

**From Technologically “Green” Design to
Authentically “Green” Practice:
The Search for Architecture Capable of Creating Environmentally
Responsible Minds, Rather Than Just Environmentally Responsible Buildings**

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Abstract

Not eco-effective technology, but a redesigned Western mind, should be the theme of environmental responsibility discourse, and also an objective of “green” architecture. This paper will seek to explain that Western society’s high hopes in eco-efficiency are merely the consequence of hidden relations within technological structures which conceal our dependence on ecology, causing a general unawareness of our technological deformation. Only the practice of constant questioning of our epistemology and ontology can help members of Western society to search for alternatives beyond those imposed on them by technological society. More important than “green” buildings, architects need to create “green” practices, in which they will, not as mere professionals but dedicated human beings, provide space for extensive creative collaboration where people can together explore new meanings and values, create new knowledge, learn solidarity and respect for each other and the world, and gain responsibility for the environment and communities they have helped to create.

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Introduction

Terms like “green architecture”, “sustainable design”, “ecological design”, “eco-design“ identify an architectural design approach, which is concerned with architecture’s environmental impact. We all possess at least a vague picture of what “green” architecture means, likewise we have some understanding of what ecology or environmental responsibility is. However, our perception of these subjects is an acceptance of the picture constructed and provided to us by the technological structures of Western society, rather than the result of a genuine attempt to discover the depth of their meanings. Hearing that a building is “green,” we automatically picture photovoltaic panels, low flush toilets, rainwater collectors, passive cooling systems, radiant heat gain control, non-toxic materials, local building materials, or grass on a roof. We refer to certain features and qualities which that building possesses, but not the people involved in creation or use of that building—we fictitiously replace environmental responsibility from ourselves upon the objects we use.

We can find several definitions of an “ecological design.” For instance, according to Sim Van Der Ryn and Stuart Cowan it is “any form of design that minimizes environmentally destructive impacts by integrating itself with living processes” (x); Canada Green Council Building sees “green design” as “design and construction practices that significantly reduce or eliminate the negative impact of building on the environment and occupants...” (CaGBC);and Peter Graham presents “Eco-design” as “ designing in accordance with [ecologically sustainable development] principles” (279). However, what do we understand by “[minimizing] environmentally destructive impacts”, or “[eliminating] the negative impacts” of the building? This largely refers to the lowering of all environmental damages caused by the building’s construction, inhabitation and demolition, measured in embodied energy

consumption, natural resources exploitation, health costs, etc. All of these are unquestionably important measures against which there is no need to argue. But should the direct, evident, and measurable environmental impacts related to the building itself be the only values taken into consideration? Should not be the message embodied in the building and behavioral patterns of all the people involved in its life considered within an evaluation of its “greenness”?

“Green” design understood as the technological challenge of decreasing environmental impacts of the building is a product of our perception that technology is an object of humans’ mastering, external to our own essence. This externalization of technology allows us to treat it as the subject responsible for environmental degradation, hence to perceive it as the realm where the ultimate solution should be sought. However, technology constructs the human understanding of reality, which determines all aspects of our behavior; it is the essence of our humanity. Technology deforms the Western understanding of reality by hiding the substantial information, energy, and matter that flows within technological structures and terrestrial processes, which results in an unawareness of our influence and a denial of our dependence on natural processes. This deforms our consciousness about ourselves, in which we perceive ourselves as members of an advanced Western society, but not as elements constituting and dependent on planetary ecology. This denial of interdependence results in a dishonesty to ourselves about our influence on ecology, the meaning of life, and the morality of values we endorse. Since technology is a product and determinant of our knowledge, the first element to revise must be our knowledge created in quarrels between humans rather than in a collaborative observation of the objective world. However, in order to make environmental preservation a long-term strategy, it cannot be led as a competition in suppression of our desires, but rather as a joyful process of fulfilling our desire for a harmonized relationship with the entire world.

Therefore ontological questions examining our desires, fundamental values, and understandings of reality is an area where the search for a “green” planet, “green” society, and “green” design should start. In order to bring substantial results, this examination cannot be conducted solely as some abstract theory, but more importantly as a common, fundamental constituent of our everyday technological practice. Only then will we manage to remove the question of environmental responsibility from the realm of technology to the realm of ethics and remake the Western mind, more importantly than architecture, to be an object of “green” design.

Architectural theories foreign to the general public have marginalized the public’s concerns about determining the role of quality architecture and the environment. “Green” architecture conducted in the same theory-imposing pattern, can build “green” buildings but cannot redesign the Western mind. In order to influence minds, “green” architecture cannot be perceived as a physical object with low energy and matter demands, but as a knowledge transmitter with high inspirational qualities. Greater context sensitivity is the key to the “greening” of Western society. Sensitivity to social context, however, does not mean to reflect unecological aspects of the subject society, but to explore the uniqueness of individuals and communities related to a project in order to find the most understandable, hence sufficient, way of implementing “green” ideals to the public. The way to build our mutual solidarity and respect for the environment is to rediscover the non-material qualities in our lives and our environment that generate a spiritually richer life and implement these into our architecture. While technologically advanced “green” design places the responsibility upon the buildings, an emphasized human responsibility is an essential element of designing a “green” society. Active individual and collective participation in meaningful activities sustaining our physical and

spiritual existence, revealing our sociability, as well as dependence on each other and nature, is the milieu fostering our sense of environmental responsibility, and as such is an irreplaceable constituent of “green” design.

“Green” architects perceiving themselves as mere professionals obeying the rules of Western society, hence obligated to their professional responsibilities and Western ethics, dispose of the limited potential of being beneficial to planetary ecology. Their limitation comes from the unecological rules of technological structures driven by a low ecological awareness within Western society. “Green” architects should assign for themselves obligations to society and the environment larger than those posed on them through professional status in order to get the “green” message across the unecological frameworks, as well as to heal the wounds and prevent danger of which society is largely unaware. The first thing to do is to place the sustainability and “green” architecture discourse in the realm of ethics. This amounts to a refusal of a curtailed ethical responsibility stemming from an accustomed narrow awareness of the range of our individual influence on planetary ecology which excludes numerous elements or defenseless parties from the ethical consideration. One must engage in united environmental ethics not divided into a number of self-referential professional or disciplinary ethics. The reason why architects should accept responsibilities larger than those instrumentally assigned to them is that they, as creative people, possess the talent of observation given by nature which allows them to recognize the inner unecological drives of Western society and they are privileged in having the tool of architecture to expose and heal them.

“Green” architecture aspiring to trigger fundamental changes in Western thinking and desires, can hardly accomplish its mission solely by the means of designing “green” buildings. Since to manifest this message that requests the reevaluation of fundamental values into

nonverbal communication in comprehensible ways is problematic, if not impossible, larger opportunities lie within architectural practice as a space where interhuman communication occurs. It is up to the character of every single architect in what ways he/she transforms his/her architectural practices; however, this should involve a transformation of objectives. The major objective of authentic “green” practice should not be to design “green” buildings, but to offer space where people can discover new values, mutual interdependence, inevitable dependence on planetary ecology, the flaws of Western society, and build strong local identities. It is here that they can learn how to become actively responsible for their environment and communities, and get a chance to exercise civil society in order to become capable of defending themselves against unecological economic and political powers. In David Orr’s words, “green” design is not about “how to produce ecologically benign products ... but how to make decent communities in which people grow to be responsible citizens and whole people” (The Nature 12).

By healing technology and buildings we heal only symptoms, and not the very cause of environmental degradation, which is the Western mind. Gregory Bateson reminds us that “in medicine to relieve to symptoms without curing the disease is wise and sufficient if and only if either disease is surely terminal or will cure itself” (497). We cannot believe the Western greedy mind will cure itself, and we need to hope that it will not be terminal. Van Der Ryn and Cowan see ecological design to be both “a profoundly hopeful vision and a pragmatic tool. ... It provides a new way of *thinking about* design” (Preface x). More than a new way of thinking about design, it must provide new ways of thinking about everyday practices, our ethics, and ourselves. Eco-efficiency endorsed by the leading political and economic powers “does not indicate that ecological awareness has been smuggled into the core deliberations of the

technological society.” Rather, it indicates, “that the interests of the technological society have been smuggled into ecological awareness” (Davison 38), and it is up to every architect’s individual character to recognize and reveal this, and to set his/her own authentic form of dealing with it. Surely “green” architects will never stop the everyday learning process of how to build and employ united ethics, engage in courageous thinking and a firm “green” commitment, or how to make the most environmentally and socially healthy decisions. “Sustainability is nothing less, in late modernity, than the craft of moral life” (Davison 177).

Chapter I. - Technological Society

Technology: From Neutral Vehicle to the Essence of Human Agency

More than likely any member of Western society would admit that our enormous energy and raw materials consumption is indivisibly connected to the powerful technology we use. French philosopher Michel Serres, in his Natural Contract, portrays us as “as powerful as the world” (20), due to technology causing global environmental changes. Nobody can argue that this extreme technological power accompanied with an unreasonable over-consumption of energy is not responsible for environmental degradation. Most of us willingly accept this fact because negative environmental changes are undeniable and technology serves as a handy convict to be blamed.

When we talk about technology, most of us imagine machines, gadgets, energy flows, information flows, science, or something else that was created in human minds, produced through human labour, and used to fulfill human needs. We see our relationship with technology as master and servant. Due to this instrumental perception of technology, we perceive technology as a phenomenon external to the essence of humanity. In Aidan Davison words, “our everyday use of the term technology executes this fallacy of externalization by referring simply to the external objects that surround us and are apparently external to the human condition” (96). Hence “technologies become the external, static objectifications of the culturally neutral knowledge provided by science. [And] technological objects stand divorced from the essence of human knowing and experience” (Davison 96).

Externalized technology has become the favoured target of blame for environmental degradation, because as long as technology remains external to human essence, we can pretend to be innocent. While we believe that powerful and consumptive gadgets are to blame, the

solution seems to lie within our grasp. We just have to stop “cutting butter with a nuclear powered chainsaw” (Van Der Ryn and Cowan 88), and either find an alternative energy for our chainsaw, or use a butter knife, if worst comes to worst. Eco-efficiency, not requiring life-style changes, is the most endorsed solution. Every time Western society faces a situation in which some change is required, as Davison reveals, it always reaches for the solutions not demanding the change of accustomed habits.

The least disruptive, and thus the apparently most feasible, responses to unintended consequences become those that tamper as little as possible with this form of life. ... Apparently less feasible alternatives [are those posing] radical and unpalatable challenges to the constructive pattern of technological culture. (Davison 107)

Eco-efficiency proposing that we are capable of “doing more with less” (McDonough and Braungart 50) is the subject matter dominating the sustainable development discourse led by economic and political powers. McDonough and Braungart, in their book Cradle to Cradle, joke that if there was a motto of the industrial revolution it would have been: “If brute force doesn’t work, you are not using enough of it” (30). A few decades later, we have now realized that we cannot afford this approach anymore, so we have invented eco-efficiency as the opposition to “brute force.” The motto of eco-modernist sustainable development, rooted in an “assumption that we will employ the most efficient, the least risky, and the most convenient of our technological servants vigorously and optimistically, [and] that there is a little sense in any antitechnological position” (Davison 97), seems to be “every problem has either a technological answer or a market solution” (Ecological Literacy 24).

McDonough and Braungart do not believe in eco-efficiency as a long-term strategy because it is just “fine-tuning the existing destructive framework” (90). They demand a fundamental change of form of production, from “cradle-to-grave” processes to self-feeding

“cradle-to-cradle” strategies, and reorganizing market relations which endorse the producers’ responsibility of the full-life cycle of a product. They replace the idea of eco-efficiency with “eco-effectiveness”. “Long-term prosperity depends not on the efficiency of a fundamentally destructive system, but on the effectiveness of processes designed to be healthy and renewable in the first place” (“Eco-effectiveness,” MBDC). They say, “Our concept of eco-effectiveness means working on the right things—on the right products and services and systems—instead of making the wrong things less bad” (76). Even though the “cradleto-cradle” strategy seems to be a more promising solution than eco-efficiency, it still perceives technology as an object of human mastering, external to the essence of human existence. As a result, ecological preservation continues to be a technological issue external to human ethical responsibility. McDonough and Braungart do not address the ethical dimension of ecological awareness, since they believe that an appropriate design can avoid posing limitations on the Western standard of life. They claim, for example, that industrial waste produced by corporations is not the product of morally wrong action but is the “consequence of outdated and unintelligent design” (43).

Davison argues that as long as technology remains perceived as excluded from human essence, it will remain understood as a servant to humanity, and not as a constitutive element of it. This perception hiding the reality that “issues of morality and ontology [cannot be] excluded from issue of technology in the technological culture” (Davison 86) is the reason why eco-modernism fails “to illuminate the moral relationship of technological culture to other cultures, to the future, to nature, or to its own inhabitants [and] to shed light on the moral meaning of sustainability” (Davison 56). The cause, and at the same time the effect, of excluding ethics from mainstream discourses on the role of technology within environmental rehabilitation is that “both technocratic and cultural discourses about sustainability have substantially failed to

investigate how technologies, woven as they are within the fabric of our practices, express, shape and perpetuate our philosophical commitments” (Davison 94). Eco-modernism fails to offer a new understanding of the quality of life based on a recognition of the intrinsic values of all elements united in the wholeness of terrestrial existence. “While technological progress is able to serve as external means toward the technical end of mastering nature, it is unable to serve as external means to the ultimate moral end of human well-being in a welcoming, sustaining world” (Davison 113).

Perceiving technology not as a culturally and morally neutral phenomenon, but as the essence of humanity, will not only help us to recognize the real cause of environmental degradation but also to discover our own nature. In order to reveal the essence of humanity, we need to abandon the sum-of-gadgets perception of technology and see it as a framework which: builds our social, cultural, and political life; determines our understanding of reality; drives our individual actions; or serves as a measure scale against which we measure the quality of our lives. All the technologies and techniques that we use inevitably influence our perception of reality. For instance, “the invention of mechanical time ... launched European culture into the tunnel of linear, chronological time in which progression makes more sense than permanence” (Davison 70); or the glass mirror “may have been of profound philosophical significance” too, since by providing us with an external image of ourselves it “might also encourage a heightened sense of personal ego; greater faith in possibilities of the detached objective observer, increased identification with individual difference rather than communal similarity” (Davison 88). Regardless to what extent these deliberations are accurate, technological advance unquestionably determines our understanding of reality according to which we conduct our actions. Technologies “woven ... within the fabric of our practices, *express, shape, and*

perpetuate our philosophical commitments” (Davison 94). Only if we realize that we are the technological society, not only because we use gadgets, but that “technological society names a peculiar political and moral condition in which the greatest common good is understood as the greatest possible productivity of technosystems” (Davison 93), can we place technology at the essence of human existence and interweave the realm of technology with the real of human ethics.

The Deformed World and the Hidden Self

Technology creates the conditions that Western society might call development, but it is also a deformation of our awareness, values, and practice. Technological society ignores the spiritual dimension of the world which prevents us from seeing anything other than instrumental values. “Language and technology cease to engage human practitioners in the revelation of the originating mystery of things. ...Modern technology encloses our experience in such a way as to imprison things within human purposes” (Davison 118). The intrinsic value of all elements of terrestrial existence, the recognition of which is crucial for the rejection of the master-servant perspective, remain ignored. We tend to overlook that the spiritual and physical dimensions of our life are mutually determining and indivisible. Undeniably, physical environmental degradation is an immediate result of our materialism. However, materialism also causes spiritual damage. The Italian-American architect Paolo Soleri claims, our “quiet greed”, “is not [just] causing pollution, but *it is* pollution” (181). Overwhelmed by the amount of matter, “man’s genius is decaying within the process of ecological decay” (179).

According to Davison, the world we are building is deformed and unsustainable “because it encodes in our everyday practices a profound dualism of means and ends” (115). A dualism of means and ends “brings the ends – commodities – to the foreground of our experience,

whilst ensuring that the means – technosystems – recede from view” (Davison 110). Because we neither see how technology is related to natural processes, nor the relationships within technology and technological structures, we became “skillful beings” (Dreyfus in Davison 174), who can operate technology and adapt to social, political, economic, or legal structures. But we do not ask how these systems work, what sustains their existence, how they interact with us and the rest of the world. From an environmental point of view, perhaps the most dangerous element of this deformed Western world is the hidden dependence on natural resources sustaining our lives, and our hidden mutual dependence on each other. As a result of this hidden dependence we do not live in the real world, but we live our everyday practice in an imaginary technologically fabricated world. We transform the real world without seeing it, and we “willingly sleepwalk through the process of reconstructing the conditions of human existence” (Winner in Davison 98).

Due to this deformation we do not know the world and we do not know ourselves. By hiding ourselves from the fact that technological frameworks reconstruct both the natural world and our minds—that technology is the essence of our humanity—we not only lose the ability to understand natural and technological processes, but also the ability to know ourselves. Jacques Ellul claims, “man is no longer able to recognize himself because of the instruments he employs” (146). Due to our denying of the existence of fundamentally unhealthy deformations of cultural frameworks, we remain unaware of our own deformations as well. As Davison says, we are able to laugh at the moral destabilization that a Coke bottle caused in an Aboriginal community in the movie “The Gods Must Be Crazy,” but “we remain unreflective about the technological sources of our own moral destabilization” (Davison 21). It is not that we would tolerate moral destabilization in our society, but we have created deformed measure sticks for

its evaluation, which allow us to hide reality and to see ourselves in a way we want to. “With the logic of an infant who closes their eyes so you cannot see them, technological sleepwalkers hide only from themselves” (Davison 102).

The Western mind, operating upon frameworks driven by purpose and a linear timeline, is “blind to cybernetic circularities of the self and the external world” (Bateson 451), because “*the cybernetic nature of self and the world tends to be imperceptible to consciousness* insofar as the contents of the ‘screen’ of consciousness are determined by consideration of purpose” (Bateson 450). Therefore Western man, who adapts the environment to his/her purposes, instead of adapting him/herself to the environment, is capable of destroying him/herself and the environment “with the very best of conscious intentions” (Bateson 152). This deformed consciousness, which listens to the purpose but ignores the cybernetic response, constructs our denial of an interdependent relationship with the world, and makes us unconsciously dishonest to ourselves. For instance, most of the things we buy are not necessary to our survival, but are commodities that are either just a promise of “enjoyment whose true location is fantasy” (The Puppet 145) based on the notion that if you buy “X” you will get also something else; or “commodities that offer us ‘X without X’, deprived of substance (coffee without caffeine, sweetener without sugar, beer without alcohol, etc)” (The Puppet 148). This is an example of our unwillingness to honestly admit that we are willing to fictively enrich “X” with a false, instrumental “extra” value, since “X” itself cannot deliver enjoyment arising from its intrinsic value and we deceptively pretend to avoid the consequences of our desires by depriving the commodity of its inner unwanted core. The fact that an imaginative purpose can replace the reality of the meaninglessness of both the extra value and the commodity deprived of essence causes the member of consumerist society to “live in a world where fantasy is more real than

reality” (Boorstin in The Nature 69). This ideology of false imagination, characteristic to market-driven capitalism and fostered by our wishful thinking, allowing us to deny our deformation and dependence on nature, survives only thanks to our inauthenticity which is stronger than courageous honesty. In turn, this ideology serves as a platform upon which commodities with an imaginary extra “green” value, or imaginarily deprived of their environmental impacts, can be smuggled into our genuine ecological attempts. Our “willful blindness has reached epidemic proportions” (The Nature 85), and because it remains unnoticed, it has become extremely dangerous. “Simply reaching for a cup of coffee in a moment of conviviality at a sociological conference on globalization is an event of momentous, yet typically unnoticed, paradox, irony, delusion, and danger” (Davison 103). Orr aptly compares our rejection of reality as “denial ... in the service of ideology and self-interest” to the attitude of the churchman who refused to look into Galileo’s telescope (The Nature 86).

Instead of placing technology outside of the realm of human essence, which moves the responsibility for environmental degradation solely on technology, we need to realize that humanity and technology are not two autonomous entities, but one indivisible realm and that “technology is not the neutral vehicle of human agency, [but] it is the essence of human agency” (Davison 101). We need to see that “purely technological advance” is impossible (Naess 93) and “technological innovation is a form of political and moral innovation ... a form of social experiment” (Davison 104). The relationship between technological and social innovation is reciprocal. Technology creates the preconditions for change in social, ethical, and legal frameworks, but it is also a product of them. Therefore, all goods made in a thirdworld country by cheap child labor, lying on a shelf in an airconditioned supermarket in a developed country “are products of ethical frameworks as much as of factories” (Davison 106).

While some might suggest abandoning technology in order to rediscover ourselves, Davison claims that technology, as the source of our moral destabilization, cannot be separated from the process of recovery. Also, Gregory Bateson stresses the importance of technology within the recovery of our mind and environment. He suggests, in his proposal for “A High Civilization“ capable of a balanced relationship with the environment, that it would be impossible and insane to “return to the innocence” of Aboriginal cultures, since we would basically be starting the same process all over again. Vice versa, we need to hold onto “whatever is necessary [including technology]... to maintain the necessary wisdom in the human population” (503). Because “technology, like language, is not simply a manifestation of human knowing, it is also a precondition for it” (Davison 104), it is an indivisible part of the creation of new ecological knowledge. Since a rejection of technology is neither possible—since it is the essence of our humanity—nor desirable, and since it is the vehicle of our knowing, we need to discover a new moral judgment within technology through a deep examination of the relationships between the human mind, technology, and planetary ecology. The prior objective of “greening” the planet through “greening” Western society is not to make us act upon our present knowledge, but to restore our consciousness by relating ourselves to the real world of planetary ecology and to make us aware of the fact that we cannot save the real world while living a fictitious Western one.

Knowledge and Competition

The preference of technological solutions to environmental degradation is noted in Western scientific and technical approaches to knowledge. Scientific knowledge does not foster environmentally responsible behavior, because although it provides us with valuable information, “theoretical and technical knowledges ... lack the capacity to produce wise action” (Davison 162).

Our understanding of what constitutes knowledge, is rooted in the thousands of years long fight over “objective” truth. Before knowledge became the “subject of science,” objective truth about the world lay in the world without men, and knowledge was gained in the subject’s attempt to define himself in relation to the object (Serres 21). Since science has entered the history of humankind, “truth is not to be observed in the appearance of things, but is to be produced by those who think” (Davison 120), and knowledge has become the product of the final agreement between men ending the fight over the truth. “Thus experienced by the former individual subject, me or you, an obedient receiver or transmitter and a possible inventive producer of knowledge, the process of knowing runs from trials to cases to causes, from judgments to choices, and so never leaves juridical arena” (Serres 212). In order to preserve, justify, and value knowledge detached from the object, Western society developed a structure of authorities possessing power over the “objective” version of knowledge. It has been forgotten that the more knowledge pretends objectivity, “the more our instrumentalist epistemology aspires to universality, and the more our vision is crammed with devices, the less we understand our social and ecological correlationality. The less we understand the reciprocity of self and world” (Davison 143). Besides a detachment from the objective world, the other flaw of Western knowledge is its division into numerous independent disciplines, preventing Western society from building an holistic environmental wisdom. Numerous isolated disciplines create numerous self-referential subjective realities. It is this isolation and self-referentiality, which makes any discipline of human knowing incapable of providing a sufficient holistic solution for environmental degradation. “The fragmentary studies are satisfactory only because the questions posed are fragmentary” (Naess 78), and fragmentary questions are unquestionably the source of our blindness to the unity of planetary ecology.

Dominant Western science tends to oppose, discredit, and reject any alternatives, such as Gaia theory or the traditional ecological knowledge of indigenous cultures, that challenge the mainstream scientific system of belief and its frameworks (Doubleday 47). Perhaps the reason why scientific knowledge is so opposed to other alternatives challenging its structure is that the manufactured reliability of its structure is the only source of its authority. However, when it comes to “greening” the planet and society, representatives of Western knowledge should bear in mind that it is not really important who is right or wrong, but what ensures the harmony and survival. Seeking more “green” alternatives, we should search for both new knowledge and new knowledge structures, because it is difficult to find “green” knowledge “within frameworks which, by the virtue of their historical development and institutional bias, are unecological if not anti-ecological” (Doubleday 47).

Western knowledge's built in argument is indivisibly interwoven with the realm of competition, the foremost Western stimulation. Competition, perceived as the vehicle of development and thus the most valuable element of capitalism, is not only unecological when its subject matter is unecological, but more importantly it is unecological as a framework of human interaction. Competition driven by self-interest, aspiring for individual satisfaction, cannot create harmonized whole. Even “green” competition produces winner and losers, which ruins the positive motivation based on an enjoyment of the process of environmental preservation for all people engaging in it. Such competition instead provides enjoyment for a few successful competitors favouring the instrumental value of the superior position, in turn leading to the mental and physical exhaustion of the competitors. When it comes to the importance of knowledge within environmental preservation, competing parties tend to withhold their knowledge in order to succeed, rather than provide their knowledge to other

parties for the sake of planetary ecology.

Within “green” competitions, “greenness” becomes a tool rather than an objective. Any “greenness” rating system, or “green” competitors who claim that to be “green” is their objective and “green” competition is just tool to inspire and spread the ideals of sustainability, need to realize that those who see “greenness” to be their genuine objective do not need to be the “greenest.” Those who are inspired by competition and begin to desire to be the “greenest” may succeed in the subjective manner of competition, but hardly implement “green” ideals to other non-rated areas of their lives. “Green” competitions should not misplace the spreading of ecological awareness for providing a “greenwashing” tool which can be abused by the economic self-interests of competing parties. Furthermore, “green” competition cannot escape the technological perception of sustainability, since rating systems can only operate on measurable values. No rating system can measure the transformation of a competitor’s value priorities, the genuineness of their “green” intentions, the rediscovered joy of engaging in activities independent of the consumerist market, a harmonized human community, or an intensified civil society. But these incommensurable elements are the core of environmental and social sustainability. Most importantly, since “the function of empirical data-gathering is to take the decision out of the ethical domain and place it into the much more manageable domain of technique” (Spector 148), competition as a form of data gathering places environmental responsibility into the domain of technology, instead of into the realm of ethics where it belongs.

Ontology

Revised epistemology might be a precondition of a more sufficient and more sensitive responses to the issue of environmental preservation, but it is not a drive leading us towards a

“green” society. Rather it is just a vehicle of changes, because only the priority revised and modified Western mind can recognize the importance of reevaluated knowledge and enjoy the process of environmental preservation. McDonough and Braungart bring up a valid point to the issue of sustainability by asking, “how exciting is sustainability ... If a man characterized his relationship with his wife as sustainable, you might well pity them both” (155). Sustainability, achieved by minimizing our environmental impacts, is according to them, principally boring and incapable of providing positive motives, while sustainability based on the technological challenge of designing things in principally good cradle-to-cradle patterns--not limiting our self-expression--is a positive drive towards sustainability. Their reason as to why we should take this challenge is the recognition of the impossibility of getting away from the conditions we create. “We are not leaving this [planet] ..., and we will begin to become native to it [like Aboriginal cultures are] when we recognize this fact” (89). Here they seem to mistreat the “green” message provided to us by Aboriginal cultures, because it is not a recognition of the impossibility of escape that makes them such devoted caretakers, but a recognition of the intrinsic value of every element of nature. The excitement of doing things principally good still retains an aftertaste of unpleasant injunction if initiated by the motif of not having any other option. Our “green” behavior should be a response to the “moral challenge posed by the ideal of sustainability” (Davison 200), and not the technological challenge posed by a fear of death. In order to make sustainability genuinely “exciting,” positive, and fulfilling of our desires, we should not act under the pressure of not having any other option, but upon our “green” desires and inner beliefs. Then our “green” behavior will be driven by the excitement of the challenge to harmonize our beliefs with our performance, and not by the excitement of the technological challenge to harmonize our greed with the limits of natural resources.

Our world is not only deformed by everyday technological practice, but first of all by the technological deformation of the meaning of our lives. Technology, as a realm constructing the meaning of our existence, “is not only world-building, it is simultaneously world-revealing and must be therefore read as ontological text” (Davison 115). It is impossible for us to enjoy producing less, consuming less, while the meaning of our existence is seen as the production and consumption of matter produced through the “hard work” of technological engagement. If our only drive is an instrumental joy, conditioned with the recognition of our purposefulness and the purposefulness of everything else, we can hardly be expected to recognize the intrinsic value of our existence and of the whole terrestrial unity; thus any action towards environmentally responsible behavior remains just an unpleasant, selfpurposeful action of “saving our butt.”

The absence of ontological questions within environmental discourse is a consequence of absenting moral issues within environmental discourse, combined with absenting ontological questions within moral discourse. Gouinlock claims, “the absorbing questions of the moral implications of the nature of man and the world” are absent to present a moral discourse, so we do not feel moral obligation to seek ontological questions (79). Without a revision of our meaning of existence, moral philosophy remains to build its judgment of what is “good” and “bad” upon a meaning of existence deformed by technological structures. “The divorce of ontology from moral philosophy may indeed make moral philosophy easier, but it also thereby makes it largely irrelevant to our moral experience and to the worlds we build” (Davison 150). In order to make moral philosophy relevant and beneficial to the process of “greening” society, the question of morality must be based on a recognition of the new “green” meanings of our existence. Since the role of ethical action is not to suppress our desires and joy, but more

importantly it is *“an attempt to open up possibilities, to enrich the world”* (MacIntyre qtd. in Davison 163), we need to reevaluate in what sense we want to see the world enriched in order to decide which possibilities will make ethical action healing for both planetary ecology and the Western mind.

“Green” behavior, and for that matter “green” design, “is not simply a more efficient way of accommodating our desires; it is the improvement of desire and all of those things that affects what we desire” (The Nature 28). Those who seek where we should turn in “greening” the planet must see, like the authors of Factor Four saw, “the recourses that we need most urgently to rediscover and to use more fully and wisely are not in the physical world, but remain hidden within each one of us” (qtd. in Davison 34). “Green” society and the planet are neither a question of technological skills and knowledge, nor an issue of revised epistemology alone but a question of reconstructed meaning of our existence; hence “the ultimate object of ecological design is ... human mind” (The Nature 30).

As productive beings, we tend to seek enjoyment in accomplishing the goals we have assigned to ourselves. If we were to perceive “green” society, or ultimately the “green” mind, as a state that we aim to achieve, we would easily become frustrated from the non-achievability of this task. In order to harmonize our enjoyment of “green” behavior with our “green” inner beliefs, we need to abandon our technological desire to accomplish a task, and seek enjoyment within the process of the transformation of our minds in itself. Likewise, “ultimate moral goods are not realized as the completion of a practical task, but are realized as the ongoing achievement of cultivation and sustaining good in our lives” (Davison 160). The “green” mind is not without environmental impact at all (since this is impossible), but that which genuinely engages in its own transformation. Therefore, we should not focus on how ultimately “green”

our society and mind look, but in the kind of process in which we should engage. Our task is not to theoretically prescribe some sort of desired form of “greenness” and go for it, but to engage in an everyday practice of examining, revealing, and continuous retrospective reevaluating of what the “green” mind and “green” society might stand for.

The Everyday Practice of History Making

To begin sustainability discourse with ontological questions helps to achieve a more significant change towards sustainability than technology can provide. In order to depict the kind of change which is required to balance the cybernetic systems of planetary ecology and Western society, we could use Bateson’s allegory of a thermostat as a “homeostatic circuit” balancing the temperature in a house (479). When the conditions become unbearable, it is not sufficient to act within the old settings, and we need to set the thermostat to a new level. Using another Bateson allegory, we can picture ourselves in the position of adversary nuclear super powers simulating nuclear war. The fact of being in an enemy relationship creates a set of rules, which themselves are enemy to all of the involved parties. In order to win the war, the parties cannot operate within these rules because “the question is not what is the best thing to do within the rules as they are at the moment. The question is how we can get away from the rules within which we have been operating” (Bateson 484-5). It is apparent that our unecological behavior has become unbearable and the social rules within which we operate have become enemies to our physical and spiritual survival, therefore the thermostat of our behavior must be reset and the enemy social rules must be abandoned.

To endorse “green” competition and to apply “green” technology uncritically is nothing more than following accustomed dangerous rules. It is like going to elections in order to decide who is going to lead the inherently wrong system less badly. This might be a convenient

attitude, and natural to Western society, but it is insufficient in its “greening.” We need history-making attitudes in order to reset the rules of our inherently nonecological system. The authors of Disclosing New World claim that going to elections is not history-making: “something that makes history ... changes the way in which we understand and deal with ourselves and with things” (Spinosa, Flores, and Dreyfus 2). Our understanding of what has to be done on both the global ecology and “green” architecture levels “requires a revolution in our thinking that changes the kinds of question we ask” (The Nature 27). Systemic transformation cannot be conducted solely through the change of epistemology and ontology as abstract theories, but only as a transformation of the questions we ask within our everyday performance.

As Davison sees it, “our world-building becomes invisible not simply because dualism of means and ends blinds our thinking, but because it blinds our experience in everyday practice” (113), hence the deformation of the system can be recognized and its remedy can be delivered only through engaging in new forms of everyday practice. It is not an abstract moral philosophy that forms our morality, but it is rather, according to Davison, “the world of practice in which our everyday moral choices take place ... [because] these worldstructures frame the moral domain. They give it its shape, in terms both ontological and practical”(160). Dreyfus says, “ethical practices can function perfectly well without abstract universal principles of rightness being invoked, while principles of rightness are totally dependent upon the everyday practices for their application” (qtd. in Davison 162). Hence, there is no abstract moral philosophy that can serve as a vehicle of change, but only moral practice itself in its self reflective form. Sustainability is achievable only as an everyday event of our individual self transformation through our rediscovered “relationality” with all beings and informational energy and matter flows sustaining our existence. “We require skills of judgment that can lead

us from the foreground of selfproduction towards the background of world-producing means that relate us to our wider social and ecological reality” (Davison 158), developed through a constant questioning of the essence of our being, and allowing us to distinguish instrumental reasons from those inherent to the non-deformed core of humanity--the reasons contemplating the unity of terrestrial ecology. Unlike technological rationality, the “rationality of relationship ... brings to light the moral character of our essential relationality as members of human and biotic communities. It brings to light our essence as children, siblings, parents, lovers, ...” (Davison 166).

Since we are technological beings, the skill of relational judgment must be developed at the level of technological practice. Even though we can agree with Naess that “[a] lack of critical evaluation of technique” is responsible for our technological deformation, and that technology must be “*culturally* tested” (Naess 94), we should emphasize that since technological culture as a whole is not yet familiar with the genuinely critical examination of technology and technological structures, sustainability lies within individual questioning and decision-making, subverting present Western cultural rules, rather than following them. The only guideline to follow in this examination is individual character. Questions concerning technological production such as: “Why do I need this? Is it sustaining my physical survival? How does it influence my emotional experience? Where does it come from? How am I related to the process of its production?” must be on a daily basis accompanied with “epistemological and ontological deliberations”. There is no other way of becoming ecologically responsible than by practicing the skill of moral judgment in our everyday interaction with people, other forms of life, things, and events around us. There is no scientific knowledge we should learn before starting to practice our everyday history-making--there are only real situations ahead,

through which we will learn in the same way as acquiring skills of judgment in reflective-in-action learning. Davison reminds us, “whereas for instrumental reason the written text is the pragmatic exemplar of learning, for the practical reason it is the ultimate experience of others and things” (167).

“Sustainability is nothing less, in late modernity, than the craft of moral life” (Davison 177), and only through practicing and developing this craft can we get closer to the ideals of sustainability. Despite our efforts, we will never be able to take the quotation marks off of the word green, in the same way as no cybernetic system, including planetary ecology, can ever achieve ultimate equilibrium. We have to be aware, as has already been mentioned, that what we are trying to achieve is not a final static “green” product called “green society,” but rather an infinite process of transformation which in itself makes us “green”. This transformation is infinite because it will continue day by day and never achieve a final state, there are an infinite number of possibilities that can be engaged in every single day, and there is infinity that has not yet been done.

Chapter II. - A role of “Green” Architecture within Planetary Ecology

Architecture: From Theories to Context

“Green” architecture, in its present mainstream form focused on the “green” features of a building, can hardly represent something more, even in the “cradle-to-cradle” form, than an attempt to decrease the negative environmental impacts of the building. More significant results are achievable through “green” architecture understood as a discipline with the intent of building a “green” society. According to Ethics and the Practice of Architecture, “architecture is about shaping our physical habitat to suit human purposes, and in doing so has the capacity to fulfill spiritual and emotional needs”(Wasserman, Sullivan, and Palermo 13). But architecture should not only be about fulfilling human needs, moreover about forming human needs. Architecture is, as a technological discipline, inherent to the human essence and as such it is both the result and determinant of human behavior. The fact that architecture is not only a product, but also an element influencing human behavior, must be emphasized in the search for the role and meaning of “green” architecture.

A brief look at streets we live in and the images in architectural magazines reveals the huge division between architecture endorsed by architects and architecture that is widely used; division which poses an enormous obstacle for architects’ abilities to form society. Modern architecture and International style have entered the discipline of architecture as a resolution of an internal struggle during the confusion of neo styles, providing modern “answers” as to what architecture should be about. Even though International style has been based on modern ideas of social equity and has aimed to approach and serve the entire modern world, only the community of architects and a small portion of Western society championed its universal aesthetic and utilitarian values. An International style which ignored cultural diversity remained

foreign for the majority of Western society. The post-modern refusal of a universal truth gave birth to theories in which the “measure of success [should] be internal, ...[and the] project [should be] evaluated according to its own theory of success” (Spector 57). Although the idea of pluralism within architectural theory promises more opportunities for reflecting local cultural identities, post-modern pluralism is based more on promoting individual creative freedom than an attempt to bond architecture and local identities. Thus, the post-modern response to modern architecture did not manage to bridge the abyss between architecture favored by architects and architecture inhabited by the majority of the Western world. Fabricated theories, understandable only to experts, discredited the role of architecture and the general public instead turned to the cheap housing industry which offered familiar and understandable forms which inevitably led to a decrease of quality and consequently a lack of demand for the quality of the urban environment. The origin of the present situation, in which the architecture endorsed by experts is extremely different from the forms widely applied, is not indicative of a lack of aesthetic or utilitarian quality appreciated by architects, but is instead a reflection of the fact that these qualities were developed within disciplinary theories detached from the desires and comprehension of ordinary people.

Contemporary architecture has entered a state which Christopher Alexander has called in his “Manifesto 1991”, the “Collapse of the Present Mainstream Theory of Architecture” (108).

Some of the major failures of this theory are according to him that:

- it “does not deal with Third World building, low-cost housing, or community affairs.”
- it “does not deal with ecological problems.”
- it “does not deal with ... facts now known about the relation between human behavior and the environment.”
- it “has failed to give any general coherent explanation of the values necessary for building well.”
- it “has not produced buildings that ordinary people like.”
- it “has not provided any moral leadership that can establish the value inherent in the

built world” (“Manifesto” 108).

The biggest concerns, which we can trace in Alexander’s criticisms, are the lost relationships between the general public and architecture, between theory and practice, and the loss of moral guidelines through which we can measure inherent values. What Alexander demands is, to “free architects from the mental picture that has been constructed for them. ...[and] which is not connected to real human feelings, but only to the artificially constructed aesthetic rules of a design intelligentsia” (“Manifesto” 110). This paper does not challenge architectural aesthetic or utilitarian theories, but rather the process in which these theories are applied into a design, as well as the nature of the relationship between all parties involved within the design process. If “green” architecture takes the same path of detachment of theory from human desires, beliefs, and practice, it will remain only a fashionable manifestation of a few enlightened individuals rather than a meaningful movement providing reasonable results in environmental preservation. In the same way as history-making must involve a change of thinking, a change in the way architects and the public think about architecture is the essence of “green” architecture. Architects and the public must find common ground upon which they can establish a more fertile relationship, based on mutual respect and a common respect for the earth, capable of exploring alternatives beyond the ones characteristic of the present technological understanding of “green” architecture.

In order to reattach architecture and the public, the design process must be perceived as an attempt to deeply explore and reflect the uniqueness of a particular context rather than a mere attempt to apply some theory into that context. Unquestionably, “architecture is most context-sensitive of the arts” (Spector 159). By context we usually understand geographic, social, cultural, technological, or political structures. Since present socially constructed contexts are rather limiting to building a “green” society, “green” architecture should turn away from

focusing on social context, and look instead at the contexts of individual beliefs and the context of planetary ecology.

Since Western society represents context extremely non-ecological, “green” architecture should not take the entire society as context but rather particular individuals involved in the design process. “Green” architecture justifying itself upon the values and rules characteristic of the entire society must accept these in their original, critically unquestioned form, since a particular design process obviously cannot influence the entire society. However, if a design process manages to provide enough space to deliberate on values, priorities, or the issue of relationality with the people involved, the non-ecological context of Western society can be transformed into a more ecologically favorable context of a “greenly” redesigned human mind. The goal of this effort is to make individuals understand that there are more significant variables to consider than those constructed and endorsed by the market economy or Western democracy. The idea that “good architecture creates context” (Spector 184), gains more significance in “green” architecture than in any other architectural form. Although “green” architecture does not create the context of planetary ecology, it makes it to be part of the individual mind. The discipline of “green” architecture must perceive itself as a context-maker, or context-revealer, more importantly than a technological problem solver.

The Green Message: From Matter to Information

The request for recognition of a new context is a request for a new understanding of the role of architecture within planetary ecology. The fact that the mainstream form of “green” architecture is focused on decreasing physical environmental impacts is a result of perceiving a building to be the sum of energy and matter flows, rather than a medium carrying a message. This paper states that when it comes to the overall effect of “green” architecture on planetary

ecology, the element of the “green” message within architecture is more important than the performance of one individual building.

Gregory Bateson recognizes two forms of ecology. First, “bioenergetics” concerns material bodies and the energy flows between them; second, “informational or entropic ecology ... deals with the budgeting of pathways and of probability” (476). From the perspective of “bioenergetics,” the world is global system of matter and energy flows consisting of numerous interacting subsystems. According to the “informational or entropic” form, besides matter and energy flows ecology consists of information flows. Every physical element of “bioenergetics” possesses a mental dimension, which altogether create an overall mental system inherent to planetary ecology.

The individual mind is immanent but not only in the body. It is immanent also in pathways and messages outside the body; and there is a larger Mind of which the individual mind is only a subsystem. This larger Mind is ... immanent in the total interconnected social system and planetary ecology. (Bateson 467).

Therefore, when we speak about ecology, we are not supposed to deal only with matter, but we should also imply a process of developing and exchanging knowledge. Bateson explains this through the example of a philosopher, who even if he dies and his material body is no longer part of bioenergetics, his ideas continue to live and influence bioenergetics through informational ecology (476). The recognition of informational ecology might help us to recognize the importance of informational pathways within Western society. This means that instead of focusing on changing the form of our physical performance from a bioenergetics point of view, we should focus on the mental processes triggering it. Technology as a sum of gadgets is a part of bioenergetics, while technology as a social framework is a part of informational ecology. As argued in Chapter I, we need to change the questions we ask, hence

the way we deal with information. Western greed, as the cause of environmental degradation, is more or less the result of information upon which our society has developed in the past and which guides it in the present. Therefore, the only remedy is to spread new information and to invoke the imagination for the sake of imagining alternative futures.

Within bioenergetics, architecture represents the sum of physical relations exploiting/nurturing, balancing/distracting the global planetary system. A building consumes a certain amount of “food” in the form of matter and energy, transforms it, and returns it to the environment. This cyclical pattern is the essence of all natural terrestrial processes within bioenergetics. The only difference is that in natural processes matter returned to the cycle is capable of transforming itself again into “food” in reasonable time, and the amount of energy required to create and operate a subsystem of relations is not bigger than the amount of energy available in the world without human interference. Within this perception, any single “green” building—even one designed through waste-less “cradle-to-cradle” strategy, where recycling of a designed object is the primary motivation and not just “an awkward afterthought” (McDonough and Braungart 70)—cannot be more than the “less bad” approach, since it is still less “green” than a building that was never built at all.

Fortunately, informational ecology offers us a more encouraging picture of the role of architecture within planetary ecology. In the same way that an individual mind is not only immanent to the individual body, but also to “a larger Mind” (Bateson 467) with which it is interconnected through “pathways and messages” flowing outside the individual body, an individual building is part of the same “wider ecological system” (Bateson 492). Within informational ecology, architecture is not just an amount of matter and energy flows accommodated in physical bodies, but it is the sum of information flows. Its role is to

participate within ecology as a tester, transmitter, and source of information that can lead to either balancing or upsetting the stability of bioenergetics through modeling our further physical actions.

While a “green” building within bioenergetics decreases the environmental impact by the difference between the impacts of one traditional and one “green” building, within informational ecology, a “green” building is capable of spreading ecological awareness multiplied by the decrease of the impact on bioenergetics by the number of people inspired by that particular building. In this way we are getting from a oneplus-one decrease to an exponential decrease of overall environmental impact caused not only by architecture, but also by other realms of our practice. No matter how much we decrease the environmental impact of one building, ecology will benefit more from one inspiring “green” building, than from one inhabited cardboard box.

The “green” house of Elemér Zalotay, a radical Swiss architect of Hungarian origin, was built in a way that was incomprehensible for the surrounding community. While it may have represented extremely low environmental impact, with great design qualities, and a great architect’s creative and personal courage, it probably made more of a negative than a positive ecological contribution. This “natural eruption ...[and] canopy of anarchic movement” (Wines 208) has become the target of local hate and has hardly encouraged society to follow its way. Although Zalotay’s house triggered a large dispute, which is necessary for spreading ecological awareness, it has missed an opportunity to create a space for creative dialogin which people are willing to learn. The community in the neighborhood which has developed a resistance to this piece of work is hardly willing to reconsider their own understanding of architecture, and they are even less willing to revise the basic values of their society. In this situation, where people

feel threatened by a situation imposed on them, all parties approach the dialog with their own argument and determination to defend their standpoint. This is not an atmosphere in which an individual is willing to seek out the flaws of the society he/she is defending. Hence, in this situation neither is the learning, nor is the resetting of the thermostat of our behavior possible. It must be the goal of “green” architects to push the envelope, however, the reasons and objectives for doing this must be clearly understood not only by groups of experts or people already ecologically literate, but more importantly by the entire community involved in order to make the “green” message truly inspiring.

Understandable Architecture: Inspirational Quality without a Name

The most challenging task for “green” architects will be to harmonize their own perception of architectural quality, “green” qualities (what ever that might be), with the qualities capable of being appreciated by people in a way that will build ecological awareness upon a new non-technically-based approach to environmental responsibility which has hitherto been foreign to Western society. To make the “green” message inspiring, people need to be able to identify with the environment possessing such a message. Architects need to become more context-sensitive and less theory-dependent, more ideas-developing and less opinion-imposing. This requires architects to see themselves as observers and listeners, before designers. Perhaps a feasible solution lies in Christopher Alexander’s understanding of good architecture placing an emphasis on “the potential of the individual; the importance of a spiritual connection to the built world; the need for cooperation among people; the empowerment of individuals or small groups of people to shape their environment” (Salingaros.)

According to Alexander’s philosophy, the genuine inner quality of both the environment

and life “can not be made, but only generated” (The Timeless Way 160), therefore architects must seek variables generating quality in order to implement those into design and let quality generate itself. However, a search must distinguish the elements creating quality of life from elements creating a quality standard of living, which have become confused in Western society. The quality which should be sought and implemented in design is perhaps the one that Alexander has named “the quality without a name” (The Timeless Way 19). Alexander says, this quality cannot be named not because it means something so large that no single word can define it, but because it is “much more precise than any word” (The Timeless Way 29). So he uses the words “alive,” “whole,” “comfortable,” “free,” “exact,” “egoless,” and “eternal” (The Timeless Way 29-40) to approach its meaning, but understood in a more deeper sense than the standard-of-living perception can provide. This quality is not made, and cannot be made, and is not meant to be made; we already have it-only we have to rediscover it and bring it into buildings. “The search which we make for this quality, in our own lives, is the central search of any person, and the crux of any individual person’s story. It is the search for those moments and situations when we are most alive” (The Timeless Way 41).

“The quality without a name” that generates life within us and in buildings must be inherent to both the environment and man, because “[it] is circular: it exists in us, when it exists in our buildings; and it only exists in our buildings, when we have it in ourselves” (The Timeless Way 62), and it is dependent upon the harmony of the whole and inner harmony of its parts. “[It], like all forms of organic wholeness, depends essentially on the degree of adaptation of the parts within the whole” (The Timeless Way 163), where the parts are both people and buildings and the whole is the environment as well as society and they are all mutually mentally and physically interconnected.

Places which have this quality, invite this quality to come to life in us. And when we have this quality in us, we tend to make it come to life in towns and buildings which we help to build. It is a selfsupporting, self-maintaining, generating quality. It is the quality of life. And we must seek it, for our own sakes, in our surroundings, simply in order that we can ourselves become alive. (The Timeless 54)

The search for this quality should be, according to Alexander, the essence of the design process in which architects and people seek to rediscover the patterns of human behavior and architecture that are profound and capable of generating life. Rather than to plan the order of dwelling upon universal behavioral theories, architecture needs to be created on the recognition of patterns unique to particular situations, to particular people. Architects need to reveal these patterns and to understand and apply “a pattern language” (A Pattern Language ix) into their work. The major objective is to create a common language that can be shared by people native to the environment in order to create sustainably functioning living spaces and a society capable of enjoying being alive. “As long as the people of society are separated from the language which is being used to shape their buildings, the buildings cannot be alive” (The Timeless Way 241). To allow people to be involved in the creation of their environment, instead of requiring people to adapt to man-made environment, is an essential part of creating living space, where people can gain “their ability to make life altogether” (The Timeless Way 239).

Alexander’s perception of what architecture should be about is perhaps more “green” than any “green” technologically advanced, or “green” but controversial building. First, it allows architects to be more context-sensitive than any attempt to fit a theory into a particular context. Second, it allows people to identify and emotionally bond with their environment and community, which is an essential part of environmental responsibility. Third, it allows and encourages people to gather in an active collective responsibility for their physical and social

environment. Fourth, it emphasizes an indivisible relationship between humans and their environment. Fifth, it encourages both architects and people to seek qualities in their lives and their environment that are more substantial than the qualities endorsed by the standard of living perception, which is inevitably the product and vehicle of Western consumerism. Finally, as an attempt to find a way in which to make “green” architecture understandable to the public, Alexander’s attitude provides architects with the opportunity to implement “green” ideals into their buildings in a way that will help people to understand and appreciate them and remain open to be inspired and willing to participate in the life of architecture and society.

From “Green” Building to the “Green” Dweller

One of the Van Der Ryn and Cowan principles of ecological design is “to make nature visible” (160). This is not to be understood only as giving a building some kind of “green” appearance. A building must more importantly express the interconnectedness of ecology and inspire the emergence of environmental awareness by virtue of “inform[ing] us of our place within nature”(Van Der Ryn and Cowan 160) through the revelation of our dependence on natural processes and requesting our conscious participation.

This paper argues that the “green” citizen is more important than the “green” building, however without a “green” building, the citizen might struggle to fulfill his/her “green” desires. No matter how environmentally responsible the citizen is, in a dull office building in the concrete-steel-glass downtown of a consumptive metropolis, he/she can neither learn nor follow the ideals of environmental responsibility. As mentioned early, this paper does not promote a resistance to “green” technology; its objective is to emphasize the importance of careful deliberation regarding how technology should be employed. “Green” technology must expose nature to the dweller, not keep the dweller at a distance from nature and natural

processes. In conventional design “nature and technology are hidden; the design does not teach us over time,” while in “green” design “nature and technology are made visible; the design draws us closer to the systems that ultimately sustain us” (Ryn and Cowan 28). When a building hides energy and matter flows, even if it is saving both, the building tells no story about our interdependence with natural processes and does not make us feel as though we are a part of the wider ecological system.

The mainstream perception of “green” design encourages us to look at a building as though it was an entity responsible for its environmental impact, and capable of minimizing it. “Green” buildings are designed to accomplish higher energy efficiency, or to decrease matter consumption regardless of the behavior of its users. When we consider the eco-efficiency of a building as a variable of the individual user, a person possessing qualities unique only to him/her is replaced by an imaginary average citizen with fixed energy and matter demands. We pretend that substituting a human being with a statistically derived figure allows us to measure the building’s “green” performance objectively. This attitude is perhaps a result of the designers’ belief that people are irreversibly ecologically irresponsible, or of the technological understanding that the human error tends to disturb technological systems. One way or the other, this attitude misplaces the causes and symptoms of environmental degradation, and leads to the fictitious removal of responsibility from human’s shoulders.

A “green” building, which excludes the human factor from its performance, remains as flush-and-forget technology, which is the cause of our deformed worldview and of environmental degradation in the first place. It treats environmental degradation as a symptom but leaves the cause untouched. A design rejecting the importance of human performance within a building is not capable of redesigning the Western mind because it “does not

encourage mindfulness or a sense of responsibility” (Van Der Ryn and Cowan 56) rather it falsely relieves us of that responsibility. When William McDonough was proposing a design for a “green” children’s day care center in Frankfurt, he resisted the request for a completely automated building proposed by the engineers, who did not trust the children’s ability to respond to interior temperature changes, with an argument that “the children would open windows and close shades when they were hot because children are not dead but alive” (A Centennial Sermon 7). Even though technology wants us to be “dead” and not to disturb its own performance; a genuinely “green” building has to be “alive,” and has to make us be “alive,” through simply requiring our assistance on a daily basis.

One of the reasons that we prefer to allow technological systems to take care of our responsibilities is our technocratic substitution of standard of living for quality of life. Because we seek joy arising from the fulfilled desire of mastering, we see the quality of a building in its ability to provide us with the technologies that we can operate from the position of the master. Some technologies, hence our activities, do not sustain our physical or spiritual existence, but only fill the void of the day, while other technologies take care of the processes that sustain our existence without requiring our participation—by doing so they create the void that needs to be filled. What we see as the relief of uncomfortable necessities, is in fact a loss of interconnection with the building, land, and also people. Davis reminds us that “the promise of liberation in everyday practice is problematic because we are simultaneously liberated from what burdens us and from what we care about” (111). Only activities which foster our physical existence and require cooperation can bring quality based on the recognition of social interdependence, dependence on nature, and a love for people and the things that surround and sustain us. Our involvement in meaningful activities on a daily basis, and our focus on “world-revealing things,

instead ... on the objects that produce what we want without our attention, aid, or skill, and thus without our joy” (Davison 112) are the key elements for healing the deformation of our practice and these can generate quality based on the recognition of the intrinsic value of living.

Chapter III. - Architects' Enriched Mission and Environmental Ethics

Architects, as persons with a large influence on the behavior-determining environment, are among the first individual Western minds that need to be redesigned. This chapter will deliberate on the architect's obligation to the process of environmental rehabilitation, and on the indivisibility of professional and personal ethics in everyday practice. In Building Community, the unnamed teacher says, architecture "must serve the interests of client and society, uplift human spirit, preserve environment, address social issues, and expand aesthetic frontiers. If it does only one or several of these things, it is quite meaningless" (Boyer and Mitgang 31). In order to deliver all of the elements of meaningful architecture, in a meaningfully "green" way, architects must accept obligations beyond those assigned to the architectural profession by legal structures, and engage in a form of practice in which they do not think and act as executors of the profession but "as custodians of harmony in the world" ("Manifesto" 111). Architects need to engage in "an enriched mission" which "in the end, means embracing the professional responsibility to build not only for the moment, but for the ages" (Boyer and Mitgang 47).

Architects' Obligations Beyond Professional Responsibility

Architects' responsibilities are derived from the professional status of architectural practice. The status of the profession must meet all of the following requirements:

- "University-level education in a special area of knowledge"
- "Internship and supervised entry-level performance"
- "Knowledge and practices ...for each new situation"
- "Establishment of disciplinary identity and uniqueness of the professional group"
- "Autonomy, earned by the profession and recognized and granted by society through state licensing"
- "Having the knowledge and expertise necessary for the wellbeing of person in society" (Wasserman, Sullivan, and Palermo 70).

Besides meeting the requirements ensuring knowledge and skills, professionals are also obligated to follow certain ethical standards. For instance, AIA's Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct recognizes five major categories of principles of conduct: "General Obligations, Obligations to the Public, Obligations to the Client, Obligations to the Profession, and Obligations to Colleagues" (Wasserman, Sullivan, and Palermo 18). While knowledge requirements serve to ensure that only competent people will be allowed to take responsibility for areas that could be harmful to society if conducted improperly, ethical obligations serve to ensure that such skilled people will do their best to serve society.

However, the obligation to ensure benefits and secure society arising from the legal status of the profession, are founded upon the socially accustomed understanding of what benefits and jeopardizes the physical and mental existence of society. Therefore, professionals, as products of the social structure, cannot base their decision-making upon realities of which society is unaware. Acting according to the architect's own individual awareness, rather than from general awareness, would simply be a violation of the professional code. The question arising from this deliberation is, what options are left for the professional architect proposing a new perception of environmental responsibility within existing legal structures drawn upon a set of ethical rules derived from Western ecological unawareness? Obviously, professional codes limit, rather than encourage, any transformation towards an environmentally responsible society.

"Ecological designers are facilitators and catalysts in the cultural processes underlying sustainability" (Van Der Ryn and Cowan 25) and therefore can neither rely on unsustainable cultural rules, nor wait until those rules will change. Architects, who genuinely accept their role in environmental protection, cannot be satisfied with the role and responsibility presently inscribed to them by professional codes. Before this paper deliberates on why architects should

accept their “enriched mission” and recognize that their obligation to environmental preservation is greater than that of the average member of Western society, the concept of responsibility must be analyzed and the type of responsibility needed within environmental preservation must be introduced.

Although eco-modernist environmental responsibility discourse fails to address the question of our responsibility as an ethical one, a genuine attempt to find a solution for environmental degradation must be placed in the realm of ethics. Responsibility for the future was not an ethical issue in the era when the planet was capable of providing the same conditions for every new generation, but since we have gained so much technological power which directly influences our behavior and reaches so far into the future and so far from our homes, the concept of responsibility has moved “into center of ethics, where it has never stood before” (Jonas 169).

According to Hans Jonas, there are three conditions that must be met in order to assign responsibility. An agent must have an impact on the world; an agent must be in conscious control of his actions; and he/she must be aware of the consequences of his/her deeds (175). If we apply these conditions of responsibility to our interaction with the world, all members of Western society qualify to be responsible for environmental degradation as well as for the future of society. First, their actions have an impact on the world. Second, they consciously control their actions, although their motivations may remain hidden by technological structures. And finally, despite the fact that the ultimate consequences of their deeds are unpredictable, they are aware that their actions may result in dramatic environmental changes.

Jonas distinguishes between “the formal responsibility” and “the substantive responsibility” (175-6). The first responsibility occurs when an agent formally admits that he/she is responsible for a past action. This kind of responsibility is useless in seeking environmental responsibility

because “the affirmation of formal responsibility is not a sufficient principle of morality” (Jonas 176), inasmuch as it deals with provable, past activities. When it comes to environmental responsibility based on responsibility for the future, only substantive responsibility, which is not concerned with “the ex-post-facto account for what has been done” and emphasizes “the forward determination of what is to do” (176), is applicable. The subject matter of responsibility in this sense is moved from “who” is responsible, to “for what” is one responsible. So the subject of responsibility is not the “agent” itself, but what exists outside of the “agent” within his/her sphere of influence. “The wellbeing, the interest, the fate of others has, means by circumstance or agreement, come under [his/her] care, which means that [his/her] control *over* it involves at the same time [his/her] obligation *for* it” (Jonas 177). “Substantive responsibility” must be based upon a *nonreciprocal* relation of responsibility” (Jonas 177).

The present understanding of responsibility within architectural practice can be largely described as formal responsibility. It is perhaps based on our technocratic perception of proof rooted scientific argumentation, and the presumption of innocence taken for granted by modern Western man, which makes acceptance of our responsibility for the consequences or deeds that will occur in the future impossible. If this form of responsibility was to be the only one we have, our ideas of environmental responsibility could hardly act as solutions for environmental degradation. Forward determination is a crucial element of environmental responsibility. The architect, in the same way as any other member of Western society, has to assign to his/herself substantive responsibility which does not stress “who” is responsible, but “for what” are we responsible altogether.

There is a certain level of forward-determined responsibility involved in architectural practice. For example, the responsibility for a final design that will occur in the future assigned

to an architect or any appointed member of a design team. However, this sort of forward determined responsibility cannot be used as a pattern for environmental responsibility because it is based on an agreement. “Contractual responsibility” is established on the basis of an agreement between two sides from which an agent can potentially be released and it is conditional, “not driven from intrinsic validity of the cause” (Jonas 1778). It is a legal status based on the reciprocity of a relationship. A subject accepts to carry the responsibility because he/she sees benefits coming from the fact of being responsible, so this is responsibility driven by instrumental impulses external to the agent. In the search for the intrinsic values of life, unburdened by reason and instrumental interpretations, upon which our environmental responsibility must be founded, contractual responsibility is not only useless but moreover corrupts the meaning of what it means to be responsible.

Original motivation is an essential element of environmental responsibility. According to Jonas, there are two forms of responsibility defined by the source of its original motivation. Besides contractual responsibility, there is also natural responsibility. “Natural responsibility” is not “instituted ‘artificially’ by bestowal and acceptance of a task ... [but]... is instituted by nature, [and] independent of prior assent or choice, irrevocable” (177). Natural responsibility, as an inherent moral status, is more solid and conditional to the existence of a contractual responsibility as a legal status. There is no contractual responsibility without natural responsibility (Jonas 178). Contractual responsibility is inevitably founded in the social structure, therefore it accommodates all of its flaws. On the other hand, natural responsibility is inherent to the individual mind, therefore it can be freed of the flaws of unecological social structures.

In summary, it can be said that on behalf of ecology the only useful sense of responsibility is nonreciprocal *natural substantive* responsibility. This means that each member of Western

society recognizes his/her obligations toward the environment emphasizing what humankind as a whole is responsible for. And since we cannot sign a deal with the environment or future generations, our responsibility must be a natural acceptance of a nonreciprocal obligation. The same model of responsibility must be applied when it comes to understanding what kind of responsibility an architect should accept. A “green” architect must recognize the intrinsic, immeasurable value embodied in both the environment and in his/her role as “custodian of harmony in the world” (“Manifesto” 111). Only if his/her obligation to both arises from the heart and character, not from a socially constructed means of responsibility, will his/her approach to responsibility become solid and independent of unstable and ecologically unfavorable socially constructed legal responsibilities.

Why Architects Should Accept an Enriched Obligation

A “green” architect should accept his/her obligation to spread ecological awareness as his/her moral duty, rather than as a professional responsibility for two reasons. First, it is an element of moral obligation which can serve as a substantial base for meaningful environmental responsibility. Second, an architect possesses the talent to observe the flaws of the technological perception of environmental responsibility, and possesses the tools to reveal the outcomes of his/her deliberations within architecture and architectural practice. However, in order to engage in natural substantive responsibility, the fact that an architect possesses the legal right to influence society arising from his/her professional status, should not be his/her prior motivation. He/she should not feel obligated to do so because he/she possesses a legal tool, but because he/she possesses the natural talents to do so given to him/her by nature, not by technological structures.

Architects are considered to be people with more creativity than the majority of people.

According to Alexander, the architect's greatest virtue—his/her creativity—arises from “his capacity to observe correctly and deeply” (The Timeless Way 218). His/her talent to observe does not only imply the observation of what the quality of things arises from, but moreover “his capacity to observe the relationships which really matter— the ones which are deep, profound, the ones which do the work” (The Timeless Way 218). If an architect admits that he/she possesses creative abilities (we would be hard-pressed to find one who would be likely to deny it) which arise from the ability to deeply and correctly observe relationships, the architect must also admit that he/she perhaps possesses a better understanding of relationships within the world than most members of society.

While architects use, or should use, their talents of observation to explore human behavioral patterns and ingredients of beauty in order to implement utilitarian and aesthetic qualities into a design, “green” architects should also explore their origins. This means “green” architects must begin the design process with questioning the values and meanings of existence endorsed by the society in question. In order to observe, recognize, and reveal technologically deformed determining values and the meaning of existence within Western society, “green” architects must examine the inner relationships of social, economic, and political structures and relate them to the information, matter, and energy flows sustaining our physical existence. We live in a system of interconnected social, economic, and political relations, as well as in a world of interconnected matter and energy flows of planetary ecology. Since the first realm operates at the expense of the latter, by doing that which threatens our physical existence, its inner relations must remain hidden to public awareness in order to function without interruptions. Because all mainstream mass communications media are ruled by and work for the system where financial profit creates political power, and political power fosters financial profit, it is difficult for members of Western society to recognize the major flaws of that system as well as

the threat to our survival which that system represents. It requires the talent of observation and deduction and a great amount of energy and time to find out the “truth” about the world we live in. Architects gifted with the talent “to observe correctly and deeply” should not use this ability only to recognize what design will provide the best utilitarian and aesthetic qualities, but moreover upon what criteria should these qualities be justified. They should recognize the real causes of environmental degradation; identify the fundamentally non-ecological elements of technological Western society; and reveal to the public the links between ecological degradation and the deformation of Western values.

Of course, architects are not the only members of Western society with the ability to observe--hence to discover and expose the flaws of Western society to public criticism. Anybody with the talent of observation should perceive his/her privilege of being naturally gifted as an obligation to be more than a powerless cogwheel of consumerist society, and not let their talents be a threat to our survival by enabling the proliferation of Western values leading to environmental degradation. However, architects should be among the first ones who recognize this moral obligation because they are additionally privileged in having the tools of modeling the environment and the Western mind, which in turn allows them to implement the ideals of environmental responsibility into everyday practice.

Architects and Ethical Dilemmas Discourse

The question of accepting responsibilities beyond the present understanding of professional codes of conduct is inherently interwoven with the realm of ethics, which should become the most reliable framework determining an architect's decision-making. Likewise, the technologically constructed division of our knowledge into numerous independent subcategories cannot create holistic environmental wisdom, and dividing ethics into numerous technologically constructed ethics cannot bring sufficient holistic environmental ethics. We need united environmental ethics and not just the implementation of environmental aspects into the realms of numerous professional or other ethics; "we need a collective ethics in the face of the world's fragility" (Serres 78).

Tom Spector, in his book The Ethical Architect, claims "neither aesthetic priority, functional priority, nor something in-between have provided an adequate framework for evaluating conflicts in architectural judgment" (106). Since these can easily get into an unsolvable conflict of value priorities, the only "source of judgment is one's ethics" (Spector 35). As much as an architect's ethics are perhaps the most reliable platform within "nongreen" architecture, they are the only reliable platform within "green" architecture. While "nongreen" architecture has a Western tradition long enough to provide an architect with the frames of reference upon which he/she can "rationally" base his/her judgment, genuinely "green" architecture that can hardly be justified by Western scientific knowledge or Western values, must instead rely on the architect's own ethical standards and then on scientifically rational validation.

Architecture, as a discipline significantly affecting not only human beings, but also the entire planetary ecology, is unquestionably not only the most "context-sensitive of the arts" (Spector 159), but it is also the most ethics-sensitive of all the arts. The task for the "green"

architect is not only to be sensitive to the ethical dimensions of “green” architecture, but also to recognize what his/her ethics should be sensitive to. “Architecture— in all of its manifestations from design and decision processes, to theoretical studies, education, and built works – as a discipline, is a collection of practices that is inherently ethical: directed to the wellbeing of human kind” (Wasserman, Sullivan, and Palermo 8). In order to find what the “wellbeing of human kind” stands for, “green” architects must search beyond the technological perspective of well-being arising from the Western desire to master, which means to realize and emphasize that since “the unit of survival is organism plus environment ...[and the]...organism which destroys its environment destroys itself” (Bateson 491), the most fundamental condition of the “well-being of human kind” is the wellbeing of the entire planet. This fact should be taken, and more often emphasized, as the primary principle of decision making to which all other variables determining a decision under moral consideration are just subordinate.

Architecture, which determines and is determined by society, is as an object of conventional ethical consideration dependent on society, and the outcomes of its ethical evaluation are derived from society rather than architecture itself. It is clear that the persistence of ethics in architecture is subordinate to the stability of ethics within society. Western society has gone through a significant shift of ethics in its long history incomparable to the history of human kind, not to mention the history of the planet. What seems intolerable to the majority of Western society today, such as slavery, child labor, racism, or human rights violations, did not represent ethical conflicts just several decades ago. Probably, or rather hopefully, within the next few decades Western society will find things like war, neo-colonialism, intergenerational and international remote tyranny, or the interconnectedness of political and economic powers— all of which are acceptable in today’s Western society—ethically intolerable. It is this instability of ethical standards within Western society that makes them incompetent as the foundation for

ethics capable of sustaining our lives in the long-term. Possibly, the source of this instability can be found in the dualistic world view characteristic of anthropocentric modern man, leading to an ignorance of the interconnectedness of all terrestrial processes and to the division between “we” and “them,” “North” and “South,” “humankind,” and “the rest of the world.” “Green” architecture, as an object of ethical consideration, should therefore be examined more in respect to its mutual relationship with the more stable natural laws driving terrestrial processes, rather than in relation to unstable social ethical standards, and it should in turn seek to set new ethical standards, rather than fulfill requirements imposed by the ethical standards of Western society.

Only an holistic understanding of the world can help us to recognize the interdependence of all elements life and provide us with the foundation for meaningful environmental responsibility. In order to prevent the implementation of the fundamental ethical flaws inherent to Western society into “green” architecture, it can be judged neither within the perception of ethics as the sum of various divided ethical realms, nor by the ethics operating upon the “we them” model. By building “green” architecture upon the understanding that environmental preservation is a technological problem free of ethical consideration, or even upon the Western acceptance of divided ethics, we risk that once Western society reevaluates its ethical standards, the “green” technological attitude will radically change its ethical status. On the other hand, the value of “green” architecture based on holistic ethics driven from the inherent unity of planetary ecology, will be more stable since terrestrial processes do not change their rules as fast as society.

It is important to understand that not just architectural design, but all dimensions of architecture as a discipline must become the subject matter of united ethics. This would include architectural theory, architecture as a physical structure, any program accommodated within that structure, the architectural practice through which that structure was designed, as well as

the individual lives of all parties involved.

Serious discussion about the ethical dilemmas of architectural design has existed on the margins of architectural discourse, largely because it has not been especially fruitful. At fault is the piecemeal treatment that the subject has received, wherein the basic values of architectural design are considered apart from an architect's professional ethics. Architects, in practice, cannot – and in discussion, should not – separate the two. (Spector 205)

Spector's thought gains even more significance when it comes to "green" architecture because of at least four reasons. First, the issue of environmental responsibility must not only enter the realm of ethics, but moreover the realm of united ethics, avoiding any divisions. Second, "discussion about the ethical dilemmas of [green] architectural design" must become, as soon as possible, "especially fruitful" in order to find alternatives other than technological solutions. Third, since the establishment of any kind of universal form of "green" architecture would be neither possible nor desirable due to the recognized uniqueness of every single design dilemma, responsibility must be replaced from the generally accustomed ethical standards to the architect's individual ethical standards, which in order to obtain reliability must be deeply examined through ethical discourse. Finally, the architect's professional practice, as a space where inter-human communication takes place, offers more opportunities to redesign human minds than a building does, hence architectural practice must be the most important object of ethical consideration.

Since socially constructed ethics consist of numerous ethical realms that can often be in mutually conflicting relationships, they allow or rather require an agent to make one or some of them to be the moral framework upon which his/her decisions are conducted. This unquestionably makes an agent follow a set of rules particular to a chosen professional or social framework, but not to explore to what degree these rules are influencing the cybernetic system of planetary ecology.

The dualistic concept of our existence allows “green” architects, even those who see environmental responsibility as an ethical issue, to perceive a building as independent from the behavior of the people involved within this building. So instead of “[putting the] moral chain upon [our] own appetite” (Burke in The Nature 102), they put it solely upon the building. However, since “we are not outside the ecology for which we plan [but]... always and inevitably a part of it.” (Bateson 512), and since planetary ecology does not operate as the sum of independent realms but as an indivisible unity of interconnected relationships, it is not only nonsense to distinguish the responsibility of a building from the responsibility of people involved within its existence, moreover it can allow the idea of environmental responsibility to be abused for individual unecological interests.

To act upon the idea of united ethics would mean to try to implement “greenness” not only to architects’ work or buildings, but also into their personal lives, the lives of their clients, and all the parties involved in the design process, whether these are neighborhood communities, professional communities, or the public administration. Although William McDonough, as mentioned earlier, apparently does not perceive sustainability to be an ethical issue, since according to him the “intergenerational remote tyranny” created by “waste, pollution, crude products ... are not the result of corporations doing something morally wrong ...[but] the consequence of outdated and unintelligent design” (McDonough and Braungart 43), the danger of excluding an holistic approach to environmental ethics can be depicted through McDonough’s design for the Ford Motor Company’s Dearborn Truck Plant.

William McDonough led the team of designers who designed Ford’s “green” plant in Dearborn, which “stands to become a symbol of environmentalism” since it “will be the largest habitat roof and greenery-infused walls in the world” (Gissen 112). A more self-confident and striking description of what the subject plant represents can be found on the Ford Motor

Company websites which state, “We are a leader in environmental responsibility” (“About Ford Motor Company: Overview”); “Ford is proving that environmentally sound manufacturing processes can, in fact, be profitable” (“Reinventing the Rouge”); or “The Dearborn Truck Plant will become the centerpiece of the new Ford Rouge Center, the largest industrial redevelopment project in U.S. history and the flagship of Ford’s vision of sustainable manufacturing for the future” (“History of the Rouge”). Perceiving the plant as an isolated unit we could perhaps conclude that there is a nice piece of “green job.” But is it really the positive contribution to planetary ecology as it claims to be?

A brief look at the Ford vehicles available in the US and a little bit of mathematics reveals that Ford offers no “economy” or “compact” cars, one “standard” car, four “oversized standard”, four sport cars, four trucks, and seven sport utility vehicles. Engine displacements vary from 2.0 liters to 6.8 liters, and while the more or less “standard sized” car’s average displacement is 3.1 liters, the average Ford SUV is powered by a 5.2 liter engine. While the average Ford car’s consumption is 18/27 miles per gallon (city/highway), the average SUV’s is 17/21 MPG. On the other hand, there are cars outside of “Ford’s world” with 1.1 L or 0.8 L engines consuming around 65/100 MPG. The result of a Ford-like attitude is that “only 20 percent [of energy produced by the engine of an average American car] is actually used to turn the wheels95 percent [of this 20%] moves the car, while only 5 percent moves the driver” (Throgmorton 53). This wasted energy represents probably those 3 quarters of wasted gas in Ford cars. Instead of saving those 3 quarters of wasted fuel, the Ford Motor Company provides us with “Environmentally Friendly ‘Eco-Driving’ Tips” which can, according to them, reduce gas consumption by 25%. Besides other strategies (which of course do not include the advice to stay away from buying an SUV), we are advised to “avoid ‘topping-off’ the gas tank when refueling. [Because an overfilled] gas tank could result in spilled gasoline that contributes to air

pollution when it evaporates” (Environmentally Friendly "Eco-Driving" Tips). Is this not an excellent example of hypocrisy, fostered by divided ethics, inherent to the Western perception of environmental responsibility—offering the false belief that since we are not willing to avoid the hundreds of millions of gallons of unnecessarily burned fuel, avoiding a few accidental drops will be sufficient enough to provide us with breathable air?

McDonough, in his design for a high-rise building in Warsaw, Poland, proposed “to plant ten square miles of forest to offset the building’s effect on climate change”(A Centennial Sermon 7). The question arises how a planted forest can be seen as a sufficient solution for balancing climate change if it equalizes only the building’s impact, but neither the impact of the activity performed in the building, nor of the ideas affecting ecology developed in the building. Especially in the case where products produced in the car plant and the beliefs, visions, values, and objectives endorsed by the Ford Motor company—such as “to become the world’s leading consumer company for automotive products and services ... [to provide] personal mobility for people around the world ... [and to] provide superior returns to [their] shareholders” (About Ford Motor Company: Overview) which represent a much bigger environmental impact than the plant itself— is “greening” the plant, instead of its products and thinking, a business strategy rather than a genuine attempt to deal with the severity of environmental degradation. Should not McDonough ask the Ford Motor Company to plant a forest big enough to offset the climate change caused by all Ford cars cruising the planet, all people endorsing Ford’s visions, and their shareholders spending their profits on material welfare?

The Ford case is an example of Davison’s “dualism of means and ends” of nightmarish dimensions, which hides from us the holistic understanding of ethics, responsibility, and of the overall result of our actions on planetary ecology. While looking at the “green” design as a task to decrease the environmental impact of a building, without exploring as many as possible of

all the connections it has within planetary ecology, including its program, the behavior of all parties involved, or the message it carries, any technologically well-designed “green” building will not only be less environmentally contributive, moreover it can help to smuggle “the interests of the technological society ... [represented by the interests of economic leaders and their shareholders] ... into ecological awareness” (Davison 38), which as an overall result can cause more damage by encouraging ecologically concerned customers to buy more “sustainably manufactured” SUVs powered by fuel-guzzling 5.2 L engines.

Even though within Western political and economic structures architects cannot be responsible for the moral lives of the people involved in the design process, they should feel obligated to trigger an ethically imaginative, moral discourse. As Davison sees it, *moral life* names the fact of our practical concern to live good lives, while moral discourse arises from our need to understand how this good is nourished and threatened by the world in which we encounter it” (143). It is perhaps a missed attempt to initiate a moral discourse based on the recognition of united ethics that allows people concerned with the environment to fall into the trap of the ‘Stockholm syndrome,’ in which hostages take on the ideology of their captors’, and environmentalists engage in the language of economists (Commoner 177). “Green” designers who use financial profitability and higher productivity as a more feasible argument for getting their clients to make “green” decisions, retrospectively further foster the impression that moral discourse does not belong to the issue of environmental responsibility. Our world, the Western consumerist society, is an eco-mental subsystem, a part of the “wider eco-mental system” (Bateson 492). “The means by which one man influences another are a part of the ecology of ideas in their relationship, and part of the larger ecological system within which that relationship exists” (Bateson 512). “Green” architects, as parts of the eco-mental system, must critically evaluate their mental influence on other parts of that system, because it can nourish or

threaten both moral life and planetary ecology in more essential ways than any building.

Spector sees the debate about ethical issues as not being a serious part of architectural discourse due to the lack of fertility of such a debate. But when it comes to “green” architecture, ethical issues must not only become a part of architectural discourse, moreover it is precisely the extensive debate around the ethical dilemmas of architecture and architectural practice that can make it “especially fruitful.” “Green” architecture discourse, led in a technological eco-modernist vocabulary, seeking alternatives within platforms reflecting accustomed unecological Western values, and driven by unecological legal and economic structures, results in limiting architects’ range of possible design solutions rather than inspiring creativity expanding beyond the limitations of narrow Western ecological awareness.

If an architect manages to start a design process within the ethical discourse to a depth where ontological questions are addressed, he/she opens a space where more variables can be taken into consideration and more design alternatives can be found. Spector claims that a design process perceived as an ethical realm is enriched by the absence of universal values and a plurality of values provides the designer with “a fresh set of moral problems” (Spector 207). It is this “fresh set of moral problems,” where nothing, including the meaning of existence, should be taken for granted, and nothing considered too precious to be questioned or changed, that can trigger tremendous creativity which was previously hopelessly impossible within the rigid structure that rejects any questioning of its foundations. Since deeper engagement in epistemological, ontological and ethical discourses do not mean the rejection of technology since the establishment of new objectives will trigger further creativity in the field of technology. Perhaps “green” designers should cease to rely on the critically unexamined technologies offered by “green” market leaders, and start a creative search for their own technological innovations.

The reason why “green” design must, through the fruitfulness of ethical discourse, become more fertile in the quantity and quality of its physical interpretations is that since the planet is apparently running out of breath, “green” designs must provide numerous alternatives in order to attract as many people as possible, as soon as possible. Western society consists of numerous societies and communities diverse in cultural backgrounds, stages of ecological awareness, values, geographical conditions, economic possibilities, and political organizations, therefore “green” design must be extremely sensitive to the uniqueness of the particular conditions of the subjective design situation if it aspires to attract these diverse societies. “Solutions grow from place”, and “ecological design begins with the intimate knowledge of a particular place. Therefore, it is small-scale and direct, responsive to both local conditions and local people” (Van Der Ryn and Cowan 57). Of course, the only strategy of coping with the absence of a universal solution is creativity, developing a great number of unique design solutions that will equal the number of particular design situations.

Another reason why “serious discussion about the ethical dilemmas of architectural design“ must become the essence of architectural practice, and why architectural design cannot be judged apart from the “architect’s professional ethics” (Spector 205), is the fact that there is neither, as approached earlier, a universal method of validating appropriateness of “green” design, nor a universal “green” strategy for architectural practice within which a design is conducted. The rejection of universal methods and universal ethical standards places more responsibility on an architect’s individual character and knowledge; therefore the issue of ethical dilemma becomes an essence of individual architectural practice.

Lack of consistency, [in spite of its rejection in the past], proves a lesser peril than the requirement of systematic methods to discard important sources for informing design thinking. The moral complexity implied in a plurality of values is one of the things that makes design a source of fascination and allows it to be such a marvelously supple contributor to

contemporary life. (Spector 207)

The recognition of the plurality of values allows architects to take more responsibility upon their shoulders, and makes design more responsive and suitable to the uniqueness of local conditions. However, when it comes to “green” design within the contexts of Western society, it is important not only to act upon the plurality of present values, but more importantly to enrich this plurality by values presently forgotten. Spector says that dilemmas do not arise from “the plurality of values or vagueness of ends represented by different design solutions, but [from the] plurality of methods used to evaluate them” (Spector 77). Therefore, the objective of “green” design should be to use united ethics as a new form of evaluation, from which new hitherto suppressed or unrecognized value priorities will grow.

Likewise “no book in ecological ethics – and in the end no program – can be a *Junior Woodchuck Handbook*” (Kohák 154), there are no guidelines as to how the debate about ethical dilemmas of design and architectural practice should be conducted, or how new values can be spread within society. Since “ecology of mind” is an indivisible part of planetary ecology, “the problem how to transmit our ecological reasoning to those whom we wish to influence in what seems to us to be an ecologically ‘good’ direction is itself an ecological problem” (Bateson 512). Once again, the only method is to search for forms of questioning and influencing design forms, and forms of architectural practice, within the context of local conditions in order to find the most appropriate forms of ethical discourse and the most inspiring and harmonized way of introducing united environmental ethics to the public. Since architectural form cannot express the depth of environmental ethics, architectural practice provides more opportunities for “greening” society than architectural design, which is the final reason introduced in this chapter as to why “serious discussion about the ethical dilemmas of architectural design [must become the center] of architectural discourse” and why “values of architectural design [cannot be]

considered apart from an architect's professional ethics" (Spector 205). An architect's extensive cooperation with individual or collective clients, various communities, or administrative structures can offer space and time more sufficient for the introduction of environmental ethics to Western society than mere intercourse with a "green" building. Since the major objective of this paper is to reveal that the importance of "green" ethical practice precedes the importance of "green" building, elements determining the "greenness" of architectural practice will be addressed more deeply in the following chapter.

Chapter IV. - Architects and the Everyday Craft of Moral Practice

The thesis of this paper has been that the biggest potential of “green” architecture, as a discipline contributing to environmental preservation, does not lie within “green” buildings but within “green” architectural practice. This means that the major subject matter of “green” architecture should be the process in which a building is designed, used, and understood, which can provide a higher degree of usefulness in the environmental and social “greening” of Western world. This belief is in general based on the six premises previously examined.

First, we live in a technological society. Technology is not only a determinant of our behavior and the essence of our humanity, but it is also the source of our spiritual deformation. Members of Western society are generally unaware of this deformation which makes us blind to the relationships between matter, energy, and information; which determine the performance of the technological world and the life of planetary ecology; and unaware of the real intrinsic values sustaining our physical and spiritual existence. Second, the sole “greening” of technology cannot provide a sufficient solution to environmental degradation. Further, “green” technology promising a “green” planet without demanding fundamental changes in the behavior of Western society is merely green-washing--smuggling the financial interests of political and economic leaders into the environmental discourse--rather than a genuine attempt to ensure environmental preservation. Third, since it would be neither possible nor wise for Western society to reject technology per se, “green” technology must remain a part of our strategies for “greening” the planet, however, not without a critical examination of our relationship with it, and not as a vehicle of change but as a tool enabling us to materialize our new perception of environmental responsibility. Fourth, not buildings, but the Western mind must become an object of “green” architecture. Therefore “green” architecture must, besides

the physical performance of designed objects, become more focused on its potential to introduce environmental ethics to the public. Fifth, since Western knowledge, its system of values, and technological structures do not represent a solid foundation upon which a new environmental ethical responsibility can be established, architects must take upon themselves more individual responsibility by accepting the obligations lying beyond the responsibilities assigned to them through their socially constructed professional status. Sixth, since architecture in its physical form has very limited opportunities for spreading deep ecological awareness, architects must understand that further opportunities for fulfilling their mission of being “custodians of harmony in the world” (“Manifesto” 111), lie within their everyday architectural practices.

Conditions of Morality

James Gouinlock, in his book Rediscovering the Moral Life, takes “rationality, courage, and respect for persons” (295) to be the most important of “The Virtues Appropriate to the Moral Condition” (292). These are, however, just “*dispositions* to behave virtuously, but what that behavior might be vary with context, and ...agents” (295). It is natural for humanity that “quite commonly people do not survey all the options open to them before choosing what to do. Rather, they find an option that they believe not to be excluded by reason and that appeals to them and pursue it” (Raz in Spector 83). However, “rationality” implies a readiness to consider all possible options regardless of our prior beliefs. An agent cannot employ only the knowledge and beliefs that he possesses at the time of decisionmaking, but the process must be accompanied with a “sincere attempt to seek the truth” or rather “a sincere attempt to get the facts” (Gouinlock 296). “The effort also implies getting at the truth, as far as possible, regarding the assumptions in terms of which we try to *predict* facts.” (Gouinlock 297) Truth is an

unachievable dimension, therefore not collected data itself, but sincerity of the motive is determinant of moral virtue. A willingness to accept newly discovered facts, regardless of our prior knowledge and beliefs, is what Gouinlock calls “persistent intellectual honesty” (297). He admits that to obtain the most truthful data is a difficult task, especially in a world ruled by media providing us with “incomplete, inaccurate, dishonest, and conflicting reports” (298). But perhaps it is just an “ordinary stubbornness; a completely conventionalized mind; or an assortment of laziness, passivity fear, dogmatism, and intellectual complacency,” a mere “*unwillingness* to get [the facts]” (Gouinlock 298) which makes the truth about the system we live in hidden from us. When it comes to decisionmaking within architectural practice, especially in its genuinely “green” form, absolutely reliable input information, as well as an absolute predictability of outcomes, are hardly achievable so we have to remind ourselves that it is not the level of truthfulness of facts or the accuracy of the prediction that is essential for meeting moral conditions, but the sincerity of the attempt to seek and provide them.

Rationality without the virtue of “courage” makes a “moral judgment simply a cognitive act, rather than an evaluative response” (Gouinlock 301), with no ability to influence our actions. When Gouinlock talks about “courage,” he does not refer only to our courageous responses toward the external world; he demands that “courage” also be the driving force behind our internal beliefs: “Courage is organic not only to the reaction to an existential condition, but also to its understanding” (302). He means that inner fear can lead to an intentional resistance to uncomfortable facts, which do not correlate with our previously possessed or desired beliefs, because “cowardice is a good source of wishful thinking” (302). So “courage” must make us capable of challenging our preferred dogmas and, if needed, capable of admitting that the dogmas to which we are accustomed have failed.

The last virtue of moral judgment presented by Gouinlock is “the respect for persons.”

Gouinlock does not claim that we should treat all people, regardless of our personal relationships, in exactly the same manner. The reason for this attitude is that while no one treats all people as relatives, no one expects that other people will treat him/her as their relative. “Moral equality can be accorded to any individual in the sense that the person will be included in what is judged to be fair, whatever fairness turns out to be, so far as we may be successful in bringing it to life” (Gouinlock 312). In the context of environmental responsibility, we need to extend this respect to the entire planetary ecology. The problem with all virtues is not “so much subscribing to [them] but practicing [them]” (Gouinlock 313). Additionally, we must ensure that we practice them all together, otherwise in isolation they could be useless or harmful. We have to be aware in our attempt to conduct moral decisions that no matter how hard we try, we cannot achieve a final flawless version of morality, and whoever assumes that perfect morality is possible “has not glimpsed the nature of the moral condition” (Gouinlock 295).

Authentic Architectural Practice

Slavoj Žižek claims that the ultimate threat to our society does not come from fabricated external forces but from inside, “from our own lassitude and moral weakness, loss of clear values and firm commitment, of the spirit of dedication and sacrifice” (Welcome 154). He suggests that the question of how to reveal and deal with greed inherent to Western socio-economic and political structures

is no longer a question of developing ethical guidelines within the existing political framework ... but of developing a politicization of ethics; an ethics of the Real. The starting point here is an insistence on the unconditional autonomy of the subject, of accepting that as human beings we are ultimately responsible for our actions and being-in-the-world up to and including the construction of the capitalist system itself (Daly in Žižek and Daly 18).

He asks members of Western society to engage in an “authentic *ethical act*” (Welcome

116), lacking prior legitimization, which in turn will “create condition of its retroactive ‘democratic’ legitimization” (Welcome 153) in order to subvert the present technological structures of the Western “administrated world” (Welcome 95).

We need to see that we live “neither in an iron cage nor in an arena of unconstrained choice; [but that] we inhabit a possibility space where some moral choices are being made” (Strong in Davison 176), where our moral choices not only relate to the materialization of our beliefs within legitimate frameworks, but also to a deliberation on what beliefs and frameworks we should choose. To summon up the courage to try to reveal the deformation of Western values, the immorality of Western socio-economic and political structures, the limitations of Western scientific knowledge, and to admit ultimate responsibility for the construction of the Western world, to set up new individual authentic ethical standards and to make them the highest authority, are authentic ethical acts with which the “green” architect should start in the reconstruction of his/her mind and work. Perhaps those who genuinely attempt to meet Gouinlock’s conditions of morality will realize that it is impossible to become genuinely “green” within non-ecological Western frameworks, therefore “green” action cannot wait for prior legitimization from these frameworks. “Green” architects can only hope that their actions will set up a model that will be legitimized retrospectively. Within “green” design we have to “[give] priority to the wisdom of our intentions, not the cleverness of our means” (The Nature 180). It is this ecological “wisdom of our intentions”, that gives the “green” architect the right to act beyond Western legitimate means. “Green” architects should elevate their constantly revised character and intentions to the only legitimating authority.

Although meeting moral conditions and setting new individual ethical standards are already authentic ethical acts, the question arises what action should the “green” architect take in order to reveal the outcomes of his/her individual examination of Western society and to

materialize his/her reconstructed beliefs? One alternative could be to express them through designed objects like Elemér Zalotay did in his house. This form of authenticity, however, as explained earlier, will most likely remain just a selfexpression of the architect's beliefs, rather than a meaningful contribution to environmental preservation. Authentic architectural practice, as the realm of inter-human relations, offers a more substantial potential for making authentic ethical acts environmentally contributive.

Authentic ethical architectural practice should perhaps start with a redefinition of its objective. The new key objective is of course to redesign the Western mind; but when it comes to buildings, the architects' objective should not be to impose their visions through self expressive design approaches, but to achieve harmony between their visions and their acceptability determined by the level of ecological awareness within the community. This certainly does not mean that they should lower their "green" visions to the level of the public's minimal ecological awareness, but rather to raise their ecological awareness through the process of design. Extensive social contact within the design process is a predisposition for growing ecological awareness, therefore architectural practice should be perceived as a platform for wide-ranging collaboration relating as many people and ideas as possible rather than a tool for the realization of individuals' plans and visions. The architect proposing this approach will most likely interfere with the stubbornness of accustomed economic, political, and social structures and will face a lot of rejection, thus a "firm commitment, [and] the spirit of dedication" are crucial ingredients of "green" practice.

"Green" architectural practice is not about developing technological skills, but about developing the ability to create communities of thinking within which all the people involved, including the architects themselves, will through personal communication learn about technological deformation, the flaws of accustomed structures, values, solidarity, the virtue of

personal responsibility, and relationships between each other and the environment. How to create and mediate such cooperation is up to the architect's individual character. However, his/her authentic form of participatory practice will be endlessly modeled through reflective learning-in-action along with endless transformation of the architect's knowledge and character. Davison says, "Performing social activity well is not dependent on the guidance of abstract theory ... Praxis, our relational action, and the practical moral wisdom which belongs to it, brings us into selfdefining relation with our world" (Davison 161).

Explorative Communities

In an attempt to obtain as much appropriate knowledge as possible, "green" architects should move their practices from the isolated drawing board to an open debate table, where they can gather as many project-related parties as possible, offer and exchange information, and collectively redesign their minds. In conventional professional practice, to seek all available data means to use conventional methods which are generally accepted as reliable. Donald Schön explains in The Reflective Practitioner, that Western conventional wisdom is inherently interwoven with "Technical Rationality" (39), which is the foundation of decision making in professional practice. The objective of "Technical Rationality" as "a process of problem *solving*" (Schön 39) is to find the best way of achieving "established ends" (Schön 40). "Technical Rationality depends on agreement about ends. When ends are fixed and clear, then decision to act can present itself as an instrumental problem" (Schön 41). However, this attitude ignores the element of "problem setting" (Schön 40). According to Schön, the element of "problem setting," which must be involved in decision-making, is not "a technical problem" (40). In order to set a problem we need to set the "boundaries of our attention to it" (Schön 40), and create a system of evaluation other than Western conventional wisdom or professional

knowledge.

In order to live up to the expectations imposed on the professional by society, he/she must remain dependent on Western conventional knowledge. However, if he/she accepts united ethics, requiring a consideration of the effects of his/her actions beyond his/her professional responsibility, and acts according to his/her “persistent intellectual honesty”(Gouinlock 297) before approaching conventional technological problem solving, he/she must engage in “problem setting.” To set the problem within “green” practice, means to reevaluate conventional methods, scientific knowledge, professional responsibilities, as well as social value priorities. The “green” architect must set “boundaries of [his/her] attention” (Schön 40) to the scope that will copy the boundaries of the impact of his/her actions, the boundaries of his/her responsibilities towards planetary ecology, the boundaries of his influence on all parties involved in the design process, and the boundaries of their ecological impacts and environmental responsibilities. Since all of these boundaries exceed the boundaries of the conventional rational and ethical consideration of the majority of Western society, there is no higher authority than the professional’s character to define the extent of his/her individual boundaries of consideration.

When an architect replaces technical rationality with his/her own character as an authority leading his/her decisions, he/she must manage to give it a reliability comparable to the reliability which technical rationality possesses, in order to maintain the credibility of professional practice. The only way to do this is to train one’s character in the everyday practice of posing questions, including those examining his/her innermost intentions, and analyzing the outcomes of decisions based on an exclusive dependence on the architect’s individual ethical standards. Due to the absence of any guidelines for how precisely this should be conducted, the architect must be open to constant learning through a reflectivecritical analysis of his/her own

actions. This learning will be done in no other way than by the trial-error method, so characteristic of all cybernetic systems.

The “green” architect cannot conduct his/her learning-in-action alone, because any new set of objectives must include learning through interdisciplinary and inter-human cooperation and the revelation of discovered ecological knowledge to the people. While Schön sees the “practitioner’s reflection-in-action as a largely psychological process of reframing problems, a process of changing one’s mind” (Forester 7), Forester sees “such recognition as integral to deliberation in which parties [involved in the design process] together learn about fact, value and strategy all together” (7). This is also one of Van Der Ryn and Cowan’s principles of ecological design, which states that the architect has to “listen to every voice in the design process. No one is a participant only or designer only: Every one is a participant-designer. [An architect must] honor the special knowledge that each person brings [,because] as people work together to heal their places, they also heal themselves” (146). “Ecological design changes the old rules about what counts for the knowledge and who counts as knower. It suggests that sustainability is a cultural process rather than an expert one, and that we should all acquire a basic competence in the shaping our world” (Van Der Ryn and Cowan 147).

For architects—as professionals trained to be the leaders of design processes and to offer answers to all questions, based on trust in their educational and professional training—the idea of “lowering” their status to the level of all parties involved and equaling their knowledge with other “non-professionals” may be uncomfortable. But hopefully, for the sake of future generations, it is not an unacceptable demand. Rolf Jensen, a city planning director in Oslo, Norway, claims that “downgrading the image of [their] own profession, [and] having more professional humility”(qtd. in Forester 99), is for planners (and unquestionably for architects too) a strategy to gain the ability to address the needs of all affected parties. Only this approach

can lead to an ability to learn from others in deliberative practice as well as an ability to effectively cooperate with all parties involved in the design process (Forester 100). This is perhaps the essence of “green” architectural practice.

“Green” architects need to reevaluate their understanding of their objectives of practice and the processes by which their decisions are made. Architects who perceive their practice as a legally established structure, providing them with the authority to demand an acceptance of their professional scientific knowledge without reservations, can hardly reject the superiority of their scientific knowledge and technology over any other kind of alternative forms of knowing, whether these might be the traditional ecological knowledge of Aboriginal cultures, or thoughtful insights coming from members of Western society. They need to realize that while working in isolation of scientific knowledge, architectural theories, or any practice cooperating solely with professional experts, they lose the opportunity to gain more knowledge than science alone can provide and most likely they will keep their technological perceptions of “green” architecture. Within this mindset, architects can neither gain perspectives broader than the knowledge of their technological specialization, nor can they infiltrate the importance of extending the “boundaries of [their, and the public’s,] attention” (Schön 40) into the minds of the wider public. If an architect decides to engage in Schön’s reflective practice, learning in action through critical reevaluation, and to search for new criteria for this reevaluation outside of the realm of professional knowledge, he/she can gain a more holistic knowledge about his/her role and potential within the process of environmental preservation. However, if an architect decides to engage in Forester’s deliberative practice, involving extended cooperation with all available resources of professionals, non-professionals, and local communities, the degree of input and knowledge will become greater and he/she will be able to achieve a higher sensitiveness to the uniqueness of project, as well as create a space for collective active learning

about environmental responsibility. Therefore, the design process should be perceived as a collective exploration, rather than an individual decision, and architectural practice should also become a space for creative public discourse, rather than solely the author's opportunity to realize his/her own individual architectural vision.

In order to provide a truly resourceful space where all parties involved in the formation of the project will be able to creatively contribute, the mediator should help them engage in a debate different from the Western understanding of negotiation. The Western form of negotiation is based on an attempt to prove the appropriateness of the negotiator's perspective by providing undeniable evidence for their claims. Although the process of negotiation involves in the end certain compromises, the major objective of a negotiator is to push the realization of his/her interests as far as possible at the expense of the opposite parties. This is a product of Western scientific knowledge, born in the fight over reliability, and serving as a tool in the fight over who is right. This approach to negotiation is dangerous to planetary ecology for at least three reasons. First, planetary ecology bears all the expenses since it cannot defend itself at the negotiation table. Second, all opportunities to find new creative solutions get lost, since the negotiating parties are too exhausted from defending themselves. Third, no party can afford to offer a solution benefiting the opponent, rather than itself, since this would ultimately lead to a "defeat." The role of the architect within this process is to mediate alternatives proposed by all parties, not to defend the interests of any one of them, in order to preserve the creative spirit of negotiation. According to the New England Environmental Mediation Center, the role of the mediator is to regulate negotiation in order to achieve "a rule that everyone can 'live with'" (qtd. in Forester 160). The mediator must explain the fact that no party will defend all of its interests, since this is impossible and undesirable. However, with a sufficient amount of solidarity, all parties can understand that likewise "the purpose of Inuit law was not to ensure

justice for individuals, but to maintain harmony within the community, and between the community and the spirit world” (Fossett 207), the objective of explorative collaboration is not to fulfill everybody’s desires to the maximum extent, but to harmonize their relationship, their relationship with the rest of the world, and to discover alternatives as to how the task can be done.

To “decide on peace among ourselves to protect the world, and peace with the world to protect ourselves” (Serres 25)—this should be the most fundamental strategy for any creative collaboration. To provide endless ideas, to deliberate on value priorities, to test numerous alternatives, and to preserve a high degree of solidarity must become the goal of any collaborative negotiation. In order to make the debates creative rather than limiting, where all parties will be willing to provide ideas without risking that these will be mistreated against them, a “decide-announce-defend” (Forester 63) scheme of negotiation must be abandoned in “green” design. Parties cannot approach the table with already made decisions, but must provide their standpoints and ideas as a resource for the process of cooperation from which the final “green agreement,” whatever that might be, will arise. The intention of all parties involved cannot be to defend as much as possible at the expense of their counterparts, but to find solutions benefiting all, including the parties not present at the negotiation table. Debates within “green” design must be transformed from “*adversarial expectation to collaborative exploration*” (Forester 101). All parties must also accept that their role is not only to bring their ideas, but also to bring a willingness to fundamentally reconsider their standpoints, and to listen and learn about alternative attitudes and, most importantly, values. None of the parties can bring their value priorities as invariable constituents, but they all together should attempt to create a new set of values because they come to participate to “learn in action not only about what works but about what matters as well” (Forester 67). Therefore, in this collective

learning-in-action form of creative Participatory Action-Research (PAR), “we may not only argue to test strategies for maximum gain, but we may make and act on new agreements, transforming ourselves and others in the process” (Forester 153).

Honesty

Only an atmosphere of trust can make explorative debate really creative. Parties without a trusting sense that their ideas to benefit others will not be used against them will hold those ideas inside. Therefore, architects as mediators must attempt to generate an atmosphere of mutual trust in order to build a community of open-minded people. This is not possible in any other way except to found debate upon a high level of honesty, which must consist of honesty to others as well as honesty to ourselves.

To build honesty with ourselves we must critically examine our intentions, the purposes of the actions we take, our expectations, and ask to whom and precisely how the outcomes we believe in will be most beneficial. The deeper we get in reconstructing the essence of our Western mind, the higher level of honesty to ourselves will we achieve. Ideally, an agent should carefully examine his/her value priorities, beliefs, meaning of existence, and relations with society and ecology. In a more realistic perspective, he/she should at least be open-minded and truly listen to the values prioritized by others and be ready to deliberate on them and perceive them as equally important to those of his/her own. Professionals need to unquestionably deliberate on the appropriateness of their knowledge and scientific analyses that they bring to the table. Designers must also reevaluate whether they have sought solutions within all of the alternatives available, whether the environmental and social impacts of their proposals have been reconsidered to the maximum possible extent and detail, whether their proposal is truly sensitive to the local context or just a fabrication of utilitarian and aesthetic

theories to which the designer's mind is accustomed.

To be honest with others does not mean just telling them the truth or not telling lies. It also means that the presented facts have gone through an extensive process of reevaluation and that this is understandable to all of the parties involved. According to David Orr, only knowledge conducted in a common language with a "high level of honesty" and not in jargon can influence the way people think (The Nature 137). Therefore, honesty of the mean of communication is the essential element of honesty needed with others and collaborative creativity. The mediator must make sure that the language and content of the communicated information is understandable to all, even to those who coyly remain silent in their confusion. If the mediator recognizes mutual confusion between two other parties, his/her role is to decipher the cause of this confusion and clarify the content of the message. If the mediator realizes that a party unknowingly leads others to suppress their fundamental rights or interests, he/she is obligated to point this out. This is especially important when it comes to the rights of parties missing at the table, such as planetary ecology. Moreover, if the parties see that somebody else is also making sure that their interests will not be suppressed, they will feel more comfortable in opening up their minds to the explorative collaboration.

The only platform capable of sustaining such open-minded collaboration is friendship. According to Forester, planners (and for that matter architects as well) should take upon themselves the role of mediators who behave as "critical friends' who care enough to listen for more than what has been said, who care enough to wonder about what has been missed, who are engaged and collaborative enough to help" (196). In order to create harmony within the community of all parties involved, as well as harmonize the debate itself, "they must take each party seriously yet be able to laugh" (Forester 197) and be "be sensitive enough to understand but be tough enough to ask hard questions" (Forester 194). Mediators need to realize "that

friend may be among those we first turn to when we face conflicts *within ourselves* – when, significantly, not only our interests but our values and senses of self conflict” (Forester 195), therefore a redesigning of the Western mind is more likely to occur when the mediator is approached as a friend.

Less, than, like experts, judges, or implausibly neutral bureaucrats, mediators of public disputes should be seen as new, civic friends in the making: new friends of a diverse public; new friends who hope to seek out those affected and who will attend to their inclusion; new civic friends who can create a space for speaking and listening, for difference and respect, for the joint search new possibilities, and ultimately for newly fashioned agreements about how we live together. (Forester 197)

Honesty, per se, is not just an element building collaborative exploration. Additionally, it is the essence of survival. “Human activity is, at most fundamental level, designed to reduce uncertainty about survival ... [and] the first step in reducing uncertainty is to recognize threats” (Fossett 196). Inuit peoples, living in conditions where a single detail might be the difference between life and death, understand that “unforeseen and unpredictable situations, ..., pose threats to human life” (Fossett 66). This does not only apply to natural conditions, such as weather or game migration, but also to the predictability of human behavior which is accomplishable only by engaging in a high level of honesty. On the other hand, we live in a society where a “thousand things without importance are neither obligatory nor punished [and where we] do not have to pay for every detail of common life” (Serres 112). A member of Western society, in “blessed ignorance” (Habermas in Welcome 64), feels protected by technological structures and he/she does not feel physically threatened by his/her own dishonesty or dishonesty from others. But the Western world is not capable of protecting us from the natural responses to our behavior, thus honesty towards the environmental situation we face, honesty towards our role within it, honesty towards the impacts of action, and honesty

towards others, building a mutual predictability, is needed in order to reveal that every detail counts and determines our physical survival. Honesty will also help us to find a collective response to these revelations. Seemingly, in respect to our limited knowledge, there are no wrong or right decisions with regards to sustainability, and “green” architecture dilemmas are only decisions driven by honest or dishonest relationships with others and ourselves.

Engagement

Spector claims that an element of ethics within architectural practice shades away the understanding that a solution must be sought through rational scientific knowledge and improved technological methods. These “systematic and utilitarian design theories lionize a portrayal of the designer as anonymous, detached, scientifically rational diagnostician” (Spector 208). As Spector sees it, some architects appreciate this detached position because it provides safe anonymity and an opportunity to move a bigger portion of responsibility onto technological structures. This attitude, however, is not only obstructive to creativity in “non-green” architecture since it prevents the detached architect from investing his/her heart into the design, but it is also absolutely inappropriate when it comes to “green” architecture. It could be said that if “by distancing ourselves from the model of impersonal rationality, the ability to design becomes more closely aligned with personal development than with mechanical skill” (Spector 208), and if “green” practice is more about forming human minds and developing the ethical skill to pose critical questions, and not about the mechanical skills to apply the most appropriate technology, impersonal rationality has no place in “green” architectural practice.

“Green” architecture demands the architect to be a full person, with all weaknesses and strengths, and not a detached scientifically rational professional, because the “solutions to environmental problems must be designed to resonate at deep emotional levels” (The Nature

24). Emotional devotion will not only enlarge the architect's creativity, which is an essential element of the search for a genuinely "green" solution. Additionally, it will harmonize the architect's mind by synchronizing his/her personal beliefs and his/her work. If a "green" building reflects a "green" personal life and beliefs of an architect, it is more likely to be well designed and an architect is more likely to enjoy the design process. "Green" architects should desire to build "green" buildings not only because to do otherwise would be considered morally wrong, but moreover because to do so is their personal intrinsic desire. The "green" architect would want his/her desires, and not just work, to be "green".

The morally motivated designer would want to be able to care about the option not chosen, as well as the one chosen. He would want his decision to reflect his compassion and kindness. Making a choice among the available options would be influenced by considering which one would best allow him to be the sort of person he wishes to be and to act in ways he feels most comfortable. He would want these intentions to correspond with considerations of maximizing good. (Spector 85)

"Green" architects who are afraid of fact that "a more full-blooded portrayal places a much greater burden on the architect as a human being" (Spector 208), and makes architects more vulnerable within technological structures should keep in mind that it makes them and humankind less vulnerable within planetary ecology.

The "green" architect who does not want to follow the accustomed rules, or stand in opposition to society, should perceive him/herself to be, as Linda Groat has named it, an architect "cultivator." She says that while "the architect-as-artist stands apart from or in opposition to society" and "the architect-as-technician responds to the power and autonomy of social and physical forces," the "cultivator" is entirely engaged in society and provides a "personal perspective" developed in inter-human communication (qtd. in Van Der Ryn and Cowan 151). It is perhaps an engagement enriched by the investment of "personal perspective"

that transforms the architect-professional, dependent on professional structures, to an architect-human being subverting structures by the virtue of warm and trusting personal communication. David Orr says, the “Great Work” of transforming society “must begin where we are, in the small acts of everyday life” (The Nature 4-5). For architects, “where we are” cannot mean just their practice situated to their office and scheduled to their office hours. The inseparability of professional and individual ethics makes “green” architecture a lifestyle rather than just a professional orientation. In order to hold the function of mediator within a debate attempting to eliminate the hierarchical structure of decision-making, architects must gain a natural authority arising from their trustfulness which cannot be obtained in any other way than by showing an utter dedication to their role as “custodians of harmony in the world” (“Manifesto” 111). Architects’ authority can be built “only insofar as architects see themselves, and are seen by the public, as belonging to a learned profession whose commitment to society extends beyond doing a job” (Matteson and Donovan).

Since architectural practice, as a source of the architect’s income, is indivisibly related to money flows, and hence to the tangible obligation of the paying client, architectural practice as a profession faces reasonable obstacles in gaining the public trust. Voluntarism, as part of architectural practice, can help to gain the public trust. In the same way that we cannot engage in a self-benefiting contractual relationship with future generations, “green” architects should not try to materially benefit from all of their activities. Architects requesting financial compensation for every single service do not set an example of endorsing anything other than material values, moreover they lose the opportunity to influence those communities, such as students or unfortunate neighborhoods, who cannot afford their services. Voluntarism, of course, should be a strategy for all people concerned with environmental and societal degradation, not just architects. The idea of volunteering architects arises from a recognition

that “the future of work can no longer consist exclusively of gainful employment” (Robertson in Sachs, Loske, and Linz 191). “The predominance of gainful employment will be replaced by a policy involving both gainful employment and voluntary activities ... and thus a new intermingling and evaluation of money and time, outside work and personal activities, and job and family” (Sachs, Loske, and Linz 191). In order to increase the “social capital [involving] those dimensions that used to socialize life and vitalize social existence: neighborhood, social exchanges, and active communities” and help communities to provide the “possibilities of practicing greater social [as well as environmental] fairness and of living out more real solidarity” (Sachs, Loske, and Linz 192), “green” architects must both engage in helping local communities to create and realize their visions of sustainable life, and create voluntary communities of architects willing to share their time and knowledge with ecologically concerned local communities and other “green” professionals.

Architects and Communities

The objectives of PAR proposed in this paper to be a “green” authentic ethical form of architectural practice are, to achieve a high level of sensitivity to the geographical and cultural context, to examine the knowledge of all parties involved and build new knowledge, to spread ecological awareness, and to harmonize communities and their relationships with their environment. According to Susan Smith, people involved in PAR are

examining their reality by asking penetrating questions, mulling over assumptions related to their everyday struggles, deliberating alternatives, and taking meaningful actions. They ...[reveal] the foundations of why things are the way they are. This back-and-forth, action-reflection process develops increased critical consciousness ... [They are] working to change the status quo where unjust social, economic, and decision-making structures exist, to break free of constraints, and to open up possibilities... PAR is ...an approach that makes its values and purpose transparent. (177)

Architects as mediators of PAR within the design process must remind themselves that

their objective is not just to learn about people and educate them, but that people must be encouraged to become active participants bringing their own visions to the design process, because “people are not ‘objects’ to be studied ... but full ‘subjects’ in the research process” (Smith 178). One of David Orr’s characteristics of green design states, “ecological design is a community process that aims to increase local resilience by building connections between people, between people and the ecology of their places, and between people and their history” (The Nature 180). In order to make “decent communities that fit their places with elegant frugality” (The Nature 11), we need to reject our “social world that denies our inherent sociability [because] unsustainability and unsociability cultivate each other” (Davison 206). Encouraging community participation helps to heal the environment by building more responsible communities, to heal people by creating architecture fostering the spirit of the neighborhood, and to heal Western society by building a more active civil society.

The environment is healed by a increased number of committed caretakers. In order to achieve Alexander’s “quality without a name” of the designed environment, architects cannot rely just on scientific environment-behavior studies. They must incorporate the actual needs, knowledge, and cooperation of particular communities, because only quality collectively generated within a particular social and urban context is the predisposition for longlasting active care. Then environment becomes a collective creation, hence collective responsibility and environmental responsibility will become individual initiatives, rather than public policy.

“As people work together to heal their places, they also heal themselves” (Van Der Ryn and Cowan 146). As introduced in chapter II, “green” architecture must provide opportunities for people to engage in meaningful collective activities, essentially sustaining their physical existence in order to reveal their dependence on each other and their interconnectedness with the environment and natural processes. PAR gives people the opportunity to rediscover “our

inherent sociability” (Davison 206) as well as to participate in a nature-revealing process of building the environment. Alexander suggests, “participation is inherently good [, because] it brings people together, involves them in their world; [and] creates feeling between people and the world around them, because it is a world which they have helped to make” (Alexander et al. 40). Local identity, a significant part of environmental responsibility, requires identification with both the spatial and social dimension of the community. PAR creates an environment within which Western communities can heal the wounds caused by the anonymity and impersonality of consumerist lives.

By encouraging communities to be proactive, PAR also heals the entire society. In Western democracy, “too many decisions [are] made for the people, not by them” (Naess 159). This unhealthy habit makes it easy for TNCs leading the market, state, and international policies, to gain power, against which individuals and local communities are helpless. Ryn and Cowan say that “design is far too important to be left solely to designers. Design is not neutral. It is molded too by powerful political and economic forces”(152). The environment is too important to be left to architects working solely for the sake of private economic or political interests. Communities capable of defending themselves against powerful economic and political forces play an irreplaceable role in the process of “greening” society. It is up to the “green” architect’s character to recognize and accept the fact that although PAR might seemingly be complicated, as an exercise of civil society, teaching people to be more than powerless cogwheels in the machinery of Western society and to be proactive in their responsibility for the future of society and the environment, it is more environmentally profitable than any “green” building.

The community must be involved in the design process from the very beginning not only because “direct action which is performed late in the planning process has much less chance of

being successful than a direct action which proceeds at the early stages of planning” (Naess 146), but moreover because in the early stages civil initiatives can bring positive inspirations to the creative process, while in the later phases it is left only with taking opposing positions. If the community is left only with the possibility of objections, creative space based on collaboration cannot be created. Architects must realize that PAR within the early stages of the design process benefits not only the environment and the community, but also architects and their clients. It can be a fertile source of inspiration, and “the process of participation tends to create places which are better adapted to human functions than those created by a centrally administrated planning process” (Alexander et al. 40). Early cooperation with the community can avoid later complications in the form of community protests that disturb design and construction progress. Although the “green” architect’s prior motivation for encouraging and engaging community participation must be an intrinsic value of this attitude and not just an instrumental value of benefiting him/her self, this fact can serve as an argument for less ecologically concerned clients. PAR can serve as a space for deeper cooperation between interdisciplinary partnerships on both educational and professional levels, as well as deepen levels of cooperation between educational institutions and practitioners. Students of architecture and other disciplines could engage in active context-sensitive learning by participating in PAR as part of their educational programs.

Not only architects are obligated to recognize the importance of community participation within “green” design, but also the lay public should recognize the importance of architects’ participation within the processes forming their environment. When an individual or community forms its environment with insufficient or without any assistance from the architect they basically fail to meet the conditions of morality, since they have not sought all available knowledge related to their actions affecting others, do not have the courage to test their own

dogmas about what architecture can offer, and they have conducted their actions with no respect for the environment and others who will bear the impacts of their uninformed decisions. However, architects should not blame society for the little trust it has in their profession, and they perhaps need to seek the causes of present trends which exclude architects from the design processes within their professional community.

Ernest Boyer and Lee Mitgang, in their survey report Building Community, analyze the present state of architectural education in the US, and propose solutions allowing the architectural community to develop educational processes fitting the demands of more sustainable design. The results of the survey depict architecture as a generally technical domain, suppressing the role of ethics within the profession, as strongly segregated from other professions and the public, and with strongly disturbed links between architectural education and practice.

The educational process is mostly based on the “context-free design”(Boyer and Mitgang 25) which removes any appreciation of the social context from the design process. For architects to accept their “enriched mission”(Boyer and Mitgang 31), education must in addition to a technological problem-solving perception of design include also the aspect of ethics and social responsibility. “Educating architects not only for competence but also for civic engagement is surely one of the highest priorities for architecture schools in the coming years” (Mitgang Preface xx). Architecture students and practitioners should not be encouraged to create just great buildings, but more importantly “wholesome communities” (Boyer and Mitgang 28). It is architectural education based exclusively on academic and theoretical work that is responsible for excluding the social and ethical contexts from students’ understandings of the roles and obligations of an architect. However, architecture should “challenge the status quo into making responsible environmental and social changes” hence, architectural education

should expand from the drawing boards to practice and build “a moral sense of service to community” (Mockbee in Oppenheimer and Hursley 1). Another problem with higher education is, according to David Orr, that students exposed to the “fear of failure, financial dependency, and the asymmetrical power relationships” must willingly or not “buy into a particular worldview congenial to professionalized, disciplinary knowledge and institutionalized science”, which “eviscerate[s] their idealism and energy” (The Nature 155). Rather than serve as a career planning process, higher education needs to provide a “deeper and more vivid concept of what it means to live a life of service and commitment in what surely will be the most fateful period of human history” (The Nature 157).

The other problem with the architectural profession is its strong disciplinary isolation that, according to Boyer and Mitgang’s survey, starts on campuses. They conclude that instead of segregating students of architecture from other disciplines, they should be encouraged to take classes offered by departments other than just the school of architecture. A holistic perception and capability of interdisciplinary cooperation is essential for efficient communication with clients and communities in practice. At most of the schools, students do not learn how to speak to the public, “they only learn how to speak architect talk” (Boyer and Mitgang 67). This means that students are neither encouraged to engage in cooperation with communities for ethical reasons, nor even trained to speak to them in jargon-free language. However, “green” design is a “commitment to clear discussion and debate” and creates a space where “everyone is empowered to join the design process” (Van Der Ryn and Cowan 27), therefore the language of “green” design is jargon-free language, genuinely willing to communicate the message in its clear form and encouraging public discussion—not limiting community involvement by blurring the message

The final issue worth mention in respect to the architect’s ability, or rather disability, to

work with communities is the segregation within the discipline of architecture itself. As long as architects do not behave as members of a sustainable community, it is impossible for them to “get the profession back to the status of community leaders” (Boyer and Mitgang 149). Before architects can become capable of teaching the public to enjoy being part of a community, architects must first enjoy being part of a sustainable community of architects. They have to build a cooperative system, a “unified profession” (Boyer and Mitgang 126), binding architectural education and practice. This, however, is not possible as long as architects see themselves firstly as competitors on the market and the attitude of senior architects towards interns remains “It’s not my job to teach you. You are here to produce” (Boyer and Mitgang 117). As long as the profession’s internal discord and deformed value priorities is the message architects are sending to the public, they can neither provide an example of a sustainable community, nor gain the reliability and public trust they need as mediators of a collective collaborative exploration and as “custodians of harmony in the world” (“Manifesto” 111).

The objective of a “green” design process should be to approach as many Western minds as possible and to inspire them to critically think about their values and to seek alternatives other than ones provided to them by science, the market-driven economy, and Western political administrations. Hopefully, within this process people will become open to more ecological value priorities, and recognize the aspects of life that fundamentally sustain their physical and spiritual existence through the rediscovery of the interconnectedness of the terrestrial processes. The role of the “green” architect is to create space where people will rebuild their social links and local identities and enjoy the collective cooperation of taking care of their environment. As well, such space should inspire people to learn how to create economically and politically self-sustaining local democracies dependent upon local resources, to be able to proactively defend themselves and their environment against economically and politically powerful structures

threatening their well-being, the well-being of their children, the well-being of other cultures, and the well-being of other forms of life. If “green” architects manage to do all this, part of it, or even just strive to make this their inner intention, their contribution to environmental preservation will be considerably larger than any single “green” building they will ever build.

Chapter V. - From Philadelphia to Cape Dorset

This chapter will depict one possibility of what “green” architectural practice could represent through examples of the work of Philadelphia based architect Timothy McDonald, who was interviewed for the purposes of this paper, and enriched with insights obtained in an interview with Kristiina Alariaq, a community justice coordinator in Cape Dorset, Nunavut. Tim McDonald is a practicing architect, contractor, client, university professor, and member of the Northern Liberties Neighborhood Association (NLNA) urban committee. Kristiina Alariaq runs a travel business and currently cooperates with a Yellowknife based architect on the community center project in Cape Dorset.

Although McDonald does not consider himself to be a “green” architect and from the technological perspective of “green” architecture his buildings might not be “green” cutting-edge “LEED-platinum” ones, his work probably contains more “green” potential than most “green” technology buildings. This paper suggests that more possibilities for “green” architecture lie in a “green” architectural practice than in a “green” building. The “greenness” of McDonald’s work lies in his dedication to care for the environment of his neighborhood and his desire to inspire people, which are the key elements of an enriched mission of deliberative practice contributing to the creation of sustainable communities. McDonald, who represents in his projects the position of client, architect, and contractor has created a group of people (mostly architects) who physically build the buildings they have designed. This hands-on approach allows them to extend space for exploration and learning from the drawing board to the physical space of the construction site, which in turn helps them to recognize elements that are invisible from behind a drawing board and find the most appropriate solutions for a particular site. The following aspects of McDonald’s work, based on the theoretical part of this

paper, represent the “greenness“ of his approach.

First, and perhaps the most important aspect of McDonald’s work, is his perception of his role and his dedication to it. He says, “My role on the earth is to inspire people.” As argued in this paper, the element of inspiration should be more emphasized when it comes to “green” architecture. Perhaps the most valuable thing about inspiring is that those whom we inspire are stimulated emotionally or intellectually while the physical activity arising from their stimulation is voluntary and is not copying an original pattern. Hence, it is a transformation of desires from which voluntary transformation of deeds emerges, which is a more durable strategy than imposing restrictions to physical actions. The fact that working according to our inspiration does not mean uncritically copying what we have experienced, but to create our own response to our inspiration, is essential in respect to the diversity of design situations and the absence of universal solutions. McDonald says that his form of work is not meant to serve as a model for others to uncritically apply, but that he intends to inspire others to seek their own alternatives. The most “green” element about McDonald’s statement is that he does not say, “My role as an architect is ...”, which shows an indivisibility of personal beliefs and architectural practice. He sees it as his personal duty, not as a professional objective. From this indivisibility arises his dedication, which reaches beyond professional practice, and where voluntarism is an essential part. As a member of a voluntary organization, the NLNA urban committee, he believes that voluntarism plays a big role in forming healthy neighborhoods.

Second, McDonald believes that every project is so unique that a design must be approached as “an experiment [starting] from scratch.” Any intentional time and money saving reproduction of ideas or techniques previously applied is an obstacle to his ability to sensitively address the uniqueness of a particular site, as well it tends to dismiss questions more fundamental than those concerning the technological dimension of design. Moreover,

McDonald not only takes this approach as his individual work method, but also uses the environment of the NLNA urban committee to spread awareness of the positive sides of such an attitude. The NLNA urban committee does not attempt to develop prescribed standards that would give architects and investors a simplified set of rules to follow. McDonald says, achieving the most suitable solution is not about standards but about the discussions surrounding each project. Even though standards would be mostly welcomed by architects and investors, because they would make the design process dependent on negotiations with the NLNA urban committee less time consuming and create the impression of fair conditions for all, they would be disadvantaging to the neighborhood. Investors and most importantly architects need to realize that the environment is far too important to become the object of mere production, therefore its creation cannot be subordinated to time savings but should be treated with a high level of carefulness. Trust in standards, as forms of fairness-ensuring structure, are perhaps rooted within our Western understanding of equal citizen rights, in which we demand the same treatment, opportunities, and conditions regardless of the diversity of the variables determining a particular situation. This attitude, however, is more about ensuring individual justice than ensuring harmonizing of the environment and the life of a community. Of course, an absence of standards gives us more control and places more responsibility upon members of urban committees, which is exactly the reason why their reliability must be built on a high level of public trust in their ethically irreproachable conduct.

Other positive attributes of absencing from standards is that the NLNA urban committee can encourage discussion around subjects that otherwise would not be addressed. For instance, when investors base their perception of marketable housing on present forms of housing, the urban committee tends to trigger discussion around the issue to what extent presently available forms of housing are really the result of public demand or just forms imposed on the public by

the housing industry. McDonald attempts to explain to investors that by endorsing a doing-it-like-it-has-always-been-done attitude they need to compete within the existing market, while new fresh approaches can help them to create their own market. Although this paper opposes this kind of instrumental reasoning and economist language within “green” architecture, a positive element of this attitude is perhaps preserved by the fact that its objective is to discover and introduce new perceptions on what the quality of housing could represent which is a request for change more fundamental than the cosmetic “greenings” of the present understanding of quality. On the other hand, a dedication to non-instrumental values can be traced in the example when McDonald suggested to a young architect who implemented some “green” features into his design, that although the urban committee welcomes such an attitude, he should try to influence his client to follow this “green” path more deeply not because the urban committee looks with favor upon “green” attempts, but because it is simply a good thing to do.

Cape Dorset, and other northern communities, can serve as excellent examples of the dangers of imposing design strategies that are insensitive to local geographical, geological, and cultural contexts. There is no need to examine more deeply the obvious fact that Western housing enforced upon the totally different Inuit culture, and applied within extremely different geographical conditions, is a significant part of the ruthless and inexcusable harm which Western society has caused to the spiritual and physical life of Inuit communities. Instead, the meaninglessness and counter-productivity of the centrally organized administration of the design process and application of foreign design strategies will be depicted in Kristiina Alariaq’s design proposal for a new community center in Cape Dorset. She expresses disillusion with both Western architectural designs and administrative structures with superior attitudes to the design process within the context of Northern communities. Kristiina Alariaq, as

a client of architects, says that architects planning within a different cultural and geographical environment try to impose their already made perceptions instead of seeking inspiration within the culture they are designing in. This makes their designs seem foreign to Inuit communities. In addition, centrally created design process standards are obstructive rather than contributive to designing within specific local conditions. She says, as a compulsory content of documentation she needs a geological study, but which to date has been conducted outside of Cape Dorset upon data considering the geological conditions wider than the project site. The particularities of the site obviously cannot be taken into the consideration within a study conducted in this way. The question arises, what is the purpose of an administrative structure requiring a geological study but willing to be satisfied with inaccurate data? Does this really ensure the safety and interests of the society, or does it only instrumentally foster its own existence by pretending meaningfulness and imposing constructed authority over the real objective world?

The third “green” aspect of McDonald’s work is the fact that he has created his own structure of work, allowing him to modify a project during construction according to newly recognized variables and newly developed ideas, which would otherwise be suppressed and doomed to oblivion due to the complexity of the contractual relationships between the client, architect, engineer, and contractor. He claims, “I do not have time to deal with [these] structures, so I create them for myself.” A rigidity of technological, legal, and social structures based on essentially non-ecological foundations, and the fact that we accept these structures as they are and uncritically accustom ourselves to them, are the major obstacles for “greening” Western society. Of course, a practicing architect cannot ignore structures giving him/her an opportunity to practice the architectural profession to which he/she is legally obligated, but a search for strategies that would make him/her a more autonomous unit within them is an essential part of “green” practice. McDonald’s approach could serve as an example of

bypassing at least some of the structures that are obstructive to authentic “green” attempts.

Fourth, McDonald has created an environment capable of serving as a fertile matrix for explorative thinking in his practice and helps it emerge on the neighborhood level as well. His belief that the “making of architecture is a temporary experience” and that “none of [their] ideas are precious” enough to be unquestionable and unchangeable, helps Tim to create what he calls a “community of thinking.” One of the McDonald’s team missions is “to extend the imagination of the architect beyond the drawing board and into the building process” (“Firm Profile,” Onionflats). In his team he has managed to create a work environment fostering the desire to explore, critically revise, and freely apply ideas in a way foreign to the mainstream form of the housing industry. Besides a flexibility of ideas, the relationship between people developing ideas is important to make thinking really explorative and applicable. Just a short interaction with McDonald’s team reveals that the form of relationship upon which their work is driven is that of friendship. There is no division between those who think and those who execute, those who command and those who obey, as there is within most work structures characteristic of Western practice. No establishment of rights seems to be needed and the authority to interfere in previously designed ideas would probably be given by a simple: “Hey buddy, how about ...” A framework based on dialog at every level of the process, rather than prior decisions forced through the process, offers significantly more opportunities to learn, test, and even create knowledge. McDonald’s “community of thinking” does not involve only his team, but within each project there are other communities that, according to McDonald, need to be encouraged to participate in the “community of thinking.” Besides his team, there is the neighborhood community affected by the project, as well as a community of officials and building inspectors. Since McDonald’s firm does not do all the construction work on projects, there is also a community of contractors. And last, but not least, would be the community of

people passing by, who can be inspired but also help to inspire McDonald's team. McDonald says that their reactions to the project influence what his team does. Apparently for McDonald, all of these communities have in common the fact that they are all welcomed to participate in a true dialog about the project. Any community is welcome to bring the insights they consider important, and as McDonald believes, all communities can learn through this dialog.

Kristiina Alariaq says, the fact that the concept of order and obey used to be foreign to the Inuit is part of the reason why they were so vulnerable and easy to manipulate when they encountered Western society which approached them from a perceived superior position. Perhaps the order-obey hierarchical structures so unnecessary for the state of war are so characteristic of Western society because we are in a state of war with each other and the world. Although as members of Western democracy, we tend to perceive ourselves as free—our freedom of decision inevitably obeys the superior structures of the “administrated world,” and perhaps we are, as Žižek suggests, just a mere “object of biopolitics, and ... possible political and citizenship rights are given to us as a secondary gesture, in accordance with biopolitical strategic considerations” (Welcome 95). We are subordinate to the structures that built their superior position upon unecological competition and which are hardly willing to discredit competition and the order-obey scheme of cooperation since it is a platform fostering their authority. While the absence of an order-obey concept made Inuit culture vulnerable in their encounter with Western society, its presence within Western society seemingly makes us vulnerable within the real world. This is not a request for anarchy, only for a recognition that a less hierarchically structured environment might bring more creativity, flexibility, adaptability, and more individual and less system responsibility to the architectural practice established as inspiring a “green” prototype of sustainable community.

As member of the NLNA urban committee, McDonald attempts to create a “community

of thinking” on the neighborhood level, which helps to build a proactive responsibility for the local environment, to sustain local identities, and helps to rebuild the relationship between the architectural community and the public. McDonald’s firm’s website states their mission is “to educate the public about the collaborative roll of the architect in not only the making of buildings but of culture and meaning in contemporary society” (“Firm Profile,” [Onionflats](#)). His task is to create liveable space, allowing the neighborhood to be alive, starts with inspiring people involved in local investment activities to think about their practices and benefits for the community in ways other than conventional ones. Instead of seeking the public interest defined by economic terms, we need to, according to Forester, “characterize the public realm in which we wish to live and act together,” then we will find that by “freeing ourselves from the economistic language of public interest, we can turn to the inescapable task ... of fostering a safe and enabling public realm” (173). An example of a redefinition of the public interest and of setting the foundations of a neighborhood in which people would love to live together can be traced in the following story. After McDonald had fought for four years with a local influential developer over a huge “big-box” development which threatened to ruin the urban fabric and social interaction in its location, one day the developer changed his mind and called McDonald saying, “Tim, I hate your guts because you make me think.” Tim says, the developer changed not only his standpoint but also himself as a person into an openminded man willing to accept that there might be better alternatives, more profitable for the community and himself, and he became McDonald’s friend. Perhaps there is nothing more ecologically and socially beneficial, more favorable to our survival, than individuals who are made to think in ways other than strong market-economy driven schemes, inspired to think about a fresh set of objectives and alternatives, and changed into open-minded people engaging in friendly collaboration. Only this kind of change in our individual thinking can help to build an urban environment with an

embodied strong sense of local identity, proactive responsibility for the environment, and neighborhood cooperation.

Kristiina Alariaq sees a deprivation of responsibilities for educating children, physical survival, and for the environment to be the major source of Inuit frustration from which the problems their communities face arose. The responsibilities of members of Western society were not taken by the other culture as acting from a superior position, but we have created various superior structures responsible for our education, physical existence, and our environmental conditions. Maybe our tendency to perceive Inuit communities as more troubled than ours is a result of our inability to see our own wounds, and perhaps the only way to heal both cultures is to place responsibility on individuals for their own destiny, for who they are, and where they live. But if healing can be achieved only through gaining autonomous individual responsibility for our lives and our the environment, we might be in bigger trouble than Inuit communities since we not only do not have that kind of autonomy, we moreover do not know what such autonomous responsibility for the real world could represent within the imaginary structures we have created.

The fifth aspect of McDonald's work that could be considered "green," is his attempt to communicate as a human being rather than as a professional. The most important "green" elements of acting and communicating as a non-professional, approached earlier, are that when an architect uses non-professional language people can better understand the message, and moreover when an architect acts as a non-professional people can see in him/her more than just the executor of a profession, they can better see the real person that can create a trust stronger than that built merely upon professional abilities. While a professional's trustfulness is built upon his/her knowledge and loyalty to professional codes of conduct and proved through the process of rational argumentation free of emotional engagement, mutual interhuman trust is

inevitably built on openhearted informal communication performed in an emotionally positive atmosphere. According to McDonald, humor plays a significant role in communication because “humor is about relating to people” and it allows the creation of “true dialog.” He says, “Learning how to communicate is learning how to be an architect.” To be seen as a person, rather than as a strict professional is especially important when it comes to communication with the community, however, it is, according to McDonald, also extremely helpful in communication with administrative structures. McDonald sees humor and open communication to be a big part of being subversive to rigid structures. Anybody, to whom some form of legal responsibilities and rights were assigned by administrative structures, is obligated to the laws of those structures, but also can, to some degree, act upon his/her personal beliefs. An architect who behaves as a human being, not as a professional, can inspire his/her administrative counterparts to discover and extend their human dimension within the positions they represent. For an architect it is important to understand that to subvert the administrative structure does not mean subverting the credibility of the people who represent it, but just the structure itself and that the easiest, or perhaps the only way, to do this is to encourage representatives of the administrative structure to remove responsibility from the structure itself upon themselves. Would anybody be selflessly willing to engage in communication or responsibility exceeding his/her job obligations if approached by an architect as mere professional doing his/her job? In order to inspire others to become openminded, committed, individually responsible, and more autonomous human beings, the architect cannot behave as a closed-minded, disengaged, impersonal professional worshiping codes and underrating the role of quality inter-human relationships within his/her practice. Besides, humor makes the design process more joyful for all parties involved. Kristiina Alariaq as a client admits that she definitely prefers to cooperate with an architect as a human being rather than an architect as a

professional.

The last, but not least important aspect of McDonald's work that could be considered "green" in respect to the beliefs expressed in this paper, is the fact that he bridges a gap between architectural education and architectural practice. Even though the fact that McDonald works as both a university professor and a practicing architect makes connecting students with architectural practice easier, this is not an essential "green" element of his work within the process of building a sustainable architectural community by connecting education and practice. What is crucial is his attitude towards the students working in his practice and the form of hands-on learning that Tim promotes on academic grounds. As approached earlier, it is impossible to build a collaborative community of architects if young architects are discouraged to think creatively, forced to merely produce drawings, and are placed at the bottom of the hierarchical order-obey structure. This attitude, first of all, makes them cogwheels within the structure and severely damages their creativity that could provide new fresh sets of problems and solutions. Moreover, it places them in a strongly competitive environment in which hard professional work, rather than the development of personal qualities, influences their future. Falling into this career scheme they risk losing their optimism and dreams in the constant fight over their positions, and they begin to foster the life of the hierarchical structure within which they grew as professionals and only the preservation of which can preserve their hard-earned positions. McDonald has a different opinion on what should be the objective of the transition between the school of architecture and architectural practice. One part of his firm's fourfold mission is "to empower a younger generation of architects, builders and craftsmen to continue to dream" ("Firm Profile," [Onionflats](#)). The example of personal commitment that McDonald demonstrates surely represents for his students, and students working in his firm, a space for dreaming, thinking, and learning. This can be seen as the possibility to set up a foundation for a

creative, committed, and collaborative community of architects who will be an essential source of inspiration in upcoming eras, which David Orr calls “the most fateful period of human history” (The Nature 157).

Kristiina Alariaq notes that Inuit elders who teach children about traditional Inuit values, practices, and ways of life, like the elder working parttime in the Cape Dorset day care center, not only help children to discover their roots in order to grow as complete persons living spiritually richer and sustainable lives, but they also heal themselves. Perhaps architects accustomed to unsustainable practices, rooted at every level in competition and driven by a desire for career success, need to heal themselves and their practices by teaching young generations of architects about the values that fundamentally sustain our spiritual and physical existence, such as honesty, solidarity, and respect for everybody and all elements of planetary ecology. By doing so, maybe they will rediscover the dreams about the role of architecture that they most probably used to have but lost somewhere down the road of their hard work of fitting into market-driven structures.

Conclusion

This paper is not meant to be a criticism of “green” technology per se; it calls for a deeper reevaluation of “green” technology within the wider contexts of planetary ecology and the ecology of the Western mind in order to reveal the reality about our world and ourselves. The objective of such a reevaluation is to reveal the fact that the technological perception of “green” architecture, which dismisses the human responsibility for the environmental impacts of a building, is the result of our unawareness of our technological deformation. The revelation at the core of our relationship with technology needs an extensive individual and public reevaluation of our fundamental values and technological practices. Both “green” architecture and sustainability are not technological, but ethical issues, and the question is not what technology we need in order to preserve our physical existence, but what further fundamental change we need in order to heal our spiritual existence along with technology and from which our physical survival will arise as a result of our “green” desires. Davison’s idea that “the moral challenge posed by the ideal of sustainability, its undoubted capacity to call us forth to respond to the deformation of our world, is firstly that of bringing [a commerce of sustenance] out into the arenas of public discussion” (200) should become central to the “green” architecture discourse. Not technologically challenging “green” buildings, but morally challenging “green” practices composed of extensive public discussion needs to become the objective of “green” architecture.

There is no universal scheme for “green” practice, although a ground rule should be that our “hope that we may once again begin to build the conditions of trust in our shared world” (Davison 207) be brought up to life and fostered by the recognition that “it is mutuality not competition that defines our existence” (Davison 207). It is not important how sophisticated the

“green” methods are that architects develop because only a genuineness of their commitment can justify the “greenness” of their deeds and make them realize that within “an ethic of sustainability ... we recognize and celebrate each other’s efforts, no matter how limited their extent and no matter how foreign their form, to engage in the giving and receiving sustenance” (Davison 200). In respect to the request for higher context sensitivity, Van Der Ryn and Cowan call “standardized solutions that require enormous expenditures of energy and resources to implement, ... available [as] off-the-shelf recipes [and] unconsciously adopted and replicated on a vast scale ... *dumb design*” (10). They ask those who take the question of sustainability sincerely, to admit that “the emperor has no clothes [, and] conventional design is failing because its epistemology is flawed” (13). We need to see that even “green” design, concerned with environmental impacts, remains dumb if applied through isolated practices placed behind drawing boards as “off-the-shelf recipes.” Extensive public discussion and open-minded collaboration are the realms where architectural practice should be placed. On the question of whether architects presenting their projects to the NLNA urban committee do not tend to be opposed to ideas coming from outside parties, Tim McDonald gives a simple answer: “Only stupid do.” Maybe this is the answer that depicts where the core issue of “green” design lies. The difference between sustainable and unsustainable living is perhaps not as much a question of the difference between environmentally responsible and irresponsible buildings, as the difference between people and architects who are willing to admit “the emperor has no clothes,” are eager to listen, deliberate, and learn with others altogether, and those ... who are not.

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