

# Actions and the energeiai: the ‘ethics of borderlands’ in the educational praxis of architecture

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## **Introduction: human conduct, morality and ethics**

My whole tendency and I believe the tendency of all men who ever tried to write or talk Ethics or Religion was to run against the boundaries of language. This running against the walls of our cage is perfectly, absolutely hopeless. Ethics so far as it springs from the desire to say something about the ultimate meaning of life, the absolute good, the absolute valuable, can be no science. What it says does not add to our knowledge in any sense. But it is a document of a tendency in the human mind which I personally cannot help respecting deeply and I would not for my life ridicule it. (Wittgenstein 1965, p.11-12).

Sometime between September 1929 and December 1930 Ludwig Wittgenstein delivered a lecture to ‘The Heretics’, a society of Cambridge. The untitled manuscript was published posthumously with the title ‘A Lecture on Ethics’, giving a hint about the content of the lecture, and it is the only public lecture that Wittgenstein gave dealing explicitly<sup>1</sup> with the topic of Ethics. This is extremely important because in his book, the *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*, Wittgenstein claimed that ‘ethics cannot be expressed’ (1922, par. 6.421) and that ‘[w]hereof one cannot speak thereof one must be silent’ (1922, par.7). Wittgenstein broke his silence by opening that

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<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, according to James Edwards 1982, p.81, all of Wittgenstein’s work, and especially *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, deals with Ethics.

lecture with a definition of Ethics taken from G. E. Moore's *Principia Ethica*: 'I am using it [the word "Ethics"] to cover an enquiry for which, at all events, there is no other word: *the general enquiry into what is good*'. (Moore 1962, p.2). The italicised words were the ones quoted by Wittgenstein. Moore in his book argued that he used this definition in contrast to the disposition of many philosophers to accept as an 'adequate definition of "Ethics" the statement that it deals with the question of what is good or bad *in human conduct*'. (Moore 1962, p.2, emphasis added). Moore also claimed further that the enquiries of Ethics of these philosophers 'are properly confined to "conduct" or "practice" ' (1962, p.2). Moore clarified further that 'good conduct' is a complex notion where both 'good' (and/or 'bad'), as well as 'conduct', need to be defined. Moreover, he followed on that '*we all know pretty well what "conduct" is*' (1962, p.3), so the focus should remain on the moral uses of the terms 'good' and/or 'bad' (Quinton 1968, p.125). 'What is good? and What is bad? and the discussion of this question (or these questions) I give the name of Ethics[...]' (Moore 1962, p.3).

This paper proceeds to examine the discourse of Ethics as it appears in architectural education, by doing exactly the *opposite*<sup>2</sup> of what Moore suggests. I start by challenging the fact that we all know 'pretty well' what 'human conduct' is, and I focus especially on defining this term in its relation to architecture, and especially to architectural education. The reason for doing this is *not* because I trust the dispositions of the 'many' other philosophers more than Moore, but because my aim and Moore's are dissimilar. Moore's aim, as he stated clearly above, is to define Ethics, and find what is

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<sup>2</sup> There is a contradiction here with Moore's non-naturalism, that 'good is good, and that is the end of the matter'. Moore 1962, pp.6-7. See more in Daly 1996, p.31. 'Nothing can be said about 'good' except that is good'.

good (and /or bad). My aim is different, since I deliberately do not define Ethics, but rather discuss it through its manifestations of *morality* and *ethics* in concrete situations.<sup>3</sup>

Although in their practical and common usage the terms ‘ethics’ and ‘morality’ have similar meanings in the modern English language, as I have elsewhere argued (Koutsoumpos 2006), their etymological genealogy implies that ‘*morality*’ is associated with normative rules, while ‘*ethics*’ is characterised by a reference to more mundane notions of habit or addiction. Bernard Williams has suggested that ‘morality’ in Western culture has a unique significance ‘developing a special notion of *obligation*’ (1985, p.6). For this, Williams comes to call ‘morality’ a narrower system of the wider discourse of ‘ethics’. The distinction here can be summarised by describing a connection between ‘*morality*’ with normative obligation and external rule, and ‘*ethics*’ with habitual action, pre-accepted customs and dispositions. Hereafter, I expand Williams’ categorical distinctions by introducing another narrow system that focuses on an understanding of disposition, which I name ‘*ethics*’. *Morality* and *ethics* (note the italics) will be two distinct areas of the overall discourse of Ethics, which for the sake of clarity, I am going to call ‘Ethics’ (note the capital E).

My tactic here is to trust the fact that everyone understands something as having to do with notions of good or bad (in its manifestation as *morality* or *ethics*), despite the fact that these notions can be different amongst different people. In these terms, I invert Moore’s approach by suggesting that ‘we all know pretty well what

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<sup>3</sup> It is this decision that is aware of the contradiction of ‘wanting to support ethics but rejecting its defining them’ that Johnston 1999, p.167 discusses. This in some sense, responds to Wittgenstein’s conviction that Ethics can not be communicated or expressed; a conviction that is rooted well back in the history of philosophy starting in Plato’s dialogues *Protagoras* and *Meno*.

Ethics is’, and I focus instead on the question of ‘*what is human conduct*’, or in other words, ‘*where can we find Ethics?*’, or else, ‘in which area of human life does Ethics become manifested?’

This paper is divided into two parts. The first part utilises the Aristotelian Ethics that distinguish three areas of human action or conduct: thinking, making and doing (*theoretical, poetic and practical*). Through the analysis of the terms I show that, so far, ‘thinking’ and ‘making’ have been the conventional ways of seeing architectural Ethics as *morality*. On the other hand, ‘doing’ which is associated with *ethics*, has been largely underestimated in the role that it plays in the wider Ethical discourse. For this, I build an argument that supports *ethics* through ‘doing’ and *praxis*. The second part of the paper presents this argument in a concrete situation of a dialogical interaction between students and tutors from the design studio, the core of architectural education, where they discuss ‘ethics of borderlands’. In this concrete situation I focus on *ethics* and present its manifestation in *praxis*.<sup>4</sup>

### **Action, conduct and the energeiai (theory, poesis, praxis)**

The aim of this paper, to identify the area of life where Ethics become manifested, is very similar to the structure of *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle’s major treatise on Ethics. According to Deborah Achtenberg, before proceeding into defining the human good, Aristotle first tried to identify its field of exercise, what he calls the human *ergon*, a term that has been translated by Bradshaw as ‘deed’ or ‘thing done’ (2004, p.1), and by Heidegger as ‘what is

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<sup>4</sup> Note the contrast with Daly 1996, p.204 when he says that ‘ethical value cannot reside in my action or in the world’.

accomplished in action’, or ‘what is effected in working’ (1975, p. 12). After this, Aristotle tried to find what completes human good, namely virtue and happiness: ‘Aristotle claims that virtue *is derived from our ergon* [...]’ (1991, p.60). This is a rather bottom-up process for the enquiry of Ethics, contrary to the top-down approach suggested by Moore. Aristotle used this approach deliberately in contrast to Plato (1096a 9; Gadamer 2004, p.310), in order to avoid the impasses that his teacher had come to concerning the education of Ethics.<sup>5</sup> Consecutively, from Aristotle’s arguments, *ergon* becomes the field for the exercise of Ethics, and this leads us to the term *energeia* (‘in’ the *ergon*), which most probably was invented by Aristotle (Bradshaw 2004, p.1). The definition of *energeia* appears to give great pains to contemporary philosophers, mainly because of the frequency (Bradshaw 2004, p.1) and the inconsistency (Chen 1956) of its use by Aristotle in his various treatises, and also because of the language and culture shifts that changed the meaning of its translation through the ages. For example, Heidegger (1975, p.12) argues that the translation from the ancient Greek *energeia* to the Latin *actualitas* and the modern actuality is deceptive: ‘The literal translation is misleading. In truth it brings precisely another transposition or misplacement to the word of Being’\_Heidegger argues overall that with the translations of the words through the historical time and shift of the historic paradigms (Ancient Greek, Latin, modern world) the fundamental concepts of metaphysics do not remain the same but change, loosing every time something of their original meaning. Going into further detail is beyond the scope of this paper, so here I will use Heidegger’s definition of ‘*ergon*’, and extend it to define

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<sup>5</sup> Plato in his dialogues *Meno* and *Protagoras* claimed that virtue is not possible to be taught. For the contrast between the *Meno* and the *Nicomachean Ethics* see Reuter 2001, p.82. In defence of the Platonic method of enquiry see Annas 1999, p.96.

*energeia* as ‘what is accomplished *in action*’, emphasising the *inner* and ‘active’ connection with action as such. From these definitions, we can conclude that human conduct is demonstrated by the activities that constitute human life, and is revealed *in action* (or *en-ergon*).

In the context of Ethics, however, human conduct usually means the ‘[m]anner of conducting oneself or one's life; behaviour; usually with more or less reference to its moral quality (good or bad)’ (OED 2nd edn 1989, under conduct). In other words, human conduct is the ‘way of life’ and according to Oakeshott it appears as ‘*inter homines*’ (Oakeshott 1975, p.35), because it engages people in inter-action. The word ‘conduct’ means the action of leading or guidance, which nowadays is almost identical with the root word ‘duct’. This notion of guidance is important in the context of this paper because of its implicit educational inference between the teacher with the student, or a student with a colleague. Conduct, though, should rather emphasise a meaning of inter-action that is fundamental for the Aristotelian understanding of the human being as a political animal; while, according to Oakeshott, ‘what joins agents *in conduct* is to be recognized as a “practice”[...]’ (Oakeshott 1975, p.55 –emphasis added). Following this line of thought, my overall argument will support an understanding of Ethics that appears *in* ‘practice’ and especially, a narrower notion of practice, that of *praxis*. For education, this means that the conduct of Ethics appears not only *in action*, but more specifically *in* the exercise of the actual process of education; the educational *praxis*, in its most mundane level of everyday life.

In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle defined three prominent ways of life. The first one, ‘the life of enjoyment’, Aristotle dismissed as ‘vulgar’, since it is the way of life that identifies ‘the good or

happiness, with pleasure' (1998, 1095b 14, p.6). The other two ways of life are the 'political' and the 'contemplative'.<sup>6</sup> According to Nicolaus Lobckowicz (1967), the 'political life' is the origin of our contemporary notion of *practice* and the 'contemplative life' is the origin to our understanding of *theory*: 'In fact Aristotle seems to have been the first Greek thinker to reduce the many different walks of life to three and in a sense to two, thus becoming the first to explicitly contrast "theory" and "practice" ' (1967, p.4). Since Aristotle, the distinction between the equivalent Greek terms of '*theoria*' and '*praxis*' has been central to the Western philosophical tradition, forming a fundamental opposition. Furthermore, Aristotle very often 'introduces a more refined distinction between "*poesis*" and "*praxis*" ' (Bernstein 1971, p.ix), a difference that is rendered in English as 'making' and 'doing'. A characteristic example of the above distinction is the title of the Architectural Humanities Research Association (AHRA) conference, *The Politics of Making: Theory, Practice, Product*, that took place in Oxford in November 2006. Namely its subtitle appears to have adopted the established Aristotelian categories; a fact that is also apparent from the correspondence of the conference's three strands, being divided into Theory, Practice and Product, with the three basic types of Aristotelian knowledge.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> An earlier version of this tripartite distinction is attributed to Pythagoras who described the human conducts through a metaphor of a festival: Some people join in it in order to sell their merchandise and gain money; some to display their physical force; and some only to admire the beauty of the displayed things as well as the speeches and the performances. Lobckowicz 1967, p.5 mentions this story accrediting Cicero and Jamblichus, who refer to a lost treatise of Heracleides of Pontus.

<sup>7</sup> Aristotle 1989, 1025b 25 in *Metaphysics* claims that 'every intellectual activity is either practical or productive or speculative'. See also Ross 1964, p.187.

Elsewhere, I have analysed in detail the philosophical origins of the terms ‘thinking,’ ‘making’, and ‘doing’ by revisiting Aristotle’s Ethical writings through two dipoles: *theoria/praxis* (Koutsoumpos 2006) and *poesis/praxis* (Koutsoumpos 2007), and because of the limited space, I will take the details of this analysis for granted. Here, I can only summarise the overall argument that *theoria* is an understanding of theory that does not proceed from practice and does not prescribe and predetermine action, but it rather *participates in the praxis*. On the other hand, the difference between *poesis* and *praxis* lies in the fact that making is an activity that has a purpose, an aim, an end or a *telos*, that is outside the activity itself (building a house); while doing is an activity that embodies an aim in itself (playing the flute). My overall project challenges the above categories, especially the dominance of *theoria* and *poesis* over *praxis*, and argues for the possibility of seeing architecture *as a form of praxis* or ‘doing’. In what follows I examine the previous theoretical discourse on a concrete situation of the design studio in architecture.

## **The situation of ‘ethics of borderlands’ in the design studio**

Ethnomethodological studies *analyze everyday activities as members’ methods* [...] Their study is directed to the tasks of *learning* how members’ actual, ordinary activities consist of methods to make *practical* actions, *practical* circumstances, *common sense* knowledge of social structures, and *practical* sociological reasoning analyzeable; and of discovering the formal properties of *commonplace*, *practical common sense* actions, “*from within*” actual settings, as ongoing accomplishments of those settings. (Garfinkel 1967, p.vii-viii –emphasis added).



The key study below is part of a wider research project that examines the manifestation of Ethics in three educational case studies: the architectural design studio, the music class and the *dojo* (the place for the education of martial arts). The use of the everyday situations to answer theoretical problems is actually not different from Wittgenstein's later suggestion of philosophising: inquiring ethics *without* philosophy. In the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein adopted a much more diffuse and humble style of writing, 'showing his unsayable answer to an unutterable question. *Here*, in a life exemplified by this sort of writing, by this kind of attention to things, is found "the sense of life" ' (Edwards 1982, p. 104, –emphasis added). Wittgenstein in his later work came to suggest that '[t]here is not a philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, like different therapies' (Wittgenstein 2001, par. 133). One such 'method' or therapy<sup>8</sup> that was strongly influenced from Wittgenstein's thought is *ethnomethodology* (Lynch 1993, p.20). Developed by Harold Garfinkel in the late '60s, ethnomethodology still remains today one of the most unconventional means of sociological analysis, exactly because of its radical way of de-literalising the common understandings of the way that people accomplish their actions, through a painstaking focus on the practical and mundane horizon of everyday situated practices. The following

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<sup>8</sup> 'Ethnomethodological studies are not directed to formulating or arguing correctives. They are useless when they are done as ironies. Although they are directed to the preparation of manuals on sociological methods, these are in no way supplements to "standard procedure," but are distinct of them. They do not formulate a remedy for practical action, as if it was being found about practical action that they were better or worse than they are usually cracked up to be. Nor are they in search of humanistic arguments, nor do they engage in or encourage permissive discussions of theory'. Garfinkel 1967, p.viii.

presentation<sup>9</sup> of the situation and its analysis owes a lot to an ethnomethodological understanding of the way that people give accounts about their methods.

In the design studio of the School of Architecture of the University of Edinburgh, a tutor (John) and a group of students (amongst them Mary) were having a tutorial. They were all sitting around a big table where drawings, models and a laptop lay on top. David, the course organiser, came by and having attended part of the tutorial-discussion between John and the students, he made a long (>30 min) intervention (Figure 1). At some point Mary came to ask about the purpose of the project (Figure 2):

Mary: I just wanted to ask (.) sometimes (we want to be) (0.5) that (1) e:m (0.5) I need to figure out (.) some kind of (.) pu:rpore in order to (prioritise)(concretise) (.) for example (.) my question (0.5) for the information (in each case)

David: Okeyy

John: I think that was (.) part of (.) our discussion (.) our initial discussion (0.5) when they were trying to describe their project=

D: =So what is your purpose?

M: That is what I a:m trying to figure out fro:m (0.5) e::m what questions tha::t (I have) (0.5) and (.) wha:t (.) seems to be interesting to: (.) deal with [so this]

D: [but you already] answered the (.) (main aim) (0.5) your purpose is to investigate (.) here (2) that

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<sup>9</sup> Here, I have used the Conversation Analysis' transcript techniques offered by Emanuel Schegloff, in his online transcription project <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/schegloff/TranscriptionProject/index.html> (23. 03. 2007). In brief, the number in parenthesis indicate the length of a pause in seconds and the bracketed words represents overlapping speech.

is your (purpose) isn't it? (0.5) em and in investigating here with all the skills and the techniques that you have and (enschooled) as an architect (0.5) which include the fact that the project (makes) interventions (it is just experiment isn't it?) big interventions (.) and (.) we are drawing (again) as we like it (.) as we see it (.) as we understand it and as we gather more and more information (in it) (1) maybe in the process of doing that (.) the purpose of your (endeavour) is: (.) to establish (further purpose) (.) to establish (further purpose) (1.5) but we know that the difference that drives all purposes (.) thus far is the interest (.) in (0.5) reconsidering (.) the traditional notion of limits (0.5) architectural limitation (.) and that's already driving your (intrigence area) because you found (.) this line (.) goes out quite far (0.5) the river is merely a line (when amount) (.) does not omit (.) and it has traditions (.) conventions (.) being (caused) already (1) there are (merely) new techniques further underlining that (.) line (1) I mean what (particularly) issue someone etc etc (0.5) so there are all sorts of purposes yeah? Is this not good enough purpose? =

M: ahm ((affirming))

D: I don't think we need purpose in sense of the use of your purpose is to design a museum (.) your purpose is to design and archive (.) your purpose is to make a primary school (.) your purpose is (.) you know (.) maybe that might be a programmatic value of plan that could rise from this investigation of limits of the city (1) I think that's where (.) we are quite useful to the city authorities (in the purpose that) they would have an agenda which may much more driven by the scientific technological advancement program (1) (while we) we may want to look at the fantastic (.) wonderful context of Shanghai (.) and show architectural language (.) as it comes out of the reevaluation of (.) its: historical limits (4) Simple isn't it?

Student: Hehh ((laughs affirming))

J: But I guess (.) they have to give an answer and (2) on how they understand these limits (.) they have to to ha(.) have a proposition against how they [would]

- D: [but they]=
- J: =if they would have to transform it and this [is I] think the job of the archit[ect ]
- D: [I agree] [I agree]
- J: =then they need to have a tendency and this is what a thesis is [in my understanding]
- D: [Well I think (.) if you take that slo]wly (.) you need to have (.) an understanding of the limits
- J: Ahm ((affirming))
- D: and you say oke::y (.) lets do that (.) so what do we do: as architects (.) we draw (.) where all the drawings are limits (0.5) these are all wonderful limits (.) born out of techni:ques of representations (1) but they are not necessarily the limits of this thesis (.) what limits (.) that's clear limitation when you section you draw limits (.) that's the main key about sections (.) that's why we draw them all the time (.) that why it's difficult as architects to (.) eh (0.5) realise sometimes that what we are doing (.) (in principle) (intrinsically) (.) is limiting (1) is why (.) is interesting to (.) invert (.) that (.) picture (0.5) of (.) ou:r sections as (.) em: (0.5) connectivity (...vity) rather than (2)
- J: separation=
- D: =separation. (3) A project of (.) I mean you don't hear this (.) in architecture schools (.) because this is difficult to imagine (.) given our normal lexicons (.) but (.) how do you draw (.) an inrelation=
- J: =hh ((affirming)) (1)
- D: as opposed to a section (0.5) because under the (0.5) ethics of borderlands (and our interest) (.) in borderlands

you would have to draw an inrelation (0.5) (inaudible)  
 (2) You'd have to change the title (.) of our (.)  
 orthographic eh tradition (0.5) to draw inrelations. (1) It  
 is quite good, [isn't it] John?

- J: [aha:]  
 ((affirming))
- D: I know (.) I have to remember that (.) hhh[hh]hhhh  
 ((laughter))
- J: [hh]  
 ((laughter affirming))
- D: I have never said it that way before=
- J: =hhhh ((laughter)) (1.5)
- D: I have written it in all sorts of (0.5) (converting) ways but  
 that is very clear (0.5) to draw an inrelation (.) Jesus.

The above discussion gives a first hint that, in spite of the theoretical obstacles pointed out by Wittgenstein for the communication and education of Ethics, students and tutors in the design studio do discuss notions of Ethics in architectural contexts. These notions of Ethics are not just abstract or theoretical reflections about goodness or badness in general, but they are actually rooted deeply in architecture. The whole discussion evolves around the concept of *section*, one of the most fundamental tools of architectural representation. In the above dialogue, every architectural view is a section (including plans and elevations), and for this it draws limits. This leads David to speak explicitly in the given extract about the *Ethics of Borderlands*, despite the arguments for the ineffability of Ethics by Wittgenstein.

This dialogue also provides a first glimpse of the fact that the students and the tutors were not just exchanging logical propositions or pure statements about Ethical issues as passive agents. On the contrary, Mary appeared to ask for advice that can be seen as having to do with Ethics. When asking for a purpose to understand her own questions in order to choose ‘what is interesting to deal with’ she is acknowledging an impasse, a lack of aim, or *telos*, in her work so far. Although that in her words it is not clear if this is an Ethical impasse or a general question about the brief of the building that she has to design, David deliberately opens up the discussion to Ethics by introducing the aim as ‘the establishment of difference’ and that ‘the difference that drives all purposes is the interest in reconsidering the traditional notion of limits and architectural limitation’. The purpose is not just the brief that defines the conventional category of the building (museum, school, archive), but rather the experimentation with the overcoming of limits and the drawing of ‘inrelations’ through conventional sections. In this sense, it is obvious that the teacher did actually engage in conveying moral education to the students by providing examples and suggestions on how an Ethical architecture should be approached. He even makes this explicit with the use of the phrase the ‘Ethics of Borderlands’.

From the beginning part of this paper, I have pointed out that the main difference between *praxis* and *poesis* is the existence of an aim beyond the activity itself. In some sense we can suggest that the whole dialogue was concerned exactly with the destabilization of *telos* or aim in architecture. According to that discussion, the teacher and the student used the term ‘purpose’ that is very similar if not identical to that of aim or *telos*. I already mentioned before that when Mary asks about a ‘purpose’ it points towards a lack of aim, or *telos*,

in her work. Moreover, I pointed out that David deliberately gave an Ethical twist to her question by promoting ‘the establishment of difference’ as an ultimate aim, going beyond conventional notions that see the purpose as the brief or the program that leads directly to a building. For this reason, the purpose of the project was not given in advance in a handout, but it was constructed in the design studio as part of the educational process. In what follows I show how different ‘purposes’ are constructed in the dialogue.

First of all, Mary’s question came to initiate a new sub-theme, that of ‘purpose-finding’, in a discussion that was considering issues of representation as sectioning. Nevertheless very quickly Mary’s role in the discussion was superseded by David’s long responses, and also by a secondary discussion between the two tutors. David’s long responses, in particular, structure the above situation into three distinct parts. In some sense his responses can be described as monologues not only because of their length and the lack of interaction from the other parties, but also because of the fact each response has an internal structure that includes a start, middle and end. The ending is being made especially explicit by the announcement of a rhetorical question each time: ‘Is this not good enough purpose?’, ‘Simple, isn’t it?’, ‘It is quite good, isn’t it John?’ These monologues convey an explicit theoretical delivery of notions of morality. As David was telling the students just before the given extract, the section is an action of separation, distantiation and ghettoing, or organization, neatening and tidying, according to which side of the coin one chooses to focus on. By drawing or creating walls and boundaries of various forms, architects continually make ethical decisions that historically, at the city level, have led to ghetto-sectioning Jews ‘in the sixteenth century in Venice’, or mad people

‘in eighteenth or nineteenth century in Europe’. ‘Your sections draw limits,’ says David to the students and what we as architects are doing ‘in principle is limiting’. David was setting an external rule, that ‘limiting is bad’, and that what the students should do is supersede this by drawing ‘inrelations’ instead of sections. He even titled this moral lesson as the ‘Ethics of Borderlands’. This understanding of Ethics is very similar to the concept of *morality*. No matter how Ethically correct and progressive this idea of drawing inrelations is, the way that it is delivered, through these kind of monologues that aim to stimulate the students through their reflective faculties, aim to point the students towards the ‘right way’ of *morality*. Nevertheless, David did not actually give a lecture about the Ethics of Borderlands, and the monologues were actually part of a dialogue where the different parties negotiated the purposes of the project.

This negotiation becomes apparent in the way that the three parties use personal pronouns in the above excerpt, revealing very different approaches of purpose that have to do with the notion of aim or *telos* of the architectural action. First of all Mary makes her question in first-person singular, referring to a personal problem, a situation that she is facing right now: ‘I need to figure out some kind of purpose’. David’s first monologue started with referring to Mary’s problem in particular by using second person: ‘Your purpose is to investigate here’, ‘the skills and techniques that *you* have’. Very soon though he introduces the project, and from then on he switches to first-person plural: ‘We are drawing as *we* like it’, or ‘*we* know that the difference that drives all purposes’. By this fact he starts to include the demands of the project and those that are part of it, like an ideal group of students who are approaching this ideal purpose. When he has to make a specific comment on Mary he returns to the



second-person: 'That is already driving *your* area, because *you* found this line'. The second part of the monologue (after Mary's affirmation) starts with the repetitive use of the second-person again, but this time not to refer to Mary's specific problem, but rather in order to emphasise an imperative voice that imposes a rule: '*Your* purpose is to design a museum', in the same sense that we understand a sentence '*You* shall not steal!' This second paragraph emphasises David's personal view of the topic by saying '*I* think'. The second-person plural follows to show again a different category; the role of the architects, in contrast to the third person plural; the role of the commissioning authorities. '*We* are quite useful to the planning authorities, in the purpose that *they* would have an agenda', the distinction here is not very far from the practice/theory division as presented before.

John nevertheless intervened, and started using the third person plural in order to refer to the students: '*they* have to give an answer, on how *they* understand these limits, *they* have to have a proposition[...]' which emphasises the responsibility of the students to commit in a design proposal, that needs an aim. Finally in the third part of David's monologue, he said: '*You* need to have an understanding of the limits and *you* say ok lets do that, so what do *we* do as architects? *We* draw!' Again, here, David changes from the second-person singular to the second-person plural in order to differentiate, somehow, John's views from his own that are part of what an 'ideal' again group of architects do. David also says: 'that's a limitation when *you* section *you* draw limits that's the main key about sections that's why *we* draw them all the time'. In this case the second-person singular is making a reference to the student's work again, a fact that is confirmed by the fact that, while saying this,

David points towards the model and looks toward the student. The change to the second-person plural, ‘that’s why *we* draw them all the time’, starts to refer to the totality of architects who admit of being sometimes unaware of ‘what *we* are doing’. Finally, after John’s affirmation, David changes back to the clear second person singular-plural distinction in order to emphasise the responsibility of the students in contrast to the ‘ideal’ standards of the project: ‘[...]under the ethics of borderlands (and *our* interest) in borderlands *you* would have to draw an inrelation[...]’.

From the above analysis we can see vividly the variety of purposes or aims that one can find in architecture, and how these are constructed through discussion between the students and the tutors. There is the first-person singular (*I*) or personal purpose that here is identified with a need to set up the program of the brief for a building; there is the second-person singular (*you*) purpose that refers to the students and their responsibility to meet an imperative purpose in order to be part of ‘the project’, or part of the ideal team that understands the purpose; there is the third-person plural (*they*) referring again to the responsibility of the students in order to cultivate a tendency towards a thesis; and there is the first-person plural (*we*) that refers to the ideal team of students that understand the purpose or sometimes the totality of architects that are misled but should go back to the ‘right’ purpose: *Drawing inrelations* (according to the Ethics of borderlands).

All these different purposes are actually external to the activity of architecture. While the purpose in the case of poetics is different from the activity itself, in the *praxis* it is inherent in the activity. In this sense, in terms of Ethics, architecture as *poesis* has a purpose that is external to it, and for this is related to *morality*. On the other hand

architecture as *praxis* has a purpose that is internal to it, and for this it is related to *ethics*. Nevertheless, the variety of purposes in this situation of the design studio, was constructed *in* the dialogue that consists of the educational activity itself. Although it may reflect moral beliefs and opinions about how architecture is being done, the way that these beliefs were negotiated in the dialogue was not given in advance as a theoretical remedy, or crystallised from the beginning. For this, the educational practice was not a form of making that was leading towards an explicit aim, but it was a form of *praxis*, where the educational aim was inherent in the educational activity: the dialogue.

The dialogue as *praxis* is not relying only on the succession of reflective responses that aim to deliver each time a monologue. Dialogue as *praxis* is a participation in a state of mind characterised by an openness towards the other, and this creates a horizon that is habituated during the educational praxis. As Jodie Nicotra argues in *The Force of Habit*, habit does not *stick to* an individual, in a sense that a self pre-exists, and then habit comes to join it. On the contrary, habit *happens to* one (Nicotra 2005, p.8), in a sense that is beyond one's free will, and at the same time is constitutive of the self; the self is a collection of habits. Deleuze describes the constitution of the self like this: 'We are habits, nothing but habits: the habit of saying "I"' (Deleuze 1991, p.x –cited in Nicotra 2005, p.1). So when each party was conversing in the dialogue delivering *moral* views about Ethics, at the very same time they were habitually using personal pronouns to communicate these Ethical ideas. This habitual response embodies *ethics* in the *praxis* of the dialogue, and it was part of undeclared lessons of this course. In this way we can see that *ethics* and *morality*, although they are connected, since they refer to

evaluation of good and bad or right and wrong as part of the overall Ethical discourse, differ in something extremely substantive. Morality's nature is inseparably related to a normative evaluation external to a practice, while 'ethics' has a descriptive character internal to it. This difference as we saw above is not just a difference in degree or value, but a difference of nature and for this reason should not be mixed, especially in the area of education.

### **Concluding remarks**

It [architecture] may be better grasped *as a verb rather than through its heterogeneous products*; it is a process with inherent value. The presence of a well-grounded *praxis*, the trajectory of an architect's words and deeds over time that embody a responsible practical philosophy, is far more crucial than the aesthetic or functional qualities of a particular work. (Pérez-Gómez 2006, p.205, emphasis added).

This paper attempted a revisit of human action in order to locate the area where *morality* and *ethics* become manifested. Action, conduct, *ergon* and *energeiai* lead to an examination of the Aristotelian notions of *theoria*, *poesis* and *praxis*, of which the first two are connected with *morality* as the so far privileged discourse of Ethics, having to do with normative evaluations according to an external rule. *Praxis*, on the other hand, the activity that does not have an aim apart from the activity itself, embodies *ethics*, the spontaneous evaluation that is based on habit, custom and disposition. This *praxis* in the architectural design studio is the dialogue itself that leads the trajectory.

In this sense, this paper defends the hypothesis that Wittgenstein gestures towards; an area of Ethics that has the

characteristics of an ineffable discourse. A discourse which, although is implicit, cannot be expressed, cannot be put in words, it can arguably be taught through a tacit mode of undeclared lessons. This area of Ethics is *ethics* that is very different from the canonical view that sees Ethics as a normative doctrine. *Morality*, on the other hand, although effable, explicit, expressible and reflective, *cannot* be taught exactly because of its normative character that resists the rationalization of Ethics.

The mundane activity of *praxis* was found to encompass the *ethics* of the educational activity, diluted in the repetitive nature of the dialogue in the context of the design studio. On the other hand, *morality* was found to be part of a distilling process that refines argument about how things should be – here, the Ethics of Borderlands. During this process of dilution and distillation, although *ethics* and *morality* are connected, since they refer to evaluation of good and bad or right and wrong as part of the spirit of the overall Ethical discourse, they differ in something extremely substantive. *Morality's* nature is inseparably related to a normative evaluation external to a practice, while *ethics* has a descriptive character internal to it. This difference as we saw above is not just a difference of degree or value, but a difference of nature and for this reason should not be mixed, especially in the area of education.

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