

Anna-Maija Ylimaula:

Origins of style.

Phenomenological approach to the essence of style in the architecture of Antoni Gaudi, C. R. Mackintosh and Otto Wagner.

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An interpretation of style

Anna-Maija Ylimaula's doctoral thesis on the origins of style is an ambitious work, dealing with philosophy as much as with the manifestations of style in architecture.

Ylimaula understands architecture as a language which expresses the way of life and the values of people, while depending on the economic, political, industrial and technological conditions of a given time. Beyond this, architecture is able to reveal spiritual values which transcend time and place.

The specific purpose of the dissertation is the explanation of the nature and meaning of architectural style, the development of a universal theory of style and its application to, an evaluation of Art Nouveau – a style known also as Secesionsstil, Jugendstil, Kansallisromantiikka and Modernismo Catalana.

At the outset of her work Ylimaula reviews the different interpretations of style as given by philosophers from the first century B. C. until the present. She sketches viewpoints dealing with the aesthetic, technical, psychological and sociological dimensions of style, as well as the

hermeneutic and phenomenological interpretations advanced by Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer.

Unfortunately, her deliberations lack clarity and important themes are incompletely presented. This is particularly the case in her dealing with Heidegger's theory of art on which her own theory rests. She fails to give Heidegger's explanation of the word poetry, without which his use of the term remains unintelligible, and she misinterprets one of his statements which she quotes without being aware of the political message hidden within it.

Concerning poetry, Heidegger referred in one of his lectures on Nietzsche to the Greek words *poiein* (performing a creative act based on knowledge) and *Poiesis* (the result of the action). According to him, the word *poiesia* – poetry – is applicable to the result of knowledgeable creative activity in any field of the arts, from architecture to language art. His theory of art, as introduced by Ylimaula, states: "Poetry is the essence of architecture." Her theory of style proclaims: "Poetry is the essence of style."

Concerning Heidegger's political attitude, it is important to keep in mind, that the essay *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes* which is the foundation of Ylimaula's work, was conceived in the years 1933/34 – the time, when his active participation in the "nazification" of German university life was at its peak. Ylimaula is familiar with his position which she opposes staunchly, without, however, feeling, that it interferes with his theory of art.

For reasons of space, this topic cannot be discussed here. It must, however, be mentioned at a time in which fervent nationalism is rampant in many parts of the earth.

Truth in architecture

An interesting short chapter of the thesis deals with conflicts connected with demands of construction, materials to be used and the role of ornamentation. Materials can be shown in their own right or hidden for the sake of elegance: bricks, e. g., covered by sheets of marble. Ornamentation can be meaningful symbolism or empty artifact. Ylimaula stands for truth in architecture which, she declares, "is simply honesty in design and genuine materials." The matter is, however, not as simple as that. Looking, e. g., at the excessive gilded beauty of Viennese Art Nouveau as expressed by Olbrich, Wagner and the painter Klimt, one cannot help asking: Is art an active participant in the post-Victorian attempt to hide behind beauty the reality of political deceit and social injustice? Or does it truthfully represent the mask of a decadent society?

The theory of style

Having laid a comprehensive groundwork of philosophical viewpoints, Ylimaula proceeds to the presentation of her theory of style. In seven concise statements she proposes, that style is not a preconceived category, but that it evolves from the work of art and reveals the nature of this work. The work of art allows style to occur and style expresses artistic truth. The creation of a work of architecture is connected with preservation: a creative spark had been received and is preserved in the work. Poetry (in the sense explained above) is the essence of architecture and the style evolving from it makes a mere building into a work of architecture.

The seventh statement reads: "Architecture is bound to people and determines their essence and takes part in their history."

Ylimaula elucidates the statement twice – the first time by quoting a paragraph from Heidegger's essay on the origin of the work of art. It is a paragraph which relates art to history, which Ylimaula has not fully understood and hence mistranslates.

Heidegger claims, that history is the carrying off of a people into its mandate ("in sein Aufgegebenes"), so as to integrate it into its dowry ("in sein Mitgegebenes"). The core of the statement is the national-socialist concept of a mandate which a people has to carry out, so as to live up to the values bestowed on its race. Seen in context with Heidegger's convictions at the time of writing the sentence, it refers without doubt to the German people, though it can be applied to any nation.

The application of the theory

Ylimaula tests the practicability of her theory by using it for an analysis of Art Nouveau as demonstrated by the work of Antoni Gaudi, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Otto Wagner. The analysis is preceded by short and factual biographies of the three architects. Two of these accounts may be amplified by rather dramatic details which Ylimaula does not mention.

Not unlike his countryman Ignatio de Loyola, Antoni Gaudi renounced the brilliant high society life of his youth and spent his final years in religious absorption. He lived in a small studio in the still unfinished cathedral of the Sagrada Familia which was conceived as a great mystical poem, full of symbols related to the rules of liturgy. On the way to Masa, which he attended every evening at the church of San Filippo Neri, he was struck down by a tram, taken, unrecognized, to a hospital for the poor and died there a few days later.

Charles Rennie Mackintosh was one of eleven siblings and handicapped by a clubfoot. Disturbed by the noise and clutter of the home and by his handicap, he found relief in long solitary walks and an intimate acquaintance with nature. Based on his scrutiny of the supportive structure of flowerstalks, he developed the austere design of his buildings and interiors, and his aversion for clutter led to the purity of his style.

The two examples bear out Ylimaula's thought, that style evolves from the structural concept of

a building and reveals what the building is meant to convey. Gaudi's work was marked by his strong relationship to nature and his religious convictions, while Mackintosh combined his view of nature with his belief in ancestral Scottish ideals. Wagner related the basic forms of Hellenic architecture to new materials and modern techniques.

The idea, that architectural structure permits personal style to manifest itself is realized in the exuberant forms of Gaudi's early work which is inspired by the cosmic forces of nature, in Mackintosh's floral motives and geometric design, and in Wagner's "Nutzstil" which combines aesthetic visions with highly practical purposes. His church of the Steinhof was designed for mental patients, requiring particular care and hygienic precautions. In surroundings of pre-raphaelite beauty the sanctuary offers features such as a descending floor which facilitates quick cleaning by flushing water down the aisles, dispensation of holy water by pressing a tube, inserted in the font, and a first aid room and toilets in easy reach.

Each of the three architects expressed in his style his own concept of truth, be it found in religious faith, the beauty of simplicity or in classic harmony.

The concept of poetry as essence of architecture corresponds with the young Gaudi's remark, that ornamentation equals the meter and rhythm of a poem, as well as with the aging master's statement, that his mystic theory of proportions is a symbolic expression of the Trinity.

The nationalistic core of the seventh statement of the theory is documented by Gaudi's use of Catalonian traditions of style and Mackintosh's reliance on Scottish baronial architecture.

Wagner's work is free of national traits. The multi-national Austro-Hungarian monarchy did not lend itself to the development of a specific national character.

The application of Ylimaula's theory of style does reveal common elements in the work of three utterly different personalities. Though all of them are considered representatives of Art Nouveau, it cannot be overlooked, that Gaudi belongs to the variety called Modernismo Catalana and Wagner to the Viennese Secession, while Mackintosh is a forerunner of the Bauhaus Stil.

Conclusion

In summing up her findings, Ylimaula states that, despite much criticism levelled at Art Nouveau, it ought to be recognized as an important phase in the history of architecture, a meeting point between historicism and functionalism. While there are great differences in the work of the three architects under discussion, the numerous traits which they have in common prove that "in the light of the universal theory of style and because of its essence Art Nouveau has a coherent content and thus without any doubt is also style."

Ylimaula is satisfied with her findings

The reader of the dissertation has to battle with a profusion of difficult and by no means clearly presented philosophical theories, incomplete trends of thought, faulty use of the English language (with the only exception of Kirsti Simonsuuri's beautiful translation of Aila Meriluoto's Gaudi-poems) and the basic question, whether the theory lends itself to practical use in the study of architecture.

Nevertheless, the dissertation contains so many thought-provoking topics and its three protagonists are such fascinating artists, that it is well worth to be given attention.

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This book is a doctoral thesis in the history of architecture at the School of Architecture, the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm. I was asked by the School of Architecture, as a professional philosopher, to act as an "extra opponent" at the public defence of the thesis (on May 19th, 1992) because of the "philosophical approach" of the thesis. My remarks here are basically the critical remarks I made as opponent. I do not intend to give anything like a full review.

The book consists of three chapters: Chapter 1 ("Style is more") is mainly a historical introduction to discussions about "style" in art and architecture. Chapter 2 ("Theoretical background") sketches the philosophical background and presents the abstract form of the author's "theory of style". Chapter 3 ("Three architects from the turn of the century") discusses Antoni Gaudi, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Otto Wagner from the point of view of the authors "theory of style". Except for some general remarks on the authors concept(s) of style I limit myself to the philosophical points (which are almost exclusively to be found in Chs. 1-2). All unspecified page references below are to the book being reviewed.

Before I turn to critical remarks I want to say something about what the author aims at.

The title of the book, *Origins of style*, partly mirrors Martin Heidegger's work *The Origin of the Work of Art*, which was a source of inspiration for the present author's "theory of style". The inspiration seems to have been mediated

mainly through a book by Martin Kusch, *Language as Calculus vs. Language as Universal Medium* (Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht 1989). The plural in the title, *origins*, emphasises the fact that (the concept of) style has more than one origin. In chapter 1 the author gives a historical account of concepts of style and discussions about what styles there are. She wants to present *various approaches* to style and to the question *what architecture really is*.

It is sometimes difficult to follow the discussions in Chapter 1 because the author both tries to give a historical account and pursue her own line of analysis with the goal of separating what is right (with regard to style) from what is wrong. The author obviously thinks that "style" is often used in a much too formal and/or superficial sense. She wants to "reach beyond the ornamental surface" in order to "find a deeper meaning in the concept of style" (preface).

One sense of the word "origin" in the title of the thesis is "historical origin". Another sense, the more important one for the author, is origin as (conceptual and/or ontological) *source*, *foundation* or *essence*. Style in architecture has its origin, its essence, beneath the surface of the building. The author finds this source or origin in "the underlying philosophy, the carrying idea which goes through the whole work of art" (p. 29). She even talks about style *as* underlying philosophy (cf. p. 28-29). This idea is related, the author claims, to Heidegger's and Gadamer's ideas about truth and truthfulness in art. Style is thus associated with *truth*, *truthfulness* and *authenticity*. Moreover, style is said to be what distinguishes *architecture* from *mere building*.

The author tries to formulate what she calls a "universal theory of style", even, I think, a *universal* theory of universal style. Such a project is very ambitious, indeed it aims so high that it is doomed to fail *somewhere*. What makes this book interesting, it should be added, is exactly that it aims *so* high. This universal character of style is said to be related to the universal nature of language; here too Heidegger acts as a source of inspiration. I do not really understand exactly

the connection between language and style is, whether it is a structural analogy, a “shared essence” or something else. I will return to these difficulties.

The author’s “universal theory of style” – perhaps better called a “philosophy of style” – is ultimately formulated in seven points (p. 59–60):

- S.1 We cannot analyze architecture starting from the categories “style” or “form” etc., since these categories are accessible only in and through the work of art itself.
- S.2 Style shows us what a building truly is. It reveals the architecture of the building.
- S.3 The work of architecture lets the style occur.
- S.4 Style expresses artistic truth.
- S.5 Creating architecture corresponds structurally to its preservation; both are more matters of receiving than /of/ active participation.
- S.6 Poetry is the essence of architecture. Style transforms a mere building into architecture.
- S.7 Architecture is bound to people and determines their essence and takes part in their history.

Critical comments

I focus on the question whether the author’s “theory of style” can be labelled phenomenological and/or Heideggerian. It must also be stressed that what are presented as quotations from Heidegger are sometimes far from that. I begin, however, with some remarks on the concepts of “style” and “truth”.

One can distinguish at least three notions of style in this book. Their possible interrelationship is never made clear. In the preface it is said that vernacular architecture, for example a fisherman’s cottage, sometimes has “more style” than academic architecture. Thus there is a sense in which something has or does not have style, or has more or less style. On the other hand, a building or a work of art can exemplify *a particular style*, for example, Art Nouveau or a “personal

style”. Much of the historical background discussion concerns this notion of style. There is also, I think, a third notion of style. In the last section of the book it is said that Art Nouveau *is* style (p. 161; cf. also the last sentence of the abstract); it seems then that something that is conventionally regarded as a style either “*is* style” or “*is not*”.

There is no need for strict definitions. A reader would, however, have been helped by a few words by way of clarification. Later in the book it becomes clear that the problem at issue is not various styles but the question of whether or not an object, a building, *has style*. We must then ask why the author has chosen *style* as the decisive notion because she also uses other concepts in her discussion, such as *meaning* and *architecture*. The main question could also be formulated as: What is the difference between (mere) building and architecture? “Style distinguishes architecture from mere building”, the author says (p. 29).

The author claims that she uses a “phenomenological approach”. However, none of the phenomenological thinkers discussed in the book appears to use style as their key notion. A short section is devoted to “Gadamer’s view of style” (p. 26–27). Style is apparently not one of the most important concepts in Gadamer’s reflections on art and truth. Nor does the author build on his notion of style. In the following section, “The phenomenological conception”, Norberg-Schulz’s ideas are briefly mentioned (p. 27–28). He is said to talk about “architectural totality” rather than style. Norberg-Schulz, the author says, “prefers to write about *foundation* or *meaning* in architecture when he comes closest to the word style used in my study” (p. 28). Nor does Heidegger, to my knowledge, use “style” in his theory of art. I will return to Heidegger below.

The question remains: why did the author choose style as her key concept? It would indeed have been much easier to associate to the phenomenological tradition if she had, for example, used *meaning*.

In a section called "Style as underlying philosophy" the author says: "This study uses the word style in a very broad sense: Style is the underlying philosophy, the carrying idea which goes through the whole work of art." (p. 29). A little later on the same page she says that "if architecture lacks philosophy, no style can emerge." Style, then, is both the underlying philosophy and the *expression* of this philosophy. How do we experience style? In the section "On methods of studying style" the author says about architecture: "What we feel and perceive visually is its style." (p. 35–36).

The question now becomes: *Who* is to decide? This question becomes critical because the author wants to get at "universal style", not style according to one person (or culture) or another (I will shortly give a quotation to illustrate this point).

Let us now turn to the notion of *truth*. Let me begin by quoting Heidegger:

The truth of which we have spoken does not coincide with that which is generally recognized under the name and assigned to cognition and science as a quality in order to distinguish it from the beautiful and the good, ... (Epilogue to "The Origin of the Work of Art", in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, a collection translated by A. Hofstadter, Harper & Row, New York 1975, p. 80–81. Henceforth, I refer to this collection as PLT.)

The words "true" and "truth" have many uses in language. In the lectures which constitute *The Origin of the Work of Art* Heidegger emphasises this. He says, for example, that "we call not only a proposition true, but also a thing, true gold in contrast to sham gold. True means here genuine, real gold." (PLT, p. 50). However, most uses of "true" seem to me to be part of a family of concepts which includes, among others, honest, real, genuine and authentic, in contrast to, for example, deceptive, sham and imitation. I say this because Anna-Maija Ylimaula emphasises several times that truth and truthfulness are es-

sential to art and architecture. Style has *something* to do with truth and truthfulness, the question is *what*, precisely.

In this book there is a section called "On truth and fallacy" (p. 43–45). It begins as follows.

The question of truth as it emerges in the experience of art was the starting point for Gadamer's *Truth and Method*. He is interested in the ontology of the work of art and of its hermeneutical significance. But Gadamer's main contribution for architecture is the way he uses and analyzes the concept of truth all the way from the hermeneutic relevance of Aristotle to the Kantian critique and Heidegger's hermeneutical phenomenology. The German word *Wahrheit* seems wider than the English truth. Being *wahr* in architecture means honesty and truth on every level of the artistic work. (p. 43).

The speculation about the difference between *Wahrheit* and truth is not supported by any evidence. I can find no important difference, and whether there is one or not does not really matter. But given the quotation, it is remarkable that the author never goes into Gadamer's discussion about truth. (A section in chapter 2 called "Hermeneutics, artistic truth and the concept of style" does not at all go into the concept of truth, be it artistic or not.) And later in the section "On truth and fallacy" the author even says: "Truth in architecture is simply honesty in design and genuine materials." (p. 45). Talk about *truth* then seems unnecessary. Though these last quoted words are perhaps a "slip of the pen"; as such they bear witness to an unfortunate conceptual carelessness which emerges at some places in the book.

The author has gone into several philosophically very difficult concepts. Another is *language*. Heidegger says in his essay "Language": "Still, to talk about language is presumably even worse than to write about silence." (PLT, p. 190). The author has herself referred to these very words on p. 50.

It is difficult to talk about language in a Heideggerian way, as a “universal medium” to use Martin Kusch’s expression. In many places the author uses a *more or less* Heideggerian way of talking about language but in others she says things about language which would be inconceivable from the point of view of Heidegger – even with a broad interpretation of Heidegger. I give a couple of examples and after that I point out two problematic aspects of what the author says about the relation between *style* and *language*.

As the first example, the author talks, in the section “On architectural language” about “language as an analytical device” (p. 30) and, as support (!), Heidegger’s statement that language is included in the closest confines of man’s being. Certainly, to Heidegger language is neither a thing nor a “device”. The author continues:

To represent universally what holds universally is the basic feature of thought. To reflect on the meaning of one’s language is to reach into the speaking of one’s thoughts. Human expression is always a presentation and representation of the real and the unreal. Language speaks, both to speaker and those spoken to. Man speaks in that he responds to language.

The reference given by the author is PLT p. 190–192 (an early section of Heidegger’s essay “Language”). She should have included p. 189 as well, but that is a minor point. The important point is that this quotation contains a mixture of correct quotation, misunderstanding and free invention. It has little to do with what Heidegger actually tries to bring home, except the words *Language speaks*. Heidegger says: “To represent universally what holds universally is, according to prevalent views, the basic feature of thought.” (PLT, p. 189.) He refers to a view which he then *contrasts* with his own. And the case is exactly the same when Heidegger says: “Finally, human expression is always a presentation and repre-

sentation of the real and the unreal.” (PLT, p. 192.) The author has definitely shown that she has not understood what Heidegger says even on a quite elementary level – it is basically a matter of correct reading. Her misunderstandings are *not* on the level of difficult philosophical interpretation.

As my second and final example I mention a few things said in a section called “How do the theories of language relate to architecture: towards a theory of style”: “Heidegger was one for whom language served a wide and relative purpose: through him I have come to the realization that language is signs, meanings and understanding. ... The goal of language is to communicate.” (p. 58). This again is a misunderstanding of Heidegger, which turns his ideas into the conventional wisdom about language which Heidegger wanted to free himself from. Language has no “goal” according to Heidegger, again: language is no device – language is language, language speaks.

I can find no consistent view of language at all in this book. However, let me leave language as a general topic and point to two problems which are immediately relevant to what the author wants to argue.

She writes: “So there is only one language, as a whole, and we stand and live and work in it. The same way there is also universal style in architecture, one that covers all aspects, all periods and all regions, etc.” (p. 52). The same way? *Which way?* More specifically, language (in a universal sense) does not seem to be on an equal level with style *unless* it is identical with it. Language is also a medium for talking about architecture and style – and thereby a medium for (the constitution of) architecture and style, but not the other way round. The author has noted that herself in a passage where she says that according to Heidegger “all art, including architecture, is dependent on the truths revealed by our language” (p. 50). Thus, style seems not to be on an equal level with language. What *is* the relation between language and style? I find no answer in the book.

I turn to the second problem, which is connected to Heidegger's famous saying that language is the house of Being, to which the author refers (p. 50). I found a relevant quotation from Heidegger in Martin Kusch's book *Language as Calculus vs. Language as Universal Medium*, apparently the author's main source, but she does not refer to these words:

Some time ago I called language, clumsily enough, the house of Being. If man by virtue of his language dwells within the claim and call of Being, then we Europeans presumably dwell in an entirely different house than Eastasian man. ... And so, a dialogue from house to house remains nearly impossible. (quoted from Kusch, p. 213, who refers to "Aus einem Gespräch von der Sprache", in *Unterwegs zur Sprache*.)

If it is impossible to step outside language we may be stuck inside *our own* language. Though there may be a sense, a sense which does not admit of a plural, in which language is universal, there are essentially many different *languages*. This (real or apparent) relativism is actually recorded by the author (in the diagram from Kusch and Hintikka on p. 59). If there is no universal language can there still be "universal style"? Or to put it more in line with an earlier question: What is the relation between *universal style* and *style as recognised by various persons or cultures*?

Before I turn to my last topic, viz. the question of what role Heidegger's reflections on art play in the book, I want to discuss the content and scope of the author's "phenomenological approach" – which is announced in the subtitle of the book. The author writes in the section called "On methods of studying style":

The core of this thesis is that *style is the factor which makes the difference between mere buildings and architecture*. The stylistic theory which I aim towards is an architectural application of a phenomenological theory of art.

The art theory developed by Heidegger is studied in connection with Husserl and Gadamer, in order to avoid having Heidegger *über alles* but rather *unter anderem*. The development of language from calculus towards universal medium is derived from the discussions with Martin Kusch and his published investigations and then applied to architecture.

By using the phenomenological framework I attempt to track down the essence of style in the works of Gaudi, Mackintosh and Wagner. My approach is not that of a scientific analyst, but rather Heideggerian: I have tried to illuminate the concept of style with my personal perception and knowledge. (p. 36).

I have said enough about "language". I now turn to "Heidegger *unter anderem*". It is simply false. In the book there is almost nothing about Gadamer and virtually nothing about Husserl. To be somewhat more precise: Some general things are said about Husserl, but there is not one single reference to a work of Husserl and as far as I can judge no traces of influence. There are about ten references to Gadamer's *Truth and Method*, but the only things that are brought up are quite general remarks. As I already pointed out above, there is no attempt to go *into* his theory of truth in art.

Nor is it Heidegger *über alles*. I thereby return to the topic of how the author has used Heidegger. I divide my discussion into three parts. First I take up three points attributed to von Hermann. Then I point out a serious absence of scholarly exactness as regards quotations and references. Thirdly I question that the author's theory of style is Heideggerian at all.

The author refers in the section "Towards the origins of style" to "Heidegger's discussion of the formal origin of style" though no such discussion seems to exist – Heidegger talks about the origin of *art*. Anyway, the author approaches the formal origin of art through F. W. von Hermann's "interpretation of Heidegger". The three points she gives (p. 55) are confusing and confused, above all because they only state relations

between *the artist* (architect) and *the work of art* (architecture). I find it better not to quote it. (The book also mistakenly says “the art” instead of “the artist” in all three points, as pointed out in the *Errata* list handed out at the public defence.) F. W. von Hermann, in his book *Heidegger’s Philosophie der Kunst. Eine systematische Interpretation der Holzwege-Abhandlung “Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes* (Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 1980, p. 3), formulates three points which state relations between *three things: the artist, the work of art and art*. In the original, von Hermann talks about “drei unterschiedliche Weisen des Ursprung-seins”:

1. die Kunst als das Entspringenlassen von Kunstwerk und Künstler,
2. die Künstler als der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes,
3. das Kunstwerk als der Ursprung des Künstlers.

These can be translated roughly as:

1. art as that which lets the work of art and the artist come forth (into existence),
2. the artist as the origin of the work of art,
3. the work of art as the origin of the artist.

The author completely misses the first point. Anyway, referring to von Hermann is carrying coals to Newcastle, because these three relations are all pointed out explicitly on the very first page of Heidegger’s *The Origin of the Work of Art*. I quote from the beginning of the essay:

Origin here means that from and by which something is what it is and as it is. What something is, as it is, we call its essence or nature. The origin of something is the source of its nature. The question concerning the origin of the work of art asks about the source of its nature. On the usual view, the work arises out of and by means of the activity of the artist. But by what and whence is the artist what he is? By the work; for to say that the work does

credit to the master means that it is the work that first lets the artist emerge as a master of his art. The artist is the origin of the work. The work is the origin of the artist. Neither is without the other. Nevertheless, neither is the sole support of the other. In themselves and in their interrelations artist and work *are* each of them by virtue of a third thing which is prior to both, namely that which also gives artist and work of art their names – art. (PLT, p. 17).

“The central thoughts in *The Origin of the Work of Art*”, the author says, “have been summarized by Martin Kusch.” (p. 51). Immediately after this she says that she has “added some explanatory comments from the original text of Heidegger”. I will soon give the seven points of Kusch’s summary (A.1–A.7; the formulation of A.5 is changed by the author without that being indicated). But first I want to issue a warning to the reader of the book: Do *not* trust the “explanatory comments”! The so-called quotations are *all* inaccurate compared with the sources referred to in the footnotes (mostly PLT). In some cases the author has used a revised translation (from Kusch), without that being said. That is a minor problem. In other cases the translation is changed in strange ways, actually concealing what is in the original. In some cases the text becomes impossible to understand at all. I will not go into detail but I want to stress that the “quotations” given after A.2, A.4, A.6 and A.7 are *seriously* flawed. For example, the first sentence in the quotation after A.2 is: “The nature of art would then be this: the truth of beings fulfilling its function or role.” Instead of “fulfilling its function or role” it should read “setting itself to work”! They should not be attributed to Heidegger. When I indicated these inaccuracies at the public defence the author said that the person who did the language revision probably had changed them! This cannot be accepted as an excuse.

I have also found inaccuracies in quotations and page references in many other places. *Some*

such things always exist. But this book scores below the mark of what is acceptable in a scholarly work

The author gives her "universal theory of style based on Heidegger's art theory" in seven points, S.1–S.7 (I have stated them in the introduction). The reader immediately assumes that they mirror Kusch's seven points, A.1–A.7. However, it is highly revealing to compare them point for point (here A.1–A.7 is taken from p. 51–52, revised according to the author's later *Errata II*, and S.1–S.7 from p. 59–60):

A.1 We cannot analyze the work of art starting from the categories of "thing" or "equipment," since both of these categories become accessible only in and through the work of art itself.

S.1 We cannot analyze architecture starting from the categories "style" or "form" etc., since these categories are accessible only in and through the work of art itself.

A.2 The work of art shows us what a being truly is. It reveals the being in its Being.

S.2 Style shows us what a building truly is. It reveals the architecture of the building.

A.3 The work of art is a happening, a strife between world and earth.

S.3 The work of architecture lets the style occur.

A.4 Art is a happening of truth, truth is a strife between illumination and concealment.

S.4 Style expresses artistic truth.

A.5 The production of works of art corresponds structurally to their preservation; both are matters of receiving rather than of active doing.

S.5 Creating architecture corresponds structurally to its preservation; both are more matters of receiving than /of/ active participation.

A.6 Poetry is the essence of art.

S.6 Poetry is the essence of architecture. Style transforms a mere building into architecture.

A.7 Art is bound to nations and determines their essence and their history.

S.7 Architecture is bound to people and determines their essence and takes part in their history.

Compare these points carefully! In some cases one can find a formal similarity, in some not even that. The "step" from A to S can, as far as I could see, not at all be supported by reference to Heidegger. Take a look for example at A.2 and S.2, where "the being in its Being" and "the architecture of the building" play similar roles! But S.2 seems to have *nothing* to do with Heidegger. Even if S.1–S.7 is in some sense a "a universal theory of style", it is certainly not based on Heidegger's theory of art.

Some words of conclusion

It may be thought that I have been too *philosophically* critical of a book about architecture. Note that I have not criticised philosophical interpretations but pointed out that the philosophical parts of the book are not in accord with elementary scholarly standards with respect to references, textual *reading* and conceptual clarity. The theory of style suggested is said to be based on Heidegger's art theory. It is probably *inspired* by *some* things Heidegger said. But that is different. The author even calls her approach "Heideggerian" (in a quotation given above). It is, I think, very far from it.

It is very difficult, or even impossible, to extract an answer to the question of what art is from Heidegger. Actually he says in the addendum to *The Origin of the Work of Art*: "What art may be is one of the questions to which no answers are given in the essay. What gives the impression of such an answer are directions for questioning." (PLT, p. 86).

The author says at one place: "Heidegger is a thinker for whom precision is no virtue." (p. 50). This is, I think, a complete misunderstanding. That the author thinks so may, however, account for some of the problems in this book. I hasten to add that the book also contains a lot of inte-

resting and challenging thoughts about style, art and architecture.

It is a pity that the manuscript was not sufficiently critically worked through before it was presented as a doctoral thesis. It is well worth to publish in a revised version.

Bengt Molander,
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Kommentarer:

To Anne Fried:

I am deeply grateful to Anne Fried for her constructive review of my thesis. Since she was born in Vienna in 1903 her point of viewing Art Nouveau is quite different from mine, an architect born in the 1950's and working in northern Finland. Fried takes up big issues like the one of social deceit, if social problems were covered under the gilded surface of the Secession-architecture, but to find answers to such questions in a small thesis was not possible for me. I am glad that Fried clarified the Heideggerian meaning of the word *poesis*. About A.7 I disagree with Fried's interpretation, but respect her point of view in this matter, which evidently has another importance to her than it has to me.

To Bengt Molander:

I am deeply sorry that Bengt Molander forgets that my thesis deals with history of architecture. I wasn't trying to become a doctor of philosophy, but became one in technology. As an opponent Molander found that I defended my thesis well. He could have said that, too, otherwise one

might get another impression from the article above. I am just an architect who wanted to look at the philosophy in the concept of style. Molander as a representative of analytic philosophy cannot accept the fact which I am trying to prove: that style in its essence is basically a spiritual matter. Even Georg Henrik von Wright has recently admitted that there are many things which cannot be reached by the means of analytic philosophy. I find that architecture is one of them. There is a big gap between logicians and phenomenologists, and the architects who have been following the Wittgensteinian paths have thrown away not only phenomenology but all approaches which contain existential or idealistic features. Molander's own book on philosophy did not mention Husserl, Heidegger or Gadamer. Since he admits that "A.1-S.7 is in some sense a «universal theory of style»" it is all that I was hoping for and aiming at, and his demand to call it "inspired by some things that Heidegger said" rather than Heideggerian, suits me well. But philosophy I leave to real thinkers like Molander.

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