably within the norms of fine art appreciation, which require contemplative attention to the formal features of individual objects. While paintings, for instance, are presented in frames that isolate them as individual objects for observation, buildings cannot be completely disconnected from their surrounding environment. Furthermore, to look at a building with concentrated attention the way one would a painting in a museum is to engage with the building

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[2] For details on the structural shortcomings of Villa Savoye, see Nicole Sully, "Modern Architecture and Complaints About the Weather, or, 'Dear Monsieur Le Corbusier, It Is Still Raining in Our Garage," *M/C Journal* 12, no. 4 (2009). For discussion on the conflict between Edith Farnsworth and Mies van der Rohe about Farnsworth's privacy concerns, see Alice T. Friedman, *Women and the Making of the Modern House* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 134-143.

in an unusual way: as a tourist. The works of architecture that we truly know and love are the ones that fall into the background of our consciousness, becoming part of our system of habits.[3] The tension between the norms of fine art appreciation and architecture's distinctive non-artistic qualities challenges the applicability of the framework of Western artistic value to architecture.

My aim in this chapter is to advance a broad theory of architectural value distinct from, but inclusive of, artistic value. I argue that the non-aesthetic, non-art-historical features of architecture—its functionality, permanence, and site-specificity—require a wider framework for evaluation than what artistic value alone permits. I begin in part II with a discussion of what architecture is, sketching out some of the characteristics that are central to our conception of architecture. With these characteristics in mind, I take up the question of what constitutes artistic value in part III, and in part IV I proceed to show why artistic value cannot adequately account for what is valuable about architecture. I argue that the distinctive features of architecture create multiple evaluative perspectives with respect to which architectural value is determined, a plurality that cannot be accommodated by the norms of Western fine art appreciation, which call for evaluation from a single perspective. The theory of architectural value that I propose in this chapter explains the diversity of our experiences with architecture as well as the possibility of its inconsistency with artistic value.

ii. What is architecture?

To begin, I delineate the scope of my project. Just which objects count as architecture, and what, if anything, is the difference between architecture and mere building? My goal is not

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[3] Andrew Ballantyne, "Architecture, Life, and Habit," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 69, no. 1 (2011): 43.

to provide a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for architecturehood, but simply to identify those features that are central to our common conception of architecture.[4] Just as philosophers have succeeded in theorizing about artistic value without a precise definition of art, it is also possible to theorize about architectural value without a precise definition of architecture that accounts for every single borderline case.[5]

Broadly speaking, architecture is concerned with the built environment—buildings, bridges, parks, roads, etc.—but in the context of the artworld, architecture pertains almost exclusively to buildings. The first step in providing an account of architecture is thus to determine what it means for something to be a building, and next to stipulate the conditions a building must fulfill in order to be considered a work of architecture.

Buildings come in many types. Houses and apartment buildings are places for living, offices places for work, schools and museums places for education, and religious buildings places for worship. Despite this variation, comparing different building types reveals the following similarities. First, buildings are all structures (i) *designed* (ii) *for human occupation.* The requirement that buildings be designed distinguishes them from naturally occurring structures that might also function as places of human occupation. A cave, for instance, may house human

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[4] Most theories of art consist of a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for art status. However, the plethora of borderline cases of art and, in turn, the difficulty of providing hard conditions for art status has resulted in the development of cluster theories of art: non-essentialist conceptions of art that explain the nature of art through family resemblance. See Morris Weitz, "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 15, no. 1 (1956): 27–35 and Berys Gaut, "The Cluster Account of Art," in *Theories of Art Today*, ed. Noël Carroll (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), 25–45. Similarly, my aim here to merely identify features that constitute common ideas of what architecture is rather than to provide a rigid, essentialist definition of architecture.

[5] Malcolm Budd writes in the introduction to his theory of artistic value: "I do not attempt… to present a definition of a work of art or a philosophical theory of art or a statement of its supposed essence, then to derive from the definition a conception of artistic value… Given what has happened to the concept of art, especially in this century, it would be fruitless to proceed in this way." *Values of Art: Pictures, Poetry, and Music* (London: Penguin, 1995), 3.

activity, but is not a building. The human occupation requirement highlights the functionality of buildings, which are all meant to accommodate some kind of human activity. Perhaps this requirement explains our reluctance to regard structures such as the pyramids of Giza as buildings. The worry about the pyramids is not that they house the dead—after all, other mausoleums such as the Pantheon and the Taj Mahal share this function yet are still thought of as buildings—but that they exclude the living.[6] Although pyramids have rooms, hallways, and other internal structural features characteristic of buildings, they were intentionally designed without doors to prevent the living from entering them once construction was completed. This particular feature of pyramids aligns them more with monuments than with buildings.

Further qualifications must be made to our working definition, as there remain a number of *prima facie* non-building structures that would count as buildings under our current requirements. Tents, ships, and caravans, for instance, are structures designed for human occupation and often have the same functions as conventional buildings, but nevertheless do not fit our conception of building.[7] Pavilions and underground catacombs also fail to align with our intuitions about buildings due to the lack of interior qualities in the first case and exterior qualities in the second. To address the first of these two problems, we can add to our definition that buildings are (iii) *permanent* and (iv) *site-specific.* Tents, ships, and caravans are not buildings because they are either temporarily erected or moving. And to address the problem posed by pavilions and underground catacombs, we can further stipulate that buildings tend to (v) *possess both interior and exterior qualities.*[8] Although pavilions have many of the same structural features as buildings, their lack of interior qualities seems to disqualify them as buildings. In a similar vein,

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[6] Stephen Davies, "Is Architecture an Art?" in *Philosophy and Architecture*, ed. Michael H. Mitias (Amsterdam: Rodopi Press, 1994), 35.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

although underground catacombs such as the Basilica Cistern in Istanbul may possess interior qualities, their lack of exterior qualities altogether makes it difficult to conceive of them as buildings. The requirement that buildings exhibit exterior in addition to interior attributes calls attention to the public face of architecture. Since buildings must be large enough to accommodate human activity, their exterior qualities endow them with a presence in the public world.

I have characterized buildings as permanent, site-specific structures designed for human occupation that possess both interior and exterior qualities. Still, this definition doesn't seem sufficiently precise. Many sculptures and monuments fit this definition even though we would not typically think of them as buildings. We do not, for instance, think of the Statue of Liberty as a building, even though it fulfills all the requirements we have identified and even possesses rooms, stairs, elevators, doors, and other quintessential architectural features. The problem is not that the Statue of Liberty is representational; even non-representational monuments face this problem. The Arc de Triomphe does not fit our intuitions of what a building is despite possessing all the qualities that are characteristic of buildings. Although monuments such as the Statue of Liberty and the Arc de Triomphe are technically buildings, our intuitive rejection of them as such suggests that they belong to separate category of objects. Let us define monuments as buildings that are necessarily externally focused and that have a specific commemorative function. According to this definition, the interior qualities of monuments are non-essential. If for some reason the interior of the Statue of Liberty became unusable, the monument would still be functional in the relevant sense, as only its external features contribute to its commemorative function. By contrast, if the interior of a house, school, or museum were to become unusable, that building would cease to be functional in the relevant sense, as the functionality of these buildings relies on their ability to accommodate human activity. These

distinctive features of monuments warrant their separate treatment, and I will therefore exclude them in my discussion of buildings.

I have established some of the characteristics that are central to our idea of what a building is, but I have yet to elaborate on what it means for a building to count as a work of architecture. Although the terms "building" and "architecture" are sometimes interchangeable, the way in which the latter is used often implies an elevated status. A building is any structure that possesses the five aforementioned features, but a work of architecture achieves something more. Thus, architecture would appear to consist of a subset of buildings exhibiting some special quality that warrants a designation separate from mere buildings. This was the sentiment behind art historian Nikolaus Pevsner's statement that "a bicycle shed is a building; Lincoln Cathedral is a piece of architecture." [9] Theories that purport to explain the distinction between building and architecture are therefore normative; they make claims about the features of architecture that are so important as to call for a privileged status.

Although there are many theories that explain what makes architecture good or bad, there is only one clearly stated account of what makes architecture *architecture* rather than building. According to Pevsner's aesthetic theory of architecture, "nearly everything that encloses space on a scale sufficient for a human being to move in is a building; the term architecture applies only to buildings designed with a view to *aesthetic appeal*."[10] This proposal, however, is unsatisfactory. It can't be that design with a view to aesthetic appeal is the deciding factor of architecturehood. After all, most bicycle sheds *are* designed with a view to aesthetic appeal. Bicycle shed builders must decide what materials to use, whether to paint them and if to paint them then in what color, and where to build the sheds so that they do not look out of

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[9] Nikolaus Pevsner, *Outline of European Architecture* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), 15.

[10] Ibid. Emphasis added.

place in their environment. These may not be aesthetic concerns in a fine art sense, but they are aesthetic insofar as they pertain to the appearance of the shed. Although Pevsner is right to point out that Lincoln Cathedral was designed with more aesthetic awareness than the bicycle shed, it isn't the presence of aesthetic awareness in the former that makes it a work of architecture and the absence of aesthetic awareness in the latter that makes it a mere building.

This may, however, be a misinterpretation of Pevsner's argument. Rather than applying the notion of aesthetic appeal straightforwardly, Pevsner insinuates that the difference between Lincoln Cathedral and the bicycle shed is that the former is a *work of art* and the latter is not. Indeed, Pevsner proceeds to argue that a good architect requires the visual focus of a sculptor or painter in addition to the spatial imagination of a builder, and the combination of these skills grants the architect the status of an artist.[11] Given this reinterpretation, the aesthetic theory can be stated as

> *Aesthetic theory of architecture*: *x* is a work of architecture iff *x* is a building and *x* is a work of art.

The aesthetic theory, thus interpreted, is appealing because it seems to accurately pinpoint the difference between buildings with architecture status and those without it. Lincoln Cathedral is a work of art—one look at the sculptural intricacy of its towers, the upward sweep of its vaults, and the transformation of sunlight through its stained glass windows reveals this. The average bicycle shed, on the other hand, is not a work of art.

However, the problem with the aesthetic theory is that its selection of art status as the sole condition that a building must fulfill to acquire architecture status is an arbitrary one, chosen

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[11] Ibid., 16.

without justification from a long list of important differences between Lincoln Cathedral and the bicycle shed. Lincoln Cathedral possesses far more features beyond art status that the bicycle shed does not: monumentality, multi-functionality (Lincoln Cathedral is not only as a place of worship but also a public meeting space, library, landmark, affirmation of Christian devotion, etc.), high levels of expenditure, and a host of other qualities that could also serve as the basis of demarcation between architecture and building. Architecture has diverse ambitions, and it is arbitrary to prioritize one of those ambitions at the expense of others. In the remainder of this essay, I will therefore reject normative accounts of architecture that privilege works of architecture above mere buildings, and treat all buildings as works of architecture deserving of individual consideration.

iii. Artistic value

Setting architecture aside for the moment, I turn to the question of artistic value. The account of artistic value I identify in this section will serve as a baseline for comparison with the account of architectural value I develop in the following one.

Artistic value refers to the sort of valuable properties that are pertinent to evaluations of objects qua art. The kinds of value in art make an impressive inventory, which includes aesthetic value, historical value, art-historical value, cognitive value, moral value, political value, economic value, therapeutic value, social value, educational value, sentimental value, and religious value.[12] However, not all of the valuable properties in art are relevant to judgments about artistic value. The fact that I can hold *Starry Night* over my head to protect myself from

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[12] Dominic McIver Lopes describes the values in art as an "inventory of values" in "The Myth of (Non-Aesthetic) Artistic Value," *Philosophical Quarterly* 61, no. 244 (2011): 520.

rain may be reason to value the painting, but it is not reason to value the painting qua art. It would be rather strange if a critic were to defend the artistic value of *Starry Night* on the basis that it makes a fine umbrella. Economic value is another valuable property that is irrelevant to assessments of art qua art. Although the price at which a *Starry Night* sells might depend on the painting's art status, it does not affect the painting's artistic value; the selling price of *Starry Night* can fluctuate while its artistic value remains constant. Developing a theory of artistic value involves providing criteria that allow us to sift out the *right reasons* for valuing art from the inventory; that is, the reasons that justify valuing art qua art.[13] To value *Starry Night* as an umbrella or for its selling price is to value the painting for instrumental reasons that have no bearing on what makes it worth valuing qua art: the *wrong* reasons.

But what exactly are the right reasons for valuing art? What criteria should we use to sort through the inventory of values in art to distinguish the valuable properties determinative of artistic value from those that are merely adventitious? Since artworks are intended to elicit responses from spectators, theories of artistic value tend to address the quality of experiences that artworks engender. My intention in the following discussion is to assess a few representative theories of artistic value and settle on an account that most parallels the conception of fine art value deployed by art historians and critics in the Western tradition. Philosophers have advanced numerous theories of artistic value, many of which are broader than the Western formulation and are thus able to accommodate the value of functional arts such as architecture.[14] It is a virtue of such theories of artistic value that they can explain architectural value, but those theories are

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[13] I borrow this framework of valuing for the right reasons from Erich Hatala Matthes, "Love in Spite Of," in *Oxford Studies in Normative Ethics: Volume 6*, ed. Mark Timmons (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 247-248.

[14] For a sampling of theories of artistic value that are able to accommodate architectural value, see Noël Carroll, *Beyond Aesthetics* and Robert Stecker, "Artistic Value Defended," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 70, no. 4 (2012): 355-362.

not my concern here. I will show that unlike these more generous theories, artistic value as sanctioned by the Western tradition cannot wholly account for the values of architecture.

Theories of artistic value can be divided into three categories: inclusive, exclusive, and moderate. Inclusive theories of artistic value are those that more or less dissolve the distinction between artistic value and value in art. Consider, for instance, Nicholas Wolterstorff's purposive account of artistic value:

> *Purposive theory (inclusive)*: Artwork *x* possesses artistic value iff, and to the extent that, the experience of *x* realizes the purposes for which it was made.[15]

The purposive theory doesn't narrow down the inventory of values in art much because artists create artworks with countless objectives in mind, and the theory legitimizes all of those objectives to the extent that artists are successful in achieving them. Artists are motivated to produce artworks not only to create objects of aesthetic interest, but also to convey political messages, inspire religious devotion, and achieve fame and fortune. However, not all of these motivations are relevant to assessments of art qua art. As previously discussed, considerations such as whether or not an artwork sells at a high price should not be relevant in judgments about artistic value. Inclusive theories of artistic value are unsustainable; they fail to recognize that some of the properties that make art valuable *simpliciter* do not make art valuable qua art.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, exclusive theories of artistic value designate a single kind of value as constitutive of artistic value: aesthetic value. Consider an exclusive theory proposed by Monroe Beardsley:

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[15] Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Art in Action* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 157. Dominic McIver Lopes discusses Wolterstorff's trivialization of artistic value in "The Myth of (Non-Aesthetic) Artistic Value," 520.

> *Aesthetic theory (exclusive)*: Artwork *x* possesses artistic value iff, and to the extent that, *x* generates a valuable aesthetic experience.[16]

According to Beardsley, an aesthetic experience is characterized by an intense and unified fixation on the perceptual features of its object, and is valuable for its own sake.[17]

The aesthetic theory is attractive because it captures the primacy of aesthetic consideration in evaluations of art. Instead of emphasizing all values in art uniformly as inclusive theories do, exclusive theories single out the most pertinent value that drives artistic evaluation. However, confining artistic value to aesthetic value is too restrictive for a number of reasons. First, there are artistically valuable artworks that lack aesthetic value. Duchamp's *Fountain*, for instance, is artistically valuable despite being aesthetically indiscernible from a commonplace urinal. Second, the artistic value of an artwork is rarely exhausted by its aesthetic value.[18] If artistic value could be explained through the formal features of an artwork alone, then subject matter and other non-formal properties of art would be irrelevant in artistic judgments. Third, by singling out aesthetic properties as determinative of artistic value, the aesthetic theory is committed to the view that the artistic value of a work is fixed at the time of the work's creation. The problem with this view is that not all extrinsic, time-dependent values are adventitious. Art-historical value—the value of an object given its place in an art tradition or a historical sequence—is an important factor in art historians' and critics' judgments about artistic value despite taking into account factors beyond the aesthetic features of artworks.[19] Max Ernst's

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[16] Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, Inc., 1958), 528.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Stecker, "Artistic Value Defended," 355.

[19] Alan H. Goldman, "Art Historical Value," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 33, no. 1 (1993): 22. For a more general discussion of the role of history in theories of art, see Noël Carroll, "History and the Philosophy of Art," *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 5, no. 3 (2011): 370-382.

surrealist *Pietà or Revolution by Night* would possess substantially less artistic value if it were not grounded in the millennium-long artistic tradition of the *Pietà*, a fact that cannot be explained simply through attention to the painting's formal features. The aesthetic theory's narrow view equating artistic value with aesthetic value does not do justice to the nuance of artistic value.

Given the untenability of both inclusive and exclusive approaches to artistic value, we are left with a moderate theory as a final possibility. While inclusive theories pick out too many values from the inventory of values in art and exclusive theories pick out too few, moderate theories of artistic value fall somewhere in between. Consider Malcolm Budd's view:

> *Intrinsic value theory (moderate)*: Artwork *x* possesses artistic value iff, and to the extent that, *x* offers an experience that is intrinsically valuable.[20]

By intrinsic value, Budd means that artistic value must derive from the experience of the work itself, rather than any instrumental value of the work's effects. Although his reference to intrinsic value may suggest an exclusive conception of aesthetic value, the kinds of experiences that Budd has in mind are quite broadly conceived. He does not set intrinsic value in opposition to extrinsic value (i.e. the value of an artwork in virtue of its relation to other things), but to instrumental value (i.e. the value of the effects of an artwork on people who experience it, or the value of an artwork's accomplishment of some end).[21] Although he gives priority to formal features intrinsic to artworks, he admits that a work's extrinsic values can contribute to the intrinsic value of the experience the work affords. Thus, the experience of representational

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[20] Budd, *Values of Art*, 4.

[21] Ibid., 5.

subject matter, the cognitive and ethical dimensions of art, and the art-historical properties of art are all given legitimacy (albeit of a secondary nature) in Budd's account.

Budd's theory of artistic value is attractive because it gives formal features in art precedence while allowing room for the possibility that other values in an artwork will have a bearing on its artistic value. This conception of artistic value is consistent with the kind of value that art historians and critics search for in their assessments of art. Consider the following passage from a recent art history textbook describing the task of the art historian:

> Art historians use a variety of theoretical perspectives and a host of interpretive strategies to come to an understanding of works of art within their cultural contexts. But as a place to begin, the work of art historians can be ranked into four types of investigation:
> 1. assessment of physical properties,
> 2. analysis of visual or formal structure,
> 3. identification of subject matter or conventional symbolism, and
> 4. integration within cultural context.[22]

Of the art historian's four tasks, only the fourth (and last) in the ranking pertains to anything beyond the intrinsic properties of the artwork.

Although art critics have in addition to the art historian's interpretive task a further one of making an evaluative judgment about an artwork, the tools at their disposal to make that judgment are no different from those of the art historian. In fact, if a critic's interpretation of a work is well presented, her evaluation of the work will be self-evident.[23] Consider the following excerpts from critiques in *Art in America*: "Against all odds, the appropriation of David Hockney's sets and

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[22] Marilyn Stokstad and Michael W. Cothren, *Art History: Volume II*, 5th ed. (Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education Inc., 2014), xxxi.

[23] Tom Anderson, "Defining and Structuring Art Criticism for Education," *Studies in Art Education* 34, no. 4 (1993): 202.

costumes for Mozart's *The Magic Flute…* proved a resounding success,"[24] "[t]aut and luminous, Tom Butter's new constructions of fibreglass and found objects are like a set of concise, cryptic tales."[25] The evaluation in the first of these critiques is explicit; in the second, the evaluation is implicit in the positive tone of the critique. But both of them show that the same interpretive strategies of formal analysis used by art historians provide the basis for sound criticism and judgments of artistic value.

In sum: in the Western tradition, the right reasons for valuing an artwork are determined by the intrinsic value of the experience that the artwork affords. Although formal analysis takes precedence, extrinsic properties can also factor into judgments of artistic value.

iv. Architectural value

Given this account of artistic value, we are now in a position to gauge its compatibility with architectural value. As with defining artistic value, the project of defining architectural value involves providing criteria for distinguishing the values of architecture qua architecture from mere values in architecture; that is, determining the right reasons for valuing architecture. My aim in this section is twofold: (i) to show that the scope of Western artistic value is too narrow to accommodate the range of properties that constitute architectural value, and (ii) to propose a theory of architectural value that, unlike the Western evaluative framework, is sensitive to the unique, non-artistic properties of architecture.

The first of these tasks can be accomplished by means of example. Since architectural value is something that all great works of architecture possess to a high degree, a good starting point for

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[24] Brooks Adams, "Magical Mystery Flute," *Art in America* 79, no. 5 (1991): 51.

[25] George Melrod, "Tom Butter at Curt Marcus," *Art in America* 79, no. 5 (1991): 171.

thinking about architectural value is examining the sources of value in great works of architecture. What are the value-making features of, for instance, the Seagram Building, the Walt Disney Music Hall, and Tate Modern? Each of these buildings possesses value qua art. They are praised for their aesthetic qualities, the interpretive challenges they pose, their art-historical awareness, and the impacts they have had on subsequent architectural designs. Although each of these buildings enjoys a high degree of artistic value, their value qua architecture is not exhausted by artistic value. The Seagram Building is valuable for its role in shaping modern corporate identity and lifestyle in the United States.[26] The Walt Disney Music Hall is valuable for its acoustics, which make lackluster concerts performed at other venues sound extraordinary.[27] Tate Modern is valuable for the success of its architects' repurposing of the original power plant to serve as a museum.[28] These are instrumental values of the buildings they describe and thus are not constitutive of the artistic value of those buildings. However, they are not merely adventitious values in the buildings. Although we may not yet have a clear picture of exactly the right reasons for valuing architecture, the arguments listed above are among the right *kind* of reasons that make architecture worth valuing.[29] Yet, they are excluded from the set of reasons offered in standard Western accounts of artistic value.

Artistic value also fails to explain the values of architecture because it obscures the primacy of the relational value of architecture to its environment, favoring individual buildings rather than the role that buildings play in shaping their broader environments. One problem with approaching

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[26] Carol Willis, founding director of the Skyscraper Museum in New York, quoted in Mark Lamster, "A Personal Stamp on the Skyline," *New York Times* (New York, NY), April 3, 2013.

[27] Herbert Muschamp, "Architecture Review: A Moon Palace for the Hollywood Dream," *New York Times* (New York, NY), Oct. 23, 2003.

[28] Rowan Moore, introduction to *Building Tate Modern: Herzog & De Meuron Transforming Giles Gilbert Scott*, ed. Rowan Moore and Raymund Ryan (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 2000), 7-12.

[29] Matthes develops this account of valuing for the right kind of reasons in "Love in Spite Of," 248.

architecture with the kind of contemplative attitude the Western tradition demands is that such thinking privileges a small subset of buildings: well-funded buildings by academically-trained architects in internationally established styles, meant to be stand-alone objects of aesthetic interest. The vast majority of buildings do not fall under this description. When we think about the architecture of a city, a few individual buildings may come to mind—the famous museum or distinctive skyscraper, perhaps—but what we really think about is the general character of the city, which can be unique and lively even though the individual buildings that make up the city are banal.[30] Consider, for instance, the vibrantly colored buildings on the cliffs of Cinque Terre, or the brownstones lining the streets of Brooklyn. Although these buildings create aesthetically interesting environments, considered as individual objects the Cinque Terre buildings are kitschy and the brownstones are unremarkable.[31] However, despite their lack of individual value qua art, these buildings possess value qua architecture insofar as it is important for buildings to complement their neighbors and contribute positively to their settings. Indeed, a building's fit within its environment is so important that it can eclipse considerations of artistic merit. A large-scale International Style building such as Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim may possess outstanding artistic value in Manhattan among buildings of a similar scale, but that value might be compromised if the museum were instead constructed among small, gable-front houses in a residential neighborhood in Queens.

I have discussed a number of cases in which artistic value proves to be inadequate in accounting for what makes architecture valuable. In doing so, I have shown that despite the

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[30] See Allen Carlson, "Reconsidering the Aesthetics of Architecture," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 20, no. 4 (1986): 21-27.

[31] Stephen David Ross addresses the question of whether components of artworks ought to be considered artworks in themselves in "Some Ambiguities in Identifying the Work of Art," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 36, no. 2 (1977): 137-145. He briefly discusses the implications of this view for architecture on 140.

Western tradition's classification of architecture as a fine art, the evaluative framework that the tradition provides is unsatisfactory for determining the value of architecture. Now I turn to the task of proposing an alternative theory of architectural value that fills in the gaps left by artistic value.

Throughout this essay I have examined cases in which good architecture turns out to be mediocre when evaluated qua art and, conversely, in which mediocre architecture turns out to be good when evaluated qua art. The fact that the qualification "qua art" must be made suggests that art is a *perspective* from which objects can be evaluated—a perspective attributed to the Western fine art tradition and characterized by an attitude of disinterest and contemplative attention. I will call this the *art-perspective*. Evaluating art qua art (i.e. determining an artwork's artistic value) requires adopting the art-perspective; assessments of art from non-art perspectives that are interested rather than disinterested or immersive rather than contemplative do not produce evaluations of art qua art. For instance, to determine the artistic value of Pachelbel's Canon, one must assume the art-perspective and evaluate the song's formal features and structures, and art-historical significance. However, since for many listeners Pachelbel's Canon evokes memories of their wedding day, the song is often evaluated sentimentally—a perspective that is neither disinterested nor contemplative. Whatever judgment of Pachelbel's Canon results from this personal, interested evaluation is not a judgment of the song qua art, but qua sentimental object. Although there are many ways to evaluate art, evaluating art qua art demands assuming the art-perspective.

I do not wish to undersell the relevance of artistic value to architectural value. Many works of architecture of are also works of art, and the artistic value of these buildings is one facet of their architectural value. The Sagrada Familia is a great work of art as well as a great church, cultural symbol, tourist destination, landmark, and museum. The Farnsworth House, like the Sagrada

Familia, is a great work of art, cultural symbol, tourist destination, etc., but is not a great house. Although the Farnsworth House is still considered a great work of architecture, it is such in virtue of its artistic merit and not its functional merit. We would be far less forgiving of the practical faults of the Farnsworth House if it were not the artistic masterpiece that it is.[32]

Although artistic value is an element of architectural value, the discussion above indicates that it does not fully constitute architectural value. The possibility of discrepancy between artistic and architectural value suggests that unlike art, which qua art must be evaluated from a single perspective, architecture can be evaluated qua architecture from several perspectives. Assessed from the art-perspective, the Farnsworth House has a high degree of value; thus, the Farnsworth House is valuable qua art. Evaluated from the inhabitant-perspective, the Farnsworth House has a low degree of value; thus, the Farnsworth House is not valuable qua house. Although evaluations from these two perspectives yield disparate judgments about the same object, both are appropriate perspectives from which to judge architecture qua architecture. Considered alone, however, each evaluation provides an incomplete picture of the house's architectural value. Unlike artistic value, architectural value does not consist of the value judgment from a single evaluative perspective; rather, architectural value consists of the sum of value judgments from all the appropriate perspectives from which a building should be assessed.

The multi-perspectival quality of architectural value is possible because of architecture's non-artistic properties. Recalling our previous discussion of architecture's central characteristics, architecture is necessarily functional, permanent, and site-specific in a way that the other fine arts are typically not. These characteristics create a variety of perspectives from which architecture can

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[32] See Larry Shiner, "On Aesthetics and Function in Architecture: The Case of the 'Spectacle' Art Museum," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 69, no. 1 (2011): 38.

appropriately be evaluated qua architecture. The right reasons for valuing architecture are therefore much more broadly conceived than the right reasons for valuing art.

Some evaluative perspectives are created by the functionality of architecture. For example, a house has the function of providing a living space for its inhabitants. Houses can thus be assessed from the perspective of the inhabitant, who is concerned with the quality the living space the house provides. Often, however, the function of a building is not so clear. There is usually some degree of ambiguity in what a building is meant to achieve, a problem known as *the problem of indeterminacy*.[33] Consider, for instance, the Sydney Opera House. Although the function of the opera house may appear to be to accommodate concerts, the building is endowed with the additional functions of being a restaurant, a public monument, a place for concert-goers to display wealth and status, and a work of art. The opera house can be evaluated according to its success in accomplishing any one of these functions. Indeed, some architects have argued that a civic building's function as a symbol of a community's shared values and standards of life is equally as important as the building's more immediate functions.[34] Evaluated qua concert venue, the Sydney Opera House is not successful. The acoustics of the concert hall are notoriously deficient; architects have been trying to find ways to improve the hall's sound quality since construction was completed in 1973.[35] However, evaluated qua public monument or qua art, the Sydney Opera House is tremendously successful. The architectural value of the Sydney Opera House is determined by weighing all of these assessments rather than picking out a single one. According to my account of architectural value, the problem of indeterminacy in architecture is not a curse in the way that

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[33] Roger Scruton identifies the problem of indeterminacy in *The Aesthetics of Architecture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 38-43. Glenn Parsons and Allen Carlson elaborate on the problem in *Functional Beauty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 143-149.

[34] James Taylor-Foster, "Renzo Piano on 'Civic Duties' in Our Cities," *Arch Daily*, January 13, 2015.

[35] Marina Kamenev, "Sydney's Opera House: Easy on the Eyes, Not the Ears," *Time*, October 19, 2011.

many philosophers have characterized it. Instead, the problem presents an opportunity to elaborate on the multifarious values of architecture qua architecture.

Permanence and site-specificity are also features of architecture that create multiple evaluative perspectives. Permanence and site-specificity embed buildings into their environments and make it difficult to isolate them as individual objects of appreciation. Architectural photography that appears in magazines and textbooks often aims to make architecture as art-like as possible, eliminating any contextual cues surrounding the building being photographed. However, this kind of isolating art-perspective is only one way to evaluate architecture. As I have shown in my discussion of the Cinque Terre and Brooklyn houses, architecture can also be evaluated from a perspective that accounts for the relational value that buildings have as elements of a neighborhood or landscape.

I have shown that architectural value, unlike artistic value, is aggregative. Determining architectural value involves adding up the value judgments made about a building from all the appropriate evaluative perspectives. Perhaps there is a parallel to be drawn between the multi-perspectival quality of architectural value and the multiple perspectives needed to experience a building in its entirety. Just as determining architectural value requires assessing a building from various perspectives, experiencing a building requires walking through it and examining it from different angles.[36] By contrast, the value of a painting can be determined from a single evaluative perspective, just as paintings can be grasped in their entirety from a single viewpoint. Such an analogy seems fitting given the intricacies of architectural value I have discussed in this chapter.

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[36] Jenefer Robinson, "On Being Moved by Architecture," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 70, no. 4 (2012): 337.

v. Conclusion

My discussion has shed light on the complexity of architectural value, and has emphasized the inability of the framework of Western artistic value to account for much of what is valuable about architecture. In section III, I was able to provide a succinct account of the right reasons for valuing art as conceived in the Western tradition. Such an account was possible because artistic value is determined with respect to a single evaluative perspective, so defining artistic value simply involved determining the right kind of reasons for valuing art according to that perspective. Unlike artistic value, architectural value cannot be understood from a single evaluative perspective. Architecture's functionality, permanence, and site-specificity endow architecture with a multitude of values that contribute to its value qua architecture, and those values cannot all be identified from a single perspective.

Chapter II. On Functionality

i. Functional beauty

Philosophers often maintain that works of fine art belong to a special category of objects that have no functions beyond serving as sources of aesthetic experiences.[1] However, as my argument from chapter I suggests, a more suitable way to phrase this claim is that works of art do not have practical, non-aesthetic functions *qua art*. Let us call this the *independence thesis*: the position that artistic and practical values are independent of one another.[2] According to the independence thesis, some works of art have practical functions, but whether they successfully fulfill those functions is irrelevant to their artistic value. A commemorative statue, for instance, might effectively fulfill its function of paying tribute to a historical event or figure, yet lack value qua art. Similarly, recalling the previously discussed suburban cookie-cutter house, a building might possess value qua architecture if it successfully fulfills its function (in this case, facilitating the day-to-day lives of the families that live in them), but nevertheless lack artistic value. Because functional value is an instrumental value—a value an object has in virtue of its effects—there is a tension between functional value and artistic value, which is concerned with identifying the qualities in artworks that make experiences of those works intrinsically valuable. The independence thesis maintains that a work of art's functionality may contribute to its value, but only adventitiously and not qua art.

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[1] See Monroe Beardsley, *The Aesthetic Point of View* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), Clive Bell, *Art* (New York: G. Putnam's Sons, 1958), and Nick Zangwill, "The Creative Theory of Art," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 32, no. 5 (1995): 307-323.

[2] Sven Ove Hansson, "Aesthetic Functionalism," *Contemporary Aesthetics* 3 (2005).

However, there is reason to think that functionality is more integral to the aesthetic character of objects than the independence thesis suggests. There are cases where knowing an object's function affects the aesthetic qualities that we perceive the object to have. For example, bicycles with missing seats and cars with flat tires are eyesores not because there is anything inherently displeasing about the way they look, but because we know what functions bicycles and cars are supposed to perform, and their disfigured appearances make them appear manifestly unfit to carry out those functions. Indeed, someone without the functional concepts of "bicycle" and "car" might not experience the same displeasure at the sight of the damaged objects that we do.[3] The same idea is applicable to judgments about architecture. Although there is a difference between evaluating a building qua art and evaluating a building qua functional object, we do not completely forget about function when we evaluate a building qua art. We do not think about buildings as works of sculpture or abstract compositions of lines and shapes. Rather, when we observe buildings we implicitly recognize them as functional objects, and the aesthetic qualities that we discern in them are shaped in part by this recognition. A house with broken windows is visually displeasing, not because there is anything inherently ugly about the appearance of broken glass, but because the broken windows make the house look unable to perform its function of providing shelter for its inhabitants. In this case, knowing the house's function alters its appearance and determines the aesthetic qualities that we perceive in it. These cases provide motivation for rejecting the independence thesis in favor of an alternative that recognizes the possibility of a connection between practical and aesthetic value. Let us call this alternative position *functionalism*.

One might wager that the displeasure we take in the appearance of the bicycle with a missing seat, the car with a flat tire, and the house with broken windows is not aesthetic in nature.

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[3] Glenn Parsons and Allen Carlson, *Functional Beauty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 107.

Perhaps the source of our displeasure does not lie in any aesthetic quality of the disfigured objects, but simply in knowing that these objects cannot fulfill their functions. This point, however, oversimplifies the matter. Although these disfigured objects certainly cause us practical frustration in being unfit to perform their functions, our displeasure is not exhausted by that practical frustration. Consider the difference between a computer that won't turn on due to an irreparable software problem and a computer that won't turn on due to irreparable physical damage, perhaps a dented surface or a cracked screen. Although both computers are equally unable to carry out their functions, the latter is far more unsightly than the former, which is visually indistinguishable from a functioning computer. Both computers are equally unfit for function, but because the physically damaged computer *looks* more unfit for function, we feel more displeasure at the sight of it than we do at the other one. Indeed, the quality of *looking* fit for function seems to carry far more weight in our aesthetic judgments than the quality of actually *being* fit for function; a computer with physical defects will be visually displeasing regardless of whether or not it functions well. Because we take aesthetic pleasure in objects that look fit for their function and aesthetic displeasure in objects that do not, the appearance of fitness for function seems to be an aesthetic quality.[4] Call this feature that an object has in virtue of its function and whose appreciation requires knowledge of that function *functional beauty*. Functional beauty is only possible under a functionalist view because the independence thesis precludes the possibility of a relationship between aesthetic and practical value, a relationship that must hold for functional beauty to exist.

Functional beauty is especially meaningful in architecture in virtue of the unique kinds of functions that buildings serve. Although all buildings have the immediate function of providing shelter or, at the very least, organizing space, most buildings also have additional

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[4] Ibid., 108.

technical and intellectual functions that factor into our evaluations of them. Concert halls have the function of complementing the acoustic quality of the music performed inside them, houses of worship have the function of inspiring religious devotion, and civic buildings have the function of expressing their societies' values. Without knowing a building's function, one's aesthetic evaluation of a building is incomplete.

One building that illustrates this point particularly well is Frank Gehry's Stata Center at MIT. The Stata Center—coincidentally, home to MIT's philosophy department—is a Deconstructivist building with a cartoon-like exterior of metal segments protruding at unexpected angles scattered among a group of more conventional rectangular brick towers. In addition to its whimsical façade, the Stata Center is known for being notoriously difficult to navigate. Each elevator serves only certain floors, the hallways are curvilinear, and there is an excess of unoccupied space scattered throughout the building. The Stata Center's floor plan is, on the whole, a mess, and it is impossible to find one's destination within the building during a first visit. The lack of organization in the Stata Center's plan might make the building seem unfit for function, and therefore lacking in functional beauty. When we first encounter the building, we assume that one of its functions is to efficiently facilitate navigation, which it clearly fails to do. The Stata Center makes what should be a simple task difficult, violating one of the fundamental tenets of good design that alleges that the best designed objects are those that function so seamlessly that we do not even notice ourselves using them.[5] The Stata Center's apparent failure in fulfilling its function might impel us to assign negative aesthetic qualities to the building; we might describe it as inefficient, sloppy, or convoluted.

However, knowing the Stata Center's true function forces us to reexamine this initial negative evaluation. Frank Gehry intentionally designed the building to be difficult to navigate

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[5] Donald Norman, *The Design of Everyday Things* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 3.

because he wanted to facilitate chance encounters among faculty and students at MIT. After listening to faculty members' complaints that the overly efficient buildings in which they currently worked made them feel isolated and were not conducive to collaborative research, Gehry implemented numerous design strategies in the Stata Center to address their grievances. For example, he decided that designing offices around "neighborhoods" rather than hallways and incorporating more meeting spaces and shared facilitates would help to catalyze discussion among the MIT community, even though it meant settling on a floorplan that would be difficult to navigate.[6] Another of Gehry's design strategies was to plan the Stata Center according to a progression from public to private. The spaces near the building entrances are all open to the general public, the transition areas are open only to members of the MIT community, and private workspaces are located at the innermost points within the building. Therefore, in order to reach their offices and classrooms, faculty and students must walk through numerous public spaces, creating an opportunity for spontaneous interaction. Frank Gehry discusses his intentions for Stata's design in the following statement:

> I am happy that this building expresses what's going on inside. My interpretation is that it reflects the different groups, the collision of ideas, the energy of people and ideas. They each have their own sorts of vectors and they will all be colliding with each other, some accidentally and some by contrivance. That's what will lead to the breakthroughs and the positive results. I think that's really going to work. I can't wait to see everybody in there—to see the beehive buzzing.[7]

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[6] Robert Campbell, "Does Gehry's Stata Center Really Work?" *Bloomberg*, June 19, 2007 and Nancy E. Joyce, *Building Stata: The Design and Construction of Frank O. Gehry's Stata Center at MIT* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004), 43.

[7] Frank Gehry, quoted in Joyce, *Building Stata*, xv.

Without knowing the Stata Center's function, it is easy to assign negative aesthetic attributes to the building because it appears unfit for its function. However, knowing that the building was designed to be confusing in order to spark conversation among members of the MIT community changes the way we perceive it, as the building performs this function very well. Although the building under observation has not changed, the aesthetic qualities that we perceive in it shift with knowledge of its function.

However, the mechanism underlying the translation from knowledge of an object's function to perceiving special aesthetic qualities in that object requires explanation. How can an object look one way to us when we do not know what its function is, and then look a different way once we do? Ostensibly, nothing about the object has changed, yet our experience of the object is reshaped once we know the purpose it is meant to serve.[8] In this chapter, I address this question, which is typically referred to as the *problem of translation*.[9] My aim is to propose a solution to the problem of translation that is sensitive to both the multifunctionality of individual buildings and the range of functions across works of architecture.

I begin in part II by elaborating on what functionality in architecture consists in, focusing on the distinction between primary and secondary functions; that is, functions that determine

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[8] There are other properties that, like function, cannot be discerned in an object, but that may nevertheless affect the way the object is perceived. For instance, knowing that a work of art is of groundbreaking originality might translate into a positive aesthetic quality in the work, and knowing that a work is a forgery might translate into a negative one. Originality and authenticity, like functionality, seem to have a bearing on the aesthetic value of artworks even though they are indiscernible. For general discussion on the possibility of aesthetic difference between two apparently identical objects, as well as more specific details on groundbreaking originality as an aesthetic quality, see Robert Hopkins, "Aesthetics, Experience, and Discrimination," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 63, no. 2 (2005): 119-133. For discussion on authenticity as an aesthetic quality, see Carolyn Korsmeyer, "Touch and the Experience of the Genuine," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 52, no. 4 (2012): 365-377.

[9] The problem of translation was initially identified by Roger Scruton in *The Aesthetics of Architecture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 41-42.

the kind of thing an object is, and functions that an object is accorded incidentally. I show that works of architecture—unlike "simple" functional objects that are defined in terms of their primary functions—are complex functional objects whose primary functions cannot claim priority as the source of their identity. The distinction between simple and complex functional objects forms the basis of my discussion in part III, where I consider Glenn Parsons and Allen Carlson's solution to the problem of translation. Because their argument assumes that all functional objects can be categorized according to their primary functions, I criticize their proposal's inability to explain the functional beauty of complex objects such as works of architecture. In part IV I propose an alternative solution to the problem of translation with the flexibility to account for complex functional objects. I argue that knowledge of a building's function organizes our perception of the building and allows us to understand how the building's design addresses that function. In other words, under my account, functional beauty is an aesthetic evaluation of a design solution. I show that the beauty of complex functional objects cannot be organized into the kind of neat, simple structure that Parsons and Carlson propose, and argue that my solution is more amenable to the particular functionalities of architecture.

ii. Function in architecture

To begin, I will address a key distinction in our understanding of functionality—the distinction between primary and secondary functions—and consider its applicability to architecture.

An artifact's primary functions are those functions without which the artifact would not be the kind of thing that it is.[10] Primary functions are contrasted with secondary, or accidental, functions: functions to which an artifact is put to use but are not indicative of the artifact's identity. For example, the primary function of a shovel is to move loose material such as coal, dirt, or snow. [11] Whether the shovel performs this function effectively is irrelevant—a dysfunctional shovel is, after all, still a shovel—but an object lacking the function altogether cannot be a shovel at all. Sometimes, however, shovels are not used as shovels, but for other purposes, such as propping up garage doors. This is a secondary function of shovels. If a shovel could not perform this function, it would still be the kind of object that it is.

What are the primary functions of architecture? When I sketched out the characteristics that are central to our conception of architecture in chapter I, I postulated that one such characteristic is architecture's accommodation of human activity. Although the range of functions across buildings is extensive—houses, hospitals, libraries, and shopping malls, for example, are all buildings but serve extremely varied purposes—the one primary function that works of architecture possess overarchingly is the function of enclosing or, at the very least, organizing space for human activity. An artifact lacking this function would be disqualified as a building.

What sets architecture apart from simple functional objects such as shovels, however, is that in addition to their overarching primary function of organizing space for human activity, most buildings have additional primary functions that cannot be generalized across the board. Hospitals must provide health care and treatment; without this function, a building could not be

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[10] Jonathan Gilmore, "A Functional View of Artistic Evaluation," *Philosophical Studies* 155, no. 2 (2011): 296.

[11] I borrow this example from Parsons and Carlson, *Functional Beauty*, 76.

a hospital. Clearly, however, not all works of architecture share this primary function. Subcategories of architecture—or *building types*—specify additional primary functions that buildings must perform in order to qualify as members. Therefore, not only are works of architecture multifunctional (i.e. possessing multiple primary functions), but the functions that constitute a building's multifunctionality differ from one building to another.

However, even within building types there is variation in the functions that buildings serve. For instance, although all religious buildings have the overarching function of accommodating worship, not all religious buildings share functional aspirations in other respects. Churches, mosques, synagogues, and pagodas have different primary functions in virtue of being attributed to different religions. But even among the houses of worship in a single religion there is variation in primary function. Consider the functional differences between an opulent Gothic cathedral and a simple Quaker meeting house. Gothic cathedrals were built to impress and generate awe in spectators. Their high ceilings, sculptural ornamentation, and stained glass windows were meant to appear to defy gravity and give visitors the impression of entering a celestial realm. By contrast, meeting houses were designed without steeples, decoration, or explicit liturgical symbols characteristic of cathedrals, as Quakers believed that these embellishments distracted from the content of religious ceremonies, obscuring what was truly important about religion. The simplicity of meeting house design was meant to emphasize the sermon instead of the spectacle of religious practice. Although these two kinds of religious buildings share the primary function of accommodating worship, their other primary functions do not align.

We could, perhaps, get even more specific about building types in order to determine the primary functions of architecture. Rather than thinking about religious buildings generally as a subcategory of architecture, we could identify even narrower subcategories of religious

buildings—for instance, Gothic cathedrals specifically—and determine the primary functions of objects that belong in these subcategories. But variation in primary function will persist even then. There are differences between the primary functions of Gothic cathedrals in France and in Poland, of those affiliated with convents or monasteries and those that are not, and of those that are also museums or tourist destinations and those that are strictly used for religious ceremony. Although we could continue to identify increasingly precise subcategories, at a certain point we will reach such a high level of specificity that the primary functions we attribute to objects in those subcategories will lack generalizing power and thus cease to be informative about the primary functions of *architecture*, which are what we were aiming to identify in the first place.

The fact that architecture cannot be defined in terms of its primary functions suggests that the functionality of architecture is different from that of objects such as shovels. It was easy to specify the primary and secondary functions of shovels earlier in this section because shovels can be defined in terms of their primary function. To be a shovel is just to possess the primary function that is characteristic of shovels, namely, to move loose material. Let us call such objects that are categorized according to their proper function *simple* functional objects.

Unlike simple functional objects, architecture cannot be defined in terms of its primary functions. As I have shown, most buildings have primary functions that do not apply overarchingly to all works of architecture. Architecture therefore resists definition in terms of its primary functions. To bring out the contrast in functionality between architecture and simple functional objects such as shovels, let us call objects whose functional categories are not defined by the primary functions of objects in that category *complex* functional objects. With this distinction between simple and complex functional objects in mind, I will proceed to address the problem of translation.

iii. Functional beauty and category-dependency

In this section, I analyze Parsons and Carlson's response to the problem of translation, which posits that functional beauty depends on the functional category under which an object is perceived, and in section IV I develop an alternative account of functional beauty that addresses the limitations of their proposal.

Parsons and Carlson's adapt their response to the problem of translation from Kendall L. Walton's account of aesthetic appreciation.[12] Walton develops a cognitively rich account of aesthetic appreciation: an account that recognizes the centrality of knowledge and beliefs about an object to its appropriate appreciation. Cognitively rich theories of aesthetic appreciation stand in contrast to disinterested theories, which urge audience members to divorce themselves from rather than attend to facts that apply to the object of appreciation. According to Walton's cognitively rich theory, knowing the artistic category in which a work belongs—for instance, in either the category of painting or sculpture—determines the aesthetic qualities that we ultimately perceive in the work. He distinguishes between perceptual qualities in art that are aesthetic (e.g. mystery or tension) and non-aesthetic (e.g. dark coloring or diagonal composition), and argues that the artistic categories to which an artwork belongs determine the aesthetic properties of the work because they specify the sort of non-aesthetic properties that count as "standard", "variable", and "contra-standard" for that category.[13] He defines a standard non-aesthetic property as a property that all or at least paradigmatic instances of that category possess (e.g. two-dimensionality in painting), a variable non-aesthetic property as a property that is irrelevant to works' belonging in that category (e.g. the colors in a painting), and a contra-standard non-

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[12] Kendall L. Walton, "Categories of Art," *Philosophical Review* 79, no. 3 (1970): 334–367.

[13] Ibid., 335.

aesthetic property as a property that tends to disqualify works from a category (e.g. three-dimensionality in painting). Works in the same category are primarily distinguished by their variable properties. For instance, the differences between two paintings will likely lie in their colors, compositions, and representational content: factors that neither qualify nor disqualify artworks from the category of painting. The categories in which we perceive an artwork give structure to our aesthetic experience because they implicitly specify the non-aesthetic features in the work that count as standard, variable, or contra-standard according to those categories. Walton argues this organization of non-aesthetic qualities has an impact on the aesthetic qualities we discern in art. For instance, perceived in the category of sculpture where two-dimensionality is contra-standard, Jackson Pollock's *Autumn Rhythm* might seem lacking in dynamism due to its flatness. But perceived in its proper category of painting in which flatness is standard, *Autumn Rhythm* epitomizes dynamism.

Although Walton does not use this term, his theory of aesthetic appreciation describes the *cognitive penetrability* of aesthetic experience. Cognitive penetrability—the thesis that differences in background beliefs or cognitive states may cause two perceivers to view the same object in distinct ways—provides a useful way for thinking about the role that functionality might play in aesthetic experience.[14] Cognitive penetrability stands in opposition to cognitive *im*penetrability, which describes cases where our knowledge or beliefs about something are incapable of affecting our perception of it. A famous illustration of cognitive impenetrability is the Müller-Lyer illusion, where two lines of equal length but with tails that point in opposite directions continue to appear to be of different lengths even after the perceiver knows that that they are equally long. Unlike the Müller-Lyer illusion, our experience of art is cognitively

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[14] Dustin Stokes proposes this definition of cognitive penetrability in "Cognitive Penetration and the Perception of Art," *Dialectica* 68, no. 1 (2014): 1.

penetrable, as knowledge of certain facts about artworks—namely, the artistic categories in which artworks belong—can affect our perceptions of them. Cognitive penetrability therefore helps us see why knowledge of a building's function might have an impact on the aesthetic qualities we perceive in it; knowing what a building's function is alters our perception of the building. However, cognitive penetrability does not tell us *how* that knowledge impacts our perception. This is the question that the problem of translation boils down to. What happens once we have knowledge about a building's function that impels us to see it in a new light?

In their response to the problem of translation, Parsons and Carlson borrow Walton's theory of aesthetic appreciation as category-dependent, but change its application from general artistic categories to specific functional categories. They argue that knowing an object's function alters its perceptible aesthetic qualities because that knowledge specifies the qualities that count as standard, variable, and contra-standard to a functional category. Depending on the combination of standard, variable, and contra-standard properties perceived in an object in light of knowledge of its function, the object may possess one of three types of functional beauty. Parsons and Carlson summarize these three types of functional beauty in the following way:

> The first of these involves aesthetic qualities, such as the traditionally recognized quality of 'looking fit', that things possess when the functional category employed to perceive them causes us to see these things as having no contra-standard features at all and as having, to a high degree, certain variable features that are indicative of functionality. The second type includes aesthetic qualities like simplicity, gracefulness, or elegance, which functional things possess when the functional category used to perceive them makes them appear as having no contra-standard or variable features, but only the essential, standard ones. In the third way in which functional categories can affect aesthetic appearance, things appear able to perform their function, but the functional category that we apply in perceiving them leads them to appear as lacking some standard features. In this event, things, by still looking capable of performing their function, may display a pleasing

dissonance in their sensory elements. The resulting aesthetic quality may be described as a surprising, even playful "visual tension."[15]

In his discussion of functional beauty, Rafael de Clercq provides a helpful outline of Parsons and Carlson's classification of functional beauty types:

Functional beauty	Perceptual features that appear to be…			Relevant aesthetic qualities
	Standard	Variable	Contra-standard	
Type I	Some	Some	None	Looking fit
Type II	All	None	None	Simplicity, gracefulness, elegance
Type III	Some (possibly)	Some (possibly)	Some (by definition)	Visual tension[16]

Although Parsons and Carlson's account may explain the functional beauty of simple functional objects that are defined in terms of their primary functions, it fails to explain the functional beauty of complex ones such as works of architecture. The problem in their account lies in its imperfect adaptation of Walton's theory of aesthetic appreciation. They begin by swapping Walton's claim that properties are standard, variable, or contra-standard with respect to category membership in favor of a modified claim that properties are standard, variable, or contra-standard with respect to functional category membership. So far, so good. The trouble arises when, in order to make their account of functional beauty as widely applicable as possible, Parsons and Carlson begin to fudge the distinction between functional categories and functions

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[15] Ibid., 158.

[16] Rafael de Clercq, "Reflections on a Sofa Bed: Functional Beauty and Looking Fit," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 47, no. 2 (2013): 38.

generally.[17] This shift is not so problematic when it comes to simple functional objects such as shovels, as the functional category to which shovels belong is defined by the primary function of shovels; what it means to belong to the functional category of shovels is exactly to possess the primary function that is characteristic of shovels. Although Parsons and Carlson's framework captures the functional beauty of simple functional object, it is unclear whether complex functional objects such as buildings can survive the same shift, as the functional category membership of complex functional objects is not tied to the primary functions those objects serve. Art, for instance, is a functional category, but defining art in terms of its primary function of providing aesthetic experiences is not an informative way of conceptualizing functional beauty. It is unclear how knowing that the function of art is to provide aesthetic experiences would allow us to identify the properties that count as standard, variable, and contra-standard for art. What would it mean for a work of art to provide an aesthetic experience in a standard, variable, or contra-standard way?

Similarly, as discussed in section II, architecture is not defined in terms of the primary functions of objects that belong in that functional category. Although all buildings share the primary function of organizing space, most buildings have additional primary functions that do not apply overarchingly to all works of architecture. This concern cannot be alleviated simply by being more precise about the functional category in which a building belongs, as the same problem will arise for architecture even when its functional categories are made narrower. The comparison of Gothic cathedrals and Quaker meeting houses demonstrated this. Because the functional categories in which buildings belong cannot be defined according to their primary functions, Parsons and Carlson's account does not capture the functional beauty of architecture.

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[17] Stephen Davies, "Functional Beauty Examined," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 40, no. 2 (2010): 328.

Because the functions of simple functional objects are straightforward, there is no problem determining the features that count as standard, variable, or contra-standard according to the functions they serve. The complexity of architecture's functionality makes it difficult to classify the features of buildings in the same way. Therefore, while Parsons and Carlson's definition of functional beauty as dependent on functional category might help us deal with the problem of translation as it pertains to simple functional objects, it does little to shed light on functional beauty more generally.

iv. Functional beauty and design solution

I have shown that the problem in Parsons and Carlson's account of functional beauty lies in its false assumption that architecture can be defined in terms of the primary functions of buildings. Because works of architecture are complex functional objects, an account of functional beauty in architecture must have flexibility; it must be sensitive to the fact that buildings are multifunctional and that there are a broad range of functions across works of architecture. In what follows, I introduce an alternative solution to the problem of translation that fulfills this requirement. I propose that knowing a building's function has an impact on the aesthetic qualities we perceive in it because that knowledge allows us to assess the ways in which the building's design addresses its function. Therefore, although I agree with Parsons and Carlson's premise that knowing an object's function organizes our perception of it, I disagree with them about the process and effect of that organization. While Parsons and Carlson posit that knowledge of function allows us to sort through the properties that count as standard, variable, and contra-standard with respect to that functional category, I suggest that knowledge of function simply allows us to ascribe aesthetic qualities to way that the object addresses that function. I therefore

relieve their account of its rigid framework, and propose an alternative that can explain the functional beauty of simple as well as complex functional objects.

Parsons and Carlson briefly outline a concept that does not end up factoring into their response to the problem of translation, but that I think provides a helpful starting point for thinking about what a possible solution might look like. They tease out a distinction between two meanings of "understanding function".[18] On one hand, this could mean understanding the identity of an object's function: *what* the object's function is. On the other, this could mean understanding *how* the object performs its function. They point out that this distinction tends to go unnoticed because we have no problem seeing how most everyday objects perform their functions. For instance, when we are determining the functional beauty of a chair, the question of how the chair performs its function does not factor into our judgment explicitly because all chairs perform their functions according to the same basic principles that we are already familiar with. However, in some cases understanding how an object performs its function is not as obvious. For example, knowing that a complicated machine has the function of detecting certain molecules will likely do little to affect our aesthetic experience of the machine; our perception in this case remains cognitively impenetrable. But knowing *how* the machine detects these molecules would likely penetrate our experience, as this knowledge would allow us to see certain parts of the machine as being, for instance, perfectly in place or out of place, and efficiently or inefficiently arranged.[19]

The distinction that Parsons and Carlson draw out between understanding *what* and understanding *how* parallels the tendency of architects to frame their work in terms of design problems and design solutions. What architects call "problems" in a building project are in fact

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[18] Parsons and Carlson, *Functional Beauty*, 93.

[19] Ibid., 93-94.

functions that the building is meant to serve. To understand a design problem is to understand *what* the building's function is. For instance, when commissioned with the design of an art museum, an architect is faced with the problem of planning a space that will best showcase the objects in the museum's collection. In other words, the architect's task is to address the function of the art museum. Although many buildings pose similar design problems, architects address them in different ways. Every art museum must display art, but the designs of art museums— that is, the solutions to art museum design problem—are by no means alike. There are few architectural similarities between, for instance, the MoMA (a sleek, International Style building) and the Guggenheim Bilbao (a daring, Deconstructivist building) even though both are exhibition spaces for modern art. To understand a design solution is to understand *how* the building's design addresses the problem.

The MoMA and the Guggenheim Bilbao demonstrate not only that there are multiple possible solutions to the same design problem, but also that those solutions have different qualities. The MoMA solves the problem effectively: the modern simplicity of the glass and steel exterior gestures to the kind of art inside the museum, and the plain, rectilinear galleries inside provide an anonymous backdrop for the works inside to shine. Because we recognize that the architect's solution to the MoMA design problem is successful, we perceive positive aesthetic qualities in the building; we might describe the building as elegant because we perceive the building's solution to the design problem to be elegant. By contrast, the Guggenheim Bilbao has faced harsh criticism for failing to fulfill its function as an exhibition space.[20] The metallic, sloping walls of the Guggenheim Bilbao have been criticized for swallowing whatever art is displayed inside. The primary exhibition space in the museum is an enormous, polychrome, curvilinear room

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[20] Larry Shiner, "On Aesthetics and Function in Architecture: The Case of the 'Spectacle' Art Museum," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 69, no. 1 (2011):

longer than a football field that is an unflattering display space for art, which tends to require a plain backdrop to be appreciated properly. Although the Guggenheim Bilbao might be successful in fulfilling its other primary functions—such as serving as a tourist attraction and a work of art in its own right—it does not successfully fulfill its function as an exhibition space. Because we know that the architect's solution problem of the Guggenheim Bilbao is not successful, we perceive negative aesthetic qualities in the building; we might describe the museum as harsh or unaware because the museum's design does not effectively address the design problem. These positive aesthetic qualities we perceive in the MoMA and negative ones we perceive in the Guggenheim Bilbao are judgments of those buildings' functional beauty. They are aesthetic judgments that require certain knowledge about the buildings—specifically, their design problems and design solutions—to make. Just as knowing how the molecule-detection machine performs its function has the capacity to penetrate our aesthetic experience of the machine, knowing how an architect's solution addresses a design problem can penetrate our aesthetic experience of architecture.

Consider again the Stata Center, which I introduced in part I of this chapter. According to my account of functional beauty, knowing that Frank Gehry intended for the Stata Center to be difficult to navigate affects the aesthetic qualities we perceive in the building because that knowledge provides a basis for our identification and evaluation of the building's design solution with respect to the problem it addresses. Although the labyrinthine floorplan might at first appear to have the negative aesthetic properties of being daunting and unattractive, our perception of the building's aesthetic features changes with knowledge of its function. Knowing the Stata Center's true function, the challenging floor plan no longer seems daunting and unattractive, but instead represents an imaginative solution to a difficult design problem.

Like Parsons and Carlson's theory, my account of functional beauty aims to establish a relationship between functional beauty and the cognitive penetrability of aesthetic experience. However, we told different stories about what that relationship looks like. Parsons and Carlson attempted to systematize the relationship, arguing that knowing an object's function alters its perceptible aesthetic qualities because that knowledge specifies the qualities that count as standard, variable, and contra-standard against a given functional category. I showed, however, that their thesis does not hold for complex functional objects such as works of architecture, whose functional categories cannot be defined in terms of the primary functions of the objects in the category. My alternative account about the relationship between functional beauty and the cognitive penetrability of aesthetic experience posits that knowing an object's function alters the aesthetic qualities we perceive in it because that knowledge allows us to identify and evaluate the creator's solution to a design problem. Because my account does not rely on the notion of functional categories, which do not suit architecture's complex functional nature, it is not susceptible to the same criticism as Parsons and Carlson's is.

v. Conclusion

Functionality is one feature that distinguishes architecture from the other fine arts. However, because the Western framework of artistic value emphasizes disinterestedness, the relationship between practical and artistic value in architecture is often overlooked. In this chapter I advanced a functionalist view of aesthetic appreciation, explaining how knowledge of a building's function might shape our aesthetic experience of it.

The position that I developed in this chapter is applicable not only to architecture, but to functional objects more generally. Of particular interest are works of craft, design, and non-

Western art, objects that are of great aesthetic interest but that do not fit comfortably in the framework of fine art appreciation due to their functionality. The utilitarian nature of crafts such as ceramics, weaving, and woodwork is at odds with the "art for art's sake" attitude that dominates the world of Western fine art.[21] As a result, "craft" tends to lack the same positive valence as "art"; theorists often contrast art with *mere* craft, which suggests that craft occupies a lower status than art. Like craft, design is concerned with functionality, but refers to mass-produced rather than handmade objects. Due to its functional focus, design too lacks the positive connotation of "art". Non-Western and subaltern artifacts—artifacts made by groups at a disadvantage to those in power—are also objects that are aesthetically interesting but often distinct from fine art due to their functionality.[22] Most non-western artworks were created to serve a purpose such as hunting, agriculture, providing shelter, or addressing the spiritual realm, and not to be displayed in art museums.[23] To subject these artifacts to the customs of Western fine art display is to impose a foreign categorization upon them that obscures the sources of their value. Evaluated for their formal qualities in a disinterested and distanced manner, subaltern artifacts are susceptible to assessment as aesthetically deficient because they were never meant to be evaluated against that standard in the first place. Although works of craft, design, and non-Western art are undoubtedly objects of aesthetic interest, their beauty cannot be properly appreciated in the framework of Western of artistic value, which emphasizes contemplative attention to an object's formal features. Because architecture bears important similarities to craft,

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[21] Sally Markowitz, "The Distinction Between Art and Craft," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 28, no. 1 (1994): 55.

[22] A. W. Eaton and Ivan Gaskell, "Do Subaltern Artifacts Belong in Art Museums?" in *The Ethics of Cultural Appropriation*, ed. James O. Young and Conrad G. Brunk (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 235.

[23] Ibid., 245.

design, and non-Western art with respect to functionality, my discussion in this chapter helps to shed light on the values of these objects as well, providing a vocabulary to describe their beauty.

Framing the problem of translation in terms of design problems and design solutions also helps to illuminate the aesthetic concerns of mathematicians and scientists. Mathematicians, for example, are often motivated by aesthetic considerations such as simplicity and elegance, and often speak of the "beauty" of mathematics. Math is a helpful example for thinking about functional beauty because it deals so obviously with problems and solutions. Just as the beauty of the Stata Center stems from the building's ingenious solution to a challenging design problem, the simplicity and elegance that mathematicians are interested in concerns the aesthetic properties of the solutions that they propose to mathematical problems.

Chapter III. On Publicness

i. Architecture as public art

Architecture is a public art. Unlike paintings, sculptures, and concerts, which are normally displayed or performed in private "art spaces" such as museums, galleries, and auditoriums, buildings necessarily exist in the public arena. While we choose to enter art spaces and expose ourselves to the works inside, we do not have a choice when it comes to viewing buildings in the spaces where we live and work. Architecture's status as a public art carries with it a number of moral implications that do not apply to the private arts.[1] Because buildings make us their audience without our consent, architects have a social responsibility that other kinds of artists do not. We generally have no objection to private artists pushing the envelope, even if the results are disturbing or offensive. Indeed, there is a common intuition that artists should have the right to control the creation, exhibition, and treatment of their work, and that freedom of creative expression is essential to artistic progress.[2] Although it seems like the same artistic rights should be extended to architects, who are artists in equal measure to painters, sculptors, musicians, and poets, the publicness of architecture demands that those rights be weighed against the interests of the public. We may enjoy visiting museums and viewing art that we fine ugly or offensive, but we might oppose that same art being

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[1] Philosophers disagree on the relationship between moral and aesthetic value. Autonomists maintain that moral merits and demerits in art are not aesthetically relevant, while moralists believe that a work's moral value contributes to its aesthetic value. For a defense of autonomism, see James C. Anderson and Jeffrey T. Dean, "Moderate Autonomism," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 38, no. 2 (1998): 150-166. For a defense of moralism, see Noël Carroll, "Moderate Moralism," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 36, no. 3 (1996): 223-238. Although there are cogent arguments to be made in favor of autonomism in the private arts, moral and aesthetic considerations cannot be separated in architecture due to its publicness.

[2] K. E. Gover, "Artistic Freedom and Moral Rights in Contemporary Art: The Mass MoCA Controversy," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 69, no. 4 (2011): 355-356.

displayed in public, where we would be forced to interact with it every day. Thus, architects seem, at least to some extent, to have an obligation to design for public taste.[3]

However, the problem with assigning this obligation to architects is that public taste and the taste of the art community tend to oppose one another, with the public preferring familiar, accessible art and professionals preferring difficult, intellectualized art. If architects were obligated to design for the public's unrefined taste, then the future of architecture as an artistic enterprise would look pretty bleak. After all, the vitality of the artistic enterprise consists in artists pushing beyond existing artistic styles to find new and creative ways to express themselves and respond to the world around them. The success of art therefore depends at least in part upon artistic progress, and in the interest of promoting that progress, architects should not simply serve public taste, but challenge the public with new architectural forms. How can these two competing duties be reconciled?

This chapter evaluates such moral problems that arise from architecture's status as a public art. I begin in part II by outlining the conflict between the architect's right to artistic freedom and responsibility to design for public taste. Although the publicness of architecture prevents architects from enjoying equal artistic freedom to private artists, I argue that architects should not simply comply with public aesthetic preferences; rather, they should strive to design challenging buildings within the artistic constraints imposed by publicness. I argue that architects ought to aspire to *bilaterality*; that is, they ought to design buildings that appeal both to the public and to art professionals, rather than to one or the other. I show how bilaterality is possible in architecture, and argue that in designing bilateral buildings architects reconcile their conflicting duties of artistic integrity and designing for the public. However, to place the burden of bilaterality entirely on architects might seem unfair. I address this problem in part III, where I show that the public also

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[3] I use "obligation," "ought," and "duty" interchangeably throughout this chapter.

has a role to play in achieving bilaterality in architecture. I argue that the public has an obligation to be receptive to the aesthetically challenging features of architecture, and show that this obligation distributes the burden of bilaterality between architects and the audiences of their buildings.

ii. The architect's obligations

There is an intuition that artists should have artistic freedom: the freedom to produce art unhindered by society. One motivation behind this intuition is the privileged status we accord art as a form of expression. Artists often use their work to explore their creative potential and understand issues that they think are important, and the value of these activities warrants their protection.[4] Respecting the privileged status of art by ensuring artistic freedom is one step that a society must take to maintain optimal conditions for the production of good art. Art produced in societies that restrict artistic freedom—for instance, under authoritarian regimes where artists are used as pawns to advance a political agenda—tends to suffer in aesthetic value.[5]

However, our expectations for artistic freedom do not end with the mere freedom to exercise it. We also believe that artists ought to embrace that freedom, creating works that satisfy their own artistic interests over and above their audience's; that is, we believe that artists ought to create their work with *integrity*. Ted Cohen calls cases where an artist produces art to satisfy her audience and not herself cases of "fraudulence."[6] If an artist produces her work with integrity but does not find an audience for it, she has done nothing morally wrong. The morally objectionable

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[4] James O. Young, "Profound Offense and Cultural Appropriation," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 63, no. 2 (2005): 140.

[5] See Haig Khatchadourian, "Artistic Freedom and Social Control," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 12, no. 1 (1978): 23-32.

[6] Ted Cohen, "High and Low Art, and High and Low Audiences," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 57, no. 2 (1999): 139.

situation occurs instead when an artist is not committed to her work but produces it nevertheless because she knows it will find an audience and earn her fame, fortune, or some other reward unrelated to her self-realization as an artist.

Cohen does not indicate his reasons for thinking that artistic fraudulence is wrong, but I believe that there are two possible sources of moral wrongdoing that explain his view. First, pandering artists commit an injustice against their audiences. Since there is an expectation for art to be created with integrity, an artist who fails to uphold that integrity deceives her audience; the public's appreciation is governed by the false view that the work is a manifestation of the artist's genuine self-expression when, rather, it has been created to manipulate its viewer into a positive response. Second, artists who pander to their audiences fail themselves. To understand how this can be, it is helpful to think about duties of artistic integrity as arising from an artist's practical identity. Practical identity is "a description under which you value yourself, a description under which you find your life to be worth living and your actions to be worth undertaking."[7] Our practical identities give rise to reasons and obligations, and when we fail to fulfill the obligations that our practical identities create for us, we risk losing that identity altogether. For example, being someone's friend is a practical identity that generates various duties—supporting the person, sympathizing with them, being loyal to them, etc.—and a friend who fails to support, sympathize, and be loyal to the other person can no longer call herself that person's friend. Similarly, to be an artist is to assume a practical identity that gives rise to obligations, one of which is to create works with integrity. We criticize pandering artists whose primary motivation is not self-realization, but material gain by labeling them as "sellouts," as they fail to act according to what being an artist—a practical identity that they proudly choose for themselves—requires of them. Both these lines of reasoning suggest that artists ought not only *have* artistic freedom, but ought to *exercise* that freedom in their work.

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[7] Christine Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 101.

Should architects have the same artistic freedoms as other artists? It is first worth noting that the artistic freedom of architects is already limited by the fact that architecture is a service as well as an art.[8] Due to the nature of their service, architects are morally obligated to be honest to their clients and to design buildings that (at a minimum) will not collapse, as well as legally obligated to follow building codes and regulations. But setting aside these service-related restrictions on artistic freedom, should architects otherwise have the right to artistic freedom over their designs?

One reason to resist according architects artistic freedom is the gap between public and professional taste. If architects were to embrace their artistic freedom and design buildings without regard for public taste, then they would end up designing an awful lot of buildings that the public would hate. Taste—one's capacity to discern aesthetic quality—is not given, but cultivated, and because architects devote much of their lives to the study of art and architecture, they have had the opportunity to engage in the education and leisure required to cultivate taste. It thus makes sense that their taste in architecture is different from that of the public who, for the most part, have not taken time to develop the same level of aesthetic sensibility to architecture. Because public taste is uncultivated, it is typically synonymous with *bad* taste. A 1949 *Life* magazine article entitled "High-brow, Low-brow, Middle-brow" included a chart classifying members of each category's tastes in everything from sculpture and music to salads and games.[9] The chart makes the gap between high-brow and low-brow tastes obvious; high-brow musical preferences, for instance, are shown to consist of Bach and Bartók, and low-brow musical preferences of jukebox music. The article makes clear in its various derogatory remarks targeting low-brows that high-brow tastes are not merely different from but *better* than low-brow ones, and because the overwhelming majority of people belong in the low-brow category, low-brows are deemed a hindrance to cultural development. The

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[8] I borrow the distinction between architecture qua art and architecture qua service from Noël Carroll, "Architecture and Ethics: Autonomy, Architecture, Art," *Architecture Philosophy* 1, no. 2 (2015): 139-140.

[9] Russell Lynes, "High-brow, Low-brow, Middle-brow," *Life*, April 1949, 99.

problem with the gap between public (low-brow) and professional (high-brow) taste for architecture is that architects, unlike private artists whose obligations concern only their own artistic integrity, have duties to design for the public in addition to themselves. This leaves architects in a difficult position. Their duty as public artists tells them to design architectural equivalents of pop music, but their duty of artistic integrity tells them to design Bachs and Bartóks.

One case that calls attention to the difference between public and professional taste in architecture is the controversy over Kallmann, McKinnell, and Knowles' Boston City Hall. At its opening, the massive, concrete building received praise from critics, art historians, and architects. One architecture critic, Walter McQuade, insisted that City Hall's "robustness" echoed the distinctively Bostonian character of Trinity Church—the city's architectural icon—and was thus a modern interpretation of Boston's aesthetic essence.[10] Critics at most major newspapers shared McQuade's sentiments, and City Hall was awarded the American Institute of Architects Honor Award in 1969. The public, on the other hand, hated the building, describing it as "overbearing," "cold," "monstrous," and "a lot of wasted space."[11] In 2008, Boston Mayor Thomas Menino campaigned to have the building torn down, proclaiming that it was "modernistic and not typical of Boston."[12] Boston City Hall seems to be a case in which architects exercised their artistic freedom at the expense of their responsibility to design for public taste. Architects and critics, with their cultivated tastes, responded positively to City Hall, while the public with their unrefined aesthetic sensibilities found themselves unable to understand it.

One might think that professional opinion should be privileged over public opinion in debates over architectural merit. After all, professionals have cultivated tastes that make them more

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[10] Walter McQuade, "Toughness-Before-Gentility Wins in Boston" quoted in David Monteyne, "Boston City Hall and a History of Reception," *Journal of Architectural Education* 65, no. 1 (2011), 45.

[11] Ellen Perry Berkeley, "More Than You May Want to Know About Boston City Hall" quoted in Monteyne, "Boston City Hall and a History of Reception," 45.

[12] Jack Thomas, "I Wanted Something That Would Last," *Boston Globe* (Boston, MA), Oct. 13, 2004.

reliable identifiers of aesthetic value than the layperson.[13] In debates over the artistic merit of private art, we tend to accord more credibility to the opinions of art critics than to those of non-experts. However, since architecture occupies communal space and makes the public its audience without their consent, there is reason to be skeptical about deferring to professional opinion alone in cases involving architecture. McQuade may have liked Boston City Hall, but why should the public care what he thought? He wrote his comments from a privileged position as an art professional, and was not even a resident of Boston when City Hall was built. How could he have understood what it was like to be a member of the public who had to live and work every day in the midst of a building as ugly as City Hall?[14]

McQuade's comments are problematic because they are too esoteric for the public to take seriously. Consider again his claim that City Hall is beautiful because it is aesthetically linked to Trinity Church and thus consistent with Boston's architectural character. This is more a defense of City Hall's *intellectual* value than its aesthetic value; it defends the building's beauty on the basis of what the building says rather than what it looks like. Douglas Stalker and Clark Glymour posit that intellectual defenses of public art are only successful if they show that (1) the work says something serious or interesting and (2) the work says it in a way that is accessible to the public; defenses that fail the first of these conditions are "vapid," and those that fail the second are "pretentious."[15] McQuade's defense of City Hall fulfills the first of these conditions. I imagine that most Bostonians would agree with McQuade that it is important for buildings in Boston, especially civic ones, to

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[13] See David Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," in *Four Dissertations* (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1999), 228.

[14] Cf. Jerrold Levinson, "Hume's Standard of Taste: The Real Problem," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 60, no. 3 (2002), 229-231.

[15] Douglas Stalker and Clark Glymour, "The Malignant Object: Thoughts on Public Sculpture," *The Public Interest* 66 (1982): 9. Stalker and Glymour use "vapid" and "pretentious" to describe all intellectual defenses of art that fail either condition, but I think that attaching vapidity to the first condition and pretentiousness to the second makes their argument clearer.

celebrate the city's architectural heritage. However, his defense fails to satisfy the second condition

of accessibility. Even though McQuade's defense says something serious and interesting, surely few

Bostonians think that City Hall actually succeeds in representing Boston's architectural character;

the building looks nothing like any of the traditional buildings in Boston. His defense of City Hall,

like most intellectual defenses of public art, suffers from pretentiousness. It expresses a difficult idea

in inaccessible terms and fails to acknowledge that the public must carry the burden of interacting

every day with what is ultimately an ugly object. Pretentiousness is a moral problem for public art

because it is offensive for professionals to present the public with an ugly object and insist that they

see its intellectual beauty; such situations make members of the public feel "stupid or ridiculous."[16]

As public artists, architects are obligated to avoid pretentiousness by displaying sensitivity to public

taste in their designs. This obligation holds architects to a different standard from private artists.

Private artists usually do not act wrongly in creating challenging or offensive works of art—indeed,

we generally *encourage* them to do so for the sake of artistic progress—because their audiences elect

to view those works. However, because buildings make us their audience without our consent, it

is reasonable to expect architects to serve the interests of the public and to hold them accountable

when they fail to do so.

    Architects must prioritize their audience, but this does not consign them to a career of

pandering to their audience. In what follows, I argue that architects should still create aesthetically

challenging works, but given the constraints that publicness places on architecture, they ought not

proceed in doing so in the same way as private artists would. I propose that architects have an

overarching, second-order duty of *reconciling* their competing first-order duties of artistic integrity

and designing for public taste.[17] Ted Cohen has introduced a distinction between parochial and

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[16] Hilde Hein, *Public Art: Thinking Museums Differently* (Oxford: Altamira Press, 2006), 55.

[17] The first-order and second-order distinction is borrowed from Harry G. Frankfurt, who differentiates between first-order desires (desires to perform some action) and second-order desires (desires to have certain desires, or desires concerning first-order desires). "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person," *Journal*

bilateral art that helps explain what the architect's second-order duty might look like.[18] Cohen observes that most art appeals to either professional audiences or public audiences, but not both; fine art attracts professionals and popular art attracts the public.[19] He calls art that caters to one of these two audiences *parochial* art. However, he notes that some artworks—Hitchcock movies, for example—attract both public and professional audiences, and labels such works *bilateral* art. Bilateral art may be either fine art or popular art, but it is special because it contains something for every audience.[20]

The trouble with Boston City Hall is that it is parochial; it attracts professional audiences and excludes public ones. Parochial art that appeals only to professional audiences is appropriate for display in private settings, as private artists are neither required nor expected to create works that will appeal to anyone but themselves. However, since architecture is necessarily public, moral problems arise for parochial architecture that appeals only to professional audiences due to the offense it causes the public when they find themselves excluded by an elite, private language. When architects design parochial buildings like Boston City Hall, they fail their duty to design for the public. Parochial architecture that appeals to the public as opposed to professionals is equally questionable, albeit for different reasons. In designing such buildings, architects fail their duty of artistic integrity. For instance, McMansions—mass-produced copycats of traditional domestic architecture—are not designed with artistic integrity, but pander to the public's preferences. Beyond the fact that they are pandering, these buildings create a further problem in virtue of being banal

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of Philosophy 68, no. 1 (1971): 5-20. Here, I use Frankfurt's framework but apply it to duties rather than desires.

[18] Cohen, "High and Low Art, and High and Low Audiences," 140-141.

[19] Cohen calls professionals "snobs" and the public "vulgar," which provides a useful, if harsh, way for thinking about the gap between public and professional taste, but I'll continue using my own labels.

[20] Although I do not address it here, this point raises the question of whether public and professional audiences appreciate the *same* things in bilateral art or whether there are two distinct sets of features in bilateral art, one of which appeals to the public and the second to professionals.

and repetitious. Shouldn't architecture sometimes challenge us and expand our aesthetic expectations?[21] Isn't the public disadvantaged when they are exposed only to trite architecture, just as they are disadvantaged when they have access only to trite art? Fine art is generally more difficult to understand and appreciate than popular art, but the intellectual challenge of interpretation is part of what makes art—and architecture—so valuable.

One solution to the conflict between public taste and artistic integrity lies in Cohen's description of bilaterality. Bilateral architecture that appeals to both public and professional audiences is possible, and indeed quite common. Many of the most renowned buildings are bilateral. Fallingwater, the Guggenheim, Tate Modern, and the Beijing Bird's Nest are some modern examples that come to mind. Bilateral architecture is challenging, which appeals to professionals and presents the public with an opportunity for aesthetic growth. Yet, parts of bilateral architecture are publicly appealing without being intellectually demanding. Unlike Boston City Hall, which requires cultivated sensibility and art-historical insight to appreciate, Fallingwater is visually beautiful without further intellectual input. Although understanding the principles of organic architecture that underlie Frank Lloyd Wright's design certainly makes one's experience of Fallingwater more meaningful, it is not required see that the building is beautiful.

Artistic integrity only requires of private artists that they create works for themselves. Whether their work turns out to be parochial or bilateral has no effect on their artistic integrity so long as they embraced their artistic freedom in creating it. As public artists, however, architects must not only design for themselves, but for the public. Thus, architects who design parochially have failed one of their first-order duties. Either they have pandered to the public and thus failed

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[21] Christian Illies and Nicholas Ray argue that part of an architect's duty in serving her uncultivated client's interests is introducing the client to new kinds of beauty, as condemning the public to a repetition of conventional architecture will not satisfy their aesthetic desires. See their "An Aesthetic Deontology: Accessible Beauty as a Fundamental Obligation of Architecture," *Architecture Philosophy* 2, no. 1 (2016): 68.

to uphold their artistic integrity, or they have designed a publicly inaccessible building and thus failed their duty to design for public taste. Only in designing bilaterally can architects fulfill their second-order duty of reconciling these competing first-order duties.

Not all architects claim to be artists. Many architects are quite happy to abide by their clients' demands and simply provide the technical expertise needed to realize them. My concern has been primarily with architects who think of themselves as artists, as their artist-status accords responsibilities to them that non-artist architects do not have. Non-artist architects do not have duties of artistic integrity; only persons who identify as artists are subject to this duty. They are, however, subject to duties to design for public taste, as the publicness of architecture itself is enough to confer this duty upon all architects, regardless of their self-identification as artists. Even non-artist architects have an obligation to protect the public from offensive architecture, and should challenge any client that wants a building that will offend people who must see it every day.

iii.. The public's obligations

My discussion up to this point has focused on the obligations that publicness creates for architects. My account of architects' duties to design bilaterally has been driven by a sensitivity to the public's needs. I have shown that the two sides of bilateral architecture—the aesthetically accessible side and the aesthetically challenging side—are both good for the public. The former keeps the building within the public's aesthetic comfort zone, while the latter presents the public with an opportunity for aesthetic growth.

One might object, however, that my proposal is too burdensome for architects. Thus far, I have placed the onus of bilaterality entirely on architects, making them singularly responsible for gauging public taste and reconciling it with their own ideas for architecture. In the picture of bilaterality I have offered, the public seems to be absolved of responsibility. The aesthetically

challenging side of architecture is available for them to explore if they choose to do so, but they do not have an obligation to evaluate the art-historical, intellectual, and otherwise inaccessible features of architecture. In other words, there is no expectation for the public to even consider the kinds of defenses of architecture that Stalker and Glymour call "pretentious."

However, there is reason to think that the public *should* consider such defenses. Art professionals may be guilty of pretentiousness when they defend architecture on the basis of its art-historical or intellectual value, but members of the public who dismiss a building before giving it the attention needed to assess its aesthetically challenging qualities may be equally guilty of close-mindedness. Perhaps bilaterality should not be a responsibility assigned solely to architects, but one shared between architects and the public. If the public has an obligation to try to understand the challenging features of architecture that architects think are important, then bilaterality can be characterized as a conversation between the public and the art community, rather than a burden that falls entirely upon the latter.

In order to determine whether the public has a duty to appreciate the aesthetically challenging side of architecture, we must first answer some broader questions about our obligations concerning artworks. Do we have obligations to like, or at least consider, good art? Are we obligated to cultivate our faculties of taste? I will examine these questions at length as they pertain to art in general, and will proceed to consider their relevance to architecture as a public art form specifically.

There are various possible justificatory grounds for our obligations concerning artworks. For instance, one's obligation to like or to consider a friend's artwork might stem from one's duty of friendship to that person. In this case, our obligation would be justified on moral grounds. Another possible way to justify our obligations toward art—and one that emphasizes the importance of art itself—is to point to some aesthetic quality of the work that warrants our approval or consideration of that work. Let us call an obligation of this kind that is defensible on purely aesthetic grounds an

aesthetic obligation.[22] Consider the claim that one ought to like *Starry Night*. If this claim can be justified by reference to some aesthetic quality of the painting such as its beauty or expressiveness, then the claim invokes an aesthetic obligation. The key idea here is *justification*; while it is true that *Starry Night* is beautiful and expressive, these facts do not necessarily justify an obligation to like the painting. Indeed, the claim that we ought to like *Starry Night* because it is beautiful and expressive—or any claim that we ought to like a given artwork because of its aesthetic qualities, for that matter—lacks any real force. Because ought implies can, and because we cannot like an artwork through sheer force of will, we cannot have obligations to like artworks. In light of this objection, we might want to amend our current formulation of aesthetic obligations. If the claim

> (I) One ought to like *x* because of its aesthetic qualities.

is too strong, then a softer alternative might be

> (II) One ought to consider *x* because of its aesthetic qualities.

(II) is preferable to (I) because it invokes a duty of action rather than a duty of feeling. To consider an artwork is to refrain from dismissing it out of hand if or when one has the opportunity to see it. (II) is thus better understood as a negative rather than a positive duty; to consider *Starry Night*, for instance, is not necessarily to go out of one's way to visit the MoMA and examine the painting, but to pay adequate attention to the sources of the painting's artistic merit before forming a judgment about it if or when one visits the MoMA. Of course, depending on the degree of cultivation of one's tastes, the difficulty of considering different artworks will vary. It is easier to put oneself in a

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[22] Hilde Hein, "Aesthetic Prescriptions," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 26, no. 2 (1967): 213.

position to assess, say, pop music than it is the music of Bach and Bartók, as assessing the latter calls for refined aesthetic sensibilities that the former does not. Nevertheless, both pop music and the music of Bach and Bartók ask for our *attention* if or when we have an occasion to listen to them, which—unlike the approval asked for in (I)—is within our ability to give freely.

Although our aesthetic obligations concerning particular artworks are of a negative kind, we might have some positive aesthetic obligations concerning art in general. While we are not obligated to go out of our way to visit the MoMA and see *Starry Night* in particular, we might be obligated to make a special effort to expose ourselves to and give our attention to at least some art, whether that be to *Starry Night*, pop music, the music of Bach and Bartók, or any other works of art. If we have such aesthetic obligations to art in general, then they are obligations of an imperfect kind: we have options as to how we fulfill them. If we had perfect obligations to consider art, then we would be obligated to consider *every* work of art, which is clearly beyond our ability to do. Therefore, if aesthetic obligations to art in general exist, then we can choose how we satisfy them, be it by visiting art museums, reading books, attending concerts, etc. Although it might be preferable to do all three, we do not fail our aesthetic obligations in selecting one over the others.[23]

The transition from accepting that we have negative duties to particular artworks to accepting that we have some positive, imperfect duties to art in general may seem a bit abrupt. In order to see where our obligations to art in general come from, there are a number of questions we must address. Who do we wrong in failing to engage with art? Who benefits from the fulfillment of aesthetic obligations?

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[23] Martha Nussbaum makes a similar point when she writes, "Works of art are precious objects, objects of high value. And yet it is a remarkable feature of our attention to works of art that it appears to spread itself smoothly and harmoniously… If one day I spend my entire museum visit gazing at Turners I have not incurred a guilt against the Blakes in the next room; nor have I failed a duty toward Bartók by my loving attention to Hindesmith. To live with works of art is to live in a world enormously rich in value, without a deep risk of infidelity, disloyalty, or any conflict which might lead to these." *Love's Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 131-132.

Every duty has a subject, object, and beneficiary, the subject being the person required to fulfill the duty, the object the person to whom the duty is owed, and the beneficiary the person who benefits from the duty's fulfillment.[24] The subject of an aesthetic obligation can be anyone, as every person is a potential member of art's audience. The object and beneficiary of aesthetic obligations, however, are not so easily identified. Let us consider a few candidates for these roles and settle on one that, for the moment, seems the most promising.

Some philosophers have argued that artworks, in virtue of their privileged status above ordinary objects, are the bearers of moral rights, which create obligations for the people who interact with them.[25] Just as your right to free speech creates obligations for people with whom you interact to refrain from silencing you, an artwork's moral rights generate obligations for its audience to deal with or not deal with it in certain ways. If artworks have moral rights, then we might owe it to them not to mishandle or destroy them, to perform and interpret them appropriately, and to appreciate them in a way that befits them.[26] However, while thinking about artworks as the bearers of moral rights might help to explain our negative duties to art—duties not to dismiss art out of hand when and if we have the opportunity to see it—they do not explain our imperfect positive obligations to art in general. The moral rights of artworks do not seem to ground an obligation for us to make a special effort for us to expose ourselves to them, but simply to appreciate them in a befitting manner when we do encounter them. Furthermore, it is unclear how artworks could benefit from our appreciation of them. Although we might be obligated not to mishandle or destroy artworks, these obligations do not benefit artworks, but simply prevent them from being harmed. Therefore, artworks are neither the objects nor beneficiaries of aesthetic obligations.

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[24] Alison Hills, "Duties and Duties to the Self," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 40, no. 2 (2003): 132.

[25] See Alan Tormey, "Aesthetic Rights," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 32, no. 2 (1973): 163-170 and David Goldblatt, "Do Works of Art Have Rights?" *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 35, no. 1 (1976): 69-77.

[26] Anthony Cross, "Obligations to Artworks as Duties of Love," *Estetika* 54, no. 1 (2017): 85-101.

Another candidate for the object and beneficiary roles of aesthetic obligations are artists: the creators of the works that we are obligated to consider. It seems unlikely that our aesthetic obligations are owed to artists. After all, artists are not owed, but must *earn* consideration from their audiences. If simply calling oneself an artist were enough to warrant the consideration of one's work, then all artists would be owed consideration regardless of their work's caliber. However, the fact that we believe that artworks of high quality deserve consideration and works of low quality do not deserve (or at least deserve less) consideration suggests that consideration is a privilege that artists earn by cultivating a reputation for making good art, rather than a right that they are accorded simply in virtue of being artists. Although artists cannot be the objects of an aesthetic obligation, they may, however, be its beneficiaries. Artists clearly benefit from our consideration of their work. Even though they ought not focus exclusively on finding an audience when creating their work, as in doing so they would violate their duty of artistic integrity, they still benefit when their work enjoys wide consideration, which might bolster their reputation or bring them some financial reward. Therefore, while artists are not the objects of aesthetic obligations, they might be considered the beneficiaries of those obligations.

I have considered both artworks and artists as candidates for the object and beneficiary roles of aesthetic obligations, but I believe that the most promising approach to aesthetic obligations takes the subject of the obligation herself to be its object and beneficiary, too. These accounts of aesthetic obligations stem from perfectionism, as they claim that our aesthetic obligations arise from our more general duties to make our lives as rich as possible or realize our abilities to their full potential. In other words, proponents of perfectionist accounts maintain that we owe our aesthetic obligations to *ourselves*, and we ourselves benefit from their fulfillment. Marcia Muelder Eaton makes such an argument when she claims that we have a duty to live our lives as fully as we can, and because aesthetic experiences play an important role in making our lives "meaningful or worth living,"

fulfilling that duty requires paying attention to art.[27] In a similar vein, Jerrold Levinson reasons that we have a duty to cultivate our tastes because the kind of artworks that we can appreciate with refined taste provide experiences that are more enriching and worth having than those afforded by works that do not require refined taste to understand.[28] Thus, Levinson believes that we are obligated to consider good art because it is good for us. In Eaton's and Levinson's accounts of aesthetic obligations, the same person takes on all three roles of subject, object, and beneficiary. A person (the subject) owes it to herself (the object) to consider art because in doing so she (the beneficiary) enriches her life. When we fail to consider a beautiful artwork, we overlook an opportunity for enrichment and therefore fail a duty to ourselves.

According to Eaton and Levinson, duties to consider art have moral in addition to aesthetic foundations, as the enrichment of our lives is a moral matter.[29] They formulate aesthetic obligations as

(III) One ought to consider *x* because doing so will enrich one's life in unique and invaluable ways.

While both (II) and (III) are meant to justify the same obligation concerning artworks, they ground that obligation in different sources: (II) identifies strictly aesthetic sources for the obligation, and (III) broadens the source of the obligation to include moral in addition to aesthetic considerations. Let us call (II) a *strict aesthetic obligation*, and (III) a *moral-aesthetic obligation.* I have given (III) this particular name because unlike purely moral obligations concerning art—such as an obligation to consider a friend's artwork out of a duty of friendship, as previously discussed—moral-aesthetic

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[27] Marcia Muelder Eaton, *Merit, Aesthetic and Ethical* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 79-80.

[28] Levinson, "Hume's Standard of Taste: The Real Problem," 234.

[29] Hein, "Aesthetic Prescriptions," 215.

obligations emphasize art's indispensability. The consideration of art that is asked for in the friendship case does not derive from the value of art, but from the value of friendship. Friends are only obligated to consider each other's art insofar as they are obligated to be involved in each other's endeavors, whatever those endeavors might be. If, for instance, one's friend no longer wanted to be an artist and decided to become an athlete instead, then one would no longer have an obligation to consider that friend's art, but to attend her athletic competitions. By contrast, moral-aesthetic obligations are justified on the basis of art's distinctive value. According to Eaton and Levinson, our obligations to consider art do not merely stem from the fact that art enriches our lives, but from the fact that it does so in *unique and invaluable* ways. Art could not be replaced in this case by some other enriching activity because no activity can afford the same kind and level of enrichment as art. It is therefore appropriate to designate (III) as a moral-aesthetic obligation, rather than simply a moral obligation.

Because my aim is to show that we have duties to consider art, whatever the justificatory grounds of those duties may be, I will adopt Eaton and Levinson's formulation of moral-aesthetic obligations over the formulation of strict aesthetic obligations; there is a stronger case to be made for the former than for the latter. However, the moral-aesthetic approach gives rise to a difficult problem that must be addressed before we can establish that *all* members of the public have an obligation to consider art. To understand this problem, it is helpful to look more closely at the differences between Eaton's and Levinson's stances on the nature of art's indispensability. Eaton's view suggests that art's value is objective: that art is uniquely and invaluably enriching in anyone's life. On the other hand, Levinson ascribes subjectivity to art's value. He distinguishes between *art-interested persons* and *non-art-interested persons*, and claims that his argument for moral-aesthetic obligations applies only to those who identify as art-interested persons.[30] According to Levinson,

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[30] Levinson, "Hume's Standard of Taste: The Real Problem," 236.

art may be uniquely and invaluably enriching to an art-interested person, but may not be so to non-art-interested-persons. Levinson's understanding of moral-aesthetic obligations is sensitive to the fact that what counts as a uniquely and invaluably enriching activity often involves a high degree of subjectivity. For instance, an athlete may find that playing her sport enriches her life in a way that no other activity could, while a non-athlete may enjoy playing sports, but feel like her life could be equally enriched by partaking in some other activity. Similarly, someone might enjoy visiting museums and engaging with artworks, yet feel like she could equally enrich her life by picking up another hobby. Because the activities that one finds enriching are determined by one's individual preferences, Levinson's subjective account of art's value seems more plausible than Eaton's objective one.

The subjectivity of art's indispensability raises the following concern. Art-interested persons are subject to moral-aesthetic obligations. They are, after all, exactly those persons whose lives art enriches in unique and invaluable ways. But why should non-art-interested persons be subject to them? Many non-art-interested persons lead fulfilling lives without art, and it is unclear why they should feel that they ought to add art to their repertoire of interests. Although engaging with art may enrich one's life in unique and invaluable ways, there are many projects that are uniquely and invaluably enriching—travel, religion, marriage, and child-rearing among them—yet we do not expect everyone to take on all of these projects. Art may be uniquely and invaluably enriching to art-interested persons, but why should that matter to non-art-interested persons? Levinson summarizes these objections clearly and forcefully:

> Why, after all, spend any of one's free time with Shakespeare, Flaubert, Titian, Welles, or Beethoven… Why not spend it all, say, in some combination of windsurfing, motorcycling, parenting, communing with nature, doing good works, practicing yoga, touring Europe,

exploring Asian cuisine, and learning to master Gödel's proof? For those are all demonstrably good things. What is so special, then, about art?[31]

To better frame this objection and a potential response to it, it is helpful to return to the framework of practical identity that I introduced in section II. Recall that a practical identity is a description under which one values oneself that gives rise to reasons and obligations. Just as being someone's friend is a practical identity that gives rise to obligations to support, sympathize with, and be loyal to that friend, being an art-interested person can be thought of as a practical identity that gives rise to obligations to consider art. If you value yourself as an art-interested person, yet you fail to partake in art-related activities such as visiting museums, attending concerts, or watching films, then it is unclear whether you can rightfully call yourself an art-interested person at all. The practical identity of art-interested persons therefore gives rise to moral–aesthetic obligations, and art-interested persons who fail to fulfill them risk losing that practical identity altogether.

Within the framework of practical identity, Levinson's objection can be reinterpreted as follows. Art-interested persons are subject to moral–aesthetic obligations because those obligations follow from the description under which they value themselves. However, because non-art-interested persons do not value themselves under that same description, they are not subject to moral–aesthetic duties at all. This fact gets at the crux of the public art problem. My aim in this section, after all, is to show that members of the public, many of whom are non-art-interested persons, ought to be receptive to the aesthetically challenging side of bilateral architecture. But if non-art-interested persons do not have moral–aesthetic obligations—duties to enrich their lives by learning to appreciate art—then they do not seem to have duties to consider the aesthetically challenging features of architecture.

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[31] Ibid. Levinson does not provide a complete response to this question, but vaguely suggests that an answer might lie "in the context of a general account of intrinsic value, the nature of human lives, and our considered images of what we, as human beings, most want to be."

Resolving this problem is not as straightforward as simply persuading non-art-interested persons to develop interests in art. The only way to convince someone that art is uniquely and invaluably enriching is to have them experience that enrichment firsthand.[32] I believe that many non-art-interested persons could be convinced to become interested in art; these *potential art-interested persons* simply have not yet had adequate exposure to the quality and diversity of art. But some non-art-interested persons who have had such exposure to art may still not be convinced that their experiences with art were enriching in unique and invaluable ways. Although they might agree that those experiences were worthwhile and even understand why art-interested persons find those experiences uniquely and invaluably enriching, they themselves may not be compelled to share that belief.[33] Assuming that these non-art-interested persons cannot be convinced to develop interests in art at all, how can they be obligated to consider the aesthetically challenging qualities of architecture?

One resolution to this problem involves considering a fourth candidate for object and beneficiary of aesthetic obligations and reformulating those obligations once again. So far, I have considered three candidates: artworks, artists, and the subjects of aesthetic obligations themselves. I quickly touched on the first two candidates, but argued that it is most plausible to identify the object and beneficiary of an aesthetic obligation as the subjects of aesthetic obligation themselves, at least when the subject is an art-interested person. A fourth candidate for the object and beneficiary roles of aesthetic obligations that I have not yet considered is art's audience in general. Perhaps non-art-interested persons owe it to everyone else—i.e. art-interested persons and potential art-interested

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[32] This point is related to the acquaintance principle: the notion that an adequate aesthetic judgment of a work must be based on first-hand experience it. For a historical overview of arguments for and against acquaintance, see Paisley Livingston, "On an Apparent Truism in Aesthetics," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 43, no. 3 (2003): 260-278.

[33] Samuel Scheffler discusses the difference between regarding an activity as valuable and valuing that activity oneself in his essay "Valuing," in *Equality and Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 21.

persons—to advance, or at least not to hinder, the artistic enterprise that those people find so uniquely valuable. Aesthetic obligations of this kind take the following form:

(IV) One ought to consider *x* to avoid hindering the artistic enterprise.

Unlike (II), which establishes strictly aesthetic justificatory grounds for our obligations concerning art, and (III) which establishes both moral and aesthetic justificatory grounds for those obligations, (IV) expresses a strictly moral obligation. (IV) is not justified on the basis of art's distinctive value, but on the basis that we ought generally to refrain from hindering others from pursuing their interests, so long as those interests are not themselves immoral and doing so does not impose a significant burden upon us. Thus, non-art-interested persons do not need to develop interests in art to be subject to aesthetic obligations; rather, they are subject to (IV) simply in virtue of being moral agents. Because artistic progress sustains the vitality of the art community and provides art-interested persons with new aesthetic challenges and experiences to pursue, when artistic progress is hindered, the art community suffers. Non-art-interested persons therefore owe their consideration of art to art-interested persons in cases where their failure to do so would impede the artistic enterprise.

The sort of consideration that (IV) asks of non-art-interested persons is less demanding than what (III) asks of art-interested persons. Non-art-interested persons are merely obligated to consider art so as not to impede the artistic enterprise, whereas art-interested persons have a further duty to cultivate their tastes in order to have the best aesthetic experiences they can. To understand exactly what (IV) asks of non-art-interested persons, we must identify the cases in which the failure of non-art-interested persons to consider art would hinder the artistic enterprise. Would artistic progress suffer if non-art-interested persons did not go to museum exhibitions, read novels, or attend concerts? The answer seems to be no. The success of painting, sculpture, music, and literature—i.e. the private arts—does not hinge on the participation of non-art-interested persons. There are more

than enough art-interested persons to participate in and sustain the private arts without the help of non-art-interested persons. After all, art-interested persons are subject to moral-aesthetic obligations, and thus have duties to themselves to partake in activities such as visiting museum exhibitions, reading novels, and attending concerts. Because the failure of non-art-interested persons to consider private art does not hinder the artistic enterprise, (IV) is not invoked in cases concerning private art.

On the other hand, public art calls for the participation of art-interested persons and non-art-interested persons alike because it exists in the public domain. There is thus reason to think that the failure of non-art-interested persons to consider public art would hinder the artistic enterprise. When the public fails to consider a work of public art—that is, when they dismiss the work before giving it the attention required to see its merit—they create obstacles to artistic progress. Therefore, (IV) is invoked in cases concerning public art.[34]

The upshot of this argument for architecture is that non-art-interested persons have an obligation to consider the aesthetically challenging features of architecture, as their failure to do so would impede the artistic enterprise that so many people find valuable. The public therefore has a role to play in achieving bilaterality in architecture; since architects can assume that the public will consider their work, they are not necessarily obligated to cater to existing public tastes, but to design buildings that they expect will appeal to the public after giving the buildings fair consideration. Although the best works of architecture are universally liked by the public and by art professionals, they are not necessarily *immediately* liked by members of both audiences.

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[34] (IV) might have wider implications beyond architecture and public art. Perhaps all valuable activities in the public domain generate obligations for persons who do not personally find those activities uniquely and invaluably enriching, insofar as their failure to consider them would prevent them from taking place. Whenever our failure to consider a valuable public activity would hinder that activity, we ought to try to understand the reasons why others find it valuable.

Some examples will make clearer how the public's failure to consider the aesthetically challenging features of architecture impedes the artistic enterprise. Recall, for instance, my discussion of Boston City Hall and the public backlash it received. My description of the Boston City Hall debate in section II of this chapter was written from the public's perspective, and was intended to show how the public was wronged by the architects' lack of sensitivity to public taste. There is, however, another side to the debate. Architects and other art-interested persons are often frustrated by the public's close-mindedness about buildings such as Boston City Hall, as this close-mindedness has led to a general disapproval of brutalist architecture, an architectural style that the art community believes has great value. In the eyes of the art community, the public's close-mindedness about an aesthetically challenging form of architecture has created a hindrance to the architectural enterprise. Therefore, (IV) is invoked in the Boston City Hall case; the public has an obligation to consider the building and try to see its architectural merit.

One might point out, however, that the public *has* tried to see the architectural merit of Boston City Hall. After all, the building was completed nearly fifty years ago, and the art community's defenses of it have become widely known over the years as a result of the ongoing debate surrounding the building. If the public were able to see the building's architectural merit on the basis of the art community's defenses, they would have done so by now. Perhaps Boston City Hall is truly a parochial building, a building that appeals only to the art community and not the public because the sources of the building's architectural merit are simply too esoteric for the public to see.

To better illustrate how (IV) can help achieve bilaterality in architecture, I will turn away from Boston City Hall to a different example. The picture of bilaterality I offered in the first part of this chapter seemed to suggest that bilateral buildings must be uncontroversial. For instance, I identified Fallingwater—a building that is admired effortlessly by both the public and by art professionals—as a paragon of bilaterality. However, many works of bilateral architecture are not

immediately well-received by the public. The Pompidou Center, for instance, may now be admired by both public and professional audiences, but it took a few years for the public to warm up to the building. Although the Pompidou received negative responses from the public when it first opened in 1977, attitudes toward the building shifted a few years later once the public began to recognize its architectural merits as an exhibition space, a cultural landmark, and a generally fun building to look at and navigate, precisely the kinds of merits that art professionals had initially identified in defense of the museum's value when it underwent public criticism. [35] Three years after the Pompidou's initial opening, *National Geographic* summarized the conflict that the building incited between art professionals and the public, eloquently describing the public's reception of the museum as "love at second sight." [36]

The Pompidou Center demonstrates that bilateral architecture does not need to be designed strictly according to public taste, nor with the expectation that the public will immediately take to the building. The public's duty to consider the aesthetically challenging features of architecture can help bridge the space between an initial negative reaction to a building and a later positive one, and explain why so many bilateral works of architecture—the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre Pyramids, the Guggenheim, and the Yale Art and Architecture Building, to name a few—only become bilateral once the public has considered the aesthetically challenging aspects of those works. [37] Because the public has an obligation to consider these difficult features of architecture, architects can challenge their audience without violating their duty to design for public taste, and bilaterality becomes a

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[35] Cathy Newman, "Pompidou Center, Rage of Paris," *National Geographic*, October 1980.

[36] Ibid.

[37] For comparisons of initial versus current attitudes toward these buildings, see Jill Jonnes, *Eiffel's Tower: The Thrilling Story Behind Paris's Beloved Monument and the Extraordinary World's Fair That Introduced It* (London: Penguin, 2010); Susan Stamberg, "Landmark at the Louvre: The Pyramid Turns 20," *NPR*, December 7, 2009; Patrick Huguenin, "Guggenheim Museum Turns 50," *Daily News* (New York, NY), October 21, 2009; and Nicolai Ouroussoff, "Yale Revelation: Renewal for a Building and Its Original Designer," *New York Times* (New York, NY), August 27, 2008.

shared responsibility between the architects and the public rather than a burden that falls on architects alone.

Attempts to design challenging yet bilateral buildings are not always as successful as the Pompidou. Sometimes, the aesthetically challenging features of a building are too esoteric for the public to grasp even after making an effort to see the building's architectural merit. These are parochial buildings: buildings that appeal only to the art community and not to the public because the sources of their merit are too obscure for the public to see. The Boston City Hall is a parochial building; over the years, members of the public have worked in, visited, contemplated, and paid an enormous amount of attention to the building, but still have not been able to see its aesthetic or architectural merit. When the public dismisses Boston City Hall, they do not do so out of hand, but after a long consideration process. Boston City Hall is therefore a parochial building, and represents a failure of its architects to design with the public's interest in mind.

I have shown that all members of the public have aesthetic obligations concerning architecture. Art-interested persons have moral–aesthetic obligations to consider the aesthetically challenging features of architecture; these obligations follow from the description under which they value themselves. Non-art-interested persons have strictly moral obligations to consider architecture; these obligations follow from their more general duty to refrain from impeding the interests of others. Because the failure of non-art-interested persons to consider the aesthetically challenging features of architecture might hinder artistic progress—something that is central to art's vitality—they owe their appreciation of architecture to art-interested and potential art-interested members of architecture's audience who would be harmed by that hindrance.

iv. Conclusion

Architecture's status as a public art gives rise to obligations that do not necessarily exist for the other fine arts. Because their works are imposed upon their audiences, architects must show special concern to the interests of the public, whereas private artists whose works are displayed or performed in museums, auditoriums, or other sanctioned art spaces are not obligated to exhibit such sensitivity because their audiences elect to view their works. Although architects must aim to design buildings that will ultimately appeal to the public as well as to art professionals, I have shown that they do not bear the burden of bilaterality alone. Since the members of the public—art-interested and non-art-interested alike—have obligations to consider the aesthetically challenging features of architecture, they meet architects partway in the pursuit of bilaterality.

The conclusion I have reached may seem counterintuitive. It seems strange that the public has stronger obligations concerning public art than they do private art. After all, since they do not consent to viewing public art, it seems like their obligations concerning it should be minimal. I have shown, however, that architecture's existence in the public domain imbues the appreciation of architecture with a moral weight. Rather than being nuisances, these extra obligations seem to demonstrate that architecture, unlike the other fine arts, has a unique ability to engage audiences who would not otherwise seek out aesthetic experiences.

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