

THE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF ARCHITECTURAL EXPERIENCE: SCRUTON ON ARCHITECTURE AS ART

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The notion of architectural experience has been explored by Roger Scruton in a essay in which he provides an account of both its structure and content, along with clarifications of certain key concepts in architectural criticism, such as architectural success and architectural beauty. In this article, I introduce Scruton's theory and argue that, despite its intuitive appeal, some crucial elements for the appreciation of buildings as works of architecture are not adequately addressed there. I then propose various ways of addressing these criticisms.

Roger Scruton's account of the structure and content of our experience of architecture remains analytic aesthetics' most articulated theory on the topic.¹ According to him, architectural *experience* is not only intrinsically interesting but is also a central component in understanding the value of architecture and its place in the system of the arts. In fact, Scruton argues that analysing the mental states and features that are involved in an architectural experience provides better insights into the nature of architecture than does an *a priori* definition of its essence. In this article, I do not dispute such general assumptions but rather take them as a starting point. My aims are (1) to provide an accessible exposition of Scruton's account of architectural experience, in both its structure and content, and (2) to advance some critical remarks in order to amend his theory and meet these criticisms.

The theory advanced by Scruton is important because it connects aspects of Kantian aesthetics – particularly the idea of understanding architecture starting from the concept of aesthetic experience – to more recent developments of

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¹ The theory advanced by Roger Scruton in *The Aesthetics of Architecture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979) applies certain concepts analysed in his *Art and Imagination* (London: Methuen, 1974) to architecture. Other authors associated with the tradition of analytic aesthetics who have in some detail discussed questions related to architecture are Nelson Goodman ('How Buildings Mean', *Critical Inquiry* 11 (1985): 642–53), Gordon Graham ('Art and Architecture', *British Journal of Aesthetics* 29 (1989): 248–57), Edward Winters (*Aesthetics and Architecture* (London: Continuum, 2007)), and Rafael De Clercq ('Architecture', in *The Continuum Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. Anna Christina Ribeiro (London: Continuum, forthcoming)). Despite the quality of these works, it is fair to say that architecture has been a neglected topic in analytic aesthetics.

analytic philosophy and classical sources of architectural theory.² It is also relevant to the contemporary debate in the philosophy of architecture because Scruton offers a valid alternative to a number of other (more influential) theories according to which architecture is a language and thus there is more than a simple analogy between interpreting a natural language and understanding architecture.³ In addition, Scruton's theory, with its emphasis on aesthetic and humanistic values, is also one of the most articulate philosophical frameworks within which modernist and functionalist architecture has been criticized.

This essay is organized as follows. In the first part, I discuss Scruton's account of the structure of architectural experience, in particular the notions of intellectual pleasure, imaginative perception, and taste. In the second part, I describe the content of such architectural experiences, that is, perceptions of expressive qualities, beauty, harmony, and appropriateness. In the third part, I draw attention to what has been left out of Scruton's theory, which nonetheless seems important to understanding architecture. I then refine his accounts of architectural success and experience in order to meet my criticisms.

I. THE STRUCTURE OF ARCHITECTURAL EXPERIENCE

I.1. INTELLECTUAL PLEASURE

Pleasure is an important component in experiencing art, for it provides (defeasible) evidence of aesthetic value; however, there are different kinds of pleasure, and they

² The importance of the Kantian approach in Scruton's aesthetics is also crucial in other more recent Scruton contributions, such as 'In Search of the Aesthetic', *British Journal of Aesthetics* 47 (2007): 232–50. The influence of Wittgenstein's philosophy is evident in Scruton's criticisms of the definitions of architecture. See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology, and Religious Belief*, ed. Cyril Barrett (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967). Other analytic philosophers whose ideas are important for Scruton are Stuart Hampshire and Frank Sibley, and, in particular, their assessment of the concept of taste and its connection to art criticism. Among the classic architectural theorists who influenced Scruton, Leon Battista Alberti plays a central role with his definition of beauty in terms of the harmony of relevant parts.

³ These theories are discussed and criticized in Scruton, *Aesthetics of Architecture*, 137–78. The tendency to interpret architecture as a language appears not only in the works of semioticians such as Roland Barthes and Umberto Eco, but also in analytic aesthetics. See Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1976). The key difference between Goodman and Scruton is in the idea that, according to the former, buildings are works of art insofar as they symbolize, signify, or refer in a specific way. But, according to Scruton, and following the work of contemporary philosophers of language, natural languages have a semantic structure that is significantly different from the alleged architectural 'idiom'.

cannot all be taken as signalling aesthetic merit.⁴ In order to identify the kind of pleasure that constitutes an essential part of our architectural experience, Scruton distinguishes sensuous from intellectual pleasure in terms of the internal/external relation between cognitive processes and the object of the experience.⁵ Intuitively, there is a distinction between the pleasure we feel in eating an ice cream and the pleasure we experience in perceiving Andrea Palladio's Villa Almerico Capra (known as *La Rotonda*). When eating, cognitive processes may influence our experience positively or negatively, such as when we are told about unpleasant ingredients in food (for example, if we know chocolate contains insect parts, we are bound to find it less appetizing). This does not, however, constitute an essential component of the experience because we may enjoy an ice cream even without thinking about its composition. Thought can certainly influence sensuous pleasure but is not a required element of the pleasant experience itself; thus, the relation between cognitive processes and the experience of sensuous pleasure is external. When it comes to enjoying architectural works, however, the relationship between thought and experience is internal (or essential): an intellectual understanding of a building and active attention towards its particular details are both essential components of pleasant aesthetic experiences. The reason is that without attention and understanding (intended as forms of cognitive activities), there could be no object of pleasure. This suggestion – that an aesthetic object is created by an intellectual act – can be taken in a loose and non-metaphysically loaded sense. For instance, we can rephrase the same idea adverbially by saying that what is central to the intellectual pleasure typical of our architectural experience is an imaginative act of attention and understanding, that is, an act of seeing a building *imaginatively*, without referring to aesthetic objects.⁶ No external object is literally built up by attention or imagination.⁷

⁴ Philosophers have questioned the importance of aesthetic experience and pleasure in evaluating works of art. See, for instance, Noël Carroll, 'Aesthetic Experience: A Question of Content', in *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art*, ed. Matthew Kieran (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 71–72, and James Shelley, 'Against Value Empiricism in Aesthetics', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 88 (2010): 707–20. I will leave aside these more general concerns, since, if we accept these criticisms, Scruton's whole project would be a non-starter.

⁵ Scruton is influenced here by Bernard Williams, 'Pleasure and Belief', in *Philosophy as a Humanistic Discipline* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 34–46.

⁶ Compare this view with Roman Ingarden's theory of architecture according to which understanding architecture requires the appreciation of objects over and above three-dimensional buildings. See his *Ontology of the Work of Art*, trans. John T. Goldthwait and Raymond Meyer (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1989), 255–316.

⁷ Compare Scruton's account with Jerrold Levinson's remarks on the relation between pleasure and the value of art. Levinson claims that when pleasure is relevant to the artistic value of a work of art, it should be an *informed* pleasure; the occasion of pleasure must be seen as coming from an experience in which the perceiver is informed about the contextual features of the work in question. See Jerrold Levinson, 'Pleasure and the Value of Works of Art', *British Journal of Aesthetics* 32 (1992): 295–306, and Malcolm Budd, *Values of Art* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Press, 1995), 11.

1.2. IMAGINATIVE PERCEPTION

Scruton also introduces a distinction between literal and imaginative perception, the first being characterized by seeing the world as it is (or as it appears to be) and the second by seeing the world through a free application of imagination.⁸ The aim of literal perception is to adhere to reality, whilst perceiving imaginatively is influenced by a special mode of attention we pay to objects, that is, the particular point of view we apply to reality. Imaginative perception is not an activity through which we modify our beliefs about how the world is constituted but rather involves imaginative experiences, that is, experiences we have when we imaginatively perceive something. More precisely, Scruton argues that there is a categorial distinction between imagination and belief. Among the many differences, Scruton claims that imagination involves unasserted thoughts and, hence, does not coincide with believing.⁹ For example, seeing a bunny in the clouds is a case of imaginative perception, whilst seeing a bunny on the lawn (when there is one) is a way of acquiring beliefs about the world.

Scruton argues that imaginative perception is a central element of architectural experience. Those mental states that are correlated to acts of imaginative perception (that is, imaginative experiences) are the internal causes of pleasure in experiencing a building. He also claims that the activity of imaginative perception is particularly evident in the ambiguous 'interpretation' of patterns of details on buildings' exteriors. Take, for example, the Theatre of Marcellus or the Flavian Amphitheatre (now known as the Colosseum). We can see the columns as either supportive elements or as decorations on the walls and arches. Another, example of architectural ambiguity, more recent, is the external patterns on the Bank of China Tower in Hong Kong, in which we see combinations of either crosses or diamonds.¹⁰ Alternative ways of seeing ambiguous patterns in buildings are possible in experiencing architecture through our imaginative perception.

There is a strong reading and a weak reading of the three-sided relationship between imaginative perception, ambiguity, and architectural experience: the perception of ambiguities may be taken as either an essential component of architectural enjoyment or not. If the former, then, in order to experience a building as a work of art, it is necessary that the elements of the construction,

⁸ Scruton provides a detailed account of imagination in his *Art and Imagination*, 84–120. The terminological shifts between imagination and imaginative perception must always be taken as thus qualified: imagining is a special case of 'thinking x as y ', which also involves thinking of the descriptive element ('as y ') as appropriate to the qualified object. When perception is involved, it is implied that we combine (or apply) such imagining with a certain experience. See *Art and Imagination*, 97–98.

⁹ See *ibid.*, 97.

¹⁰ See Philip Jodidio and Janet Adams Strong, *I. M. Pei: Complete Works* (New York: Rizzoli, 2008).

whether columns or steel frames, allow ambiguous and varied ways of seeing. A consequence of this strong reading is that buildings that do not allow ambiguous interpretations of their details cannot be seen imaginatively. This interpretation does not seem to accommodate the current practice of architectural evaluation; in fact, we do appreciate and experience buildings as works of art also when they do not show ambiguities of the kind just described. For example, the Pyramids do not allow such ambiguities but are still considered remarkable works of architecture. A different and more plausible understanding of Scruton's view is that alternative ways of seeing a building are possible in experiencing architecture through our imaginative perception but this is not an essential component of the experience itself. According to this non-essentialist interpretation, one of the roles of ambiguous readings in buildings is to signal that, even if we are not aware of how imaginative perception influences us, cognitive processes are involved in the architectural experience of certain buildings. Thus, ambiguous readings can be seen as making explicit that there is more than one way of imagining an object. They are important because they stimulate our attention and make us conscious of the fact that some imaginative and cognitive activity may be present in our perception of works of architecture.

Scruton also claims that we are *not* forced to see a building in a certain way because imaginative perception is free, in the sense that what stands before us does not compel us to see it imaginatively. Instead, perceiving a pattern of detail on a building imaginatively is a voluntary activity.¹¹ It is important to emphasize that the role of imaginative perception is crucial to our architectural experience because this is the faculty responsible for recognizing meaningful patterns of ornamentation, which is a fundamental part of grasping expressive elements and beauty in an architectural composition. Similarly to how we perceive movement in sequences of sound, we notice different rhythms, resting points, or, more generally, different arrangements of details in a physical construction. It must be noted that in Scruton's account of imaginative perception related to architecture, the content of these perceptions is mainly visual. This way of introducing the

¹¹ Scruton, *Aesthetics of Architecture*, 85. The concept of imaginative perception can be compared to criticisms of the 'innocence of the eye' in the perception of artworks. The idea is that some form of mental or complex categorization is always present in our way of perceiving the world. See Ernst Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969) and Goodman, *Languages of Art*. See also Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations / Philosophische Untersuchungen*, 2nd ed., trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958), 200. Another interesting connection can be drawn with recent discussions of whether perceptual experience has conceptual content. See Bill Brewer, 'Perceptual Experience Has Conceptual Content', in *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*, ed. Ernest Sosa and Matthias Steup (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 217–30, and Alex Byrne, 'Perception and Conceptual Content', in *ibid.*, 231–50.

concept of imaginative perception is of great importance regarding some of the critical points I will discuss in the second part of the article.¹²

Another related element that characterizes imaginative perception is that this activity can to some extent be directed by the will. For instance, we can focus on certain groupings of columns and see them under a specific description if we are asked to. Associated with this possibility is the idea that such ways of seeing a building through a description can be more or less adequate. This, in turn, leads us to another central point of Scruton's account of the experience of architecture: taste.¹³

1.3. TASTE AND AESTHETIC JUDGEMENTS

Even though imaginative perception is free, this does not mean that aesthetic judgements about buildings, which are influenced by this faculty, are not grounded or that there cannot be genuine disagreement in aesthetics. In fact, eventual reasons advanced to modify our way of seeing a work of art (or any other object of aesthetic attention) can be more or less appropriate. In particular, judgements of taste or arguments put forward by critics can lead us to different imaginative perceptions and thus to a different, possibly more rewarding, architectural experience. Applications of the faculty of taste are not limited to suggestions about how to perceive an object; for example, aesthetic judgements can take the form of attributing aesthetic properties to objects.¹⁴ Scruton argues that these two applications work together in the same reasoning process. Relative to the notion of expression, he claims that when we state that a building expresses movement, we are also thereby committed to accepting such an aesthetic judgement as an appropriate way of seeing the building. For example, if we assert that Borromini's San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, an iconic Baroque building, expresses movement, then we are also committed to the idea that the proper way of seeing it is precisely how we have described it.¹⁵ Similarly, when Wölfflin portrays the Baroque style as 'exciting, ecstatic and intoxicating', he is also suggesting that his description is not merely a psychological and subjective effect

¹² Scruton, *Aesthetics of Architecture*, 71–103.

¹³ For further discussion of Scruton's notion of imaginative perception, see Kimmo Lapintie, 'The Imaginative Eye: Roger Scruton and the Aesthetics of Architecture', *Architecture & Comportement/Architecture & Behaviour* 3 (1987): 137–58.

¹⁴ For a recent account of the features of aesthetic judgements, see Malcolm Budd, 'The Intersubjective Validity of Aesthetic Judgements', *British Journal of Aesthetics* 47 (2007): 333–71. See also Frank Sibley, 'Particularity, Art, and Evaluation', in *Approach to Aesthetics: Collected Papers on Philosophical Aesthetics*, ed. John Benson, Betty Redfern, and Jeremy Roxbee Cox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 88–103.

¹⁵ See Anthony Blunt, *Borromini* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 52–85 for a description of the building in question.

but is also a proper aesthetic judgement through which we are invited to see a certain architectural style in a way that he is committed to take as appropriate.¹⁶ The concepts of justification and expression are thus tightly knit.¹⁷ Scruton also claims that the reasoning of an art critic who invites us to appreciate a building takes the form of practical reasoning in which the conclusion is a perception and, more precisely, a change in the way of seeing. The mark of persuasion is not a modification to our set of beliefs but rather a modification of our way of seeing.¹⁸ Such different ways of seeing an object imaginatively, however, can be more or less adequate in relation to, among other things, the features of buildings and the reasons adduced to adopt a particular perspective. For example, the suggestion of seeing the columns in the Flavian Amphitheatre as decorations of the walls and arches can be sensibly grounded in the observation that the whole building, seen in this way, expresses firmness and solidity. The reason is that the columns are relatively smaller than the walls and arches, so it would be better not to see them as supportive structures of the edifices. In conclusion, Scruton argues that not all judgements of taste are equally well grounded or of equal value and one way of appreciating this point is by arguing that such judgements may modify our way of seeing.

II. THE CONTENT OF ARCHITECTURAL EXPERIENCE: EXPRESSION, BEAUTY, AND APPROPRIATENESS

II.1. EXPRESSION

Scruton draws the distinction between representational and abstract art in terms of the different role played by the content associated with the work for its appreciation. More specifically, a proper understanding of a representational work of art is essentially connected to an adequate awareness of the content of the work in question, where 'content' is understood as the set of propositions related to its representation.¹⁹ This means that to appreciate a work of representational art, we need to associate the formal features of the work with what it represents.

¹⁶ See Heinrich Wölfflin, *Renaissance and Baroque*, trans. Kathrin Simon (London: Collins, 1964), chaps. 1 and 2.

¹⁷ See Scruton, *Aesthetics of Architecture*, 110 and 198.

¹⁸ For a discussion of this last claim, see Robert Hopkins, 'Critical Reasoning and Critical Perception', in *Knowing Art: Essays in Aesthetics and Epistemology*, ed. Matthew Kieran and Dominic Mclver Lopes (Dordrecht: Springer, 2004), 137–53. An early work that influenced Scruton on this topic is Stuart Hampshire, 'Logic and Appreciation', in *Aesthetics and Language*, ed. William R. Elton and W. B. Gallie (Oxford: Blackwell, 1954), 161–69.

¹⁹ Scruton, *Aesthetics of Architecture*, 180. To a first approximation, a proposition is the content of what is represented. For instance, the sentences 'It rains' and 'Piove' have the same content: the proposition that it rains.

Now, architecture cannot be considered a representational art because a building, as opposed to a work of literature, does not articulate or develop a thought but rather profits, in its imitative elements, from our previous capacity to recognize a certain form and make it intelligible for our appreciation (for example, the shells decorating Bramante's *Tempietto*).²⁰ The subject of a representational work of art is also the subject of the thoughts (propositions) of whoever attends to it with understanding. Such a requirement is not, however, essential for architecture.

If architecture is not a representational art, does it follow that no thoughts at all are involved in its appreciation? If not, how could our architectural experience have any meaning? Scruton argues that even if there is no narrative element, architecture can still involve thoughts about things, or at least something akin to thoughts. In particular, such 'thoughts' resemble ostensions more than making statements, for certain architectural forms are better described (and understood) as elements of reference rather than structured propositions. This feature may explain why we frequently find it difficult to put into words the specific emotions or concepts we feel are being expressed by a building. Scruton suggests that in certain encounters with works of architecture, we feel that something is being said even though we cannot completely describe this intuition, apart from connecting our thoughts to general predicates like 'deepness', 'sadness', 'purity' and so on. In other words, even though buildings do not articulate thoughts, they can still be seen as (metaphorical) acts of reference.²¹

For instance, certain details can contribute to establishing a connection between a building and a predicate describing an expressive property. According to Scruton, the notion of expression can be usefully connected with the display of an atmosphere rather than the articulation of a thought. Take Tadao Ando's *Church of the Light*, a construction that expresses spirituality through an idealization of reinforced concrete, its particular location, and the cruciform cut in the wall behind the altar.²² These details are the building's referential aspects, the means by which the architect has established a connection between matter and certain expressive properties. In having a direct experience of the building, what unfolds before our eyes is not the narration or representation of a subject but the experience of an atmosphere by means of certain expressive elements. This display can be understood as a sort of act of reference performed by the architect through the work's details. Appreciating such expressive connections is what grounds the content of aesthetic judgements about an architectural work, that is, its beauty.

²⁰ Ibid., 184–87.

²¹ Nelson Goodman argues for a similar view in his 'How Buildings Mean'.

²² See Philip Drew, *Church on the Water, Church of the Light: Tadao Ando* (London: Phaidon, 1996).

II.2. BEAUTY, HARMONY AND DETAIL

A rewarding experience of architecture will involve beauty. Describing his understanding of the concept of architectural beauty, Scruton refers to Leon Battista Alberti's classical account.²³ Alberti notoriously explained beauty in a building as a 'reasoned harmony of all the parts within a body, so that nothing may be added, taken away, or altered, but for the worse.'²⁴ This kind of beauty is a property composed of various elements: number (*numerus*), outline (*finitio*), and position (*collocatio*). From the relationship between these elements, another quality emerges: 'gentle harmony' (*concinnitas*).²⁵ The aim of *concinnitas* is to compose the parts of a body so that the existence of one part (aesthetically) explains the existence of another ('so that they correspond to one another in appearance'). Thus, beauty is a form of sympathy generated by a mutual correspondence of number (that is, quantity), outline (or lineaments), and position, as dictated by *concinnitas*. Scruton seems to agree with this characterization of architectural beauty. The atomic components of architectural meaning are the details of the architectural composition, though the notion of detail is to be understood only as decoration, not as meaning. On the contrary, a column, a door, or an urn can each be an architectural detail as can the mould of a cornice and the carving of a capital: every focus of attention that can be separated from the whole can be called a detail. Although such details can be perceived as separable parts, they gain their significance in the context of the entire architectural composition.

According to Scruton, the capacity for perceiving beauty in an architectural work comes from imaginative perception. The recognition of patterns of detail that 'call to each other' and form a meaningful correspondence is, in fact, both a visual and intellectual task. He also claims that the measure of architectural success is a pleasant architectural experience that is determined by the relationship between a building's parts and its whole. This notion of architectural success has interesting consequences for the architect's role. In particular, architecture cannot be described as an activity involving a mere step-by-step theoretical procedure but rather as including internal considerations of aesthetic value.²⁶ Consequently, according to

²³ I will not discuss Scruton's suggestion that judgements of beauty are not possible without knowing what type of thing is being judged here (*Aesthetics of Architecture*, 9). For a discussion on this, see Frank Sibley, 'Aesthetic Judgements: Pebbles, Faces, and Fields of Litter', in *Approach to Aesthetics*, 176–89.

²⁴ Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. Neil Leach, Joseph Rykwert, and Robert Tavenor (1485; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988), 156.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 302–3. The bibliography on Alberti and the notion of *concinnitas* is vast. For a list of references, see Robert Tavenor, *On Alberti and the Art of Building* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1999).

²⁶ See De Clercq, 'Architecture', in particular the discussion on architecture as problem-solving, for an articulation of this idea along the line defended by Scruton.

Scruton, the activity of the architect consists of designing a building in which function is wedded to the arousal of beauty as previously described: aesthetic values are essential for architectural success itself.

This notion of beauty relies on what is perceived as being appropriate to a whole in which all parts are meaningfully related. Scruton, like Alberti, insists on the concept of appropriateness in his elucidation of architectural success. Generally, however, judging appropriateness does not involve only aesthetical considerations; on the contrary, as its wider usage suggests, appropriateness can also serve to introduce demands of value and moral character into the object's aesthetic sphere.²⁷ The conceptual equivalent of the appropriate within the aesthetic sphere is the notion of proportion, defined by Scruton as a property exhibited by a building whose parts 'provide adequate visual reason for one another'.²⁸ In this sense, being proportionate is one way of being adequate; in particular, it is the aesthetic way of being appropriate.²⁹ When Scruton discusses his conception of proportion in terms of being adequate and appropriate, his focus is exclusively on the appropriateness of the parts and the whole, within a specific building. He recognizes the importance of location for buildings, but location is not explicitly addressed in his account of architectural success in terms of the appropriate relationship between the parts. This concludes our presentation of the main aesthetic principles of Scruton's theory of architecture.³⁰

III. THE COMPLEXITY OF ARCHITECTURAL EXPERIENCE AND THE APPRECIATION OF BUILDINGS

In this section, I will discuss two problems in Scruton's account of architectural success and experience and will offer emendations to meet these criticisms. In the final part, I also revise his concept of imaginative perception by introducing the notion of reflective movement, intended as an integration of the former. I first argue that Scruton's theory does not properly take into account one important element of our understanding of the value of buildings: movement. The second critical remark is that Scruton's notion of architectural success does not address the importance of the relation between a building and its location. I then amend Scruton's account to meet these objections. While Scruton is certainly aware of

²⁷ Scruton, *Aesthetics of Architecture*, 232.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 235. For a similar use of the notion of proportion, see also Patrick Suppes, 'Rules of Proportion in Architecture', *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 16 (1991): 358.

²⁹ For other discussions of proportion that take into account Scruton's view, see Rafael De Clercq, 'Scruton on Rightness of Proportion in Architecture', *British Journal of Aesthetics* 49 (2009): 405–14, and Derek Matravers, 'Revising Principles of Architecture', *Journal of Architecture* 4 (1999): 39–45.

³⁰ I have not covered other topics included in Scruton's theory, such as the relevance of moral considerations in architecture and its implications for a theory of the self.

the importance of these two elements, he does not acknowledge their importance in his explicit definitions of architectural beauty, experience, and architectural success. My criticisms are intended as attempts to integrate his account, to make its parts more harmonious.

Various art forms, in line with the very nature of their artistic media, suggest certain appreciative models.³¹ Here, the term 'appreciative model' is intended as a set of attitudes and dispositions about regarding specific works of art as valuable in relation to certain conceptions of what constitutes success in that specific form of art. In architecture, the medium that is employed to convey the aesthetic experience on which our aesthetic evaluations are based suggests a different model of appreciation from the one for, say, painting.³² Similarly to architecture, sculpture also employs an artistic medium that does not allow us to perceive all of the artwork's features at once. We cannot, for example, simultaneously experience all aspects of a statue such as Michelangelo's *David* because of its three-dimensional nature and the necessity of moving around it to get acquainted with its non-aesthetic properties.

A distinction can usefully be drawn between (1) appreciative models of a form of art in which the non-aesthetic properties of the work are given in a relatively short period (time-static) and/or in a relatively restricted portion of space (movement-static) and (2) appreciative models based on works whose non-aesthetic properties require time (time-dynamic) and/or movement (movement-dynamic) to be revealed to the perceiver. For instance, it does not make sense to walk around Leonardo's *Mona Lisa* (except to dodge tourists) because the proper model of appreciating a painting is, relative to motion, static; once we have reached a privileged point of view, the non-aesthetic properties of the work are displayed in front of us. This can be sensibly disputed but, even so, this appreciative model seems at least to apply to certain works of conceptual art that can be grasped in a few seconds and from a single stable location.³³ In general, an appreciative strategy can be classified as appropriate insofar as it allows a complete perception of those

³¹ This is not uncontroversial, see, for example, Noël Carroll, 'Performance', *Formation 3* (1986): 64–78, and David Davies, 'Medium in Art', in *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*, ed. Jerrold Levinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 181–91, for a discussion of the contentious claim that each form of art has a specific nature determined by what is allowed by its related medium. However, nothing crucial in this essay hinges on this discussion.

³² See David Davies, *Art as Performance* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), Davies, 'Medium in Art', and Joseph Margolis, *Art and Philosophy* (Atlantic Heights, NJ: Humanities Press, 1980) for the notion of artistic or vehicular medium. To a first approximation, an artistic (or art) medium is something 'that mediates the transmission of the content of an artwork to a receiver' (Davies, 'Medium in Art', 181).

³³ With regard to painting, a possible counterexample is Hans Holbein the Younger's *The Ambassadors* (1533) with its anamorphic skull.

non-aesthetic properties that characterize the artistic medium. Which appreciative model is prescribed by the artistic medium of architecture? Because a building is a three-dimensional object, its artistic medium demands a dynamic approach to movement.

In addition to its necessity in perceiving non-aesthetic properties, movement is also responsible for the appreciation of certain *aesthetic* properties of architectural works. As maintained by Steen Eiler Rasmussen, having a certain experience of movement inside a building can ground ascriptions of aesthetic features specific to the work.³⁴ For instance, the arrangement of rooms influences the perception of rhythm in a space as well as aesthetic judgements about it. In addition, the spatial effects of certain details can be properly appreciated only by moving within the spaces created by the architectural work.³⁵ Take, for instance, Ando's central cube-room, part of the recently restored Punta della Dogana in Venice. To perceive its rich material quality, achieved by means of a successful combination of Ando's signature use of concrete and traditional *masegni* (traditional Venetian paving stones), it is necessary to move around the cube inside the museum. In fact, the best way to perceive the specific solemnity, purity, and uniqueness conveyed by this spatial composition is by movement, which allows a number of perceptions that, in turn, ground aesthetic judgements. In this case, a description of Ando's cube can alert us to the presence of expressive qualities in the Punta della Dogana, qualities such as solemnity, purity, and uniqueness; but means other than movement cannot properly convey the peculiar way in which these properties are embodied in this particular building. For instance, it is only through movement that we can appreciate the solemnity of Ando's cube in the Punta della Dogana. If my reasoning is correct, then a more appropriate appreciation of certain aesthetic features of architectural works cannot be purely visual but must also include bodily experiences.

Additionally, proper appreciation of architectural works and, consequently, rewarding architectural experiences can also be related to the sense of touch. Feeling with our hands the quality of the materials used in the walls of Ando's cube inside the museum is a perceptual experience that can ground different, richer aesthetic judgements because at first, the raw concrete of the walls may appear 'unfriendly', inhospitable. If, however, we run our hands over the concrete, the impression is completely different: its smoothness and warm temperature convey a radically different sense of the material, which can ultimately transform our visual perception of the walls themselves. After touching the perfectly smooth

³⁴ See Steen Eiler Rasmussen, *Experiencing Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1959).

³⁵ For an analysis of the role of movement in architectural experience, see Fred Rush, *On Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2008).

and pure concrete surface, we can start to feel that the walls are welcoming and are a suitable place for the exposition and appreciation of other works of art. Again, in this second case, direct perception of certain non-aesthetic properties by specific perceptual means can radically modify our aesthetic judgements. It follows that a proper architectural experience is not only related to sight but includes other senses as well.

In conclusion, an adequate account of architectural experience on which Scruton thinks ascriptions of aesthetic value are based must include an explicit reference to the experience of movement, for this element is crucial to an inclusive perception of both the non-aesthetic and aesthetic properties of a building.³⁶

A second criticism of Scruton's account is based on the fact that his theory does not properly accommodate our intuitions about the relationship between a building and its environment.³⁷ By not explicitly mentioning this relation's importance to architectural success, Scruton's account does not adequately capture an essential aspect of architectural appreciation and beauty: its localized nature. For instance, Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater is not only beautiful for its use of horizontal and vertical lines but also because the horizontal lines echo the rocky plane on which they rest. The so-called 'sense of detail' advocated by Scruton as the key element of architectural understanding should be enhanced by an equally important 'sense of location'.³⁸ Taking into account a building's location can sometimes influence the perception of its aesthetic and artistic properties. For instance, a building can also be judged appropriate based on what is built around it. Architects usually design their buildings in relation to where these constructions will stand; their features should therefore be seen as responding to the environment. These interactions may cause us to judge certain buildings in different ways. A famous example is Philip Johnson's Sony Tower in New York City, which can be seen as contrasting with the functional and modernist style of the surrounding

³⁶ For another theory that analyses architecture as a visual art, see Edward Winters, 'Architecture', in *A Companion to Aesthetics*, 2nd ed., ed. David E. Cooper et al. (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 74–6. Scruton's and Winters's theories have recently been criticized by Larry Shiner in his 'On Aesthetics and Function in Architecture', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 69 (2011): 31–41. An interesting discussion on the implications of including senses other than sight in the category of aesthetics is Frank Sibley, 'Tastes, Smells, and Aesthetics', in *Approach to Aesthetics*, 207–55.

³⁷ For an analysis of the concept of harmony between buildings, see Rafael De Clercq, 'Modern Architecture and the Concept of Harmony', *British Journal of Aesthetics* 51 (2010): 69–79.

³⁸ For clear discussions of the role of location in relation to the appreciation of architecture, see Allen Carlson, 'Existence, Location, and Function: The Appreciation of Architecture', in *Philosophy and Architecture*, ed. Michael H. Mitias (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), 141–64, and 'On Aesthetically Appreciating Human Environments', *Philosophy and Geography* 4 (2001): 9–24.

buildings and, thus, as addressing a certain architectural style in a peculiar and interesting way. Just as he recognizes movement, Scruton also recognizes the importance of the distinguishing feature of location in architecture. His notion of architectural success, based on the notion of the appropriateness of the parts and the whole of a single building, does not, however, emphasize the weight of this concept. I do not claim that Scruton does not consider movement or location at all. He does indeed recognize that location is a distinguishing feature of architecture, and he acknowledges the role of movement and its importance in the perception of 'anticipatory' appearances of objects.³⁹ Rather, my criticism is that these elements are not explicitly included in his account of imaginative perception applied to architecture, which is developed principally in terms of visual experiences and upon which our architectural experience is based.

The two previous lines of reasoning suggest one should make two revisions to Scruton's account. The charge of not including the localized nature of architecture in the notion of architectural success can be addressed by refining the notion as follows: 'The measure of architectural success is a pleasant architectural experience that is determined by the relation between the parts that compose a building *and* by the harmonization of a building with its surroundings.' If this emendation is accepted, we can also modify the related account of architectural beauty by first recognizing an intrinsic and an extrinsic sense of beauty in buildings. A building is intrinsically beautiful if a relation of proportion exists among its proper parts, while it is extrinsically beautiful if the whole of such parts is in harmony with its surroundings. Being extrinsically beautiful is not, however, a sufficient condition for being intrinsically beautiful: a building may not look completely unpleasant if visually combined with the appropriate surroundings, even though it may not be taken as proportioned on its own.

In a similarly revisionist spirit, we can also accommodate our intuitions about the importance of movement in architectural experience. For example, we can say that an experience involving the perception of certain harmonic and rhythmic aspects of a building is achieved by means of movement. The perception of these elements is not only a matter of perceiving that one detail matches the other visually but also involves kinaesthetic perception exercised through movement. A pleasant experience, and therefore a successful architectural composition, is related to the particular way in which a building leads us through its rooms and internal spaces. Whether extrinsic or intrinsic, the beauty of a construction is achieved not only by appealing to visual perception but also includes those pleasant experiences derived by moving inside and around the building.

³⁹ See Scruton, *Aesthetics of Architecture*, 10–13, and 96.

Elaborating on these last thoughts about movement, we can also significantly improve on Scruton's concept of imaginative perception. I have suggested that, like instances of imaginative visual perception, aesthetically relevant experiences of movement are not to be taken as unreflective and mindless strolls through halls and rooms. Because imaginative perception, which is discussed by Scruton in relation to sight, requires thinking about a detail in a certain way, an aesthetically relevant experience of movement must be similarly seen as involving an awareness of the spaces delimited by the parts of the building. In particular, the perceiver must be aware that the building is leading her through its internal spaces in a certain way, possibly for specific purposes. The notion of 'reflective movement' identifies this process of experiencing movement in which we are aware of a particular path suggested by the arrangement of the building's details. Just as we may be asked to view a pattern of detail in a particular way, we may be asked to become aware of our movement in a specific space for certain reasons. For instance, we may be asked to perceive moving inside a church from one specific position to another as if it were a process of approaching faith or any other metaphorical notion appropriate to the particular location. By becoming aware of how details are arranged and how they guide us, the overall experience of an architectural work is enriched, which can influence judgements of architectural value.⁴⁰

The concept of reflective movement refers to imaginative experiences influenced by perceptions not directly related to sight. The perception of solemnity and purity in Ando's cube, for instance, can be seen as emerging by applying imagination to our perception when we touch the raw concrete of the walls. Reflective movement cannot be classified as a type of imaginative perception in the sense previously specified by Scruton, that is, as an activity strictly related to sight. In fact, reflective movement, in certain cases, can influence emotions and experiences felt when seeing a work, thereby subverting the senses' order of importance. This does not mean that movement and kinaesthetic sensations are more important than sight, for this would completely subvert Scruton's account and, more importantly, does not seem to be correct. What is suggested here is simply that there are cases in which imaginative perception, intended as an activity strictly related to sight, can be influenced and also enhanced by reflective movement, which is intended as an activity that combines imaginative (and thus mental) elements with movement and kinaesthetic sensations. It can be convincingly argued that the term 'imaginative perception' describes a broader category that includes imaginative visual perception (in the sense previously explained) and reflective movement (or imaginative kinaesthetic perception).

⁴⁰ See Alva Noë, *Action in Perception* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005) for a theory that underscores the importance of the localized aspects of our perception.

One may legitimately contend that a crucial point in Scruton's description of imaginative perception is that it is the activity by which we perceive 'what is not there,' that is, something that emerges from the real composition of the architectural details but whose content is of no existential import. Consequently, it can be argued that reflective movement cannot be equated with imaginative perception because reflective movement is an activity that acquaints us with how the world is. In particular, by walking through a castle we become aware of how this castle is, thereby precluding the activity of imagination. If this is the case, then reflective movement cannot be equated with imaginative perception. One way of addressing this objection is by again drawing attention to what attitude a successful and adequate architectural experience may require us to adopt. In particular, sometimes the proper appreciation of a building may actually require us to move and experience the building while applying our imaginative faculties. For example, it can be argued that a proper appreciation of the majesty and firmness of Margat, a Crusader castle in Syria, requires moving around it and imagining ourselves as soldiers of the Mamluk sultan of Egypt trying to capture it. The perception of certain aesthetic features that a building possesses or possessed may require, among other things, imagining ourselves in the context and conditions in which that building was. Perceiving the difficulty of ascending the hills where the Krak des Chevaliers (another Crusader castle) lies and actively engaging our imagination in this act may provide us with a richer experience, which can sensibly ground perceptions of both non-aesthetic properties and aesthetic features of the castle. In addition, such experiences cannot be classified as merely visual, since they involve a more complicated awareness of sensations and emotions derived from bodily perceptions during our movement. In conclusion, it seems that Scruton's theory of imaginative perception should make room for a notion of active engagement. This is because imagination can be applied to movement to allow for a richer, more appropriate architectural experience. Including reflective movement is consistent with Scruton's theory and would, in fact, strengthen his account.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Scruton's theory is a fascinating attempt to clarify the structure and content of our aesthetic engagement with buildings. The aim of the first two parts of this article was largely expository, and in them, I clarified various interpretative nodes of Scruton's theory.⁴¹ In the third part, I advanced two criticisms and suggested

⁴¹ Other criticisms of Scruton's theory appear in Anthony Skillen, 'The Foundations of Roger Scruton's *The Aesthetics of Architecture*', *British Journal of Aesthetics* 20 (1980): 257–65, and R. A. Sharpe, review of *The Aesthetics of Architecture*, by Roger Scruton, *Philosophy* 55 (1980): 567–69.

various revisions. In particular, I underscored the importance of the relation between a building and its surroundings as a criterion of architectural beauty and discussed the notion of reflective movement. By including these emendations, it seems that a broader range of elements that play a crucial role in our architectural experience has been captured. Given that architectural experience is, according to Scruton, what grounds aesthetic judgements about buildings, a more comprehensive account of how architectural works are appreciated is required if we want to achieve a better understanding of the value of certain constructions. I also argued that the concept of imaginative perception should be understood as including means of perception that are not exclusively visual.

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