



# ILLUMINATING AMBIGUITY

From Jacques Tati to Architectural Design

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Examiner: Pekka Passinmäki

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# Abstract

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Owing to Martin Heidegger's accounts of our everyday experiences—whereas we fluidly encounter entities in a number of hitch-free activities—our primary way of understanding hardly becomes an issue for us. Here, we always already have an implicit understanding of a meaning-giving context that we are unreflectively immersed in, namely "the world", whereby entities are inconspicuously understood to make sense in a certain way. In other words, since we are unreflectively "thrown into" the world, thereby presupposing (so feeling familiar with) what entities are in terms of their significance in our concern, the way we can be always fluidly familiar with them becomes possible, so to speak, by keeping ourselves estranged from them. In this sense, the more it is familiar to us in our everyday experience, the more we overlook it.

The most ordinary things, thus, possibly have the most extra-ordinary background as it has been the least observed while it is always already implicitly understood by us. This thesis, by applying this interpretation of what lies behind the ordinary to the context of architecture, postulates that if such overlooked side of architecture in our everyday experience can be *illuminated*, we may have a chance to re-encounter the ordinary kind of architecture in an extra-ordinary sense: With that in mind, this thesis aims to explore notion of ambiguity in architectural design in terms of its capacity to allow us to re-discover the ordinary.

The methods of study take a form of hermeneutic circle, moving back and forth between illustrating few architectural works that supposedly embody ambiguity and examining notion of ambiguity in general by incorporating a case study with Jacques Tati's films, grounded in some thoughts of Martin Heidegger. The evidence for study is thereby composed of interpretations of few architectural works and Tati's films, reflected against Heidegger's phenomenological analysis of our everyday experience.

The study of ambiguity results in an overview of how phenomenological interpretations of ambiguity in architecture allow us to re-discover the ordinary in architecture, where a certain kind of ambiguity is found to play a crucial role in illuminating the background of our everyday experience, shedding light on what inconspicuously lies in our implicit understanding of the world. This result argues that the particular kind of ambiguity can be a means of leading us to concern architecture in terms of its way of being while we at the same time concern it in terms of what it usually is.

The thesis also explores notion of ambiguity in the context of architectural theory in general, by reinterpreting Robert Venturi's view of it; here, the thesis aims to examine his articulation of ambiguity not only in terms of the basis of form/matter dichotomy (i.e. theoretical understanding alone) but in the sense of both pre-theoretical (implicit) and theoretical understanding. This study of ambiguity results in differentiating ambiguity into the three modes in terms of what kind of understanding the source of ambiguity is based on (pre-theoretical understanding alone, both pre-theoretical and theoretical understanding, or theoretical understanding alone). Thus, the thesis argues ambiguity in terms of its possibility to illuminate what grounds our ways of understanding the reality.

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# CHAPTER 1

*Introduction—An Opportunity Given*

# 1. Invitation for Observing What We Don't Observe

## 1-1. A Double-Take at the Ordinary

This paper aims to propose and explore a certain kind of ambiguity in architecture, in response to such question; what could explain the peculiar phenomenon that I (and we may) experience with some photographs of the two architectural works (fig. 1, 2)—*Herzog and de Meuron's work, E, D, E, N, Pavilion (1987)*, and *Richard Wentworth and GRUPPE's work, Black Maria (2013)*. To begin with, this chapter introduces the question as a starting point of this paper, before we move on the study of the ambiguity.

To clarify the question, there is a word that can briefly signify the experience that I had with the two architectural examples, that is, *a double-take*. It refers to a moment that we look twice at something or someone as we find it or that person somewhat unusual or out of the ordinary. Although the following William D. Blattner's excerpt is meant to explain Martin Heidegger's locutions, it could be helpful for us, for it demonstrates sense of un-usualness as what essentially let us do a double-take.

My living room is an entire context of equipment, all arranged and arrayed so that it can serve its appointed purpose. Sofas *belong* in living rooms, which is why we do a double-take when we see a sofa sitting idly by the side of a road, for example. A sofa by the side of a road is *out of place*. One can just walk up to such a sofa and sit in it, but normally one's use of a sofa is always in terms of the sofa's belonging to a living room. (Blattner, 2007, p.52)

A double-take happens in our daily lives, and it is an interesting moment in the sense that it attractively guides our attention to something that we barely put in sight otherwise. When we walk down a street, we may find ourselves doing a double take to make sure if the person who passed by was an old friend who must have moved to a different city, which otherwise we would not have put in sight of consideration until this happening. While we presuppose that the old friend *usually* belongs to a different city, we somehow cannot help but paying attention to him because it comes to be *unusual* to see him visiting or living in this city. When we do a double-take, behind of this moment, something usual for us in some way becomes unusual to some extent.

When it comes to the two architectural works (fig. 3, 4), *E, D, E, N, Pavilion* and *Black Maria*, our impulse to do a double take seems to arise explicitly. While this double-take itself might not be special, it leads to the next interesting movement that brings up two kinds of possibility: When we take a look again to check what evoke our impulse to do a double-take, it goes in either situation of such two; whether the second look makes us content with a moment of "aha, that's why" and finish this experience, or puzzle us even more. In other words, the former lets us nail down the reason of why it is unusual once and for all, but the latter somehow escapes from the former way of understanding. In the cases of the two architectural works, I believe that our attempt to understand why we did a double-take is likely to struggle to capture or fix a conclusive reason, since we ended up being puzzled in facing rather numerous possible ways to explain why it can be unusual to us.

In sum, once the two architectural works with their unusualness let us do a double-take, our attention thereby comes to be guided into further engagement with them to grasp what appears to be different from the usual, why it is unusual. But we cannot help feeling little puzzled since we must

notice the difficulty to exhaust all possible explanations or to reach an ultimate explanation for why it is exactly unusual. Nonetheless, I must underline that this is just a crucial beginning of how the two architectural works become so peculiar to us. So now, what happens after we get puzzled? In short, while we are still in search of what make it unusual as a result of this puzzling situation, we seem to concern *the architecture in terms of what has been usually overlooked*, because looking for its unusualness needs thinking of its usualness. Here, it raises *a special moment* to the degree to which we come to see ordinariness in an extra-ordinary manner by shedding light on such overlooked ordinariness, in contrast to *a usual moment* that we usually see the ordinary in an ordinary manner, where ordinariness is not something to be concerned but that which we feel familiar with and self-evidently clear, as if we take the ordinary for granted.

Such special moment is the key to the research question of this paper, though, it is an unfamiliar idea in general, so I should clearly illustrate the whole experience from the beginning of a double-take, to show how the special encounter arises, seeing the ordinary in an extra-ordinary manner.



Fig. 1(top left): Herzog & de Meuron, 1986-87. E, D, E, N, Pavilion. in Rheinfelden [pavilion]

Fig. 2(top right): Wentworth, R. & GRUPPE, 2013. Black Maria, in London [temporary structure]

Fig. 3(bottom left): Herzog & de Meuron, 1986-87. E, D, E, N, Pavilion. in Rheinfelden [pavilion]

Fig. 4(bottom right): Wentworth, R. & GRUPPE, 2013. Black Maria, in London [temporary structure]

In the case of E,D,E,N, Pavilion, some kind of unusualness firstly attract our curiosity. In the second look, the obvious start can be its column at first glance (fig. 5), looking like some kind of inchoate classic order, seemingly derived from the way we see the column as a column of a building like any of other normal building. However, the name of the hotel—so called EDEN Hotel—and the name of the pavilion itself provide a clear reason for us to imagine that the column signifies, indeed, an alphabet ‘D’, followed by other letters of the name along with the other columns (fig. 6).

In this alphabet-like column's sense, where each column represents each letter of the hotel's name, we may also notice its absurdly direct way to express the name even with a sense of humour, because such literal or even pop-art like way of expression is demonstrated in a deadly serious manner by its monotonous appearance of figure, texture, and colour of concrete. In addition, strangeness of those columns arises not only from that absurdity, but also the fact that the letters of columns are not following an ordinary alphabet proportion. For instance, a letter "D" is much thinner than usual. And, because of this unlikeliness of being a letter "D", it even appears to bring forth some sort of sculptural-like sense, as if a letter D wants to be more than a letter D, awaiting to be seen in a different way. At the same time, once a letter D begins to be elusive or vague to be seen as a letter D, how it appears to us in this certain way get thereby undermined.

The less it looks like an alphabet, the more it may be gravitated to the initially tangible way we saw a column, which was seeing a column as a column of a building, not text on note or some kind of adverts, and in which it is somewhat making a sense to see it as a column with order, as we have already seen it as inchoate classic order. However, having the way we see D-shaped column as a column that imply a kind of architectural order, it is not that easy to apply the same way to the three other columns. For example, how could we interpret a letter N-like column (fig. 7) as having some sort of order, considering what we know as usual order in historical buildings? Since we have never seen N-shaped order in western architecture, perhaps some undiscovered civilisation may have had this order once; here, what makes us stop seeing them as having a new kind of order? Perhaps, it might not be that strange to see it in the way we try to see it as order.

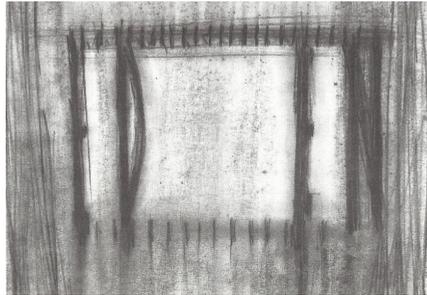


Fig. 5 (left): Herzog & de Meuron, 1986-87. E, D, E, N, Pavilion. in Rheinfelden [pavilion]

Fig. 6 (middle): Herzog & de Meuron, 1986-87. E, D, E, N, Pavilion. in Rheinfelden [Sketch] (a particular façade where the name of the hotel emerges)

Fig. 7 (right): Herzog & de Meuron, 1986-87. E, D, E, N, Pavilion. in Rheinfelden [pavilion]

Thus, by facing the architecture to check what led us to do a double-take, various kinds of interpretations were unfolded by the demonstration, and there are the two essential viewpoints by which we can appreciate why the special moment hereby arises, to concern this pavilion *in terms of* what has been usually overlooked: The first viewpoint is that the pavilion does not allow us to reach a conclusive view to explain why it made us do a double-take, i.e. unusualness. The second is that the absence of such conclusive view leads us to keep paying attention to the un-usualness as far as the

situation is not merely clueless for us; conversely, this means that we thereby come to need paying attention to what is the usualness of the un-usualness. The un-usualness can make sense only because we know the usualness, so paying attention to the un-usualness means to the usualness as well.

The way we can experience the pavilion through a double-take, therefore, comes to be explicitly based on having a vantage of both *what may shape the ordinary in a usual way* and *what may be different from that ordinariness if it emerges with un-usualness*. So now, we can highlight the special moment that springs from this pavilion, the illumination of what has been overlooked usually: Insofar as a moment prior to doing a double-take belongs to where we usually see *the ordinary in an ordinary manner*, in which we barely put something in sight, like an overlooking way, how we see this pavilion, after doing a double-take, becomes clearly different because some kind of its unusualness let us explicitly *pay attention to the ordinary while we search for what can be out of the ordinary in this situation*; here, having this extra illumination on the ordinary means that we no longer see *the ordinary in an ordinary manner*, but *see the ordinary in an extra-ordinary manner*. Thus, the crucial uniqueness of this pavilion lies with the moment that we can *see the ordinary in an extra-ordinary way*, the illumination of what has been overlooked. Here, the research question springs from my desire to understand why such special moment could somehow take place by this pavilion: *What could possibly explain why we could see the ordinary in an extra-ordinary sense, and what kind of the architecture can bring up such phenomenon to us?*

By the way, like EDEN Pavilion, Black Maria now should be illustrated as a case that offers the same kind of uniqueness and highlight the research question. This work is a temporary timber-structured auditorium (fig. 4, 8) in an atrium of Central Saint Martins. Named after Edison's film studio, Christoph Junk, a member of Gruppe Architect, describes that this name is meant to signify this place to be like a tool or vehicle to produce some sort of events to bring people together, as if how Edison treats his studio in terms of its availability as a tool for filming, rather than a sense of architecture with the empty space that contemporary architecture tends to focus on. (Junk, 2013) Wentworth, a collaborator, explains the work as "a gathering machine". (Wentworth, 2013)

Aside of focusing on the auditorium in terms of how convivial and interactive it could be with people as it was highlighted by the authors, for the purpose of the paper I underline this architectural work rather in terms of its strangeness and un-usualness at first glance. It is a kind of un-unusualness, lying with Black Maria, that leads us to do a double-take.

At the second glance (fig. 4), what is likely to surface initially seems its un-usualness as an auditorium (as long as we somehow understand it as an auditorium). We come to pay more attention to this un-usualness in the way we did so in the previous pavilion case. Just like a column of the pavilion that shows itself as some inchoate kind of classic order and as a letter 'D', the auditorium seems to speak up in such two ways; the first view (fig. 9) lets us see it as something that houses even an entire theatre within itself (fig. 10), yet the second view guides us to see it as a kind of proscenium with a stage behind it (fig. 11), and this makes the front of Black Maria a kind of auditorium for audiences. Once those two ways of interpretation become apprehensible, we may realise that either of them cannot be taken as a conclusive or ultimate view to understand the timber structure, and so we must keep both in an equivocal sense in spite of the incoherency of applying the two ideas at the same time into the structure. Given this absence of a conclusive view without being a clueless situation, our curiosity for un-usualness is inclined to develop need for further reading on this timber structure.



Fig. 8 (top left): Wentworth, R. & GRUPPE, 2013. *Black Maria*. Back side [temporary structure]

Fig. 9 (top right): *Ibid.* Front side.

Fig. 10 (bottom left): *Ibid.* Interior view of *Black Maria* (the opening closed for the event).

Fig. 11 (bottom right): *Ibid.* Front side.

While further reading goes on, the way we thereby pay more attention to the wooden structure, to discern its un-usualness, must be always in relation to what kind of usual auditorium-ness lies behind. In other words, what allows us to see auditorium typically as auditorium, a kind of ordinariness, must be referenced in order to understand what have been out of tune. Let us illustrate how we must go through the ordinariness in such further reading.

For instance, such reading may begin with an easy clue such as the staircase that certainly makes sense as seats for audiences (fig. 9), then its stage is placed in front of them; which is to say, this architectural work is seen as something that contains stage and auditorium within itself. Accordingly, the empty space in front of the structure turns out to be a part of its stage due to its opening, whereby passer-by appear to be actors for those (onlooker) who sit in the staircase in the structure.

However, once we concern passer-by as those who are looking at the structure, it makes the onlooker in the structure not onlooker because they are observed by passer-by. Given such incongruency raised by reading meanings of those who are involved in the structure in some way, a sense of humour, comedy, and little absurdity become explicit from the instable and lively relationship between passer-by and onlooker (fig. 9, 11). Here, an interesting switching moment may happen to us, that focusing on playful relationship between people may subsequently undermine the way we see the wooden structure. This is because if we follow an interpretation of onlooker to be observed by passer-by, this make us inclined to see the entire structure rather as a big proscenium box, within which the stair-case can be seen rather as a part of a stage setting. That is, we are slipped from the initial view, in which we see the structure as something that houses a stage and auditorium together, into another view. And, we may continue unfolding a train of thoughts even more.

Anyway, my point in illustrating reading of Black Maria is that, like the case of EDEN Pavilion, once we develop further reading for its un-usualness, we end up shedding light on what usually shape its usualness that lies behind this situation. Black Maria, so to speak, no longer limits us to seeing *the ordinary in an ordinary manner* but guides us to *see the ordinary in an extra-ordinary manner*.

To recap, the aforementioned experience of the re-discovery of the ordinary could be distilled into the four essential points. (1) Once we do a double-take, behind of this moment something usual for us is inconspicuously un-usual to some extent. (2) Since we cannot fully grasp or easily fix a conclusive view that explains what makes it un-usual and led us to do a double-take, we thereby get puzzled. (3) Insofar as we fail to nail down a conclusive understanding of this un-usualness (yet not leaving this experience behind because it is not a totally clueless attempt), what we can do is, then, still a constant search for the un-usualness by contrasting that with its usualness, a kind of comparative dialogue between what is in the ordinary and out of the ordinary. (4) As we constantly pay attention to the usualness (the ordinary) in order to reach a better understanding of the un-usualness—what is out of the ordinary—in this situation, *the way* we hereby encounter the architecture that its mysterious un-usualness belongs to would be different from *the way* we barely put in sight architecture in our daily lives (having no impulse of doing a double-take): Here, what clearly differentiate the former way from the latter is that we can encounter the architecture *while at the same time* we have an explicit illumination of the way how we typically and grantedly see the ordinary, that which happen to lie behind the mysterious un-usualness of the architecture. In short, those four points sum up how architectural works may lead us to shift from where we see the ordinary in an ordinary way (a granted way) to where we see the ordinary (which lies with the architecture) in an extraordinary way by illuminating, so to speak, what has been overlooked typically.

By the way, it is worth highlighting two more important characteristics in common between EDEN pavilion and Black Maria. First, we may find both works somewhat absurd, or even occasionally humorous in some way by noticing some kind of unexpected incongruity. Second, two equivocal interpretations are always presented in their un-usualness, playing essential roles in each experience. In short, the first is a sense of absurdity, humour, or comic, and the second is a sense of ambiguity. I consider both seem to play important roles in our experience with the two works.

Given the four essential points to describe the rediscover of the ordinary and the two distinctive features that characterise the two architectural works alike, let us underline the research question once again to develop our discussion: How can we explain the phenomenon of the two buildings that allows us to shed light on the ordinary from a different perspective, as if we can survey what have been usually overlooked? To clarify this, the two characteristics shared between the two works seem to be an tempting start for us, that we can ask if they have something to do with the question; this means, is it appropriate to consider that some particular kind of wittiness, or the sense of ambiguity, or even both of them might have an essential influence on our experience with the two examples? Nonetheless at the same time we must pose this subsequent guess, for it cannot be more than a mere assumption derived from my interpretations of the experience, and none of them have a theoretical support to pursue at this moment.

So now, instead of setting any hypothesis, we shall start from something that comes before those assumptions. It is the fundamental tendency that lies with the two works, that both clearly have something to do with the ordinariness. Put differently, both cases lead us to do a double-take, since they somehow outstand from the horizon of the ordinary; here, we can start to take a close look at what we meant by *the ordinary*. Thus, we shall firstly clarify what makes something ordinary, typical,

usual, normal, and even self-evident to us. If we can articulate this, we will get at least a better standpoint to survey what can possibly make them strange (extra-ordinary, un-usual, abnormal). Only then, we may ask if a certain kind of idea causes such strangeness, after which a hypothesis can be formed to explain the experience, rediscovery of the ordinary, with the two architectural works.

In terms of a method to study ordinariness, I like to proceed with a case study approach with several films of Jacques Tati, especially till we can firmly achieve a hypothetical framework to illustrate why our experience with the two architectural works become special. Note that, there are mainly the two reasons for not choosing architecture but different medium to establish a reasonable draft: First, I find it hard to gather an adequate number of cases in architecture that are similar to the two architectural works we saw in this chapter, and even if I could come up with enough of them, a difficulty might arise from the incoherency between different programmes, scales, and authors while investigating all together. Second, if not architecture, other mediums can be helpful for us as long as they can consistently demonstrate the peculiar experience in the way the two architectural works did with various examples in a coherent manner, and as long as they have been studied before by other scholars in the sense that may offer helpful references for this paper in some way.

Given those two reasons, I find that most of Tati's films offer us the same kind of peculiar experience, where an ordinary kind of things comes to be explicitly illuminated in an un-usual way along with some kind of witness and sense of ambiguity. In this sense, it is worth considering his films as a relevant material for the case study to form a draft that may illuminate the two architectural works later.

# CHAPTER 2

*Ambiguity in Place:*

*Re-discovery of Everydayness*

# 1. Jacques Tati and His Interest in an Inconspicuous Side

## 1-1. Plotlessness and Everyday

[Jacques Tati says] “Music-hall is one of the reasons why I like to shoot from far away. On the legs, Keaton for me is Number One. You could have a sound-track through the means of his legs. A dialogue. Interrogation. Then decision. Finally fear. Chaplin, on the other hand, has been very clever all the time. He's a great comedian. He creates very good situations, but they are a little bit too much for me. Too much is done on purpose. He says too clearly, I'm a poor man. I'm cold. I'm hungry.”

[Tati] likes films to be “about everybody but also about nobody big.” Before he started *Traffic*, Tati went to a highway and just sat watching. “People going away for the weekend. Not a smile. A dog looked out of the back of one car, staring at a field where he could have run about.” (Jacques Tati, cited in Gilliat, 1976, p.66, p.83)

Jacques Tati is an actor and auteur renowned for his entertaining yet mysterious films (one may say comic films): in particular *Jour de fête* (1949), *Les Vacances de M. Hulot* (1953), *Mon Oncle* (1958), and *Playtime* (1967). To appreciate peculiar significance of his films in brief, it helps us to begin with what clearly differs from other kinds of comedy. In general, comic films structurally configure elements to tell a story with actions and gags, yet Tati's films except *Mon Oncle* appear to have very little to do with the story which is typically used in comic films. (Bellos, 1999) For instance, his films hardly establish set-up in the beginning of films for a narrative structure, such as raising a dramatic question that will be answered in the climax, which can be easily seen in Charlie Chaplin's films.

Having no proper presence of narratives in Tati's films does not mean a dull or tasteless impression for the audiences but, rather, creates particular sense of atmosphere in his films. Instead of offering a clear and definite story line, Tati's films come up with various other mixtures of cinematic effects in unique ways, in which different kind of elements seem to come together as a whole without a narrative structure. David Bellos (1999) points out multiple effects play crucial roles in forming such vague unity: overacting sound effect, panoramic visualisation of the locations, a wide range of characters, obsessive use of vehicles, and Tati's persona—Hulot (Francois in *Jour de fête*).

For those carefully arranged and detailed effects, atmosphere in Tati's films is intricately constructed yet easily recognisable in terms of its distinctive features. This atmosphere has been consistently presented throughout his most works as his peculiar signature. (Bellos, 1999) In other words, the absence of narratives conversely plays an essential role in forming the atmosphere, because films, then, need to make sense without having a proper structure which often subordinates heterogeneity of various elements and expressions into single kind of perspective. This means, plotlessness in Tati's films—avoiding a proper story whose order tends to restrict the heterogeneity of messages and meanings of the elements in films—may interweave individualities of elements, so

to speak, as they are, whereas audiences can have a better chance to observe various circumstantial and charming effects of his films.

David Cairns, a filmmaker and critic, nicely articulates the absence of narrative in terms of haphazardness and transience in *Jour de fête*, *Les Vacances de M. Hulot*, and *Playtime*: “a series of characters, objects, and situations are shuffled and reconfigured, and when they fall together again, the experience is over.” (Cairns, 2014) Given heterogeneous elements without being woven into a distinctive story, they emerge as a collection of short-lasting experiences. While a proper story may present elements in an over-dressed manner, plotlessness renders them in an under-dressed manner.

For example, look at the scene (fig. 12) in *The Goat* (1921) by Buster Keaton. Audiences are obviously directed to focus on a series of his visual comedy that constitute the entire story; Keaton intends to spotlight *something special* in an exclusive manner. Contrary, at the scene (fig. 13) in *Playtime* by Tati, audiences are obviously not directed to a certain kind of drama or comedy, so they come to realise that what is presented there is nearly *nothing special*. Here, what is clever in this under-dressed scene is that if one actively brings himself into engaging with the presented situation, despite of its un-extraordinariness, he may find a joy in noticing a doppelgänger of Tati’s *Persona*, Hulot, in the right side of the frame. In short, Tati does not spotlight *something special* but explicitly brings fourth *nothing special* to audiences in order to lead them to observe what lies behind un-extraordinariness, i.e. the background of ordinariness. This means, the experience of the audiences in Tati’s films is partially dependent on themselves to enjoy and appreciate the world in his films, since they better be active enough to encounter a series of transient and circumstantial pictures of the worlds.



Fig. 12 (left): *The Goat*: visual gag, missing a car, 1921. [silent film]



Fig. 13 (right): *Playtime*: a wide view of a lobby of an airport terminal. 1967. [film]

Given the importance of plotlessness and understated expression in Tati’s works, a crucial subject matter for this paper seems to resurface: Ordinariness plays an essential role in his films in the sense that they bring to the fore something not special—something typically considered as ordinary and worth no explicit attention in a situation—to be observed by audiences. If we say Keaton and Chaplin like to play their games in the foreground of a scene, the background is Tati’s favourite field. So now, what does it mean by ‘something which seems not so special’? How can we rightly describe ordinary kind of things—yet we seem to have an unspoken understanding of what it means?

As we know that they are certainly not anything dramatic, outstanding, or remarkable, there is a perfect word that seems to signify what lies behind ordinariness and that we all are already familiar with: *everyday*, *everyday life*, or *our everyday experiences*. Maurice Blanchot, in *Everyday Speech*, captures what the term “everyday” mean in its essence (ontology):

The everyday is platitude (what lags and falls back, the residual life with which our trash cans and cemeteries are filled: scrap and refuse); but this banality is also what is most important, if it brings us back to existence in its very spontaneity and as it is lived—in the moment when, lived, it escapes every speculative formulation, perhaps all coherence, all regularity. (Blanchot and Hanson, 1987, p.13)

So, on the surface level, the everyday becomes what we are first and foremost: “at work, at leisure, awake, asleep, in the street, in private existence”. (Blanchot and Hanson, 1987, p.12) In other words, the everyday may signify everything that are once involved in an ordinary side of one’s life.

Prefacing Blanchot’s view of everyday, we now see that the ordinary become ordinary because they are already within one’s everyday sight. Once something is somehow captured in light of one’s everyday experience, it is bound to become intelligible as the ordinary to him; this means, in turn, that they thereby come to escape from what is worth our speculation for, so they cannot rise above the horizon of something special. Put differently, as soon as we take in something as ordinary, we thereby come to ‘stop’ understanding them regardless of the fact that the ordinary are basically, constantly, and closely surrounding us in terms of their involvements in our lives. In fact, this peculiar and almost paradoxical force of everyday was already questioned by an ancient thinker: a Greek philosopher Heraclitus in the sixth century B.C. described the everyday: “We are estranged from that with which are most familiar.” (Olson, cited in Thompson, 1983)

So now, as something not special, the ordinary, seem to have their essence in our everyday experiences, let us take a close look again at Tati’s films in terms of the notion of everyday: Do his films have something to do with the notion of everyday?

## 2. Martin Heidegger, Everydayness, World, and Disclosure

### 2-1. Duality of Everyday in the Films of Tati

To grasp Tati’s view of everyday, it helps to begins with a few excerpts from the interview with him in 1977—his little thoughts about the ordinary in the light of our everyday experiences:

I mean I received a lot of letters that people do say: “Thank you very much, because I didn’t know that when I was in a restaurant even if the food is not so good, after seeing Playtime, I do watch the waiters and I do always enjoy myself in the restaurant because they are great comedians. [...] When I received those letters, I am very happy because I wish [the letters] not to say “I have seen the picture” but I wish that “when they go to the airport, and they say after seeing Playtime, they say: oh boys I see Tati was [his voice fading]” [and shifted to another topic]. (Tati, 1997)

Tati, thus, wanted audiences to fully observe their surroundings, especially in terms of where we hardly find ourselves having some fun, comic or remarkable findings, such as even in a lame restaurant, a monotonous busy airport (like in *Playtime*), and a railway station just (like in *Les Vacances de M. Hulot*), i.e. any ordinary place in our everyday experiences.

In the same interview, he elaborates his interest in observing and finding something meaningful especially in an ordinary part of life, advocating an eye-opening way to encounter it, where we may have opportunities to perceive the least-expected or often-overlooked things as not what they seem:

[Hulot] doesn't say I'm very funny. I put Hulot as a same rebel to anybody else. He is an ordinary person. He is not acrobat. He is not a gagman. What happened to him can happen to everybody. And what Tati trying to do in his picture is to other people to observe a little bit more to look around what's going on in life, and to show that maybe a very unimportant man or very serious can also be funny and not so important that he imagines that he is important. (Tati, 1977)

I watched the street and I watched problems of people, I watched a driver and it is like in my picture. If you have an appointment, and you are in that café and you always look to your watch, you find that it is very long. If you start to look around yourself and to see all the details of a problem with a police and a taxi driver and a girl who is late and so forth, [...]. (Tati, 1977)

Tati thereby has considered that when we in general are looking at our worlds, we tend to overlook most of that which unlikely merit our attention, i.e. the banal side of everyday experiences. In this sense, we may say that his films explore the possibility of the banality which holds latent modality of the world, from which an inspiration for his charming re-enactment of everyday could spring as such.

Given the importance of the banality—where latent meanings in our everyday experiences lies—what interest us is a sense of duality that underlies our everyday experiences in Tati's view, which seems crucial for his humour: On the one hand, (1) the everyday is where we are 'blindly' looking at the world. On the other hand, (2) the everyday can be where we may 'genuinely' look at the world. In terms of the duality, Tati aims to advocates the latter way for audiences through his films by redirecting them, as in the interview he expressed gratitude to the letters from the audiences who tells how they could truly open their own eyes to the same ordinary worlds after watching his films. This means, those interviews remarks Tati's interest in the possibility of our ordinary everyday lives, along with his critical view to the way we tend to overlook their closest worlds; although the way we experience the world depends on us, it is likely to be on the overlooking side where things are unlikely to merit our attention.

Owing to Tati's view of our everyday lives, we now can see a problem of the everyday—that underlies what seem ordinary to us—in the sense that we, so to speak, blindly look at the world, and so the way we encounter the ordinary is characterised as overlooking one. If we may consider that Tati intends to explore his films in terms of the duality of the everyday, we better raise a crucial question: How Tati thereby could reveal or guide us to the other side; which is to say, *what could*

*possibly explain how audiences can come to 're-discover' the ordinary as not the overlooked ordinary but genuinely encountered, i.e. the ordinary seen in an extra-ordinary manner?*

To answer that, we cannot just dive into searching particular kinds of Tati's cinematic methods that may explain it, but we must have a better understanding of our basic way of experiencing the world in our everyday experiences, as this possibly dominant way we 'overlook' our everyday experiences is the most crucial starting point in order to re-discover the ordinary. The investigation of how it can be possible to rediscover the ordinary must be based on the illustration of the everyday.

To begin, Heidegger's seminal work, *Being and Time*, will lay the ground for the framework of how we can tackle the question of how we primarily see our worlds in everyday experiences. In particular, Heidegger's concept of "everydayness" could be prefaced as the obvious start to examine our primary attitude to the world: In short, that explains our undifferentiated mode whereby we first and foremost are immersed in the world (i.e. a meaning-giving context). In this undifferentiated mode of our ways of being, we always already understand entities in certain kind of determined ways without us noticing so; here, ordinality of things lies with this unreflective way of our understanding. This means, we just can understand ordinary entities, so to speak, by a means of overlooking them as our attitude of understanding is undifferentiated yet still making sense.

However, Heidegger considers *there is a special moment in our everyday experiences, that we can bring up such unreflective way of understanding in front of us*, as if everydayness begins to surface above the horizon of conspicuousness. *Yet I must note that what interest us is not to reconfigure the very everydayness—our primary attitude— but to expose the ordinary that lies in the primary everydayness in light of our deliberate speculation.* Nevertheless, to appreciate Heidegger's view of such special chance to illuminate the ordinary is not that easy, as it is inevitable to go into the complexity of his several jargons and ideas—such as distinctions between the three different modes of experiencing entities, based on which an opportunity to question our attitude to the world may rise.

Anyway, insofar as Heidegger's account will help us specify what kind of aspect in Tati's films would lead us to re-discover the ordinary as the extraordinary, it would be reasonable to take some time to preface Heidegger's ideas, as the point of departure for our attempt to identify Tati's certain kinds of method/effect that can lead the audience to re-encounter their worlds.

## 2-2. Everydayness

As we briefly saw before, "everydayness" is the undifferentiated mode of our ways of being-in-the-world, which is, for Heidegger, the typical, normal, or common way of our being in the world, the way we primarily are, i.e. "average everydayness". With this 'average' everydayness, we may trivialise this primary way of understanding entities and what they thereby are, as we unreflectively (or undifferentiatedly) keep taking in a meaning-giving context, the world, that we are always already immersed in and that thereby make their intelligibilities as what they ordinarily, typically, or commonly are in our everyday experiences.

However, for Heidegger, this average everydayness—our undifferentiated attitude towards the reality—is not doomed to be negative but can be positive to the degree to which this can be

somewhere from which we (Dasein<sup>1</sup>) can start to uncover the possibility of our essential concern for disclosing meaning of being. Yet, we better keep in mind again that: what interest us is to grasp what is primarily happening in the undifferentiated mode of our primary ways of being, since we want to know how we can rediscover what has been trivialised in our certain ways of understanding in the everyday. This means, we aim to explore the possibility for re-illuminating the closest phenomenon to be appreciated once again, rather than focusing on modifying the very everydayness by changing the essential attitude to the reality. Even if such rediscover may happen to shake the undifferentiated attitude to the world, I consider that it is overwhelming to place the role of changing the attitude itself in Tati's films anyway. With that in mind, let us look more closely at the undifferentiated mode of being in the world.

To illustrate 'the undifferentiated mode of being in the world' more clearly, it helps to begin with one of the most essential Heidegger's jargons for our discussion, "the world". In brief, *the world* is a constellation of practices, rules, familiar things, conventional ways of how we interpret, i.e. a meaning-giving context in which our interpretations make sense at varying levels. So, the world lays the ground for our primary understanding of entities—like the canvas on which our everyday experiences take place. Nonetheless, this 'canvas', for Heidegger, is usually not conspicuous to us but the inconspicuous background only against which we can understand entities as what they typically are, since we primarily unreflectively take in the background without us noticing so.

For instance, when we see an empty bottle of Coca Cola, we immediately understand it a bottle of coke. Perhaps, someone drunk it and left it there. But this would not be the case of the tribes who have never seen Coke: They might come up with an idea 'what a nice tool to mash potatoes or even hunt a fish, since this is so handy with a unique grip, and we can even see through'. Contrary, why Coke bottles make sense as they can be to us is because we already know a soft-drink bottle, the unique shape of Coke, how to drink it, how to open it, the transparency, the logo, and so forth; this means, in turn, that we are always already immersed into the ways things are in the world that we dwell in. Like a Coke bottle, when we encounter and understand something as a familiar thing, we unreflectively have an implicit or unspoken understanding of a meaning-giving context where we are always already immersed in, as Heidegger puts: "In interpreting these entities within-the-world, however, we have always 'presupposed' the world." (Heidegger, 1962. p.102)

To recap, the world is the most fundamental background of our everyday experiences, which we primarily, unreflectively, and implicitly understand, so that it primarily—yet inconspicuously—allows us to interpret things in our everyday encounter as something to make sense in terms of the way they are in our everyday experiences. With a clear picture of the world in mind, the notion of

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1 Roughly, the term "Dasein" (or also translated to "being-there") refers to our basic way of being or even refer to a person as a human-being. The point is that Heidegger concern the self not in terms of subjectivity (or self-consciousness) but a more basic way to experience oneself (one's awareness of who the one's self is to be), i.e. *Dasein*. Put differently, it is *a basic form of my awareness of who I am to be*—as the sense of identity that "underlies my awareness of my convictions, commitments, thoughts, and responsibilities. To be a person is to project a person to be, and so our being is at issue for us." (Blattner, 2007, p.37) Heidegger says, "when we designate this entity with the term 'Dasein', we are expressing not its "what" (as if it were a table, house or tree) but its Being. That Being which is an issue for this entity in its very Being, is in each case mine." (Heidegger, 1962, p.67)

“average everydayness” and, thereby, the undifferentiated mode of our ways of being in the world now helps us appreciate an important problem for this paper: As long as our primary ways of being is undifferentiated, the ‘typical’ ways we encounter things in our everyday experiences are, whether we like it or not, unreflectively following an ‘a primarily given canvas’ of which we have an *implicit* understanding. When it comes to our tendency to trivialize what things are in our everyday experiences, such primarily dominant ways of understanding them—due to average everydayness—seems to fundamentally characterize the way we are inclined to ‘overlook’ our own everyday experiences, since the way we understand the world in this primary mode is undeliberated, unreflective, and unspoken. So to speak, by undifferentiating our implicit understanding of the world—that always already allows us to understand entities in a typical way—we thereby seem to overlook our everyday experiences and encounters.

In other words, the world is latent and constantly ‘overlooked’ by us while at the same time we have a tacit understanding of it; this means, in turn, that if the world is somehow brought up to our attention, we may have a chance to unveil the overlooked everyday experiences. Fortunately, for Heidegger average everydayness is undifferentiated, meaning it is neither *owned* nor *disowned* but *unowned* by us. (Blattner, 2007) And, he illustrates a special moment that we can reveal the world while we are in our basic everyday lived experience. To clarify, we better introduce several more Heidegger’s jargons as our everyday experiences needs to be discussed more deeply from now.

### 2-3. The World, Ready-to-hand, Unready-to-hand.

Speaking of the relationship between us and the world, for Heidegger, the self exists, first and foremost, in a continual and ceaseless unity with the world. He names such aspect of us “Being-in-the-world”, which is one of our crucial features that uniquely differentiate us from other kinds of entities. Note that, what he meant by the “in-the-world” is not that *we are located as subjects in the sum of objects with their properties*. But *we dwell in a meaning-giving* context, in which we are unreflectively immersed, with which we feel always already familiar, and in which our behaviours and understanding are organised. The world, thus, is a pre-objective (prior to the subject/object divide) background that has already given meaning in our implicit understanding of what matters and concerns us in our everyday experiences. More specifically, Heidegger considers the world like a vast network of how entities are involved in our everyday patterns of activities, which he calls “a totality of involvement”. (Wheeler, 2011)

As we illustrate human-kind as those who are unreflectively and always already absorbed in the world, Heidegger introduces several crucial jargons to explain what it is like to encounter entities in our everyday experiences: “equipment”, “Ready-to-hand”, “Un-ready-to-hand”, and “Present-at-hand”. Let us briefly go through them in order.

In our everyday patterns of activity, the way we basically understand entities, for Heidegger, is not based on theoretical kind of ways of understanding but our practical skills to successfully cope with entities in a trouble-free manner. And, in such skilful coping, entities are seen to make sense without us explicitly reflecting how they are involved for activity. Heidegger differentiate those *entities* that we skilfully use in our everyday experiences, so called “equipment”. Note that, for Heidegger, there is no such “an equipment” because equipment can make sense as what they are only in the

condition that one item of equipment belongs to ‘a totality’ of equipment: Heidegger uses ‘a hammer’ to explain such holistic view. Imagine when a carpenter encounters a hammer in his studio. It would be understood as a tool to drive a nail, but this cannot make sense as such unless he knows what is a nail and wood, how to hold it, how to swing it, what kind of tasks they are suitable for, what those tasks are, and so forth. To make sense of a hammer as a hammer thereby presupposes how other related entities are involved in our everyday experiences, i.e. an entity cannot make sense as an item of equipment if it is not involved in the networks of other equipment.

Thus, if entities are practically involved in our everyday patterns of activity, they are seen as “equipment” in Heidegger’s view. Bear in mind, having an understanding of entities as equipment does not mean that we thereby experience entities, so to speak, in the form of labelling them. The way we experience entities as equipment is, in essence, by engaging them skilfully in our everyday pattern of activity. We encounter a pen while we are writing, a hammer during hammering, bicycle while we are biking, a bed when we are sleeping and lying in it, and a door knob when we are turning. The primary way we experience them, thus, is not speculation but a trouble-free coping, where we are just familiar with what they are in terms of their particular roles (something in-order-to-for specific tasks). Importantly, Heidegger comes up with his own term—“readiness-to-hand”—to signify such particular mode of equipment that are engaged in a trouble-free manner.

As entities as equipment primarily get articulable in terms of their practical roles in our everyday encounters, what concern or matter to us get primarily oriented around how they make sense for our everyday pattern of activity; this means that how they are understood is thereby ‘framed’ by that. For instance, in driving a nail with a hammer, the hammer, nails, and the wooden plank do not bear their properties (such as their shapes and colour), but only the specific aspects that are meaningful for the task (if they offer a better grip for instance). The way we primarily see a hammer, thus, is only through our concern about their roles in a task, rather than seeing it as an object to be contemplated.

We have illustrated ready-to-hand equipment (entities) so far, mainly, in terms of two important points: Basically, we experience equipment by having skilful-coping-based activity, and equipment show itself in general in terms of their roles for a task. Besides of them, in Heidegger’s view, there is one more distinctive feature of ready-to-hand equipment that interest us: While equipment are encountered by us and fluidly functioning in a context of a task, we do not need to pay attention to them, as if we can see through them to the task that we like to achieve. For instance, in using a mouse to move a cursor on screen to click something, we do not think of a mouse at all, as if it moves like a part of our body to do the task. Or, we even talk to friends while doing that.

Aside of the tools we may literally put on hand, the withdrawal of equipment from our attention also happen to the kinds of equipment that are indirectly involved in the tasks. For example, when a carpenter work on a simple task such as driving a nail on wooden panels with a hammer, he does not need to be aware of so many ‘latent’ yet important equipmental entities that are involved in the work, such as his favourite workbench, adequate light to his hands, his own workshop, large windows facing a street, a stable wooden floor and so on; they are not explicitly involved in the task but implicitly involved and play important roles in the task. So, the presence of ready-to-hand equipment that are

implicitly and explicitly involved in a task usually withdraw themselves from our attention while we skilfully manipulate them in a trouble-free manner, and they are transparent aspects to us.

In highlighting Heidegger's notion of "ready-to-hand" and "equipment", we now can understand that our basic form of understanding of what we encounter in our everyday experiences takes place in having skilful coping with equipment and smoothly having things done in our everyday pattern of activity. And, most importantly, such trouble-free activity of our everyday practices is grounded in us who are in an unbroken unity with the world: It is a meaning-giving context, in which entities are already understood as equipment on the basis of their practical roles and are often encountered by fluidly coping with them even in a transparent manner, without us noticing so.

However, in other words, such our everyday basic form of understanding of entities primarily takes place on the basis of average everydayness in which we overlook the world in an undifferentiating manner: We are, so to speak, not responsible for our own 'choice', overlooking the possibility that lies with our everyday experiences, in the sense that the way we are immersed in the world is unownedly occurring. Fortunately, Heidegger points out a special moment in our everyday experiences—when a trouble-free activity simply fails—that our undifferentiated immersion into the world comes to be shaken, whereby the world comes to the fore to be conspicuous to us. Yet, before we can begin to appreciate how the revealment of the world takes place, let us picture what happens to our basic experiences with entities when a breakdown occurs, in contrast to readiness-to-hand.

A moment of breakdown arises when our functioning ready-to-hand equipment happen to no longer work fluidly for a task to the sense that it begins to be 'bothering' us: Heidegger names the mode of equipment "un-ready-to-hand". Imagine when a pen that we are writing with runs out of ink (and we have no other), when the handle of a hammer is broken (and we can no longer swing it normally), when the saddle of a bicycle is discovered-to-be stolen, and when a leg of bed frame became too wonky. In such situation, we cannot 'see through' equipment to focus on the task, but our attention are shifted towards the misbehaving or found-to-be-missing tool; this means that we must pay attention to what used to be ready-to-hand equipmental entities. In this shift, a crucial change in our experience is that we happen to experience ourselves as *partially* isolated subjects standing reflectively before the world, because we *try to observe it and speculate* why it is not working while we *at the same time are still concerning about our everyday tasks* we initially wanted to do: Here, we are not yet really familiar with what it means by 'isolated subjects standing before the world' where their basic form of experiencing of entities is reflective. So, let us have a brief understanding about it.

There is the third mode of entities, which Heidegger call "presence-at-hand". Here, entities are encountered as objects with properties—"as the bearers of certain context-general determinate or measurable properties (size in metres, weight in kilos etc.)." (Wheeler, 2011) For instance, if one is engaged in the practice of natural science, sensing becomes purely in the service of reflective contemplation; or if philosophers argue certain context-free metaphysical understanding of the universe, the entities under study are separated from the settings of everyday equipmental practice. (Wheeler, 2011) That is, present-at-hand entities are basically interpreted as fully independent objects from the world (a meaning-giving context that we primarily dwell in); this means that the subjects/objects divide belongs to this, where we basically encounter entities in reflective engagement.

Speaking of un-ready-to-hand entities again, we now can appreciate it in terms of its unique relation to ready-to-hand and present-at-hand; which is to say, un-ready-to-hand is ‘partially’ present-at-hand and also ‘partially’ ready-to-hand. That is because broken tools show themselves neither as fully objects (as present-at-hand) isolable from the world, as they are still in relation to the context of the tasks in which they used to make sense (as ready-to-hand).

Imagine when one encounters a wonky bed and he thereby struggles to rest. It is no longer useful as a tool to sleep for him, showing itself as a broken item of equipment. Then, it stops withdrawing itself from the user’s attention as he starts to confront it to speculate why the breakdown happens. Yet, his main concern is about how he can get back to sleep; which is to say, he does not aim to theorise, study, or identify what is a bed. Nonetheless, it is inevitable to have some speculation about a bed in the process of discerning and fixing the problem to resume his everyday practices. In sum, un-ready-to-hand entities are standing before us, so to speak, as objects to be contemplated like present-at-hand entities, but they are still encountered partially as ready-to-hand as their intelligibilities are still in a context of readiness-to-hand.

In other words, although the world is not really out of our sight—as we are still concerning the task that we were unreflectively doing—our basic form of experiencing equipmental entities can be based on reflective attitude. That is to say, once our everyday pattern of activity simply fails, our basic form of experiencing changes to reflective kinds of engagement from practical kinds of coping, *yet* we do not thereby purely confront them from the perspective of us as ‘subjects’ who can be totally isolable from the world we primarily dwell in but of us as being-in-the-world.

Now, we may roughly imagine how un-readiness-to-hand can be special in terms of its possibility to offer a chance where the world seems to become more conspicuous by our reflective engagement with broken items, than the absorbed coping with ready-to-hand equipment. Nonetheless, apart from that specialty, Heidegger’s view of how we may really *unveil* the world that we primarily ‘overlook’ in our everyday experiences still remain fairly untouched. As the unveiling process is a crucial part for this paper to picture how we may re-discover the world, we should focus on what is it like to re-encounter the world by such breakdown.

So, how we come to (re-)encounter the world at the moment of a breakdown? In short, for Heidegger, such unveiling of the world, a meaning-giving context, seems to take a form of a gradual process of unfolding, like untangling a network of references. To clarify, it is helpful for us to begin with familiarising ourselves with Heidegger’s notion of “the structure of the world”, whose several constituents becomes the key to untangling the world.

## 2-4. How the World Discloses Itself to Dasein

The world is, so to speak, a canvas against which entities can primarily make sense in our everyday experiences, i.e. a meaning-giving context which we have briefly seen before as “a totality of involvement”. As we are immersed into and familiar with the world in which things are involved in a certain making sense way, a hammer, for example, can be seen as a hammer; here, it fits into a context of other various equipment with their functional roles in terms of many everyday practices.

In highlighting the world as a pre-objective context in which we primarily operate our everyday practices, “the structure of the world” is, for Heidegger, like some kind of framework where various

kinds of interpretations of entities are inserted to form a meaning-giving context as a whole. For the purpose of this paper, we are interested in the structure of the world in terms of the two kinds of distinctive patterns that plays crucial roles in making the world as such context. In short, the first pattern characterise a context in terms of how a thing become *distinguishable* in a functional sense. The second pattern illuminates a context in terms of how such functionally distinguishable thing become *meaningful* for us in the sense that they are plugged into our possible ways to be, for instance, a student, a farther, a son, a friendly neighbor, a teacher, and so on—depending on how we concern our roles in our everyday practices. This means, those two kinds of patterns offer the framework in which entities can be intelligible in terms of their functional roles and their values for our way of being in the world—as crucial constituents for the structure of the world. With that in mind, let us continue articulating each of the two kinds of patterns of the structure of the world in detail.

Speaking of the first pattern, how could entities become intelligible in terms of their functional roles? For Heidegger, in order to have entities as functionally distinguishable, it is necessary for them to be fit into a constellation of *equipment, their functional roles, and our familiar practices*. Nevertheless, this way of involving entities does not mean that we are adding them into the huge list where entities are recorded homogenously along with their characters and their appropriate occasion, but it is more like a network where they are involved with various kinds of density, proximity, and directionality.

Imagine a hammer. It fits into a pre-objective context in a certain way in the sense of having explicit links to a nail, wood, driving a nail (functional roles), and assembling furniture (related practices), rather than lemons, water, a function for squashing garlic or cooking tomato soup. Every item of equipment, like a hammer, should have its own different way to be involved into this pre-objective context in terms of its relation to other equipment and material, some functional roles, and some kind of our everyday practices. This means, in turn, that every item of those that are referred by something else in terms of their functionality comes to form a vast network of references altogether.

Speaking of an item of equipment, imagine a nail that has an explicit link to a hammer. It also has its own references to wood, metal, furniture, ship, house, and so forth. Considering one of the everyday practices that seem to have a reference from a hammer, a practice of packing efficiently with a wooden box also has its own references to a practice of storing something, moving away, shipping and so on. Once we try to trace some references from a hammer, we are thereby traversing in a vast network of references in terms of functionality of entities based on our everyday pattern of activity. And, most importantly, entities can make sense as equipment, only because they are interweaved in a meaning-giving context, the world we are immersed in, grounded in this framework that those equipmental entities are nicely incorporated in terms of their functionality. Such totality of involvement with their functional roles, thus, becomes a crucial pattern of the structure of the world, based on which we may primarily encounter entities as functionally and practically intelligible.

However, strictly speaking, the entities that has been functionally intelligible do not necessarily matter to, or concern us, since they are just articulable, merely, in terms of functional use. For instance, a drafting board for architects is seen as an item of equipment because its functional role helps them draw for designing, becoming meaningful by plugged into being an architect. But only knowing its functionality while it has nothing to do with what one does would not make it an item of equipment,

such as a case of a medical doctor's point of view. Now, this is where the second kind of pattern of the structure of the world become crucial in the sense that a functionally intelligible entities can be significant for us. Heidegger calls that kind of structure, "for-the-sake-of-which". In fact, there are several more forms of the structure that have a similar aspect to this matter, but for this paper it is enough to underline the most crucial one.

What Heidegger meant by "for-the-sake-of-which" is a kind of self-understanding of our ways of being—such as for being a student, an architect, a good friend—that can bind together a totality of functional references in a certain and unique way, whereby certain kind of things can be significant to us. For instance, when I write my thesis with my laptop, I need a quiet room, a large table, a decent chair, and some lighting. Here, they become intelligible together as a certain kind of group of practical entities that matter to me; which is to say, this particular set of entities are not only intelligible but also significant, *since they help me achieve a purpose that springs from my own self-understanding of my being, to be an good architect*. Blattner's concise illustration of the same matter should be helpful:

A for-the-sake-of-which is not a goal, some definite project that Dasein can complete, but rather something deeper and less well-defined, such as being a student, being a mother, being the black sheep in the family. (Blattner, 2011)

In other words, as much as we presuppose our primary understanding of things in terms of their functional roles, we have an unspoken understanding of ourselves, i.e. a tacit understanding of ways to be ourselves *for-the-sake-of-which* we do what we do. A totality of functionally intelligible entities, thus, are incorporated into our lives, everyday practices, and purposes, which is inconspicuously and unreflectively understood as a meaning-giving context that we are immersed in, i.e. the world.

In sum, both (1) the pattern that form a totality of functional references and (2) the pattern where referential totalities are plugged into "for-the-sake-of-which" shape a crucial framework for a meaning-giving context, the structure of the world. And, such context is inconspicuously taken in by us *as long as* our everyday practices take place in a trouble-free manner. So now, we shall finally illustrate how we can unveil, untangle, and (re)encounter the inconspicuously understood world, when a breakdown takes place in such hitch-free activity. Heidegger says:

But *when an assignment has been disturbed*—when something is unusable for some purpose—then the assignment becomes explicit. Even now, of course, it has not become explicit as an ontological structure; but it has become explicit ontically for the circumspection which comes up against the damaging of the tool. When an assignment to some particular "towards-this"<sup>2</sup> has been thus circumspectively aroused, we catch sight of the "towards-this" itself, and along with it everything connected with the work—the whole 'work-shop'—as that wherein concern always dwells. The context of equipment is lit up, not as something never seen before, but as a totality constantly sighted beforehand in circumspection. With this totality, however, the world announces itself. (Heidegger, 1962, p.105)

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2 "Towards-this" is the referential state where something is *involved for* a certain practice, e.g. driving a nail is something *towards* assembling furniture efficiently.

That is to say, the world shows itself as a totality of involvements in the form of such process: We explicitly pay attention to a disturbed task, from which we come to trace how that has been structuralized with a number of references in order to make ‘implicit’ sense in our everyday experiences; this means, in turn, that we untangle how various kinds of entities, their functional roles, and various practices which can be hereby achieved have been incorporated, interwoven into a referential totality, a totality of involvements, hence the world can be (re)encountered here. In other words, having an explicit encounter with the world means to be aware of how a broken item of equipment fits into a totality of functional references and of how we organize those various references in terms of their contribution to ways of our being for-the-sake-of-which we operate in our everyday practices.

For example, when I am in trouble-free writing with my computer, the tools and the roles they play in the activity are familiar and transparent aspects of my experience. But if my mouse is running out of battery and I have no other, I become aware of it, the computer, keyboard, battery, a shelf where I must have put extra battery and so on—as entities with which I was working, in the *practical context* of my room *in order to* make a draft of my thesis, *towards* presenting my ideas before the deadline. And I come to traverse what I inconspicuously and primarily understood to operate this everyday practice, that is, a particular kind of referential totality which are plugged into for-the-sake-of-my being an architect. Hence, breakdown has the effect of exposing not only a broken or found-to-be-missing tool, but also the world shows itself in the sense that I unveil the stuff that the structure of the world has incorporated to form a meaning-giving context that I am primarily and unreflectively immersed in.

Previously, we have illuminated “average everydayness” as where we, so to speak, ‘overlook’ the world in the sense that we *undifferentiatedly* have *an implicit understanding* of it as a meaning-giving context, based on which our basic form of experiencing entities in our everyday can take place, and in which we are inclined to trivialise them. Having a moment of a breakdown, then, become an opportunity that allows us to have *an explicit understanding* of the world, and we may illuminate why the way things are becomes the way they are. This means, whether we like it or not, we must thereby confront what we undifferentiatedly and primarily take in as *the background* against which our everyday experiences can take place as *the foreground* in an ordinary, typical, and familiar way. That is, *the foreground that are often trivialised by us shows itself differently*, since at this time the background is explicitly apprehensible; here, the ongoing form of experiencing what we typically and self-evidently know becomes no longer the same to the basic everyday form of experiencing them in the way we tend to ‘overlook’ them. Here, I claim that this peculiar situation comes to be where we may re-discover the ordinary in an extra-ordinary manner.

Hubert Dreyfus nicely underlines the unique chance at the moment of a breakdown: “shifting our attention to it [the world] while at the same time staying involved in it” (Dreyfus, 1995, p.99) In this sense, the way we can experience the ordinary gets extra-ordinary insofar as we explicitly survey the world while we are still involved in the world to some extent. Consequently, we can say that bringing to the fore the world may lead us to re-encounter the ordinary as the extraordinary.

So now, we may raise a question for Tati's films as such: Is there any disturbance in Tati's films, which is applicable to the breakdown that Heidegger consider as the special moment where the background of our everyday practices come to the fore?

### 3. Interpretation of Signs

#### 3-1. Signs: Equipmental Entities in Films

To investigate a possible disturbance in Tati's films, the two following questions must be asked: First, what kind of hitch-free activity take place with equipmental entities for audiences? Second, what kind of disturbance happens in that equipmental activity, so they may unveil the world?

To examine what can be a hitch-free activity in films, we cannot dismiss the obvious difference between our everyday pattern of activity and the moment of watching films. While audiences watch films, their basic form of experiencing is not by a means of practical coping, like a moment that we make use of them by having it on hand, but it is by a means of watching. Despite of various entities that audiences may encounter in screen, what they can do is only to observe them. In this sense, the examination of films seems to require us to distinguish audience's experiences from that of those who are in their 'actual' everyday experiences.

Nonetheless, that inevitable difference seems not that problematic for our study, once we notice that experiencing something visually or auditorily is not special at all in our everyday experiences. If a student enters a classroom, he would visually encounter a chair where he may have a seat or choose not to. If one walks through a field, he may see a quite clear sky, so he would happily continue the trip. Or, by hearing lightning or seeing thunderous clouds, he may decide to go back the way he came or find the nearest shelter. The point is that our basic form of experience certainly includes visual and audial encounters, whereby *we do not gaze at them to study, analyse, reflect, or describe what entities are* like the moment of presence-at-hand, *but we can make use of them with what they typically mean to us.*

Imagine a hammer again. A hammer is a tool to drive a nail, and this functional role is how we usually make use of them. When we are driving a nail in a hitch-free manner, in Heideggerian sense, the way we experience the hammer is, then, by a means of skilful coping, as if it becomes a part of our body to achieve the task. And, that is what we have mainly illustrated as the basic way to experience something beforehand. Now, let us imagine a moment that we see a hammer on a table or a moment that we can hear the sound of driving a nail. This is also a basic form of experiencing a hammer for us, as we may encounter the entity as something we know as a hammer but not as objects for study. This means, *even by not using it directly, it still shows itself as a hammer*, a tool to drive a nail.

If we consider that such visual and audial encounter, besides of a skilful coping, as a basic form of our everyday experiences, watching films and encountering entities visually and audially is still no exception to it. For Heidegger, such encounter where we see and tell an entity as some kind of equipment—or, in plain English, typical, ordinary, or everyday moments that 'we can tell what it is', e.g. a hammer is seen as a hammer—has been possible because we are *ontically* differentiating an entity as an item of equipment: More specifically, how we can ontically differentiate entities as equipment is achievable by the way we get familiar with them in term of what they are for, which Heidegger calls "serviceability" for a specific role (or a "in-order-to" do something).

In short, we can thereby typically tell, for instance, a hammer as a hammer because we are familiar with its *serviceability* (for driving a nail). Or, let's say if one received something as a present that he cannot really tell 'what it is', we then often explain 'that is a thing which can be useful for cooking'—like this, *ontic distinction* take place as such a common way we all do in articulating *what is what in our everyday practices*. Note that, distinguishing what is the *serviceability* of something, for Heidegger, does not require us to have a special moment (like unveiling the world), but it is fluidly apprehensible in our everyday experiences *without us being reflective or cognitive about them*. With that in mind, when it comes to audiences of films, I suggest that entities which are experienced in films also are encountered basically as something *ontically distinguishable in terms of their serviceability*, based on their familiarity to us, like the ways they are in other usual everyday encounters. Thus, the basic form of experiencing entities in films still follows that of our everyday experiences.

So now, we can bring up an answer for the first question of the two that we raised before: 'What kind of hitch-free activity take place with equipmental entities for audiences?' While audiences watch a film, practical coping with equipment is limited to 'watching' though, the basic and everyday form of experiencing entities still take place. This is because audiences still *encounter entities as ontically articulable in terms of their serviceability*—e.g. when a hammer is seen in screen, we cannot drive a nail though, we still would see it as a hammer for driving a nail. Then, audiences still make use of entities with what they typically *indicate in terms of what they are and what they are for*, and this hitch-free understanding shall be a kind of hitch-free 'activity' that may take place in watching films.

Let us move on the second essential question: 'What kind of disturbance occurs in such activity (of making use of them), so they may reveal the world?' If we simply consider a breakdown in a hitch-free activity with equipment, as we saw before, it is the moment that they no longer function smoothly to the degree to which we have to pay explicit attention to the assignment we wanted to achieve. This means, the key to a breakdown is either of missing an item(s) of equipment or having a malfunctioning item(s) of them by unsatisfactory serviceability. If a head of a hammer is missing, it could be the former, and if a hammer is too heavy or big to drive a specific nail, it could be the latter, as serviceability of a hammer, for driving a nail, gets unsatisfactory.

Then, we can extend that ideas of disturbance into our hitch-free activity in films. Let us imagine a breakdown while *we make use of entities with 'what they indicate'*. Like the hammer case, we may picture both a missing case and a malfunctioning case of it: If something missing in a scene and the originally intended *indication* cannot be delivered properly, it would be a breakdown, like having a hammer without its head. Or, if its serviceability—for *indicating* something—is somehow not functioning properly due to some kind of disturbance, such as it is too far or vague to see it.

Given few possible ways of having a breakdown in the audience's hitch-free understanding—making use of entities with what they *indicate*—we seem to be able to bring up an answer for the second question—'what kind of disturbance in a hitch-free activity may happen while watching films?'. However, there is an inevitable issue in the current postulation which lies behind our ongoing discussion; which is to say, we presume that *equipment for indicating* can be malfunctioning and thereby come to reveal the world. Here, the issue arises since Heidegger obviously differentiates the equipment whose *serviceability is 'for indicating'*—namely "signs"—from other kind of equipment, identifying them as having the exceptional capacity that *the world can be unveiled even while they are functioning properly (but as long as we grasp it 'authentically')*. In short, signs are basically equipment, but they can be something more at the same time

That is to say, we cannot simply explore the possibility of a broken *signs* as mere equipment, unless we can carefully clarify our own standpoint in terms of Heidegger's view of signs: For instance, should we focus on signs in terms of their special (almost non-equipmental) capacity? Should we look rather into the possibility of them in terms of their mere equipmentality? Or, should we apply both into our attempt to examine Tati's films?

To approach this troubling crossroad, retaining *the essential issue that we previously considered to lie with our everyday experiences*—that which *our basic form of encountering entities takes place in an 'overlooking' way*, and that against which this paper is exploring a 're-encountering' way to encounter such ordinary entities—can hereby help us shape an appropriate way to apply Heidegger's view of signs to our discussion of films. So, although we have seen the essential issue of our everyday lives before in this chapter, let us recap it once and for all, so that we can clarify the best way how we examine his view of signs for the purpose of this paper.

### 3-2. The Standpoint of This Paper to Illustrate Signs

In our everyday experiences, we tend to familiarise ourselves with entities in the sense that we are, so to speak, bound to encounter them as what they primarily are without us being reflectively or cognitively aware of what make them intelligible as what they primarily can be. Put differently, 'what they are'—what can be intelligible—is *the foreground* of what we typically encounter though, 'how they could be what they are'—how they can be intelligible—is *the background* of it. Having said that, the background is not completely missed out from our experiences. In fact, it is *inconspicuously understood and presupposed as a meaning-giving context*—i.e. the world that we are always already immersed in—in our everyday experiences, so that the foreground can make sense as what they primarily are. In sum, most of time what *seem* to be the whole picture of our basic everyday experiences with entities is likely oriented around the foreground exclusively, *whereas we, so to speak, blindly take in the background in our average everydayness*.

In that sense, *the crucial issue can thereby be pointed out as that which our primary and typical form of experiencing entities takes place, basically, whereas we 'overlook' what crucially lies behind what we primarily experience*. Accordingly, while we encounter entities in such typical manner, we come to fail to own (or overlook) the other half of the possibility where we may 'fully' engage with entities in the sense that *we can concern them not only in terms of the foreground but also the background*. In other words, if we can experience everyday entities not only in terms of 'what they primarily are' but also 'how they can be what they primarily are' by shedding light on the world (the background) that we are always already immersed in, we can thereby encounter them by fully discovering 'the whole picture' of our basic everyday experiences with them—i.e. encountering both the foreground and the background. Hence, in highlighting that issue of our everyday experiences, this paper comes to be interested essentially in 'what would lead us to unveil the world (the background)' while we are concerning entities in the context of our everyday experiences. More specifically, we thereby focus on what kind of 'equipment' can be found broken and allow us to unveil the world when we watch Tati's films.

In highlighting those specific interest, Heidegger's view of signs, at first glance, seems to be helpful and suitable for our investigation of Tati's films, since it allows us to regard the entities in Tati's films as being equipment *in terms of their indication towards what they primarily refer to in our everyday experiences*; this means, in turn, that if such indication simply fail in some way in his films, we can thereby come to bring to the fore the world—i.e. the background of what make the signs

intelligible as what they primarily can be. Nonetheless, as we saw before, this is where an inevitable issue springs from prefacing Heidegger's view of signs. If we simply see signs as equipment and apply this into the examination of Tati's films, it apparently deviates from his account of signs: Signs are fully distinguishable as equipment on the one hand, yet on the other hand his main concern about signs is that if we authentically grasp them, we may unveil the world while the signs at the same time are fluidly manipulated by us and unbroken. That is to say, his view of signs become more complicated for us in the sense that he draws a distinction between how we make use of signs as equipment; while he considers it to be 'authentic' to encounter ready-to-hand signs as the kind that can be used to bring to the fore the world, it leaves it 'inauthentic' to encounter them as the kind that merely indicate something else.

Nevertheless, this issue of prefacing Heidegger's view of signs could be sorted out if we can clearly establish this paper's points of view towards the two different ways to encounter signs—the authentic and the inauthentic—presented by Heidegger. Fortunately, our essential interest can hereby highlight a right perspective towards them. In short, given the illustration of both the authentic and the inauthentic way to encounter signs, what should interest us is particularly the latter way. This is because—as long as we are interested in entities in general, which we typically encounter, and of which make use in our everyday experiences in the virtue of presupposing the world that we are immersed in—*we shall consistently look into signs of those that we typically encounter on the basis of that presupposition too*. Thus, *we better focus not on those that are likely to be encountered authentically, where our basic encounters with signs can most likely lead us to unveil the world, but those that are likely encountered inauthentically and merely equipmentally, where our basic encounters with signs is grounded in our unreflective immersion into the world throughout the whole experience*.

Therefore, in this paper we will aim to explore signs mainly in the context of the inauthentic way to grasp them in our everyday experiences whereas our presupposition of the world remains implicit in the encounters. However, this does not mean the authentic grasp of signs can be totally untouched or ignored. This is because we still owe ourselves an explanation for why in the authentic case the world may come to the fore and become explicit to us, so that we thereby fully appreciate why the authentic case would not be suitable to be applied to the examination of Tati's films—especially, while this paper's interest lies in the way of our everyday basic encounters with entities while we are immersed in the world. With that in mind, let us start to grasp an overview of Heidegger's account of signs, by illustrating it in terms of its being equipment while also putting in sight their exceptional capacity.

### 3-3. Two Ways to Understand Signs

signs, in the first instance, are themselves items of equipment whose specific character as equipment consists in showing or indicating. We find such signs in signposts, boundary-stones, the ball for the mariner's storm-warning, signals, banners, signs of mourning, and the like. (Heidegger, 1962, p108)

For Heidegger, '*a in-order-to indicate*' is the serviceability that characterises an item of equipment as *a sign*, and it is associated deeply with our practical engagement like the other equipment. Yet, he does not conclude that signs become fully distinctive by such simple indicating role, because this interpretation is, for him, narrowly generated by understanding signs only in the perspective of its referential traits, and so missing its unique capacity we make use of. Accordingly,

his attempt at analysing what is a sign in the frame of phenomenology—how a sign become significant in our everyday lives—comes to articulate it in an ambivalent sense as it has two (yet almost conflicting) kinds of points: (1) Signs can be defined as *Ready-to-hand equipment like others*, but at the same time (2) have a *transcendental capacity since they can shed light on the inconspicuous contexts of equipment and their significance while they are perfectly Ready-to-hand*. Thus, to understand Heidegger’s illustration of signs, we must bear in mind that, unlike other equipment, signs can be significant to us in two different kinds of ways: We make use of signs with what they indication, like the way we do with serviceability of the other equipment on the one hand, and on the other hand they also can be significant when we explicitly orient ourselves in the inconspicuous context illuminated by them, thereby unveiling the world, and so corresponding to the authentic case.

There seems no shortcut available to concisely picture Heidegger’s account of signs, let us start from prefacing Taylor Carman’s explanation for the two fundamental distinctions that we must know in order to follow Heidegger’s articulation of signs.

He [Heidegger] is thus trying simultaneously to draw two separate distinctions: (1) the distinction between the occurrentness [Presence-at-hand] of mere things and the availableness [Readiness-to-hand] of all equipment in general; and (2) the distinction between two sorts of “reference” (Verweisung): the reference of all this equipment to a “what-for” (which is not itself available) [their serviceability which is the foundation of all kinds of roles], and the reference of signs, which have the peculiar function (transcendental capacity) of showing (Zeigen). (Carman, 1991, p.160)

So, the first distinction stresses Heidegger’s advocacy of the notion of Readiness-to-hand and Presence-at-hand: The former is the way of being of *entities as equipment* when we are unreflectively immersed into ongoing tasks and the world of our concern, in which entities are not engaged for contemplation but for our everyday practices. The latter is the way of being of *entities as objects* with properties hence not subordinating them into the context of our concerned everyday lives, and we thereby are subjects standing before ‘a world’ composed of a number of objects.

Although the first distinction seems, as we have seen before, familiar to us, the second distinction needs more careful explanation. Heidegger explains signs as Ready-to-hand equipment in essence, but he also wants to differentiate them from other kinds of equipment. Then, to differentiate signs from other equipment, he comes up with the idea of *two kinds of references* which technically lie in the context of all kinds of ready-to-hand equipment (about which we will return to examine later). Here, the way he draws a distinction between two kinds of references is that he claims one of them as having the special referential capacity: It can raise inconspicuousness of what constitute a context of equipment before us, whereby we may unveil the world. In this sense, Heidegger seems to argue that signs that are essentially ready-to-hand equipment can, in fact, give rise to what are usually inconspicuous aspects—the world—to us, regardless of the fact that its mode of being is still readiness-to-hand whereby we are supposed to be unreflectively immersed into the world. This means, to understand that view of signs, we need, so to speak, to conflict with the rule between the three modes of being of entities—readiness-to-hand, un-readiness-to-hand, and presence-at-hand—where a special moment of unveiling the world belongs only to the second.

With those two kinds of distinctions in mind, we can try to illustrate Heidegger’s view of signs though, it is important to keep in mind that it will take two important steps to do that: Although the idea of *two kinds of references* is the crucial key to unfolding what is a sign and its significance for us

in a comprehensive way, we must bear in mind *that it will initially let us interpret signs as the kind that we make use of with their indication*—the inauthentic case—*only after which it will lead us to illustrate signs as the other kind that we make use of with its exceptional capacity* in order to shed light on the inconspicuous meaning-giving context in which we operate our everyday practices—the authentic case. So now, let us more closely explore how Heidegger articulate signs with the *two kinds of references*.

### 3-4. Two Kinds of Reference of Signs

To appreciate Heidegger's account towards the two kinds of *references*, we better step back to see why he needs to bring forth such a sophisticated way to explain signs. First of all, his view of a sign begins with criticising the traditional view of it with its universal-relational characters. This is because such *relation* can theoretically name any kind of connection between two things, even including Present-at-hand entities. Carman lucidly illustrate that how the term “relation” turns out to be too formal and why Heidegger goes against it to analyse a sign;

if we consider the world a mere collection of objects, then a line can be drawn from any one to any other, and this line could conceivably represent a sign-relation, the one object being a sign showing the other (given a sufficient stretch of the imagination). But this obviously sheds no light on what it is, in fact, to be a sign; it offers no phenomenological insight. (Carman, 1991, p.161)

Nonetheless, Carman also points out that such formal description of a sign with relation can undeniably differentiates signs from other equipment. For instance, he compares two examples that Heidegger cited: While a knot tied in a handkerchief (as a sign) may function as a reminder of anything that we designated the knot for, a hammer cannot be used on anything but specific things such as wood and nails but screws or clothes. Thus, formal relation can, indeed, illuminate a sign as an exceptional item of equipment, with which we can re-interpret any two things as standing in a sign relation, and so it can “take any form and function together with anything and everything.” (Carman, 1991, p.161)

Nonetheless, we may assume that Heidegger still wants to avoid the notion of relation consistently, because if we thematise the essence of a sign as its formal relation between things, signs can be signs in essence even without being incorporated in the notion of readiness-to-hand and equipment; this means, in turn, the subject/object divide becomes the most suitable way to see the world, which Heidegger certainly wants to avoid. In other words, the notion of *relation* cannot (or does not need to) penetrate our ordinary encounter with signs in our everyday experiences. Here, it makes sense that Heidegger comes up with the notion of *reference*, which is not identical to *relation*. In fact, formal *relation* has, for him, its locus in the *reference* that all kinds of *equipment* belong to.

If we are to investigate such phenomena as references, signs, or even significations, nothing is to be gained by characterizing them as relations. Indeed we shall eventually have to show that 'relations' themselves, because of their formally general character, have their ontological source in a reference. (Heidegger, 1962, p.108)

Note that, what Heidegger means by *reference* is the fundamental character of all equipment, that is, *reference* of something to something in the world. In depth, such *reference* is basic ontological ground of what makes equipment as equipment, because what we have seen before as the essential

characteristics of equipment—serviceability for something (or a in-order-to do something)—can gain specific ‘something’ in the virtue of *referring*. For instance, a hammer’s serviceability *refers to* driving a nail, which also *refers to* other related equipment, materials, and their roles in our everyday practices, which also *refers to* others, and so forth. This traverse of a number of references, which seems ever growing, can constitute a vast network of references where an item of equipment can be what it is.

In that sense, *references* ground a meaning-giving context (the world) and the way, for instance, a hammer can be a hammer but not a wooden stick with a blob of metal. Furthermore, when we even ontically differentiate an item of equipment—when we encounter a hammer as something articulable as a tool for driving a nail for instance—*reference* thereby fundamentally allows us to distinguish a hammer as it refers to the specific functional role. Put differently, when we can tell a tool of equipment as what they can primarily be, what is happening behind this situation—in a strictly Heideggerian sense—is that ‘serviceability *refers to a for-what* that the *serviceability* is’, thanks to such capacity of reference—e.g. a hammer as equipment has the character of *serviceability-for* that can refer to *driving a nail*.

We now can clearly understand that the *reference* of the serviceability is what can ontologically ground the way of being of entities as equipment. That is to say, all equipment must have *serviceability* (*which itself is ontological*) that *refers to for specific characteristics of equipment* (*which is ontically apprehensible*). Then, we can really start to untangle how Heidegger could consider signs as equipment in terms of the notion of *reference*: Signs, indeed, have the *equipmental ‘serviceability’* that in this case ‘*refers*’ particularly to ‘*for indicating something*’ (e.g. a hammer *refers to for driving a nail*) as ‘*sign’s ontically articulable characteristics of equipment*’. Here, we must bear in mind that what the ‘*indicating*’ does is also a kind of *reference*—e.g. *indicating-something*—too; which is to say, ‘*indicating*’ also *refers* to something ontical in the same sense that *serviceability* (which belongs to all equipment) does *refer* to something ontical, but the crucial difference between them must be understood too: *Serviceability itself is ontological but “indicating” itself is already ontical concretion because it is referred by equipmental serviceability that belongs to signs*. Thus, we hereby have seen not only why signs can be considered as equipment like any other, but also why signs can be different from other kinds of equipment. This quite convoluted picture of *reference* will be more appreciated by raising an example.

Imagine an automobile’s turn signal, as Heidegger cited. Such signal has *serviceability* (*ontological*) as equipment, which *refers to* a specific functional character of *indicating* (*ontic*) which *refers to the direction* (*ontic*) that a car takes. We thereby can underline *two kinds of reference*: (1) *serviceability* (that belongs to all equipment) *refers to for indicating something*, and (2) *indicating* itself *refers to the direction the car takes*. Now, let us compare *that double reference of a sign to the reference that belong to other kind of equipment*. For example, a hammer has *serviceability* (*ontological*) that *refers to for driving a nail* (*ontic*). This means, there is only *one kind of reference* in the sense that *serviceability* (that belongs to all equipment) *refers to* a specific functional role.

Heidegger, thus, needs to distinguish the two kinds of reference with his jargons: “the reference of serviceability”, which belongs to all equipment, and “the reference of indicating”, which belongs to sign’s indication. This means, while *all equipment have “the reference of serviceability”*, Heidegger underlines that signs as equipment have *coincidentally both “the reference of serviceability” and “the reference of indicating”*. In this sense, Heidegger could successfully differentiate signs as equipment from other kind of equipment, yet still signs are perfectly articulable as equipment that can be useful in terms of their capacity to refer to something else.

To recap, let us clarify the two crucial kinds of reference with which Heidegger illustrate signs. On the one hand, “the reference of serviceability” is the act of “serviceability” that lies as the structure of equipment, and which itself is *ontological and inconspicuous in our everyday experiences*. Nonetheless, that inconspicuous structure refers to *an ontical concretion* with which we seem to determine a way of being of entities as an item of equipment for specific function—such as ‘driving a nail’ with a hammer, which is of course apprehensible aspect in our everyday experiences in general. Then, “*the reference of serviceability*” is *the act of reference in which an ontical concretion is referred by the ontological attribute*. In that sense, for instance, when we say that a hammer refers to the role of driving a nail, we are talking about a hammer in the ontic sense, and we are not aware of *serviceability* itself which is ontological attribute of equipmental entities.

On the other hand, “the reference of indicating” is rather explicit act of *reference*. More specifically, it is the act of the ‘indicating’ to *refer to other ontical concretion* which thereby become certain kind of useful ‘messages’ to us. *Note that, “indicating” itself is undeniably and already within an ontical concretion by “the reference of serviceability”*. In other words, “the reference of indicating” is another way to say the state where “the reference of serviceability” has *referred to the role of indicating* (an ontical concretion) which again *refers to whatsoever* (another ontical concretion). In short, “*the reference of indicating*” is *the act of reference in which an ontical concretion is referred by an ontical concretion*. As we familiarised ourselves with the distinction between *the two kinds of reference*, we now should able to grasp the following Heidegger’s explanation of the same matter:

Indicating [the reference of indicating], as a 'reference', is a way in which the "towards-which" of a serviceability [what-for of a serviceability] becomes ontically concrete [...] On the other hand, the kind of reference we get in 'serviceability-for' [the reference of serviceability], is an ontologico-categorial attribute of equipment as equipment. (Heidegger, 1962, p.109)

All equipment are ultimately serviceable with the fact, ‘what this tool does for’ on the one hand, and on the other hand a sign, thus, is ultimately serviceable with the fact, ‘what this tool indicates is what other thing is’. Here, the point is that *the former depends on a kind of referring between an ontological attribute and an ontical concretion, yet the latter does between two different ontical concretions*. Indeed, we can thereby notice that the aforementioned formal and strangely flexible ‘*relation*’—which traditionally explain signs—seems to have its locus in “the reference of indicating”—referring between two ontical concretions; indicating/whatever the ‘indicating’ refers to—which actually has its locus in “the reference of serviceability”—a crucial structure of equipment—though. That is to say, as Heidegger points out, “*relation*” indeed has its ontological source in ‘*reference*’ that all equipment belong to. Carman nicely summarise this convoluted picture of *relation* and *reference* into Heidegger’s view of equipmentality; “actual ‘relations’ obtaining between signs and the world are, qua relations, parasitic on the ‘reference’ of all equipment in general to a what-for.” (Carman, 1991, p.162) In that sense, articulating signs with *relation* could be derived only from its parasitic state on *equipment*, hiding in “the reference of serviceability”.

Now, we have seen how Heidegger articulate signs as ontically distinguishable equipment by illuminating his idea of “the reference of indicating” (and the two kinds of references). Yet, in this case, he did not elaborate particularly on how we are absorbed in the ongoing activity and presuppose the world. Nonetheless, as such signs are clearly illustrated as equipment, it would be fair to consider that we can make use of them with their explicit referential capacity like we would with the other

equipment. In that sense, our basic encounters with such signs take place while they become transparent aspects, and while the world that we are immersed in (and thereby taking in the primary meaning-giving context) is typically inconspicuous. Accordingly, signs of that kind correspond to what audiences make use of with what they typically indicate while their presupposition of the world remains implicit in the encounters.

At last, we shall move on to the articulation of signs of the transcendental capacity, so that we can persuasively put aside signs of this authentically-grasped kind for our investigation—of what kind of entities are likely to get, so to speak, hitch-freely (or even ‘blindly’) encountered by audiences while watching films.

### 3-5. Special Capacity of Signs

Although the reference of indicating could articulate signs in the context of equipment, Heidegger does not jump to the conclusion of a sign as such a mere item of equipment. Yet, in the case of the authentic encounter, he considers that signs are still distinguishable as equipment and can be manipulated as ready-to-hand even at the moment of having the ‘authentic’ capacity. So, how they could be exceptional while it can be still regarded as equipment? Here, the reference of indicating becomes, in fact, the key to the exceptional capacity of signs in the sense that Heidegger points out that there is a different kind of way of how we can make use of sign’s ‘indicating’ capacity:

Now it is certain that indicating [of ‘the reference of indicating’] differs in principle from reference as a constitutive state of equipment [reference that plays crucial role in forming equipment]; it is just as incontestable that the sign in its turn is related in a peculiar and even distinctive way to the kind of Being which belongs to whatever equipmental totality may be ready-to-hand in the environment, and to its worldly character. (Heidegger, 1962, p.109)

That is, instead of being significant in terms of its capacity to refer to something else, it can illuminate some ways of being of entities in a situation in which signs are manipulated. Thus, if we want to illuminate signs in terms of its authenticity, we must illuminate the reference of indicating in a different way from one we previously did, which Heidegger means to illustrate as a genuine, authentic way to make use of signs in our everyday experiences:

What do we mean when we say that a sign "indicates"? We can answer this only by determining what kind of dealing is appropriate with equipment for indicating. And we must do this in such a way that the readiness-to-hand of that equipment can be genuinely grasped. What is the appropriate way of having-to-do with signs? (Heidegger, 1962, p.110)

To clarify, Heidegger tries to cite an example to demonstrate that different significance of ‘indicating’. Yet, before we take on closer illustration of such sign’s special significance, it first helps us to clarify several crucial Heidegger’s jargons that is used to describe our everyday practices with equipment, since they are deeply associated with the practical experience, yet extraordinarily, with signs. They are three interconnected jargons, namely “dealing”, “environment”, and “circumspection”.

As they are deeply interconnected one another, let us begin with having an overview of how they can be useful. Imagine how we are related to entities in our everyday experiences. Most of time, our practical engagement is where the basic relation with them arises though, that takes place while

we unreflectively make use of them. For example, in our daily routine, a series of practical engagement with entities as equipment take place, such as brushing our teeth, wearing shoes, clothes, taking our favourite route to somewhere and so on.

While we unreflectively encounter, and make use of entities as equipment, the world that we are always already immersed, as we have seen before, is also unreflectively understood by us. This is because the world is a meaning-giving context where equipment can be what they primarily are in our everyday experiences; which is to say, while we unreflectively interact with equipment, we are implicitly interacting with a meaning-giving context too, the world. Thus, having our everyday experiences, where we interact with equipment in a certain way, means that we at the same time implicitly interact with a meaning-giving context against which our practical practice can take place.

In emphasising our ordinary way of relating ourselves with entities—practical engagement with entities founded in our implicit interaction with the world—Heidegger’s jargons are meant to help us describe precisely such our basic everyday phenomenon in a precise manner. More specifically, by using them, the illustration of unreflective everyday encounters with entities in a practical way (i.e. in the mode of Ready-to-hand) can be clearly differentiated from that of the deliberate, conscious, or reflective way of encountering with entities (i.e. in the mode of Present-at-hand). That is why the three terms—“Dealing”, “Environment”, and “Circumspection”—are needed for Heidegger.

So now, let us familiarise ourselves with those three Heidegger’s jargons by illustrating our practical engagement. (1) “*Environment*”: In our everyday implicit interaction with the world in our everyday practices, there is the immediate world that is a certain kind of meaning-giving context that has immediate relation to the current equipmental entities and their roles, so that the current practical activity can take place in a certain way. Heidegger names this immediate world *environment*. (2) “*Dealing*”: We make use of entities in a certain way since we are immersed in the world. In other words, we (as “being-in-the-world”) in our everyday pattern of activity are implicitly going around *Environment* (or the immediate world), so that we can tell entities in familiar ways. Heidegger calls such our crucial yet implicit engagement with the immediate world *Dealing* (or “*Coping*” by Dreyfus (1995)). (3) “*Circumspection*”: In *dealing* (or implicitly going around the immediate world), our familiar practical activities take place neither by a deliberate thinking nor zombie like automatic reflex but other form of implicit intelligence or awareness which is grounded in familiarity. In other words, it is a kind of ‘sight’, namely *circumspection*, by which we implicitly understand the situation and take in some particular contents of the immediate world in respect of the current practical activity.

Yet, I must say that the third jargon “circumspection” could remain hard to be appreciated, so adding further illustration can be helpful. First and foremost, it is peculiar awareness that we have while a practical activity is ongoing. This awareness is not a cognitive way, like deliberate thinking or study about something, but it can take in a context of equipmental entities and the situation *without us noticing*. Hence, circumspection is a kind of understanding that takes place in the background of our *dealing*. Blattner nicely demonstrates *circumspection* with the example of hammering: “I do not need to stop and think about the hammer and how to swing it, and in fact, if I do stop and think, I will swing it wrong. I see my way through the situation and to the goal of my activity by staying focused on the goal and letting my skills navigate the details.” (Blattner, 2007, p.56)

To recap, let us demonstrate our everyday experiences with the three Heidegger jargons. For instance, when I enter a workshop for making a physical architectural model, the space is already understood as a familiar room so called a workshop to me; here, the immediate world—environment—can be seen to me as a workshop. There, a large and tall table with a lump usually

appears to be my favourite and convenient place to work. In other words, they show up themselves in that certain ways of their being for me in respect of activities; here, I am metaphorically going around *environment*—i.e. the ongoing engagement with equipment takes places as “dealing”.

Once I sit at the table, I can comfortably cut paper boards and focus on how my work flows nicely, not only without paying attention to those equipmental entities with which my work can take place, but also without thinking of avoiding or fetching them in accordance to the work. I thereby can be absorbed into the ongoing work, where I can flow with how the knife, the material, my arm and body are well aligned, while those equipment are transparently handled by me in a hitch-free manner. Indeed, that is why I unreflectively know the boundary of the table without noticing it or I can quickly get the lump in the best position for me without carefully checking where it is. The practical “circumspection”, thus, is inconspicuously guiding and assisting me in the ongoing activity.

In sum, now we can clearly see that in our everyday “dealings” we do not need to concern ourselves with the items of equipment that is involved in the activities, but with the work itself, because our “circumspection” takes in the situation and the contexts of equipment without our deliberate thinking in the immediate world, “environment”.

Finally, we better return to the illustration of signs of the kind that we can, for Heidegger, ‘authentically’ make use of in our everyday experiences. To demonstrate it, we shall start from Heidegger’s first move, which is meant to keep us away from the two possible kinds of misinterpretation about the authentic grasp. An example with a turn signal on a car is brought up again: When we encounter the signal, we first let the sign guide us, but the authentic grasp do not correspond to any of the two. The first is that we look at the turn signal as present-at-hand objects by thinking of it reflectively. We thereby would discern signal’s properties, such as redness, lightness, or even the property of indicating, which might be similar to the way the traditional perspective of semiotics would do. Second is that we go along with the signal in the mode of Readiness-to-hand in terms of observing apprehensible things in the directions that the turn signal indicates: For instance, the signal let us notice pavements, planted trees on median strip, other walkers, and so forth. By excluding those two cases, Heidegger argues what makes the encounter with signs authentic as such;

a sign addresses itself to the circumspection of our concerned dealings, and it does so in such a way that the circumspection which goes along with it, following where it points, brings into an explicit ‘survey’ whatever aroundness the environment may have at the time. This circumspective survey does not grasp the ready-to-hand; what it achieves is rather an orientation within our environment. (Heidegger, 1962, p.110)

Here, Carman’s illustration of the authentic grasp of a ready-to-hand sign helps us understand Heidegger’s view of it in a more accessible way: The authentic encounter can take place only when the turn signal is encountered as a sign which “allows us to ‘survey’ the situation as a whole [...] with regard to the ends and activities in which we are involved.” (Carman, 1991, p.162) Let us demonstrate this point with the case of a turn signal: When I encounter a turn signal and making use of it, the authentic way in the current dealing does not emerge from observing the signal itself or the act of bringing my attentions to other apprehensible entities through my visual perception. But it emerges from the act of *having and securing a kind of a holistic view (not literally but metaphorically) of the background against which we can understand equipmental entities as they primarily are in the situation.*

Put differently, a sign can be authentically encountered, once the ‘sight’ to *survey* the immediate meaning-giving context—i.e. *circumspective survey*—takes place, so that we can explicitly apprehend the appropriate aspects of the appropriate equipmental entities in accordance with the means and ends. Indeed, a turn signal is used not only as something to indicate the direction that the car turns to but used as something that prompts us to be ‘alert’ to the situation. Here, we do not become alert to the situation as ‘somewhere’ in which a number of objects are located at random points but ‘somewhere’ in which certain kind of entities as equipment typically lies and become meaningful in respect of certain kind of our everyday context. Thus, signs thereby can be used as a ‘guide’ with which we can be tuned in to a mode of the current situation where appropriate ‘messages’ (certain intelligibilities of entities) can be circumspectively surveyed, so that certain kind of meanings can be intelligible—such as if the car is too fast, too big, or somehow untrustworthy which makes us avoid it. Contrary, when one is driving a nail with a hammer, such kind of aspects of entities should be basically transparent and withdrawing from his attention. And, if he is feeling the weight of the hammer, such as feeling too heavy or light, he must admit the ongoing dealing is not appropriately flowing in some way. Thus, in all kinds of equipment, a sign is certainly peculiar kind of equipment, as it can be used as ‘a guide’ to direct us towards a certain kind of way to see the whole situation. And, such exceptional guiding capacity, for Heidegger, springs from the ‘indicating’ feature we saw before.

As the distinction between the authentic grasp of signs and the inauthentic begins to take shape, how this can lead us to unveil the world? To reach that point, *circumspective survey* becomes the crucial key to unfolding that phenomenological idea. To begin, let us recap the notion of “survey” since he uses it in the particular sense: In short, the *survey* (or *circumspective survey*) is, as we saw, the act of having an explicit view towards the background of our primary understanding of something. This means, we should differentiate it from study or analysis of the situation like a scientist does by isolating themselves standing before the world as external to them. On top of that, given the meaning of “circumspection” as we have seen before, the term ‘*circumspective survey*’, then, should be understood as the kind of *survey*, particularly, in terms of our everyday pattern of activity. Note that, although *circumspection* (which itself happens *implicitly as our basic everyday intelligence*) take place in our everyday engagement with both signs (as equipment) and other kind of equipment, we must bear in mind that the *circumspection* in the case of authentically grasped signs becomes *explicit* as long as they allow us to pay attention (or survey) to the situation while our basic *circumspection* take place.

In highlighting Heidegger’s view of ‘survey’, we can finally illuminate how he elaborates on *circumspective survey* in terms of its capacity to unveil the world. In short, sign’s authentic capacity to unveil the world becomes, for Heidegger, articulable since *circumspective survey* becomes the act that may allow us to achieve a kind of “an orientation within our environment”. (Heidegger, 1962, p.110) This means, although we are unreflectively immersed in the world in this engagement, having *circumspective survey* of a meaning-giving context in the situation leads us to pay *explicit* attention to *the aroundness of environment in a holistic manner*, and so the world thereby come to be apprehensible.

In detail, a chance to unveil the world with an authentically grasped sign takes place in the form of achieving an orientation as a result of having circumspective survey of *environment* (the immediate world). Here, to unveil an orientation is another way of saying that we come to gain the point where we can survey the aroundness while we are immersed in the world. And, having the aroundness in such explicit manner means to survey a meaning-giving context; which is to say, the background of our everyday experiences thereby brought up to the fore. In other words, achieving an orientation allows us to shed light on an appropriate kind of totality of equipment in respect of the situation,

whereby this holistic survey can explicitly gestalt how they are involved into a meaning-giving context, and thereby shedding light on the world. So now, we shall appreciate Heidegger's view of the authentic grasp of sign at last;

A sign is not a Thing which stands to another Thing in the relationship of indicating; it is rather *an item of equipment which explicitly raises a totality of equipment into our circumspection so that together with it the worldly character of the ready-to-hand announces itself*. (Heidegger, 1962, p.110)

Then, combining with signs of the kind that it fully articulable as equipment, Heidegger's conclusive view of signs is composed of two different kinds of ways to make use of them in our everyday lives;

*sign is something ontically ready-to-hand, which functions both as this definite equipment and as something indicative of [was . . . anzeigt] the ontological structure of readiness-to-hand, of referential totalities, and of worldhood*. (Heidegger, 1962, p.114)

Signs, thus, can indeed have the exceptional capacity that cannot be fully captured by the way of equipment's being but the way of "indicating", with which signs can, without being broken, explicitly open up a particular 'somewhere' in which we are guided to achieve an explicit orientation in the immediate world in the sense that a referential totality can thereby be surveyed, hence the world is unveiled. Nonetheless, what interest us in respect of the purpose of this paper is of those that we make use of with *their capacity to 'indicate' by 'referring to something else'*—as that is how "indicating" can be significant to us while 'the background' (i.e. the world) unreflectively remains implicit. And, that is where the issue of our basic everyday form of encountering with them arises by *'overlooking' what crucially lies behind what we primarily experience*.

Consequently, this is why we shall put aside signs of the (authentic) kind that is likely to be used to unveil the world, and we are rather interested in signs of the (inauthentic) kind that is based on more transparent and overlooking form of encountering in the sense that our primary meaning-giving context constantly remain implicit throughout the experiences in which signs are involved. This means, in investigating how Tati's films could possibly lead audiences to re-encounter what they primarily experience in their everyday encounters, we shall postulate that entities which they encounter in films can be regarded as signs of the inauthentic kind.

So now, we can finally move on to the examination of how such signs can be 'broken' and thereby reveal the world. Fortunately, we have familiarised ourselves before with the phenomenological explanation for that breakdown process: First and foremost, we come to consider that signs are equipment like the other equipment we make use of with what they primarily are in our everyday lives, such as a hammer. Second, what make such ordinary equipment to reveal what is inconspicuous in a transparent ongoing dealing is disturbance. Third, since disturbance changes such transparent dealings to something, the same disturbance can be what make signs broken and thereby unveiling the inconspicuous context and the world, just like the moment of facing a broken hammer in an activity. Then, what could be applicable to such disturbance in the context of Tati's films?

## 4. Ambiguity: A Way to Reclaim Everydayness

### 4-1. Ambiguity as Disturbance to Signs

What would bring disturbance to an activity involving a sign that is articulable as equipment and seen as something to indicate to something else (from this point, we call *such inauthentically grasped sign* a sign)? To identify possible cause of disturbance that is somehow related to Tati's films, let us begin from imagining a situation where we no longer encounter signs as fluidly indicating equipment, i.e. un-ready-to-hand signs. Like the breakdown of non-indicative equipment such as a hammer—where a trouble-free activity is disturbed by malfunctioning or discovered-to-be-missing equipment—a mode of signs would be un-readiness-to-hand if the way they typically indicate somehow deviates from the way that we are familiar with in our everyday experiences, in the sense that we cannot help but paying attention to the indicative equipment rather than whatever we wanted to achieve by coping with them.

However, one can note that such disturbance in general could possibly take place in too many ways. For instance, as a sign may take the form of words, images, sounds, odours, flavours, or acts, and it seems almost pointless to try to fully theorise the comprehensive patterns of the breakdown. So, instead of mastering the whole picture, in this paper I rather suggest focusing on *the notion of ambiguity* as a possible locus of disturbance in Tati's films, since that seems what we may often experience as one of the most recurrent cinematic expressions in his films—in the next chapter, we will more carefully examine how it would be valid to see the expression as the tendency in his films. More specifically, it seems to be recurrently shown in his films that a certain kind of ambiguous depiction about those we typically encounter in our everyday lives comes to provoke an unexpected way we may interpret those in the sense that it seems to be put against our everyday ways.

For example, in the context of *Mon Oncle* (1958), Hulot is often depicted as a guy who always fails to keep up with the job given by his own brother in law who obviously succeeded in his business. With that in mind, there is the moment that the brother in law on the day of his wedding anniversary drives a newly-bought fancy American car to take his wife to a jazz club, where he tips the musicians a few bank notes for having them play music, as if they show off how luxurious and flawless this special night is. Then, when he is driving again the fancy car on the way back home, he breaks the silence by asking his wife and making sure if they had a perfect night (fig. 14). At the same night, Hulot is asked to look after the son in law, so he takes him out for a party with some locals. On the way back, Hulot signifies a great sense of conviviality with quite 'cheap' rides on someone's old horse wagon, singing with his local friends and son in law all together (fig. 15). Accordingly, audiences can encounter those which are supposed to be typically good or bad in an ambiguous way, whereby some 'failure-like' things that Hulot comes up can even be illuminated as positive aspects. Ambiguity, thus, seems to emerge as a reasonable means of bringing some disturbance to a hitch-free activity with a sign—of the kind which we usually make use of with what they indicate by referring to what they primarily are in our everyday experience—in the sense that the way entities are supposed to indicate some kind of intelligibility are thereby no longer coherent or consistent but even confusing.

By the way, what it meant by the term '*ambiguity*' is the quality of being open to more than one interpretation which tend to be conflicting or are somehow hard to coexist otherwise, yet at the same time it is somehow impossible to pick one of them as one ultimate interpretation. Here, it is important to differentiate '*ambiguity*' from the term '*multiplexity*' and '*obscurity*': The former signifies the quality of being open to more than one interpretation that can coexist together, and the latter the quality of being escaping one ultimate interpretation while it is open to more than one interpretation regardless of whether or not they are clear enough to be articulated. For instance, Ink blot test that

are opened to many uncertain interpretations depending on a viewer should be of obscurity. Vague shape clouds that perhaps look like a sheep or horse cannot be ambiguous but obscure. A cruise ship that functions as a hotel are multifunctional (multiplexity). But a work of Escher's paintings can be ambiguous since it brings us multiple interpretations which appear to be conflicting each other, and we cannot get to one ultimate interpretation, but they must be considered equally valid.

Then, when ambiguity takes place in an activity where a sign is involved, it disturbs the sign's Readiness-to-hand to the degree to which the sign cannot keep enough clarity in its act of indication. Now, let us look at the simplest kind of ambiguity that may happen in the form of written words. When the following script is given alone: 'Tom and Jack met at a bus stop next to the bank', one may wonder between two readings depending on what the word 'bank' could mean, the financial institution or the river bank. Since the sentence is not giving enough context to let us decide what the 'bank' means, one shall ask for more information to narrow it down. So, the two possible interpretations of 'bank' are equally introduced to a reader, and a certain kind of disturbance comes to occur in the activity of reading due to the lack of transparency of its meaning. Yet, such a simple case would rarely bring a recognisable sense of ambiguity unless we intentionally look for it.



Fig. 14 (top left): *Mon Oncle: Formal joy of Arpels. 1958. [film]*

Fig. 15 (bottom left): *Ibid.: Informal joy of Hulot and his friends.*

Fig. 16 (right): *Wentworth, R., 2011. Battersea. [Photograph]*

We better take a look at a more sympathetic example: Photography (fig. 16), by Richard Wentworth, would offer more pre-describable and almost tangible ambiguity to signs in our usual everyday experiences. It shows a street window of a restaurant on which the two notes are attached, 'Danger' and 'Open as usual'. Duct tapes has roughly covered most of the surface of glass, probably because crack covers a large part of it, leaving tiny bit of transparent part of the window with a partial picture of food menu that barely tells what kind of the meal they serve. So, a sign 'Danger' itself with a lot of duct tapes on the glass surely represents that the visitors should be careful with this broken part and so better not get closer. On the other hand, the sign 'Open as usual' for a restaurant represents that the place is open for business to serve food, so that they want customers to come closer and get in. Thus, the characteristics of both signs are conflicting each other with a sense of ticklish to our usual understanding, yet we somehow grasp why that needs such notes, so that in this particular

situation ‘*Danger*’ and ‘*Open as usual*’ can coexist despite the state of violating each meaning respectively.

Accordingly, what we can experience with such strange conflicting kind of coexistence of the two signs is that ‘*danger*’ as a sign continuously oscillates with another sign ‘*Open as usual*’, mutually losing their coherency of meanings in the context, and thereby the disturbance to an activity with those signs. Then, we as spectators of this photo are brought into the situation as ‘a little problem solver’ who pay attention to what make those signs intelligible as fluidly making sense Ready-to-hand entities. This means, we come to survey their involvements into a referential totality in terms of our everyday lives, and thereby unveiling the world.

So now, given the assumption that ambiguity can a possible means of bringing disturbance to the equipmentality of signs, we can finalise our hypothetical overview of what kind of disturbance to a hitch-free activity in Tati’s films may possibly allow us to re-discover the world while at the same time we are partially involved into the world. To nail down it, it first helps us to recap some crucial points of what this chapter has clarified so far: (1) Audiences preliminarily encounter entities seen in films as something intelligible for their primary values and roles in our everyday life, i.e. entities as equipment rather than objects. (2) If what can be common in entities found in films can be said to be their indicative significance of referring to what they typically are in our everyday experiences (where entities can be seen as signs of the inauthentic kind), what can ground their readiness-to-hand is the quality of being easily manipulable for us to reach its indication in terms of its coherency, transparency, and familiar intelligibility. (3) Then, a disturbance to a hitch-free activity involving those signs can take place when the role of them happens to be malfunctioning or discovered-to-be-missing. (4) Here, considering ambiguous expression as recurrent effect in Tati’s films, we may consider it to be a means of bringing disturbance to a hitch-free activity with Ready-to-hand signs. (5) Thus, the disturbance to equipmental activity in his films can emerge from ambiguity.

With those in mind, we now can sum up a reasonable, yet hypothetical, draft to explain the mysterious quality of films of Jacques Tati; *what could possibly explain how we can come to ‘re-encounter’ the ordinary kind of things that seem to belong to our everyday experiences in an extraordinary-sense?* To begin with, we have prefaced Heidegger’s vision to how we may unveil the world, with which we could see that the unveiling moment happens when a hitch-free activity or a hitch-free understanding simply fails. More specifically, such special moment can let us explicitly shed light on our primary ways of understanding, which most of the time inconspicuously lie behind our everyday experiences. In other words, a breakdown gives us an opportunity to illuminate the way of how the ordinary could have been primarily significant to us in a familiar sense. *This means, in turn, that we come to ‘re-encounter’ what the ordinary kind of entities primarily are (the foreground), because we at the same time can concern them in terms of the meaning-giving context—the world (the background)—against which they can be what they primarily are.* In short, in Dreyfus’s lucid words, it is the moment of “shifting our attention to it [the world] while at the same time staying involved in it” (Dreyfus, 1995, p.99)

Thus, unveiling the world by a breakdown can lead us to re-encounter the ordinary as not the ordinary in a usual way but an exceptional way by revealing the background of the ordinary. In that framework, we have pointed out ambiguity in Tati’s films to be a possible locus of a breakdown into a hitch-free understanding of the entities encountered by audiences in his films, in the sense that it can bring forth, at least, two conflictual kinds of intelligibilities in the situation.

Then, for the next chapter, we should examine how the current draft can be applicable to Tati’s films. So, we must investigate ambiguity in the context of Tati’s films using some concrete examples

in the scene, and specifically focusing on what is it like to experience ambiguity in order to re-encounter the ordinary in an extra-ordinary way—as opposed to this chapter’s focal for more general or bigger picture of experiences. This means, once the next chapter has accordingly offered us a conclusive overview of the ambiguity, we can finally return to the discussion of architecture, where this phenomenological approach can be applied to the two architectural works introduced in the last chapter.

# CHAPTER 3

*Ambiguity Studied: The Art of Jacques Tati*

# 1. Occurrence of Ambiguity: Switching Gag

## 1-1. Formula for Ambiguity

In the last chapter, we articulated ambiguity as a kind of breakdown in a hitch-free understanding and thereby a chance where we may *re-encounter* what we primarily experience in our everyday lives—those of typical, ordinary, or self-evident kind in our everyday lives. This is because the way we experience entities can thereby come to be *the way we concern them in terms of their ways of being, how they become intelligible as they primarily are*, instead of *our basic way in which we concern them in terms of what they primarily are*. That is to say, the ordinary in our everyday experiences can be experienced in an extra-ordinary manner if our hitch-free understanding fail by realising a kind of ambiguity in what ordinary kinds of entities indicate by referring to whatever they primarily. With that in mind, the main purpose of this chapter is to reach an overview of such ambiguity in a more exclusive manner than the way we articulated it in the last chapter.

Given Tati's films for a case study, this chapter focuses on the two following viewpoints to reach a sum-up at the end; that is, our discussion explores (1) *the locus of ambiguity* and (2) *what it is like to experience the ambiguity*, in order to reach the point where they come to re-encounter the ordinary in an extra-ordinary manner. These two viewpoints are based on the interpretation that chapter 2 have reached as a valid interpretation of how we may re-encounter the ordinary in an extraordinary way, which had three crucial steps: (1) It begins with a breakdown in a hitch-free understanding, then (2) what caused a breakdown is carefully faced and surveyed (the act of what Heidegger calls "circumspective survey", whereby the world is revealed), and (3) this means, in turn, that the ordinary come to be re-encountered at last.

In highlighting those three crucial steps, the two viewpoints, regarded as the focuses of this chapter, hereby fall into the first and the second of the three steps respectively, illuminating them specifically in terms of ambiguity. In this sense, the first focus illustrates the first crucial step of the three, by examining (1) how ambiguity may occur in Tati's films (the locus of ambiguity). And the second focus explains the second crucial step of the three, by investigating (2) what kind of experience of audiences, while confronting the ambiguity, become essential (what it is like to experience the ambiguity), prior to re-discovering the ordinary. So now, in this first section, we shall focus on the first viewpoint, and the second viewpoint will be illuminated in the next section.

Then, how shall we start the investigation of ambiguity in Tati's films from? Fortunately, David Bellos's interpretation of some cinematic methods, introduced in his biography of Jacques Tati (1999), can offer us one of the best grounds for what may bring forth ambiguity in Tati's films. To clarify, we firstly need a brief understanding of what that particular cinematic method is. That is a method to create a certain kind of gags, recurrently seen in most of Tati's films, and contributing to the atmosphere of his films. While Bellos calls that gags in several ways—"switch image", "switch movement", "switches" and simply "gags"—they all could be nicely thematised and defined in the form of a simple structure, grounded in Noël Carroll's cinematic account. Bellos says:

X (or somebody) takes Y (or something) for Z (or something else). What Noel Carroll calls the "switch image" and the "switch movement" in cinema sight gags necessarily obey this underlying structure; but for the formula to be applied to the raising of a laugh, X's error

in taking Y for Z has to be revealed, at some point, to someone, be it X (type A), another represented character (type B), or the spectator alone (type C). (Bellos, 1999, p.173)

Given the structure of “X takes Y for Z” as the base of a switching gag having the three possible variations in the ways of how the switching is revealed, Bellos then continues investigating how those switching gags are actually involved in Tati’s films, and he points out that type A and C take place most of the time while type B hardly happens. (Bellos, 1999) Here, this tendency of type A and C switching gags in Tati’s films will be the crucial key for this paper to understand that switching gags in Tati’s films can be the very locus that may create ambiguity. Let now us examine type A and C switching gags to find the ground for ambiguity.

To begin with, we better grasp the distinction between type B and both type A and C. The biggest difference is the presence of a disclosive hero which lies with type B but not others, because type B, as Bellos illustrated, needs a wise guy who can notice the switched element; here, the sense of error or mistake becomes obvious, which can be typically seen in Hollywood Burlesque for instance, but not for Tati’s taste. (Bellos, 1999) Remember the interview<sup>3</sup> of him we have seen in the last chapter, from which we could tell his preference to avoid dramatic awareness in his own works, as opposed to Chaplin and Keaton for example. In addition, we can clearly find underdressed expression coherent throughout his films; for instance, despite of various kind of characters are presented, they are not there to spice up and brighten the drama, but rather to add *the sense of an undramatic and generic kind of atmosphere* in the films, as Bellos puts “[the characters do] not interact, but pass each other by at a distance.” (Bellos, 1999, p.173) Given Tati’s preference for undramatic expression, it makes sense why we cannot find that much of type B gags in his films, bringing up unwanted heroic remark, drama and obviousness against his taste. Contrary, type A is likely to lead to sympathetic laughter, because the very perpetrator (X) and the victim of error (if there is any) can happen to notice it. And also, type C would be a self-effacing gag, because only the spectators with enough attention can find the switching, meanwhile characters in the films just pass each other.

Since we now can clearly grasp the tendency of switching gags in Tati’s films—type A and C—and their quality to present gags in an under-dressed manner, we can finally begin to notice how such switching can lead to ambiguity. That is, in Tati films ambiguity may spring from the switching process of switching gags, for the act of switching itself in Tati’s films is sympathetic and self-effacing. The moment when a switch is revealed in an underdressed way, thus, become the locus of ambiguity.

Nevertheless, one may argue that if the act of switching means moving of interpretation from one to another sometimes even with a sense of contrast between them, how is it possible to point out ambiguity in switching gags while they reveal what has been switched in the gag? In response to this possible doubt, I consider that Tati becomes so peculiar in the sense that while the switch is happening, he at the same time resist the very movement of switching in some way. This is because he can reveal what has been switched without overthrowing or overwriting either side of possible views presented in the scene, by purposefully keeping the validity of both meanings (by avoiding certain kind of decisiveness) that are involved in the switching. Thus, in Tati’s films, the act of revealing what has been switched in the gag—a shift from one interpretation to another—is not definitive enough to make a viewer consider the first interpretation completely wrong and overwrite it with the second; here, this indecisiveness becomes the locus of ambiguity.

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3 See p.15.

## 1-2. Case Study

To appreciate the previous explanation for the ambiguity that spring from switching gags, let us look at the three actual scenes in Tati's films, to demonstrate moments when ambiguity emerge in the process of switching, and how a breakdown to a hitch-free understanding thereby could be caused by the ambiguity.

The first case is a scene from the script (fig. 17)<sup>4</sup> of *Les Vacances de monsieur Hulot* (1953) that Bellos introduced as an example of the type-C switching gag, one that only the audiences can notice the switch:

242. S.L.S. In front of the villa. – Day

Martine says goodnight to Hulot and with her eyes still on him pushes the door open with her foot, bending her leg up from the knee, a gesture which could be taken as a come-on signal. Assuming this gesture was meant for him, Hulot is delighted, puts his hat at a roguish angle, and walks off.

243. –M.C.S– In front of the villa. – Day

Closer up, we can see the girl repeating her leg-movement, scraping away gravel that had been causing the door to jam.

Hulot has taken Martine's leg movement for a come-on; but the spectator is then given information that tells him that Hulot was wrong. This is exactly what Carroll means by a "switch movement". But in the film itself, there are many far more complex "switch" of image, movement and meaning. (Bellos, 1999, p.174)

In this script and its actual scene in the film, the truth of Martine's leg movement is to scrape the gravel but not to express a come-on signal, about which Hulot was wrong. However, we also can notice the fact that Hulot's misunderstanding did not cause any consequence or serious problem at all, because the miscommunication passes each other without any interaction. Martine's leg movement means scraping gravels, and Hulot's delightful mood (as we can imagine) means affection, but they can stay where they are without any correction. Thus, he was not wronged, and neither is she by any kind of events; here, the sense of wrong and correct over the scene comes to be understated, in contrast to other kinds of scenes that may reveal and emphasise the mistake or error. That is to say, it is appropriate to say that this scene leaves a sense of ambiguity in the interpretations about the Martine's leg movement, insofar as they do not dramatically switch a perspective from one to another. On top of that, this ambiguity can be a breakdown to audience's hitch-free understanding in the sense that Martine's leg movement can no longer bring up a clear and coherent meaning. A malfunctioning sign, thus, emerges from that ambiguity.

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<sup>4</sup> While Bellos (1999) cites the script of *Les Vacances de monsieur Hulot* to demonstrate switching gags, the DVD in *The Jacques Tati Collection* (5-Disc Set) distributed by BFI (2009), the one I used for this paper, does not have the identical scene. The reason would be, I assume, that Tati did not film this particular scene as the script depicted, or that the one I watched was the version that does not include the scene—unfortunately, several different versions of *Les Vacances de monsieur Hulot* exists and they are slightly different from one another (few scenes are deleted or slightly modified). Nonetheless, in the version I picked, there is the scene similar enough to the script. So, I believe having its screenshots would help us imagine the scene to some extent.

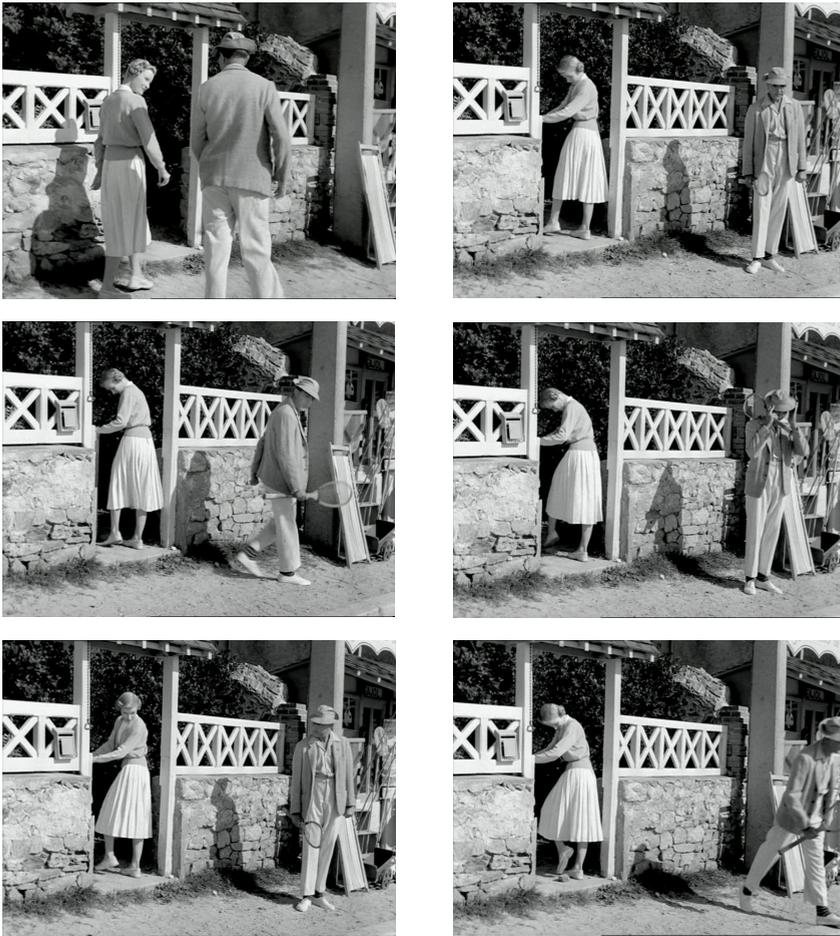


Fig. 17: *Les Vacances de monsieur Hulot*, Switching Gag with leg movement. 1953. [film] Directed by J. Tati.

Turning to the second case, it is a scene (fig. 18) from *Les Vacances de monsieur Hulot* again, which Bellos introduces to describe type-C switching gag. Whereas this case is still the same type as the previous case, sound of something becomes a switching element, so to be ambiguous, like Martine's leg movement.

At the Hotel de la Plage, the gruff waiter has closed up the restaurant for the night. He puts on his overcoat, and the camera tracks him down the stairs towards the lounge, where most of the guests are now assembled. The grim-faced waiter's footsteps grow sharper as he descends, as if he were angrily stamping steel-tipped heels into the treads. But as he moves across the lounge and out of the frame, the staccato noises go on. Immediately, we correct our "bad-tempered footsteps". Only then do we see Hulot, backing into the lounge with dance-like steps from the table-tennis room to return a long ball. In this sound gag, X is the spectator: he has been made to take Y (the sound of ping-pong balls on bats) for Z (footsteps), and can only laugh at the error he has been deceived into making. (Bellos, 1999, p.174)



Fig. 18: *Les Vacances de monsieur Hulot*, *Switching Gag with sound*. 1953. [film] Directed by J. Tati.

Alike Martine's leg movement in the previous scene, we should highlight that audiences in this second case become the only of those who get deceived and un-deceived, because the two conflictual interpretation over the footstep-like sound are explicitly and exclusively presented to them. Ambiguity thereby springs from the way the two opposing meanings over the sound are presented. One of crucial conditions for the ambiguity is, I claim again, the absence of the interaction between the characters in the frame; here, regardless of the view of the lobby with full of guests, they simply stay where they are and in what they are doing. That is to say, there is nothing that can remark the very moment of switch except our interpretation along with the given view and sound in the scene, and also nothing comes to support either of the conflictual interpretations of the sound in order to be true; here, if any character could have behaved or reacted in response to either of them, we would choose either to be true more than another otherwise.

Besides of that undramatic switching, quality of being self-effacing and inconspicuous in this switching gag is enhanced in the sense that the narrative of the film still would fully make sense for audiences even if they could not notice the gag as even happened in this scene. Hence, the importance

of whether the interpretation of the footsteps-like sound is correct or wrong is thereby understated, shaping the absence of absolute truth, which is enough to make this switching gag create ambiguous. That is to say, this ambiguous sound in this second case could be malfunctioning as a sign which is supposed to offer a clear or coherent meaning.

Nonetheless, one may argue that we should not consider this scene to have ambiguity, because the source of the footsteps-like sound would become certainly evident afterwards by the view where we come to see Hulot playing ping-pong and making the same sound there. Yet, my point in this study of the scene is if audiences are given a little moment where they may behold multiple or even sometimes conflictual interpretations about something simultaneously, it is enough to create the sense of ambiguity there.

Lastly, let us look at the third example, a scene from *Mon Oncle* (1958), which may seem the most understated manner compared to the previous cases: In the front garden of Arpel's house, Monsieur and Madame Arpel kindly greet Monsieur and Madame Pichard who were invited for Arpel's garden party. Monsieur Pichard behaves quite politely in front of them, since he works under Monsieur Arpel who is positioned in the administrative executive in a cutting-edge factory for producing plastic. During the greeting, Mme. Pichard gives a bunch of flowers to Mme. Arpel. While Mme Arpel is gazing at the flowers in fascination, M. Pichard goes "they are plastic ... flowers that last" with proud eyes (fig. 19). Mme Arpel responds with gratitude "yes, you can smell the rubber", and she keeps looking at the flowers, satisfied with its value (fig. 20). All of a sudden, Mme Pichard starts laughing, as if something triggers her, yet the others start frowning upon the awkward situation, looking at each other (fig. 21, 22).



Fig. 19 (top left), 20 (top right), 21 (bottom left), 22 (bottom right):  
*Mon Oncle: Switching Gag with Plastic flowers. 1958. [film] Directed by J. Tati.*



In terms of the gag structure—X takes Y for Z—, all characters and a spectator (as X) take a bunch of plastic flowers (as Y) for a respectful present (as Z), then something opposed to this interpretation is revealed by Mme. Pilchards' laughter; which is to say, this structure thereby comes to be switched to that which the audiences and Mme. Pichard (as X) take a bunch of flowers (as Y) for a sarcastic present (as Z).

Then, what make this switch of the structure to be ambiguous? It has to be subtle and understated way to present what has been switched to the audiences. In this flower scene, the subtlety lies with the fact that, while the two opposing kinds of interpretations about the plastic flowers (as a good present and a bad present) are provided to audiences, either of them hardly gets prioritised or de-prioritised, but both are presented equally intelligible and valid. I consider that the biggest reason for that equivocality of those opposing intelligibilities seem to lie especially with the moment that none of the characters verbally reveal what they think but remark laughter, confusion, and a frown only; this mean, in turn, that the sense of ambiguity can remain in the process of the switching gag while the two conflictual kind of meanings about the plastic flower are presented.

Besides, this understated sense of switching could be enhanced by the fact that particular relation between the flower and its meanings is no longer physically causal. For example, the previous example appeared easier for us to notice what the sound should indicate, since the grumpy man going downstairs would literally cause loud footsteps by his expressive behaviour. On the other hand, the relationship between offering a bunch of flowers and what it may mean does not occur in such physical level, but more like cultural level including the context they are in. For example, we may offer flowers to indicate sense of grieving at a funeral or affection for a wedding anniversary, and they are not physically making something as meanings but just based on our arbitrary kinds of networks of familiar meanings. In this sense, this switching gag with the plastic flower may be less distinctive switching gag than the previous examples.

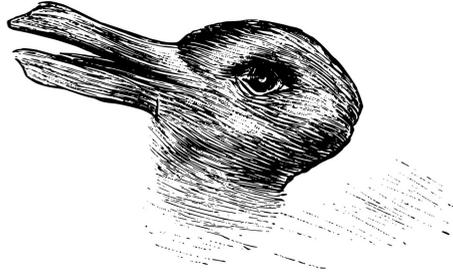
Overall, as long as this scene meets the condition to make the gag subtle, self-effacing, and obscure, ambiguity in this example can emerge in a switching gag. In other words, it is not essential to determine what is the ultimate or conclusive interpretation about the plastic flower, even though the switching moment is clearly raised to a spectator by Mme Pichard laughter.

By the way, throughout examining the three different scenes of Tati's films, we have seen that *the absence of decisiveness and absoluteness* plays a crucial role in making the condition where the gag can be ambiguous. Here, as much as that absence plays an essential role, I like to note another viewpoint to illuminate the fundamental condition for ambiguity. That is, *the presence of equivocal validity of the conflictual kinds of meanings* which are provided by a gag. My point here is to highlight that ambiguity cannot arise when those conflictual kinds of interpretations about something are less important to be considered or worth no attention. In other words, while the absence of decisiveness and absoluteness tries to keep audiences away from having a specific centre of meanings in the situation, at the same time those conflictual kinds of interpretations must be still put in sight as valid too, regardless of the irrelevancy to choose single better view out of them.

There is a nice example, Rabbit-duck illusion (fig. 23), that nicely demonstrate such unstable state of meanings—having the absence of decisiveness and the presence of validity of opposing kinds of meanings. This is because we can neither choose a single view, nor disregard conflictual kinds interpretations, but must consider them equally valid. For example, if one only sees a rabbit head in the picture, the viewer would miss out on the whole meaning of the drawing. So, to grasp the whole points of this illustration, it is essential to see it as something looking like a head of both rabbit and

duck. The switching gag in Tati's films that could raise ambiguity offers such peculiar experience, like the rabbit-duck illusion, since a spectator must keep two conflicting kinds of meanings at the same time in the light of their understanding but cannot choose either of them as better or right one; otherwise, a part of what a scene is about would be missed out.

Welche Thiere gleichen ein-  
ander am meisten?



Kaninchen und Ente.

Fig. 23: Anon, 1892. *Kaninchen und Ente (Rabbit and Duck)* [illustration]

To sum up, in this section we have clarified what could possibly create ambiguity in Tati's films by examining his recurrent cinematic expression, switching gags, and its quality of indecisiveness in the act of switching, considered as the crucial reason why ambiguity may arise in the gags. And, by inspecting the three different scenes in Tati's films, we have seen that indecisiveness in switching gags can lead to ambiguity, a breakdown in a hitch-free understanding. More specifically, we could grasp what could lead audiences to experience ambiguity in switching gags, and the essential points can be summarised as the following: (1) When a switching gag reveals what has been switched, it always provides audiences, at least, two opposing kinds of interpretations about something. Here, (2) if there is *the absence of decisiveness or absoluteness* in the act of switch and *the presence of equivocal validity of the opposing kinds of meanings* in the situation, those opposing meanings thereby can be kept as coherent together in the light of audience's attention. So, despite of having a sense of conflict between two opposing kinds of interpretations, audiences cannot choose either of them as a right answer, but they better validate both to fully encounter and grasp the whole situation in which the switching gag takes place; this means, in turn, ambiguous interpretations about the scene must be confronted as they are. Therefore, switching gags in Tati's films can be the locus of ambiguity, in the virtue of the peculiar way that the switching gag is presented; here, in Heideggerian sense, a sign that is understood in a hitch-free manner comes to have a breakdown.

In other words, speaking of three crucial steps to explain, as we have seen in the begging of this chapter, how we may re-encounter the ordinary in an extraordinary manner—(1) a breakdown happens, then (2) what caused a breakdown is carefully faced and surveyed, so (3) the ordinary can be re-discovered—we have mainly illuminated the first step so far in this section, the very beginning of a breakdown, i.e. the occurrence of ambiguity in Tati's films. For the next section, we shall move on the second step, the study of the moment that a breakdown comes to be surveyed in the case of the ambiguity in switching gags of Tati's films.

## 2. After Occurrence of Ambiguity: Bricolage

### 2-1. Bricolage

After ambiguity emerges in a switching gag, audiences take on engaging with ambiguity in the sense that they encounter something unique as a result of the occurrence of ambiguity. Note that, given Heidegger's view, this engagement is crucial in revealing the world, which we saw as "circumspective survey"<sup>5</sup>, the act of paying explicit attention to the situation when a breakdown takes place in a hitch-free activity or understanding. With that in mind, this section 2 of this chapter examines that circumspective survey, specifically in the case of ambiguity (a breakdown) of switching gags, i.e. what distinctively characterise audience's experience when they confront the ambiguity, whereby they reveal the world, so the ordinary can be seen differently.

Having examination of the circumspective survey in the case of ambiguity means to illustrate the way how audiences engage with the ambiguity, for which I like to preface the notion of *bricolage* as that which will help us comprehend the distinctive features of how audiences see the ambiguity. In other words, the way audiences engage with the ambiguity comes to resemble that of *bricoleur*; generally speaking, while French *bricolage* signifies a particular kind of activity, French *bricoleur* signifies the person who does bricolage. Nonetheless, what I meant by "bricolage" follows not only those generic meanings but specifically the way Claude Lévi-Strauss explained it in his work *The Savage Mind* (1962), so let us briefly grasp what he meant by that.

In general, French *bricolage* signifies an activity that explicitly involves a skill of working with whatever is available at hand and put them together in order to achieve a certain kind of tasks or a project; here, the important speciality of this improvising kind of work, *bricolage*, lies with its skill of using things for purposes that they were originally not meant for. In our daily lives, such *bricolage* takes place in various ways to some extent, from using a rubber boot to hold a door open (fig. 24) to building a whole palace (Postman Cheval's Ideal Palace), a case Lévi-Strauss mentions, which was made of numerous stones that were collected by its author, a layman in building but a post-man, on mainly his rounds (fig. 25).



Fig. 24 [left]: Wentworth, R., 1978. England, 1978. Making do and getting by [Photograph]

Fig. 25 [right]: Cheval, F., 1879-1912. Le Palais idéal [Architecture]

5 See pp.38-39.

With that general meaning of *bricolage* in mind, to capture what Lévi-Strauss (1962) specifically meant by the word, it helps to begin with what is the main context behind his use of the word. Roughly speaking, *bricolage* was brought up in his attempts to investigate the distinctions between mythical thoughts and scientific thoughts, while their essential differences spring from their methods to observe and understand the reality. Here for Lévi-Strauss, the *bricolage* is the peculiar activity where the way of mythological thoughts still explicitly remains in our daily lives even today, as he explains: “They [bricolage] were secured ten thousand years earlier and still remain at the basis of our own civilization.” (Lévi-Strauss, 1962, p.16)

Once *bricolage* embodies the mythical side, Lévi-Strauss introduces the word *engineer* to signify the scientific side. In other words, the distinctions between *bricoleur* and *engineer* can embody the distinctions between the mythical thoughts and the scientific thoughts. Here, the point is, for Lévi-Strauss, that as far as *bricolage* is studied against the background which the examination of the distinctions between *mythical thoughts* and *scientific thoughts* becomes his primary concern, both *bricoleur* and *engineer* should be considered together as a complementary whole—as long as we want to understand the way Lévi-Strauss articulates *bricolage*. So, to introduce *bricolage* in Lévi-Strauss’ way, let us clarify it from the perspective that takes account of both *bricoleur* and *engineer*.

Provided the importance of both *bricoleur* and *engineer* for the illustration of *bricolage*, there are many distinctive features and angles to illuminate the notion of *bricolage*, but not all of them become necessarily suitable for the study of ambiguity. So, for the purpose of this section—to clarify *bricolage* as the notion that can signify the way audiences engage with ambiguity—I suggest that what interest us should be summarised into the three different kinds of distinctions that Lévi-Strauss draws between *bricoleur* and *engineer*; which is to say, the notion of *bricolage* will be illustrated in those three ways; this means, in turn, that each of those three ways will articulate the ambiguity. So now, let us begin to go through each of them in detail.

The first distinction between *bricoleur* and *engineer* is based on what are the crucial characteristics of the things they use for a project. Lévi-Strauss explains that as the following.

The ‘bricoleur’ is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks; but, unlike the engineer, he does not subordinate each of them to the availability of raw materials and tools conceived and procured for the purpose of the project. His universe of instruments is closed and the rules of his game are always to make do with ‘whatever is at hand’, that is to say with a set of tools and materials which is always finite and is also heterogeneous because what it contains bears no relation to the current project, or indeed to any particular project, but is the contingent result of all the occasions there have been to renew or enrich the stock or to maintain it with the remains of previous constructions or destructions. (Lévi-Strauss, 1962, p.17)

For *bricoleur*, *heterogeneity*, thus, always lies with whatever is available at hand, because they are just there to happen to be those which might be useful for a need to achieve something, with which he has to manage to work since nothing else is available for him to use. Contrary, *coherency* and *hierarchy* always lie with the things engineer uses for a project, because they are collected in terms of their strictly defined roles in the work, and always have proper relation to the project. The distinction between *engineer* and *bricoleur*, thus, clearly springs from that, while engineer always aim to achieve the *coherency* of things they use, the incoherency is not an issue for *bricoleur* who attempts to make do with the *heterogeneity* with or without inclination.

The second distinction between them lies with their attitudes when they discern the meaningfulness of things they use for a project. As we have seen in the first distinction, *bricoleur's* means is limited in the sense that things that happen to be the repertoire for a project has no relation to that project. Here, while the original purposes of those things inevitably deviate from the current project, what thereby come to make them meaningful for this occasion depends not on the previously determined meanings of them, but mostly on the author's interpretations, whereby he must inevitably involve his own way of understanding in the work. In Heideggerian sense, *bricoleur* must somewhat involve the world he lives in into his work to achieve the project. Lévi-Strauss explains this crucial aspect as the following.

The set of the 'bricoleur's' means cannot therefore be defined in terms of a project [...]. It is to be defined only by its potential use or, putting this another way and in the language of the 'bricoleur' himself, because the elements are collected or retained on the principle that 'they may always come in handy'. (Lévi-Strauss, 1962, pp.17-18)

In other words, *bricoleur* must find meaningfulness within the contingent collection of things and within whatever the constraints or limit they must face in that finite repertoire to achieve a goal; here, besides of the finite resources, we must underline that the constraints is also grounded in the world —“a constellation of equipment, practices, and concerns”— in which the *bricoleur* unreflectively always already immersed. (Dreyfus, 1995, p.90) That is to say, *bricoleur's* attitude to discern the meaningfulness of things is essentially characterised by “its inclination or necessity” to remain within constraints of his finite concrete resources and the world he lives in. (Lévi-Strauss, 1962, p.19)

On the other hand, *engineer's* attitude is characterised by his impulse to “make his way out of and go beyond the constraints imposed by a particular state of civilization [the world, such as the world of physics]”. (Lévi-Strauss, 1962, p.19) Hence, for *engineer*, the constraints *bricoleur* saw are something that awaits to be questioned, challenged, and overcome by modifying or even acquiring a new theory to reach the truth of what entities are, and its hunger for coherency of a project thereby rules entities' meanings in a stable manner.

The third distinction between them, for Lévi-Strauss, become distinctive when we look at *what lays ground for intelligibilities of things*, based on which they can discern their useful meanings and roles for a project. Imagine how *bricoleur* would work with things that are available at hand. He needs to engage with them to reach the best answer for a project while he remains within the finite resources. Here, it is crucial for him to pay attention to how all the *heterogeneous* things he got may speak up and become meaningful; then, it is not enough for him to rely on the messages that come from formally determined knowledges about them, such as their properties, but something more has to be put in sight. That is, for Lévi-Strauss, the concreteness of entities in the situation comes to be the most crucial source for *bricoleur*, while *engineer* rather relies on the formalised knowledge and theory of entities—here, note that, *bricoleur* does not investigate concreteness like *scientists* do by seeing it as substance, but carefully pay attention to what it might say while at the same time he remains within the constraints imposed by the familiar world that he is unreflectively immersed in. To thematise this distinction, Lévi-Strauss introduces the notion of *signs* to describe *bricolage* and the notion of *concepts* to *engineer*:

The elements of mythical thought [bricoleur's thought] similarly lie halfway between percepts and concepts. It would be impossible to separate percepts from the concrete

situations in which they appeared, while recourse to concepts would require that thought could, at least provisionally, put its projects (to use Husserl's expression) 'in brackets'. Now, there is an intermediary between images and concepts, namely signs. (Lévi-Strauss, 1962, p.18)

Note that, a crucial distinction between *signs* and *concepts*, for Lévi-Strauss, is that what make a *sign* meaningful as it can be grounded in its impossibility to be separated from the situation in which the *sign* (phenomenon) appears, but *concepts* can be meaningful without being caught in a concrete situation. Therefore, *bricolage* sees entities as *signs* since the concreteness (phenomenon) matters to him, and he needs to take advantage of that. However, *engineer* sees entities as objects that could be solely articulable with their *concepts*, and so the way he works is not limited by the concreteness (phenomenon); this means, in turn, that he can be at distance from whatever might become intelligible from what its phenomenon may contingently speak up under the influence (and bias) of the world that he is unreflectively always already immersed in (contrary, these 'constraints' becomes the opportunity for *bricoleur*).

Thus, insofar as *bricoleur* must make do with phenomenon without reducing its intelligibility into some sort of *concepts*, what he can do to find its useful meaning for a project is to survey some kind of meanings that elude from what concepts usually can articulate. That is to say, the way *bricoleur* discern possible meaningfulness of things, as *signs*, comes to be grounded, not in the theorised or formally defined knowledge (*concepts*) about them, but in his more primary ways of understanding, i.e. his implicit understanding of the way things are in the world;

whereas concepts aim to be wholly transparent with respect to reality, signs allow and even require the interposing and incorporation of a certain amount of human culture into reality. Signs, in Peirce's vigorous phrase 'address somebody'. (Lévi-Strauss, 1962, p.20)

By the way, what primarily grounds our implicit understanding of entities is that, as we have seen in Heidegger's account, first and foremost we are unreflectively immersed into the world, a vast constellation of our concern, whereby we are always already familiar with the way things are in the reality without us cognitively or theoretically thinking about them. With that in mind, as long as *bricolage* in favour of *signs* (in Lévi-Strauss's sense) sees through their phenomenon, rather than through their *concepts*, *bricoleur* comes to interpret entities, for Lévi-Strauss, "in the language of the 'bricoleur' himself". Put differently, if *concepts*, created by cognitive or theoretical understanding, cannot be a means of *bricolage*, 'the language of bricoleur' to illuminate possible meaningfulness of the things he may use for a project must be the repertoire of his implicit understanding of the way things are in the world, in which he is always already unreflectively immersed in. Therefore, *bricoleur's* way to discern possible meaningfulness of entities along with their phenomenon where they emerge is *grounded in his reliance on his own implicit understanding of the world*, as the third distinctive feature.

Overall, the three kinds of distinctions between *bricoleur* and *engineer* illuminated the three kinds of characteristics of *bricoleur*: (1) *Heterogeneity* always lies with the things that happen to be used for a project. (2) *Necessity or inclination to remain within the constraints*, imposed by the finite resources and the world in which the *bricoleur* is unreflectively immersed, shape the way he works to achieve the goal. (3) *Bricoleur's reliance on pre-theoretical ways of understanding*, "ones which have to some extent been transmitted in advance", lays a ground for finding possible meaningfulness of things for a project. (Lévi-Strauss, 1962, p.20) In Heideggerian sense, our implicit understanding of the way that things are in the world, a vast network of reference and significance, corresponds to what *bricoleur*

is hereby interested in; which is to say, this amorphous repertoire, against which *bricoleur's* pre-theoretical ways of understanding takes place, essentially allows him to discern useful 'messages' that entities may speak up.

So now, since we now can clearly see the three distinctive characteristics of *bricolage* in Lévi-Strauss' sense, how will they let us grasp the way audiences engage with the ambiguity? To make it clear, let us apply them into one of the actual switching-gag scenes we examined before.

## 2-2. Engagement with Ambiguity

Having a project is what lead bricoleur to making do with whatever are available at hand. In the case of audiences encountering the ambiguity in switching gags, 'a project' can be something that they would aim to achieve in response to the ambiguity; note that, this ambiguity is a breakdown into a hitch-free understanding, like the moment that a head of hammer flies off while hammering. If a breakdown happens, then 'a project' is to go back to the fluid functioning state, for which we try to find and fix the problem. So, speaking of audiences, their project can be to re-establish a better perspective, from which the situation where the ambiguity (a breakdown) took place can somehow come back to make sense in their act of understanding, in comparison with the initial moment when they cannot help but struggling with the conflictual intelligibilities imposed by the ambiguity with a switching gag.

Thus, once audiences are affected by the ambiguity (a breakdown), an attempt to re-establish a better perspective to understand the situation comes to be, so to speak, 'a project'; here, a work of *bricoleur* begins to resemble the way they engage with the ambiguity. By the way, in Heideggerian view, this is the moment where the circumspective survey takes place, where we may come to concern ways of being by bringing to the fore the background of what makes us understand things in a certain way.

Now, let us reuse the third example of switching gags we saw in the last section, so we can demonstrate the way how audiences engage with the ambiguity, after which we will see how the *bricolage* will capture that. In this scene, ambiguity arises when the plastic flower begins to have two conflictual kinds of meanings; at first, it seems a thoughtful present from a guest for the host; then the switch illustrates it as something sarcastic. Once these two conflictual meanings about the flower disturbs the clarity of what it is supposed to mean, ambiguity occurs as a breakdown. Audiences thereby come to have an impulse to do a double-take at the scene to grasp why an impediment happens, so that they can go back to a smooth understanding of the situation again. This occurrence of a breakdown, hence, leads audiences into the engagement with that ambiguity (a breakdown).

As the engagement with the ambiguity takes place once audiences pay attention to the impediment, an obvious start is to survey the clearest and the closest to their attentions, that is, the two conflictual kinds of interpretations about the plastic flowers. To observe those meanings of the plastic flowers in this cautious way, it is not enough to see them exclusively but from the perspective that involves how the two conflictual ways to see the flowers is established and become possible. Here, imagine when a hammer suddenly stopped working properly in a work of driving a nail. Seeing the hammer in the way as if the hammer is not broken does not resume the work, but something more needs to be seen; which is to say, what makes a hammer a hammer in an ordinary (smoothly working) sense —the background of the foreground— needs to be surveyed to discern the reason for the

malfunction in order to bring back a hitch-free activity. Like such breakdown, audiences need to pay attention not only the meanings of the flowers, but what makes them flowers from the background.

Note that, when audiences try to unveil the background of the two conflictual kinds of meanings of the plastic flowers, as we have seen in Heidegger's account of a traverse of vast referential totality, there are other kind of things that become intelligible in the directionality of their attention and survey. More precisely, these subsequently-accessible intelligibilities become available in two directionalities, because audiences at the same time pay attention to the two conflictual kinds of meanings of the flower. Let us demonstrate how each of the two directionalities in the flower scene may develop in the engagement with ambiguity.

In the first directionality, we pay attention to the way they see the plastic flowers as a thoughtful present, which seems to make sense since this is the flowers that can last forever. Given such positivity of the flowers made of plastic, this situation likely let us imagine how perfect they can be as flowers. For instance, they can possibly have flawless appearance, overcoming the problem of real flowers that cannot avoid its limited lifespan and sometimes imperfect appearance. In this sense, we can let such imagination to unfold and enhance the way to see the plastic flowers as a good present. The more we let the initial interpretation of the flowers unfold their possible meanings in this scene, the more validity of the way we see the plastic flowers as a thoughtful present become powerful.

Moreover, not only about meanings of the plastic flowers themselves, other various entities tend to speak up to make the current way of seeing the plastic flowers more convincing. For instance, one of the most obvious is successful state of the hosts, who can afford to get a brand-new American car, a new modernistic house with a fancy garden, and all the cutting-edge furniture. Other tangible kind to be intelligible could be that the relationship between the hosts and guests can come to the fore in a certain way, where the guests look up to the hosts. Then, several entities and people apprehensible from the scene can be articulable in a certain way, forming a kind of complementary whole as a consistent story from a point of view that springs from the initial interpretation of the plastic flowers. In other words, those apprehensible meanings of various entities are deeply associated with and interacting with the way we see the plastic flowers, now, as a thoughtful present. For example, that is why, even the line that the wife of the hosts said, "yes, you can smell the rubber", seem to make some sense in the current point of view; here, the line can be a complement about the flowers as long as she meant to exaggerate the quality of plastic (that makes the flower better) by asserting its unique characteristics.

To recap, given the demonstration of the first directionality, paying attention to the plastic flowers as a thoughtful present can shed light on other kinds of entities that are apprehensible in the situation. Here, their intelligibilities become articulable to the degree to which they feed back into the initial interpretation of the plastic flowers. We (audiences), thus, can notice how this certain way of interpreting the plastic flowers (a thoughtful present) has been articulable as such, specifically, by having explicit relations to those which become apprehensible in this survey—as if they are *the ground* of gestalt articulating the flowers as *the figure* in a particular way. That is to say, as soon as we could take in the initial interpretation of the plastic flowers (prior to the circumspective survey), we already have had an implicit understanding of other kinds of entities in a certain way.

Now, in the second directionality, our attention is explicitly guided to the way in which the flowers can be seen as a sarcastic present. This interpretation seems to make sense, as soon as we realise the laughter that the wife of the guests made just right after the line, "yes, you can smell the rubber"; here, the laughter seems to articulate how comical this phrase could be. Indeed, it would be

strange to have flowers that would smell like rubber, even if the flowers have the quality of everlasting perfect appearance.

In other words, since we already have some implicit understanding of what makes actual flowers flowers in general, the plastic flowers could be understandable as a sarcastic present when the laughter took place. So, having such implicit understanding of flowers allows us to notice that, when the scent of flowers is missed out or replaced by rubber smell, such flowers seem to lose some kind of basis to be seen as flowers. Hereby, paying attention to the plastic flowers to be a sarcastic present means, in turn, that we come to survey, to some extent, what kind of our implicit understanding of the flowers has been shaping our usual understanding of flowers, an essential background to shape the current interpretation about the plastic flowers.

Besides of the aforementioned illumination of the plastic flowers themselves, other various entities that are apprehensible in this situation may, as we have seen in the last directionality, come to the fore. For example, an obvious start would be about the husband of hosts who runs a cutting-edge plastic factory; here, his greatness, based on his involvement into the business of such new material at that time, however, seems to be undermined to some extent by the presence of the current fail of plastic material. As what appear to be a magical material struggled to become flowers, this thereby illuminates him standing in a kind of awkward position. Thus, whereas what he believed to be flawless business is supposed to make him and the wife and even their taste appear great, now their characteristics are, as soon as that unexpected laughter happened, greatly influenced by some kind of flaw of the material that they proudly produce. In this sense, the plastic flowers that are given as a present for hosts can, indeed, be seen as a sarcastic present. Therefore, like the previous directionality, some other kind of entities explicitly become intelligible in a certain way to the degree to which they feed back into the current negative interpretation of the flowers.

In highlighting the illumination not only of the plastic flowers but also other kinds of entities, a constellation of various meanings that become available from the scene is what we traverse in this experience, and they are the canvas against which we can articulate the plastic flowers in a certain way. This means, in turn, that the traverse offers us a chance for an explicit survey of what we implicitly understand when we see plastic flowers as plastic flowers. Imagine the first moment when we could notice the plastic flowers as a sarcastic present by the laughter, prior to the engagement with the ambiguity; which is to say, we then already have had an implicit understanding of the background, the amorphous networks of certain kinds of interpretations, otherwise we would not have even noticed it as intelligible as such when the laughter occurs.

Overall, given the two-directional kinds of demonstration of how we engage with ambiguity and how various apprehensible entities in the scene speak up to us, my point is to demonstrate and highlight that having *the circumspective survey of the two conflictual kinds of interpretations about the plastic flowers may bring to the fore the background of how we understand it in the two ways*. By the way, since the inconsistency between the two interpretations over the identical plastic flowers is an essential cause of breakdown in a hitch-free understanding, each of those interpretations itself rather belongs to some kind of usual ways of understanding. In this sense, illuminating the background of the two opposing ways of seeing the plastic flowers can mean that *this circumspective survey can practically shed light on the background of how we understand plastic flowers in two usual kinds sense*—yet, applying both in a simultaneous manner makes the situation conflictual.

Finally, speaking of bricolage, the way bricoleur works shall be brought up here as a summary of the aforementioned demonstration—this means that the way audiences engage with the ambiguity

resemble the way bricoleur works for a project. Like bricoleur, audiences, so to speak, build up something (a constellation of meanings) to achieve a project (an attempt to re-establish a better perspective to understand the situation) by using whatever available at hand and discovering “what each of them could ‘signify’”. (Lévi-Strauss, 1962, p.18) Audiences thereby make the most out of what they can get in the situation by a means of collecting and re-arranging existent intelligibilities of entities, and its resultant constellation of meanings leads them into the position for a better view of this situation. Keeping that brief overview of the likeness between audiences and bricoleur, let us articulate the experience of audiences in detail with the three distinctive features of bricolage that we have seen before.

*Heterogeneity* was, as we have seen before, the first of the three crucial features of bricolage, which explains the characteristics of materials and tools that bricoleur’s work is based on; whatever is available at hand bear no relation to a project. Audiences hereby have a similar situation. Since an attempt to have a better view of the situation is an accidental project imposed by the ambiguity as a breakdown, then what they can do is, so to speak, just to make do with whatever is apprehensible in the scene. Then, the apprehensible are those which happen to be involved in the situation, which means that they hereby haphazardly become important constituents for an idealistic perspective to grasp this situation. *Heterogeneity, thus, characterises entities that are involved in the engagement with ambiguity too.*

*Inclination (or necessity) to remain within the constraints*, imposed by finite resources in the work and the world in which bricoleur is unreflectively immersed, was the second of the three distinctive features of bricolage, which explains bricoleur’s distinctive attitude towards its work. Audiences in the engagement with the ambiguity also works with the same inclination in their circumspensive survey of the situation. For example, once audiences in the flower scene pay attention to the ambiguous meanings of the plastic flowers, they are not in search of new findings or extraordinary insights about that flowers or other apprehensible entities in the scene. But audiences are interested in the finite repertoire of what various entities possibly mean in this context and in how they play out to make certain kind of meaningfulness in the situation, so that a constellation of existent intelligibilities can help them grasp what is really going on behind the current confusion (breakdown) imposed by the ambiguity.

In other words, audiences look neither for new concepts by having a theoretical study about them, nor for existent concepts which become available from some formalised knowledge about them separated from the situation in which they emerge. But audiences are in search of what the phenomenon (signs in Lévi-Strauss’ sense) may signify within the possibility in the language of audiences themselves; here, using their own language means having an explicit survey of the repertoire of messages, the world, which have been transmitted from entities in advance to the audiences in their lives. Hence, like bricoleur’s work, *audiences similarly remain within the constraints imposed by the finite entities available in the scene and the repertoire of their existent messages derived from past experiences (i.e. the world in which audiences are immersed in).*

*Bricoleur’s reliance on their pre-theoretical understanding* is the last of the three distinctive features of bricolage, which explains what essentially shapes bricoleur’s repertoire; here, the repertoire means, so to speak, bricoleur’s ‘language’ in which he can ‘read’ (discern) a possible solution for a project. When it comes to audiences, their pre-theoretical understanding of entities plays a similar important role in shaping their ‘language’ in which they can read useful meanings in the engagement with the ambiguity. To appreciate that, let us highlight how audiences gather useful constituents to achieve a

better grasp of the scene. As we have repeatedly seen before, they are not in search of concepts but what phenomenon may speak up within ‘the language of audiences (bricoleur)’, the repertoire of “ones which have to some extent been transmitted in advance”. (Lévi-Strauss, 1962, p.20) For instance, in the previous demonstration of two-directional survey of the scene, we were interested in how the plastic flowers can be meaningful in the situation where the ambiguity occurs, while the possibility of our interpretations remains within the way things are in our human culture and society.

In Heideggerian sense, I suggest that the repertoire can be another way to say *a totality of references*; here, the totality grounds our primary way of understanding of the way things are in everyday-lived experience, since we have an implicit and pre-theoretical understanding about them without us noticing—a hammer can be a hammer to drive a nail because we have an implicit understanding of other things and how they are involved in our life. That is to say, the repertoire with which audience can illuminate useful meanings in the situation is essentially shaped by pre-theoretical understanding. Thus, *both bricoleur and the audiences survey the situation in order to figure out a solution while at the same time they are explicitly referencing the repertoire that has been unreflectively shaped by their pre-theoretical understanding*. More specifically, both audiences and bricoleur in order to discern useful meanings about phenomenon need to survey a vast network of entities (equipment) and ways of how they become significant in their lives, which otherwise have been unreflectively understood without them noticing; this means that their pre-theoretical understanding must be involved in an explicit manner in the work to achieve a project.

In sum, the notion of bricolage has illustrated the way audiences engage with the ambiguity: Once audiences begin to pay attention to ambiguity, the way they engage with the situation resemble the way bricoleur does, in the sense that they both attempt to achieve a goal by a peculiar way of making do with what they haphazardly have at hand. Most importantly, they both must rely on ‘their own languages’, only through which they can illuminate whatever is available at hand for a possible use in a project. In detail, this similarity can be thematised in the three distinctive features of bricolage—heterogeneity of things they use, inclination (or necessity) to remain within the constraints, and explicit reliance on pre-theoretical ways of understanding.

Note that again, this engagement with the ambiguity takes place after the occurrence of ambiguity as a breakdown in a hitch-free understanding, which plays a crucial role in revealing the world which we have seen in Heidegger’s interpretation of what we may experience as a result of when a hitch-free activity or understanding simply fail. So now, to reach a conclusive overview of the experience with ambiguity as a means of breakdown that may lead us to rediscover the ordinary, let us warp up a series of those several crucial steps.

### 3. An Overview of Ambiguity in Tati’s Films

#### 3-1. Four-steps in the Experience with Ambiguity:

**Something raised, ambiguity faced, the world revealed, the ordinary re-encountered**

Given ambiguity as a means of creating a breakdown, we have clarified so far what is it like to experience such ambiguity by examining switching gags of Jacques Tati’s films in terms of two crucial steps. The first step illustrates *the occurrence of ambiguity*, the very moment when ambiguity takes place as a breakdown; here, a formula for ambiguity could be articulated by distilling the essential

structure of switching gags in Tati's films. The second step illustrate the moment in which a breakdown (ambiguity) capture their attentions and lead them into further engagement with the scene where ambiguity took place, i.e. *how audiences deliberately pay attention to the situation*. In this second step the experience with ambiguity could be explained by the notion of bricolage in the sense that the way audiences engage with the situation resemble the way bricoleur works for a project. We thus have articulated the experience with ambiguity in the two steps so far.

Nevertheless, the main purpose of this study of ambiguity is to illustrate what is it like to experience ambiguity in terms of *how we thereby can re-discover the ordinary in an extraordinary manner*; which is to say, if we want to articulate the whole experience with ambiguity, it is necessary to explain a series of experiences as a whole, from the beginning of the phenomenon to the moment of re-discovering the ordinary. Yet, what we have illustrated about ambiguity so far, the two viewpoints about ambiguity do not flawlessly cover the whole experience of ambiguity as we want. That is because they illustrate the experience of ambiguity in terms of *how it can appear to be a breakdown in a hitch-free understanding* and *how it can shed light on what lies behind our everyday experience*, such as the illumination of the background of how the plastic flowers become intelligible as plastic flowers to us in our everyday experience. Nonetheless, those two viewpoints about ambiguity are not pointless study, but articulates the crucial processes that lays the ground for the point where we can re-discover the ordinary in an extra-ordinary sense. So now, what kind of overview for the whole experience with ambiguity can we reach by fleshing out the two previous viewpoints of ambiguity?

In order to reach a finalized view of the whole experience with ambiguity, it is probably best to begin from recapping the theoretical view that we came up with in the last chapter to explain how we can re-discover the ordinary by a breakdown, grounded in Heidegger's view. With this, given a brief review of the theoretical picture, we can highlight the foundation upon which we can clearly draw an overview of the experience with ambiguity at last.

The crucial point of departure is, as Heidegger points out, that we most of time are unreflectively immersed in the world. That means, we are neither *included* in a totality of objects, nor located as a thinking thing in them. But we are *involved* in "a constellation of equipment, practices, and concern" in which we  *dwell*. (Dreyfus, 1995, p.90) For instance, imagine the world of business. It is a mode of a total system of equipment, practices, and values in which business people dwell in. That is to say, business people mean those who are always already immersed in, involved in, and familiar with the way thing are in its own world.

In highlighting that our immersion in the world grounds the primary way we experience our everyday world, what interest us in this paper is that, here, our understanding of the world is, as Heidegger illustrates, *implicit* in our everyday experience. What I meant by *implicit understanding* is that, for example, when we open a door to enter a room in our everyday engagement, we do not need to think about them, but we can just deal with it without our deliberate awareness about them; which is to say, door, door knob, its latches, and other kinds of things that are involved in this activity are already implicitly understood by us, so that we do not start thinking what are they or get puzzled to use them in a hitch-free manner. Note that, those implicitly understood things does not mean that they became meaningless or nothing for us, despite of their 'transparency', because as long as they are involved in our everyday experience in some way, they have a place to be meaningful for us in a certain way. Thus, in our everyday practical engagement, our understanding of equipment, practices,

and concern are unspoken. This means, our understanding of the world we are immersed in is thereby implicit, which is crucial point for this paper.

In other words, we have an understanding of something in a certain way in our everyday experience, and that always already take place without our explicit understanding of it. Besides, as long as we are in our fluid practical engagement, we do not need to question or to think about how we actually understand something in such primary way. Now, that is why a breakdown in a hitch-free activity or a hitch-free understanding has, as Heidegger consider, a special effect on us, that we can come to survey our implicit understanding of the world. Needless to say, this is the point where ambiguity becomes a valid means of bringing forth a breakdown, i.e. illustration of the whole experience of ambiguity begins from here. So now, what is it like to have ambiguity as a breakdown?

Given Heidegger's interpretation of a breakdown that we saw in the last chapter, let us finally bind together some of what has been discussed so far in this paper in the way that they form a conclusive interpretation of the whole experience of ambiguity —i.e. a case of a breakdown that may let us re-discover the ordinary in an extra-ordinary manner. To clarify, I propose that the four parts processes form the whole experience, in which the first three parts illustrate how it reveals the world, and the last part explains how it could mean, in turn, that we come to re-discover the ordinary in an extra-ordinary manner. Now, let us go through each part of the whole sequence.

First, it begins from a moment where we cannot help but getting caught in some kind of disturbance in a hitch-free activity or a hitch-free understanding. Put differently, although our implicit understanding of the world does not necessarily allow us to fully describe the world, we still understand the world in some way, in which we can still notice when something is not quite right.

Second, as soon as the situation become conspicuous by some kind of disturbance in our fluid everyday experience, we come to pay attention to the locus of disturbance. This means, we can thereby discern ambiguity as a breakdown. This is because a sense of breakdown ostensibly springs from the way ambiguity illuminates the current situation with two conflictual kinds of interpretations, eluding from how our implicit understanding of the situation want to tell from the same situation, so to speak. Keep in mind that this second part corresponds to *the occurrence of ambiguity*, which we have carefully examined in section 1 of this chapter.

Third, since ambiguity and its resultant two conflictual kinds of interpretations of the situation have been conspicuous, we are hereby guided to attend to the situation in a deeper way, like the way bricoleur attend to its own work. As we demonstrated in the last section, this is the point that we engage with the ambiguity in the mode of bricolage, where our deliberate focus come to shed light on not only the ambiguous meanings but also other kinds of meanings that are proximally placed (not necessarily physical space but within a familiar totality of what concern and matter to us in our everyday experience); this means, in turn, that we thereby come to bring to the fore the background of our everyday experience. Put differently, the world hereby comes to be revealed in the sense that the way things become intelligible in the virtue of our unreflective immersion in the world, the phenomenon of the world, can become accessible in the light of our circumspective survey prompted by the ambiguity. That is to say, if the background of our everyday experience is deliberately put in sight —where the way we survey the world resemble the way bricoleur surveys its world— the world comes to be revealed before us.

Fourth, given the background of our everyday experience, we may finally have a chance in which some familiar entities that could be conspicuous by the ambiguity (a breakdown) thereby can be re-encountered by us in an *extra-ordinary* way, in the sense that their meanings are still grounded

in how our implicit understanding *usually* illuminate its intelligibility in a certain familiar way while we at the same time can explicitly shed light on how the background of our everyday experience always already shape such certain kinds of meanings of the familiar entities. Note that again, this re-discovery of familiar entities becomes possible because of the previous part, where having explicit survey of the implicit understanding of the world, like doing bricolage, means to shed light on the inconspicuous background against which familiar entities—the ordinary—always already become intelligible in a certain familiar way. Given that peculiar condition beforehand, we in this fourth part can thereby experience how it is like to see the ordinary entities as what it can be ordinarily in our everyday experience; this means, in turn, that we come to concern entities in terms of their ways of being (thingness), rather than concerning entities as beings (things), i.e. we can re-encounter the ordinary in an extra-ordinary manner as a result of ambiguity as a breakdown.

Now, let us recap those four parts processes. The whole experience with ambiguity as a means of bringing up a chance to re-discover the ordinary in an extra-ordinary way begins from the point when (I) disturbance catches us, then (II) ambiguity gets discerned, so (III) the background of our everyday experience comes to the fore, i.e. the world is revealed; which is to say, (IV) we have a chance to re-encounter the ordinary in an extra-ordinary manner by concerning entities in terms of their ways of being. Thus, these four parts processes can offer an overview of the whole experience with the ambiguity in terms of its special capacity to let us re-discover the ordinary.

On top of that, the two steps —*the occurrence of ambiguity* and *the engagement with ambiguity*— that we have examined in section 1 and 2 of this chapter are designated to illustrate (II) and (III) respectively. And, the point of highlighting both points of view—the four parts process and the two steps—to illustrate ambiguity is that the former emphasises an overall picture of the experience while the latter draw distinctive features in the engagement with ambiguity. More specifically, the former view allows us grasp a conclusive phenomenological overview of how we can re-discover the ordinary in an extra-ordinary manner by a breakdown on the one hand, and on the other hand the latter view can demonstrate how *ambiguity* can actually cause a breakdown in a hitch-free understanding and how we then engage with the situation to survey the background of our everyday experience.

At last, since in this chapter we have reached a conclusive overview of the experience with ambiguity and what is it like to re-discover the ordinary by that, we now shall move on to the next stage that we apply our interpretation of ambiguity into architecture; which is to say, we can finally tackle the initial question, as we saw in chapter 1, raised by the experience with the two architectural works, EDEN and Black Maria. Moreover, if we can reach a valid explanation for the question, we may explore if the subsequent interpretation of those few architectural works can illuminate some other architecture with ambiguity.

# CHAPTER 4

*Ambiguity Applied: The Notion of Ambiguity in Architecture*

# 1. The Specific Ambiguity: From Jacques Tati to Architecture

## 1-1. Certain Kind of Ambiguity: Illumination of the Ordinary as the Extraordinary

The two architectural examples in chapter 1 have raised the very first question and few assumptions for a possible answer. Let us bring them back again to set the stage for this chapter: Is it appropriate to consider that some particular kind of wittiness, or the sense of ambiguity, or even both of them might have something to do with the reason *why the two architectural works can bring forth quite a sense of strangeness with something not really ordinary?* —Now we know that it is not exclusively about wittiness in architecture, but ambiguity should play a more crucial role to explain why the two architectural works (a pavilion and a after a breakdown (ambiguity) capture their attentions and lead them into further engagement with the scene where ambiguity took place pop-up auditorium) may appear to be unusual to some extent, for example compared to what is like to see a usual pavilion and a temporary auditorium in general.

Put differently, by noticing ambiguity in the two architectural works, I come to realise myself having a different way of encountering architecture, whereby what I thought I obviously knew seemingly begins to re-claim itself not in the same way as it ordinarily does, that is, the shift of the ordinary to the extraordinary by ambiguity in architecture. Then the originally presented assumption must develop into a more specific question: *What can it possibly explain that enigmatic phenomenon where the re-emergence of the ordinary as the extraordinary takes place?* And, if not just coincidental, *how can ambiguity have something to do with that phenomenon?*

With those question in mind, the last chapter with the study of Jacques Tati's cinematic method could demonstrate how a particular kind of ambiguity can be a means of bringing to the fore the background of what makes the ordinary as what they ordinarily are, where we can thereby come to concern the ordinary in terms of their ways of being (thingness) rather than them as beings (things) —i.e. our way of seeing entities is not Ontic but Ontological. In other words, owing to a certain kind of ambiguity, our primarily undifferentiated way of behaving and understanding —where entities always already become intelligible in a certain way in everyday practices— can come to be conspicuous and investigated; then what we think we already know can be re-discovered to be experienced *without a certain way of being because the ambiguity hereby makes its intelligibility elusive from getting nailed down by us once and for all.*

To sum up, the ambiguity at first has the unique capacity to shed light on our trivialized everyday mode of being in which things become intelligible *in a familiar way*; this in turn explicitly expose that trivialized everyday mode as the undifferentiated mode of our way of being and averageness, leading us to realise our such primary understanding of entities as things is always already take place *in a certain way*; this acknowledgement thereby allow us to, so to speak, wake up from our indifference to the undifferentiated mode of everydayness, and *to re-experience entities through concerning for their ways of being*; which is to say, that is where the ordinary may emerge as the extraordinary.

Thus, on the level of Tati's films I have nailed down explanation for the ambiguity, this means in turn that it can clarify the theoretical ground, composed of two points, with which we will explain the very first question;

: (1) *How can we encounter the ordinary as the extraordinary?*

Owing to Heidegger's view of everydayness and being-in-the-world, to experience the ordinary as the extraordinary can be possible by concerning the ordinary in terms of their ways of being (thingness) rather than them as beings (things); for this, it is necessary to unveil and explicitly confront the way how the ordinary can be what they ordinarily are to us and how the ordinary can be grounded in our everyday attitude towards the world without us noticing so, i.e. unveiling our everydayness which is primarily the undifferentiated mode of our ways of being in the world. A chance to have such un-concealment of everydayness, for Heidegger, can arise when our usual ways of experiencing entities fails in some way, so it is the moment of encountering what we always already understand but in somewhat un-usual ways. That is to say, the impediments to our behaving-as-usual or understanding-as-usual can lead us to experience the ordinary as the extraordinary—for instance, a head of a hammer flies off during driving a nail, finding a trolley (shopping cart) in the middle of university, coming across a fish head lying on street and the like. In plain language, most of time, we don't really realise how do we actually see it as what it usually is, until the moment we do a double-take at it. That is because, insofar as it seems comfortably encountered in a hitch-free manner, it is always transparently self-evident to us, hence the ordinary.

: (2) *How can ambiguity have anything to do with that revealing phenomenon?*

Ambiguity can be a means of making impediments into our usual ways of encountering entities. Why is that? That is because, while we always already understand them in a certain way, the ambiguity presents a contradictory way of understanding by bringing forth their opposing intelligibility simultaneously; this means in turn that we can no longer keep a usual way of understanding which always already presupposes intelligibility to be nailed down once and for all in a hitch-free manner. Ambiguity, thus, have the capacity to lead us to confront the impossibility to do so.

With both answers in mind, it becomes valid to claim the ambiguity as a means of bringing up the opportunity to shaken and unveil everydayness (the undifferentiated attitude to the world), and making one concern the ordinary in terms of their ways of being (thingness) rather than them as beings (things). Hence, the ambiguity leads him to re-discover the ordinary as the extraordinary.

Tati's films thereby could offer us important examples that can demonstrate such peculiar ambiguity in his switching gags that let audiences experience impediments to their usual ways of being in which they concern entities as beings (things); this impediments accordingly allows them to confront their undifferentiated attitude to the reality –everydayness– and to unveil what pre-supposedly makes it possible to understand entities as what they ordinarily are. Given an explicit view of the background of the ordinary then, audiences in Tati's films can thereby re-encounter entities by leading back their usual ways of appreciation of entities to the understanding of being of entities, i.e. the shift from concerning entities as *beings* to concerning entities in terms of *their ways of being* – from *things* to *thingness*.

Prior to the study of the ambiguity in architecture, let us experience and emphasise the ambiguity in a more instant manner. Richard Wentworth's works, especially some of his photography that capture somewhat familiar 'incidents' in our everyday life and practices, can offer apprehensible cases that let viewers experience what the ambiguity can unveil.

In the first picture (fig. 26), the narrow gate renders the ambiguity to the degree to which it obviously illuminates two different kinds of language, which allows us to traverse how they become intelligible as such; one may find it a great remark of outside and inside, that the gate explicitly illuminates our usual way to live with a city with a sloping street which suddenly translated into stairs once in the private space, which in turn let us imagine this ordinary difference into a more bigger picture, in contrast to when we ordinarily see a gate that seems perfectly ordinary in the sense its way of being is totally transparent to us. Other two works (fig. 27, 28), Oxfordshire (2006) and South East (2007), would render the ambiguity in a fairly similar way as the gate does



*Fig 26(top left): Wentworth, R., 2001. San Francisco. [Photograph]*

*Fig 27(bottom left): Wentworth, R., 2006. Oxfordshire. [Photograph]*

*Fig 28(right): Wentworth, R., 2007. South East, Spain. [Photograph]*

It is also interesting to check few other cases that express peculiar intensity of the ambiguity; in this picture of a window (fig. 29), the clothes hanger gains the intensity almost like a sculptural sense, because we may understand the clothes hanger as a clothes hanger but also as a window prop stick that makes sense as much as its 'clothes-hanger-ness', with its slightly bent figure to convey its expressive effort to hung on tight; which is to say, we thereby come to concern ways of being of the clothes hanger. Whereas the previous intensity could be presented mainly through a single item, this picture of a door (fig. 30) can convey other kind of intensity rather with complexity, almost like Escher's works (fig. 31). We can realise that the intelligibility of the rectangular hole on the door, covered by a corrugated panel, allows us to elaborate the interpretation furthermore, that is, it underlines a need for being filled to be a door as we can immediately see, but also it renders a need for a hole for letters; this subsequently reveal even more that how a door can be a door by concerning ways of being of the door.

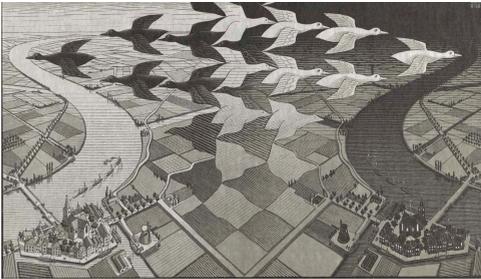


Fig. 29 (top left): Anon (most likely Wentworth, R.), n.d. no title [Photograph]

Fig. 30 (top right): Wentworth, R., 2009. Caledonian Road [Photograph]

Fig. 31 (bottom): Escher, M. C., 1938. Day and night [Print]

## 1-2. Certain Kind of Ambiguity in Architecture: Case Study of E, D, E, N, Pavilion and Black Maria

Given some demonstration of the ambiguity, articulated by the study of Tati's films, we have achieved a reasonable foundation to examine such ambiguity in architecture. The obvious start in architecture shall be finally to give an answer to the question about the two architectural works, that I posed in the very beginning; how the two architectural examples let us experience the ordinary as the extraordinary. It could be explained in the four parts processes; in experiencing architecture, (1) a spectator discerns something seemingly different from usual, a kind of *strangeness in what he ordinarily know*, leading him to do a double-take; (2) and thereby *encountering the ambiguity* by noticing equivocally valid and conflictual kind of intelligibility; (3) this, in turn, explicitly *brings to the fore the background* of how he understands the ordinary as they ordinarily are, hence leading him to shake and confront everydayness; (4) having this conspicuous background, re-experiencing architecture becomes consequently *the re-discovery of the same architecture in terms of concerning their ways of being*, whereby the spectator sees what it is like to really disclose a self-evidently transparent way of appreciation of architecture, a shift from the ordinary to the extraordinary.

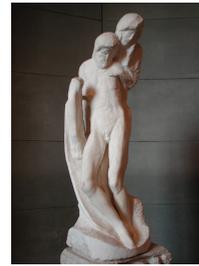
Based on the four parts processes, let us illuminate the case of Herzog and de Meuron's work, E, D, E, N, Pavilion.

(1) The unusual seems to emerge from a column (fig. 32, 33), whereby I see it as something different from what I usually know as a column because it slips from my understanding-as-usual (as a column) to some extent.

(2) Once it starts to emerge explicitly to me by breaking loose from what I usually hold as something transparent and self-evident to me, I thereby come to face it, whereby it may be seen as a letter D-shaped something but also a kind of classical order column –like quite simplified Tuscan order or highly deformed shaft like columns (fig. 34) in Gunner Asplund's work, Woodland Chapel (1919-20).

(3) While both seems equivocally intelligible to me, this means in turn that I am traversing how those come to be understandable as they are, because I need to unveil what can shape those intelligibility, the background of them. Having such explicit understanding of the background, I come to do, so to speak, Bricolage with what become apprehensible in the background to 'build up' a better story that can make a sense with the column's ambiguous intelligibility. For instance, on the one hand Letter D makes a sense because of the name of the hotel, so called Hotel Eden; this interpretation sheds light on other columns which perfectly look like other letters in the name; this understanding may refer to the fact that such 'literal' sign are usually separately expressed by putting adverts on top of the building for instance; this leads me to consider that how bizarre to see such literal expression in the very architectural element in a seemingly sculptural architectural work; then I may come to check the column again, asking myself what makes me understand the alphabet as they are, and wondering about their shape, angle, and the context; at last I come to realise how a certain way of being of the column inconspicuously always already shape what I think I know. On the other hand, the semi-classical-order column is also intelligible to me; this in turn let me observe its figure, where the tapered base and capital seem to contribute to this interpretation even more; but, I cannot help realising its imperfection with the asymmetry, like Michelangelo's unfinished work (fig. 35), Rondanini Pietà (1552-64), which leaves room for further interpretation about the column; which is to say, I begin to look around the figure of other columns, which obviously render alphabets, but I cannot help having the impulse to see them as a sort of new kinds of order for columns too; hence I come to concern how a column's order become intelligible, and what is it like to figure out a new order and language to be a column.

(4) After making conspicuous the background of the column's intelligibility, through wondering about how it can make sense in an ambiguous manner, to experience the pavilion means, in turn, an opportunity to re-encounter it in a totally different way from the initial moment, to the degree to which my attitude towards understanding this architecture is grounded in my concern for ways of being of columns. Although I still hold the same intelligibility, seeing a column as a column and a letter D, the whole point is to re-encounter them through bringing to the fore their background, which is why the ordinary can be the extraordinary after all.



*Fig. 32 (top left): Herzog & de Meuron, 1986-87. E,D,E,N, Pavilion [Architecture]*

*Fig. 33 (top right): Herzog & de Meuron, 1986-87. E,D,E,N, Pavilion. [Architectural model]*

*Fig. 34 (bottom left): Asplund, G., 1918-20. Woodland Chapel, Stockholm [Architecture]*

*Fig. 35 (bottom right): Michelangelo, 1552-64. Rondanini Pietà [Sculpture]*

Similarly, in the case of Richard Wentworth and GRUPPE's work, *Black Maria*, the same kind of rediscovering experience can illuminate why we can encounter this architectural installation as the extraordinary of the ordinary-ness. However, most of the four parts processes I applied into the last example would articulate this auditorium in a redundant manner—especially in the first part in which we discern the strangeness and in the forth in which we re-encounter the architecture through concerning ways of being. Instead of describing every step of the four parts to illustrate *Black Maria*, I should hereby underline only the important individuality that this example can convey, that is, where the ambiguity ostensibly comes up with its peculiar signature. Such distinguishable parts often lie with the second part and the third in the four parts processes, because they are meant to describe how the ambiguity emerge with certain meanings and what kind of background particularly emerge to us.

To make the architectural installation understandable, I shall begin with how the ambiguity in this timber structure may firstly emerge, based on these picture (fig. 36, 37, 38, 39). At the first glance, the relationship between inside and outside of the auditorium comes to the fore in a peculiar manner, which could be described in several ways though, perhaps a clear one can be as such: From outside of the timber structure, one as initially a passer-by can find himself becoming an onlooker because the inside appears to be the stage behind 'proscenium', but cannot help realising that the people sitting in the auditorium part in the structure should be obviously 'official' onlookers, which conversely means in turn that he, believed to be an onlooker, becomes more like an actor on candid

camera for those in the auditorium, which may leads him to other interpretation that they, ‘officially-labelled-audience’ people should be seen as actors more than himself being actors, because they are behind the ‘proscenium’, which makes him feel himself like being an onlooker, back to the first interpretation at the end. So, this ambiguous experience leads one to realise that the architectural installation physically articulate two kinds of space –inside and outside– but ambiguously characterise them as a certain kind of places for people involving their roles too, that is, both have the capacity to be a spectator side and a player side at the same time. By allowing visitors to interpret those places and themselves in an ambiguous manner –elusive from being nailed down to a certain way once and for all– what is supposed to be always already inconspicuously self-evident and transparent in an usual way of understanding an auditorium and public space for instance can become explicitly apprehensible to them; which is to say, their ways of encountering this timber structure is, in turn, grounded in their concern of ways of being of the structure, space, and other people, i.e. the re-discovery of the ordinary as the extraordinary.



*Fig. 36 (top left): Wentworth, R. & GRUPPE, 2013. Black Maria [Architecture]*

*Fig. 37 (top right): Ibid.*

*Fig. 38 (bottom left): Ibid.*

*Fig. 39 (bottom right): Ibid.*

In highlighting the two architectural examples as those which may lead us to experience the ordinary as the extraordinary, the illustration of them in terms of their ambiguity –the former’s ambiguity springs from a column and the latter’s the space– could be coherently presented by the

four parts processes: To sum up, (1) it begins with discerning strangeness in the ordinary; (2) and realise ambiguity in their ordinary meanings; (3) whereby the viewer brings to the fore the background of what can make such ordinary meanings intelligible as what they ordinarily are (that is, our attitude towards the ambiguous phenomenon become like that of a Bricoleur, as we have seen before in Tati's films, to the degree to which he assembles pieces from what seems to be apprehensible in the ambiguity involving the background of intelligibility in order to reach a better understanding of the whole situation, so that he can traverse a vast constellation of what makes significant as they ambiguously are); (4) this means in turn his way of encountering architecture thereby come to be based on concerning ways of being of architecture, hence the ordinary can be experienced as the extraordinary in architecture.

Up to this point, what we have achieved so far is, thus, a reasonable interpretation of why those peculiar phenomena with the two architectural works could have the capacity to reveal the ordinary as the extraordinary, and this way of reading came to make sense even without unfolding a proper further study of architecture. Yet, make no mistake, in this paper what I intend to argue for is the significance of the ambiguity from a perspective within the world of architectural design, for which it is still necessary to clarify where shall be a relevant place to address the ambiguity within the world of architectural discourse. To secure such relevant place means in turn that I can take it as a foundation on which a valid perspective of the ambiguity within architecture can be developed. And, to clarify the place as a valid context will at last allow me to approach a conclusion in this paper, which will be my attempt to propose a new way of interpreting the concept of ambiguity in architecture, that is, what we will see later as the distinction between the three different kinds of ambiguity –including the one we have seen so far– and the advocacy that the three form a complementary whole to provide a new perspective towards the concept of ambiguity in architecture.

Put it simply, this whole attempt to claim the possibility of the ambiguity, the kind we saw in Tati's films, within architectural design is, so to speak, an experiment of grafting a fairly unique branch (idea) from other tree to the old tree of architectural discourse —how such ambiguity may have a meaningful place in architecture and bring up a new way to light up a concept of ambiguity in architecture (three kinds of ambiguity at the end). So, to reach a conclusion in this paper, I firstly must give an answer to the question of how the peculiar ambiguity is related to and differs from other existing interpretation of 'ambiguity' that has been presented in the architectural discourse?

## 2. Re-interpretation of Robert Venturi's View of Ambiguity

### 2-1. Ambiguity for Today

To begin with, I preface Venturi's view of ambiguity as a relevant major precursor who brought the significance of ambiguity by his major advocacy of complexity and contradiction in architectural design, as his famous line "less is a bore" nicely remarks. Nonetheless, since we are often inclined to see him as one of those who represent Postmodernism, one may note that Venturi's view shall belongs rather to a part of the past, at least a generation ago, neither as old as Modernism but nor as fashionable as Minimalism, Blobism, or whatever today's architectural current impulse wants to bring forth. So, in favour of this contemporary world, claiming Venturi to be a relevant precursor for ambiguity might appear to be questionable for some people.

However, having an old view to acquire insights does not necessarily mean to be irrelevant even in spite of what appears to be an obvious difference in the 'taste' between our contemporary world and the world that Venturi was deeply involved in. Instead of being deceived by such superficial difference, it is more valid to take account of what lies behind the way of how they understand the world at that time, by which I find it interesting to see something that seems to be fundamentally shared by the two different worlds.

In Heidegger's view, what fundamentally characterise our certain sense of the reality varies essentially in accordance with metaphysics of its age, for which he suggests that there are the five distinctive kinds of epochs throughout the Western history; "the *pre-Socratic, Platonic, medieval, modern, and late-modern epochs*". (Thomson, 2011, p.8) Like Iain D. Thomson finds it illuminating to see each epoch "as historical *constellations of intelligibility*", what interests this paper is especially the fifth –late-modern epoch– illuminating what lies behind both our contemporary age and Venturi's, which is the epoch grounded in 'technological' understanding, that Heidegger famously name "Enframing". (Thomson, 2011, p.9) What Heidegger meant by the term 'technological' is referring of a certain way of how technology shapes the essence of ways of our understanding of the reality: That is to say, while technology allows us to understand entities as the sources to be mastered and controlled for the sake of some end, with or without our inclination we let this technological ways of understanding congeal our pre-understanding of the reality into the presupposition that the ultimate understanding of everything can be revealed only in exhausting how they can be optimised and exploited as resources. The problem is not technology itself, but the relationship by subordinating ourselves to it when we do not acknowledge the risk of how technology may in turn shape a problematic attitude to the reality. For example, on the surface we are already familiar with the problems of a series of environmental devastation, which is for Heidegger the unwanted side-effects of letting such technological understanding frame what essentially lies behind our sense of the reality.

Anyway, the point is that both the contemporary period and the period that involved Venturi share the same epoch according to Heidegger's view of the late-modern epoch and its favour of technological understanding. With that in mind, Venturi is not far before or someone in an age of having a fundamentally different view of the world but sharing the essence in common with today; for instance, the problem and the side-effects of technological understanding ostensibly took shape in a series of nuclear tests (1954) at Bikini Atoll by USA leaving environmental devastation with radioactive contamination in the larger area. Thus, insofar as the essence that lies behind our view of the worlds basically remains the same, it is rather appropriate to pay special attention to the architectural manifestation by the predecessors of architects who lived in the same kind of epoch; which is to say, I can see Venturi a major predecessor who brought the concept of ambiguity into in architectural design and discourse in the epoch that our contemporary period still belongs to. Put differently, his importance lies with that his advocacy of ambiguity took place despite of the general sense of truth grounded in the impulse of eliminating unobjective essence. That is why I like to preface Venturi's view of ambiguity as what was firmly established in the architectural discourse, whereby I will try to integrate the notion of ambiguity that we saw in Tati's films along with his view and re-establish a view of the notion of ambiguity in architecture.

To start the actual investigation in architecture, it is helpful to illuminate the context of the world he lived, so that Venturi's interest in the concept of ambiguity could be appreciated clearly.

## 2-2. Ambiguity after Modernism Period

Ambiguity can remark itself as a peculiar concept in a post-war climate of architecture, especially around 1960s, in the sense that it characterises the situation in which some architects reconfigure a view of what should matter for both minority and majority, people and architects, ghetto and Levittown, urban sprawl and megastructure, and the like that what is really happening *and* what it supposed to be happening.

Nevertheless, in this paper I do not mean to address that ambiguity is a new special concept: for instance, Renaissance humanism ostensibly confront the problem of ambiguity between the doctrine of Catholicism and the idea of the Ancients (Latin and Greek) at that time. What I attempt is to re-advocate a concept of ambiguity as a useful and valid method to raise a question to oneself about one's own *particular* way of understanding of things –what appears to be comfortable, familiar, and normal way to understand things for the person, and so reconfiguring one's own way of experiencing things (architecture). That is because ambiguity helps us to shed light on multiple contradictory ways of understanding about things. Thus, through questioning contradictory meanings, it consequently reconfigures (not synthesising multiple views!) a way of viewing things, which is certainly an important attitude in a difficult time.

What interests me is that an emerging picture when ambiguity in the post-war period has shaken the view of what should matter for people seems not far different from the current situation. For instance, the contradictory view of what and how automation would change us –releasing us from labour or releasing us into poverty by further social polarisation, was already seen as a question in 1958 by Hanna Arendt in *The Human Condition*, and the importance of such question has grown ever stronger in the contemporary climate of science, technology and even our everyday life. Moreover, what seems often violent ambiguity of the world, such as ever-lasting conflicts between different beliefs and perspectives (religions, capitalism, democracy, dictatorship, immigrants, natives, and so on) come to be prominent in concerns or sometimes lead to disturbing anxiety. Ambiguity has been constantly re-surfacing with our interpretations of the world through problems that always lie with contradictory views about what matter to us.

If we focus on only the period from the beginning of Modern Age to Today, when a concept of ambiguity come to concern architects and critics in the form of a theory, not just phenomenon? I believe that one of monumental (re-)emergence of a concept of Ambiguity in architectural theory in the sense of the presence of its obvious correspondence to the state of society would be first remarked by Robert Venturi. To appreciate such presence of the concept of ambiguity, it helps to picture the climate of the architectural domain in the late 1960s. It was the wake of scepticism of Modernists and their disciples, especially after the drastic changes in the worlds –the beginning of Cold war, conflicts in Vietnam, anti-war protesters, civil rights movements, sometimes violent political protests and so forth. For some architects at that time, it was inevitable to question architect's traditional impulse grounded in Modernists with their utopian stance. Modernistic view of better future clearly struggles with the actual situation, because the problem of the worlds eludes from their strategy and solutions that spring from their belief both in “a political faith”, emphasising top down approach with their universal solutions to the worlds, and in the efficiency of technological and economical solutions. (Mallgrave, Goodman, 2011, p.1) In short, “the social and political events of 1968 made manifest the outlines of an architectural crisis of confidence” (Mallgrave, Goodman, 2011, p.17)

In 1966, Robert Venturi published *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, which was a clear gesture to reconfigure dominant architectural belief by articulating what has been overlooked by Modernists, that is, the richness of various levels of meanings in architecture, especially found in pre-modern examples. Moreover, he then remarks himself as a precursor of those called often post-modernist. Regardless of the differences in their conclusions, they seem to share a way of seeking the possibility of architecture, that is, manifesting what is overlooked by Modernists.

What Venturi explicitly advocates in *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* is how architecture become meaningful with a sense of unity by maintaining or taking advantages of inevitable inclusion of complicated and contradictory demands for desirable architecture. In highlighting his emphasis on complexity and contradiction as the locus of a sense of difficult unity yet the richness of meanings, I like to underline he claims a concept of ambiguity playing a crucial role in combining his series of investigation of architectural examples and their characteristics (I will elaborate further on this interpretation in the following section).

The point is that his interest in ambiguity, as a concept that may unfold his sophisticated view of architecture in a coherent manner, is certainly a monumental remark in my opinion because it can be read as addressing the possibility of architecture in relation to the apparent struggle of Modernism but also to the struggle in society at that time in an indirect sense. His sensibility towards the world of people, not only the world of architects, ostensibly emerge in his next publication in 1972 with Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas*. Unlike Modernism with their Puristic selective stance, it investigates the possibility of architecture through the fieldwork of where traditional architects no longer have their interest and control but the amalgam force driven by society in this contemporary age. If we may consider Venturi as a prominent precursor of ambiguity in architecture after Modernism, which I believe a frequently re-surfacing subject matter in architectural debate even in this current climate such as a symposium in 2016 held by MoMA for the 50th anniversary of the publication of Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, in this paper I like to mainly focus on how we may interpret Ambiguity in Venturi's sense in the context of what I investigate as the ambiguity through Tati's films, and so articulating my view of ambiguity in better resolution in the context of architecture.

### 2-3. Ambiguity in *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*

To ensure prerequisites for the coming investigation of Venturi's view of ambiguity, it is helpful for us to articulate basic meaning of Ambiguity as a general term, by briefly revealing the outline of it. English *ambiguity* has its origin from Latin *ambiguus* (having more than one possible meaning); that is composed of *ambig(ō)* (to dispute, quarrel; to doubt; to call a question) and *-uus* (forming an adjective on a verb); then *ambig(ō)* is composed of *ambi* (both, around, about) and *agō* (to drive, move, in the sense that comporting oneself for a purpose). (Glare. 2012) Most importantly, *ambi* is a derivative that developed a looser meaning along with a proper meaning from *ambo* (both), which is rare a trace of a *dual number* in Latin, a grammatical number in addition to singular and plural, which no longer exist in most languages today (such as *friend/friends* but no dual form of it exists). (Solodow, 2010) Thus, I suggest that the essential meaning of ambiguity is *the quality of being intelligible in two contradictory meanings at once*: Whereas two opposing meanings are equally surfacing in the horizon of our understanding, both have to be treated as true because neither can emerge truer than the other.

By the way, like the term *ambiguity* with the emphasis on Latin *ambo* (both) in place, some other derivatives in English from it render their meanings in the same way, which offer us more examples of how Latin *ambi* would illustrate a concept of *both* in meaning;

[...] *ambidextrous* (second element from Latin *dexter* “right”) “having both right (hands), using the two hands equally well,” *ambivalence* (< *valere* “to be strong”) “strength in both (that is, two opposing) ways, contradictory attitude toward someone or something,” and *ambiguous* (-*ig*-<*agere* “to act”) “acting in two (opposing) ways, capable of being understood in two ways.” (Solodow, 2010, p.61)

Nevertheless, a looser development (denoting *around, about*) in terms of what Latin *ambi* meant in a word for can certainly make more sense than the strict use (denoting *both*) of it in some other derivatives, but it is not just a case of ambiguity;

[...] *ambient* (-*i*-<*ire* “to go”) “going around, surrounding on all sides,” *ambition* (at first “going around” for the purpose of seeking votes in order to win elective office, then any similar eager striving for rank or power), and *ambulant* (second element not an independent word) “walking around.” Related to *ambulant*, in turn, are *amble* and *ambulance*, the latter originally an adjective in the French phrase *hôpital ambulant* “a walking (that is, mobile) hospital.” (Solodow, 2010, p.61)

If *the quality of having two opposing meanings* can be the essential definition of *ambiguity* in general, to experience such ambiguity is helpful for us than an abstract illustration of it: “Turn left / as / you turn right”<sup>6</sup>, a seducing riddle in *The Mechanism of Meaning* (p.13) in 1979 by Shusaku Arakawa and Madeline Gins, nicely demonstrate how ambiguous in the sense that I cannot help but try to confront the impossibility by actually moving my body. The relationship between left and right are totally opposing to one another in the riddle, but they are equally intelligible to us whereby we feel compelled to accept as they are.

With the essential meaning of the term *ambiguity* in place, it is enough to begin with the investigation of Venturi’s view of ambiguity. First and foremost, I suggest that a concept of ambiguity plays a crucial role of “dominant binder” in Venturi’s sophisticated argument in *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*. To appreciate such importance of ambiguity, it is helpful to underline the use of less hierarchical structure in his texts—for example, look at the table of contents (fig. 40)—along with an overwhelming number of architectural examples, from pre-modern to modern. Furthermore, aside from the titles of each heading number (or we can say a chapter), he hardly draws clear lines between the different kinds of themes that otherwise could have classified architectural examples into clearer categories. In such complexity and obscurity of his texts, I find it sometimes hard to distil and follow his main points in the flood of the examples that seemingly demonstrate various kinds of complexity and contradiction. Along with such difficulty of his texts, I claim the grasp of rock bottom foundation upon which his investigation of architecture is conducted is crucial, that is, a concept of ambiguity.

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6 Assuming the intention of Arakawa/Gins—it was meant for a work under the theme of “Neutralization of Subjectivity”—I believe that this impossible short puzzle, like Zen Buddhist Koan, can open the possibility of giving in subjectivity, as the concepts of right and left get deconstructed, which is worth a proper attention for other kind of research.

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Fig. 40: Venturi, R., 1966. Table of contents in *COMPLEXITY AND CONTRADICTION IN ARCHITECTURE* (p.7).

Let us look at the table of contents again. Apparently, “ambiguity” is the title of chapter 3, which is after his brief articulation of what he will advocate for architecture in the book and what is the problem of Modernism in the first two sections, and which is before he investigates more or less 7 types of *complexity and contradiction in architecture* respectively till chapter 10. So, whereas chapter 3 is placed between chapter 2, which establish his major question towards architecture, and the chapters 4-10, which investigate examples, what the title “Ambiguity” of chapter 3 can reasonably bring up in relation to the other chapter is, I believe, to manifest the fundamental structure of what he tries to demonstrate through the study of many examples in the subsequent chapters. In other words, in chapter 3, I suggest that Venturi explicitly explain what he meant by “Ambiguity” and so it should coherently bind the following reflections on architectural examples and various types of complexity and contradictions in architecture. In this paper, I thus will attempt to clarify Venturi’s view of ambiguity, mainly by having extracting and emphasising the essence of chapter 3, whereby we may come to fully understand what Venturi meant by asserting ambiguity as the fundamental idea in his book.

## 2-4. Venturi's View of Ambiguity Re-learned: (Physical-Fact/Psychic-Effect) Divide ≠ (Form/Matter) Divide

To articulate Venturi's view of ambiguity in this paper, I suggest there are two points as prerequisites: First, ambiguity can bring to the fore a gap that we experience between two different ways of understanding –(1) seeing things as *what it is* (whose way of being is being substance) and (2) seeing things as *what it seems* (whose way of being is grounded in more primary way of our understanding than being substance); Second, ambiguity is not for the sake of spicing up an experience of understanding or praising chaos, but for a unique sense of *unity*. Each point requires further explanation to make them clear.

For a better explanation of the first point, it helps us to begin with how Venturi prefaces Joseph Albers's words in the beginning of section 3, which demonstrates a clue for what he means by a concept ambiguity.

... [T]he complexity and contradiction [and its resultant ambiguity] that results from the juxtaposition of what an image is and what it seems. Joseph [Josef] Albers calls “the discrepancy between physical fact and psychic effect” a contradiction which is “the origin of art”. And, indeed, complexity of meaning, with its resultant ambiguity and tension has been characteristic of painting and amply recognised in art criticism. (Venturi, 1966, p.20)

To underline significant points in this passage, it is helpful to begin with what Josef Albers meant by “the discrepancy between physical fact and psychic effect”, and this will offer us a better ground for a later discussion. Look at one of the examples (fig. 41) in *Interaction of Color* (1963) by Joseph Albers. In this colour example, we can experience the two small ochre squares as having different colours, despite of the fact that their actual colours are the same. Even after realising the real fact of it, we cannot help but understand those as different colours, but at the same time we can rationally understand they are the same in mind by reasoning through breaking it up to its parts. For instance, removing the yellow and dark blue stripes, so we can see the ochre strip (fig. 42).



Fig. 41 (left): Albers, J., 1960. IV-1, *A color has many faces—the relativity of color* CHAPTER IV, digitally reproduced for this paper [Digital Drawing]

Fig. 42 (right): Albers, J., 1960. IV-1 (without yellow and dark blue stripes) *A color has many faces—the relativity of color* CHAPTER IV, digitally reproduced for this paper [Digital Drawing]

The point is that even though I rationally know those colours are the same in mind, and so I consciously and cognitively stare at the picture to reveal so, but I feel compelled to see them as different colours somehow after all. Hence, there is a certain way of understanding that influences me *prior to a cognitive way* and even a rationally cognitive way of understanding of it. That is to say, there are two ways of understanding, which I could remark through this Albers's example; *a cognitive grasp of it and a pre-cognitive grasp of it*; as we have seen before in Heideggerian view of how a hammer is understood as a hammer by us in general, and seeing it as a metal blob with a wooden shank with its colour and shape is only some special occasion, in Un-readiness-to-hand and Presence-at-hand. Like "physical fact and psychic effect" divide, Albers remarks the same kind of divide in a different way, "factual facts" and "actual facts" divide, to explain such phenomenon of colour, which can be, I suggest, analogically interpreted in Heideggerian sense of one, "factuality" and "facticity" divide. Albers says,

Factual–Actual:

In dealing with color relativity or color illusion, it is practical to distinguish factual facts from actual facts. The data on wave length –the result of optical analysis of light spectra– we acknowledge as fact. This is a factual fact. It means something remaining what it is, something probably not undergoing changes.

But when we see opaque color as transparent or perceive opacity as translucence, then the optical reception in our eye has changed in our mind to something different. The same is true when we see 3 colors as 4 or as 2, or 4 colors as 3, when we see flat, even colors as intersecting colors and their fluting effect, or when we see distinct 1-contour boundaries doubled or vibrating or just vanishing. These effects we call actual facts.

This kind of fact seems parallel to the common saying, "what actually happened," that is, what happened in time, what went on, what moved, what developed. But "actual size" usually means something fixed, something remaining permanent, standing still. Therefore, "factual size" would be more truthful because "actual" is related to "action." It is something not fixed, but changing with time. (Albers, 1963, pp.71-72)

Heidegger's view of a similar divide is nicely articulated by Blattner.

"Whenever Dasein is, it is as a Fact; and the factuality of such a Fact is what we shall call Dasein's *'facticity'*" (82/56). He [Heidegger] draws a distinction between *facts* (Tatsachen) and *Facts* (Fakta), which Macquarrie and Robinson track with a distinction in capitalization: facts [*factual* way of being] are determinate aspects of the present-at-hand (and ready-to-hand), whereas Facts [*factual* way of being] are determinate aspects of Dasein. Thus, it is a fact [*factual*] that my computer weighs six pounds., but a Fact [*factual*] that I am a father. Both of these are examples of ways in which entities can be determinate and thus different from other entities, but Heidegger wants to emphasize an important ontological distinction between these two types of determinacy: being a father is a way of being-in-the-world, whereas weighing six pounds. is not. (Heidegger, 1962, cited in Blattner, 2007, p.44)

In prefacing Albers and Heidegger's view of differentiating modes of our understanding, I thus like to emphasise that the two modes of being of entities are well demonstrated in the previous colour example: one way of being is being a sum of colours (mere substance), which can be defined by

breaking up into its parts that are composed of universal kinds of pigments, and other way of being is being the peculiar picture, which become intelligible to us with the 'illusional' differentiation of the colours of the two little squares. Put differently, there are two ways of understanding of them: *a cognitive way of understanding and a pre-cognitive way of understanding*. And, we do not need to be necessarily aware of the line between them, yet we are capable of, so to speak, switching the way of how it becomes intelligible to us into one of them in accordance with a situation.

To appreciate those two ways of understanding furthermore, it helps to look at few general examples. At the first time an infant encounter a pen, parents do not need to teach him what is a pen by explaining its colour, shape, mechanism and components to be a pen as self-sufficient substance like a scientist does, but let him use a pen on a paper, in which he *understands* a pen by understanding *know-how* but not what it is, as we have seen the same view in Heidegger's thoughts in chapter 2. Most of the time, ordinary kinds of things that surround our daily life, just like a pen, are encountered by us and become intelligible through our understanding of know-how. Thus, how we basically understand a thing in our daily life is not grounded in the knowledge of what it is, but how to use it in general in our society and culture.

Having said that, I did not mean to think less of a cognitive grasp, but it is more developed way of understanding in our practical encounter with things in the sense it is beneath a pre-cognitive grasp. Imagine a bicycle. Our basic understanding of it is through riding it (except those who only love to hang it on a wall like a piece of art), but we do not necessarily need to know what the components of a bicycle are and why it works, since such knowledge of what it is does not allow us to drive it. In other words, we can be quite content with *pre-cognitive* understanding of the bicycle insofar as our basic experience of it is based on riding it. However, if a bicycle is broken, we need to consciously confront it and think of how it works, and which components are possibly broken, so a *cognitive* grasp of it comes to the fore. Like facing a broken bicycle case, if one somehow happens to understand a thing in the two ways of understanding—pre-cognitive and cognitive—then he has the capacity to experience it in the two ways in respect of the situation. Nevertheless, how he shifts them depending on the situation happens without him noticing it, as he does not need to be consciously aware of which way of understanding is called upon, but he just does it. And, despite of the possibility of experiencing a thing in such two different ways, it does not make him confused if what he encounters is different or not but, obviously, the identical thing.

Returning to the previous painting, we now can clearly see that the spectator has the possibility to experience it through the two ways of understanding as what it is (cognitive) and what it seems (pre-cognitive), like an ordinary thing in his daily life such as a bicycle. And, what explicitly and comfortably become intelligible to the spectator seeing the painting is experiencing the identical colour as different in an almost inevitable manner. That is to say, the experience of the incoherency of colours is also to let him realise the very gap between a cognitive way and a pre-cognitive way of understanding of a thing, which is usually unnoticed or comfortably overlooked in our daily life. Therefore, what I attempt to assert as a crucial point in the texts, where Venturi prefaces Albers's view of ambiguity, is that this ambiguity can bring to the fore the gap between the two different ways of understanding, cognitive and pre-cognitive ways; as Venturi prefaces Albers's line, "the discrepancy between physical fact and psychic effect".

Such gap is not a special aspect which happens exclusively in art works, but it is so pervasive to this contemporary age without us noticing it, which makes, I believe, Albers's art works so significant with a succession of remarking such background of how we experience our worlds in our everyday

experiences. To understand how we usually understand a pen, it is by understanding know-how; more precisely as Heidegger points out, it is grounded in our immersion into a holistic network of the way “equipment” are in the world and their significance in our life. To explain what is a pen to primitive tribes in a jungle, I need to explain, a pen is for drawing or writing something on smooth paper on a flat table, which makes sense if they know what is paper and a table, which also requires them to know what is a paper and table for, which again requires them to know what is writing, drawing, sitting, chair, and so forth, and this kind of explanation has no dead end but a traverse in a vast amorphous network of their meanings based on know-how and their significance in our lives. On the other hand, scientific (cognitive) way of understanding about a pen is by breaking up the whole into its parts to nail down their universal nature, and it can be defined by establishing the knowledge of what its components and mechanisms are. And, if we consider this cognitive understanding of a pen is authentic or the truth of it, that would certainly miss what is like to understand a pen in a primary way. Simply, we cannot reduce understanding of a pen into either way as the truth and they are equally valid way of encountering, but we tend to put more emphasis on the cognitive way over the other, especially since Rene Descartes has reduce *what I am* into merely *a thinking thing*; “although natural science can tell us the truth about the causal powers of nature, it does not have a special access to ultimate reality. This is exactly what Heidegger attempts to show.” (Dreyfus, 1995, p.252)

After all, my point of the investigation of the first of the two essential points, introduced as prerequisites for articulating Venturi’s view of ambiguity, is that the two ways of understanding are valid as they are, and each way has its own kind of ground upon which how an identical thing become intelligible to us become different—where the gap of intelligibility that Albers and Heidegger points out always lie in between; a *pre-cognitive* way is based on the fact that we are always already involved in the *holism* of equipment and their referential totality without our deliberate awareness, and a *cognitive* is based on *atomistic, reductionistic, and rationalistic impulse* through Categories Kant points out. So, like the previous colour example in *Interaction of color*, a student’s work in Albers’s class in Yale University (fig. 43) —Livingston’s work, *Color study: make one color look like two* (ca. 1958–60)— is a great example to bring up the presence of a pre-cognitive understanding, with how we cannot help experiencing the identical colour as two different colours. And, Albers’s work (fig. 44), *Untitled, (Structural Constellations drawing)* (ca. 1955), can be an explicit indication of the presence that the holistic view is always already tangled up with how its parts become intelligible, with its unstable intelligibility of how several kinds of geometries revealed and concealed at the same time.

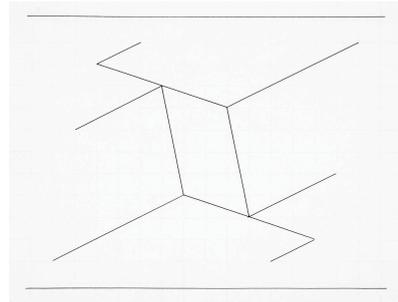
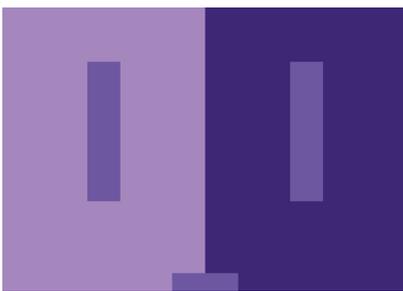


Fig. 43 (left): Livingston, ca.1958–60. *Color study: make one color look like two* [Color-aid paper on mat board]

Fig. 44 (right): Albers, J., ca.1955. *Untitled (Structural Constellations drawing)* [pen and ink on half-inch grid paper]

Thus, in highlighting the excerpt of Albers in Venturi's *complexity and contradiction in architecture*, to let a spectator explicitly experience such gap between the two ways of understanding can offer him an opportunity to realise the apparent presence of the two different ways of experiencing it and the contradiction in meanings of the identical entity. Then, ambiguity remarks itself as a crucial gap between how scientific way of understanding attempts to reconstruct the world as 'real' and how our primary way of understanding experiences the primary world that we dwell in as the world.

Before moving on the second essential point of Venturi's view of ambiguity, I better address a possible question for those who may find my interpretation of Venturi's text too arbitrary, reading it in Heideggerian sense, rather than sticking to Venturi's words. This question is surely valid since Venturi's texts seem to make more sense in Kantian sense, which can be especially noticeable in his interpretations of Albers's words, other poets, critics and architectural examples. He formalises them and his thought by using the notion of "form" *and* "content" and "form" *and* "substance" in the sense of abstract and concrete: For instance, after prefacing Albers's view of ambiguity, Venturi paraphrases it to the phenomenon of "form" and "substance" (alluding to the notions of content, and matter), upon which his investigation of architecture is elaborated:

Abstract Expressionism [such as a work of Albers] acknowledges perceptual ambiguity [the incoherency in different meanings of a picture through the two ways of understanding], and the basis of Optical Art is shifting juxtapositions and ambiguous dualities relating to form and expression. Pop painters, too have employed ambiguity to create paradoxical content [physical fact, paradoxical to psychic effect] as well as to exploit perceptual possibilities [psychic effect]. [...] Ambiguity and tension are everywhere in an architecture of complexity and contradiction. Architecture is form and substance –abstract and concrete– [...]. (Venturi, 1966, p.20)

What Albers calls "the discrepancy between physical fact and psychic effect" is thereby re-interpreted by Venturi as the several kinds of discrepancy between "paradoxical content" *and* "perceptual possibilities", "form" *and* "substance" in the sense of abstract and concrete. And, I can read that those various discrepancies are different ways to refer the fundamental discrepancy between *form* and *matter* at the end, especially in Kantian sense. In other words, two opposing elements of every pair are based on a cognitive way of understanding of things; that is because in Kantian sense "*form*" results from synthesising the manifold of pure sensation with concepts in mind –cognitive judgement, and "*matter*" is the manifold of pure sensation of a thing such as colour, shape, sound, and shadow of it –a cognitive grasp of it. Then, the study of phenomenon only with the concepts of *form* and *matter* means that both concepts are solely identifiable within a cognitive way of understanding of things, whereby it does not need to question about subject/object divide from which all kinds of cognitive grasp begin.

Thus, as the idea of *form and matter*<sup>7</sup> is solely brought up to explain why seemingly opposing meanings emerge from experiencing an identical thing, it presupposes that a cognitive grasp of things can fully explain the question. Conversely, the idea of *form and matter* overlooks our way of *being-in-the-world* where a pre-cognitive way of understanding takes place; that is what Heidegger points

7 Although this paper does not aim to explore the traditional distinction of form and matter in the context of architectural discourse, this does not mean to allude that such distinction hardly offers us a fruitful standpoint to study the quality of architecture. In fact, for example, Karsten Harries (2000) elaborates on "new emphasis on materials", in *Is Stone Today "More Stone than it Used to Be"?*, which seems to allow us to confront, question, and even overcome the limit of (late-)modernistic views of materials that essentially lies with the familiar distinction

out, as we have seen before, that we are always already “being absorbed in the way things are in the world” which is not the same as “being aware that things are in the world”. (Yalom, 1996)

We now can understand that Venturi’s most-likely Kantian way of interpretation of Albers raise a problem of dismissing our primary way of understanding of a thing by reducing and merging it into a cognitive encounter with the world, just like Descartes does. That is why I needed to resist what seems an honest way of reading Venturi’s texts, but preserving the richness of our ways of understanding of the world (as Venturi intended to do). Furthermore, there is other significant problem that is deeply related to use of the ideas of *form and matter* to describe the experience of architecture, which grounded in the impulse of reducing experience of the work of art into the experience *Aesthetic*, i.e. the problem of *Aesthetical* view of art, including architecture. This problem again lies with Venturi’s approach towards architecture in Kantian sense, though, I shall not discuss it here as it is not directly related to this paper (it is lucidly illustrated in pp.40-64 of *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity* by Iain Thomas in 2011).

For those reason to resist Kantian approach, if I could consider Venturi’s fundamental intention is to point out the richness of meanings in architecture, I suggest that my selective way of interpreting Venturi’s text in Heideggerian sense can be a valid way to distil the essence of what is left in his investigation of architecture, as the possibility and insights that we still can re-learn from it today, insofar as it meant to preserve his intention. So, let us move on the second essential point in his view of ambiguity. Nonetheless, I will try to articulate when my interpretation of his text needs little selective gesture in it.

The second essential point of Venturi’s view of ambiguity is that *ambiguity* should not be used for just spicing up experiences but for bringing a sense of unity in heterogeneity that lies with a various kind of disparate meanings in a work of art. To articulate ambiguity’s contribution to such sense of unity, Venturi preface several literary critics of New Criticism, in which I suggest especially T. S. Eliot and Cleanth Brooks analogically help us grasp what kind of unity appears with ambiguity.

With Eliot’s view of ambiguity, Venturi explains how heterogeneous meanings can be brought together into a work of art by having ambiguity in meanings.

Eliot called the art of the Elizabethans “an impure art,” in which complexity and ambiguity are exploited: “in a play of Shakespeare,” he said, “you get several levels of significance” where, quoting Samuel Johnson, “the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked together by violence.” (Venturi, 1966, p.20)

In addition, I like to preface a passage from “Theory of Literature” by Paul H. Fry in 2012, in order to help us imagine the context where Eliot claims such thoughts.

He [Eliot] says, “Poetry in our own time —such is the complexity of the world we live in— must be difficult.” He says also that poetry has to reconcile all sorts of disparate experience: reading Spinoza, the smell of cooking, the sound of the typewriter. All of this needs to be yoked together in the imagery of a good poem, as is done in a poem by Donne or Herbert, and this model of complexity is what matters both for modern literature and for literary criticism. (Fry, 2012, p.70)

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between form and matter. The point is that it is not just a mere examination of materials but unfolded by teasing out the current climate of the distinction between form and matter in the context of architecture: He thereby addresses that “matter need not be thought in opposition to meaning, that it should be thought rather as always already charged with meaning, charged with meanings even before the architect goes to work”. (Harries, 2000, p.22)

Eliot clearly remarks the importance of the presence of complexity (and ambiguity) in a work of poetry, not in the sense of making it difficult for readers, but being capable of bringing up the manifold of heterogeneous meanings and events and letting readers experience them within the entirety of the work. Complexity and ambiguity become intelligible to the readers only as a result of the capacity of a poetry work to reveal as a whole the heterogeneity in the world they live in. In the second half of *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, Venturi name such kind of entirety “*the difficult whole*”. I thus believe that Venturi meant that having ambiguity in a work of art and architecture can help us to experience heterogeneous or contradictory meanings as more or less united in the sense that it lets us encounter them together at once, despite of their incoherency as a whole.

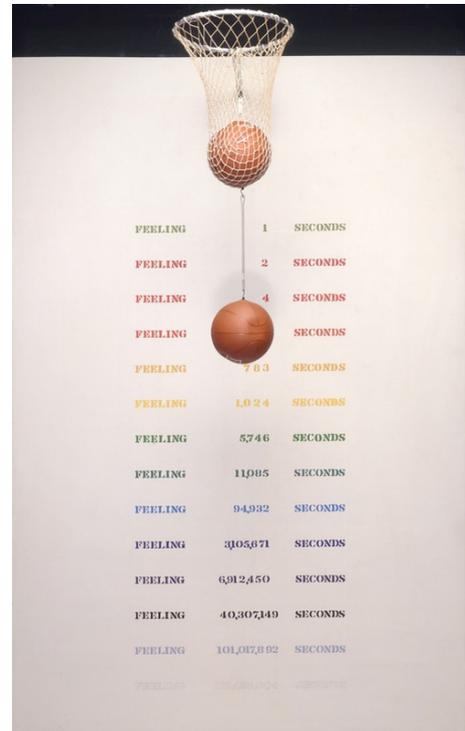
If Venturi’s view of unity through the presence of ambiguity can be considered as a means of preserving the heterogeneity and individuality of meanings yet bringing them as a whole, this interpretation will make more sense by looking at where Venturi excerpts a passage of Cleanth Brooks.

Cleanth Brooks justifies the expression of complexity and contradiction by their necessity as the very essence of art: “Yet there are better reasons than that of rhetorical vainglory that have induced poet after poet to choose ambiguity and paradox rather than plain discursive simplicity. It is not enough for the poet to analyse his experience as the scientist does, breaking it up into parts, distinguishing part from part, classifying the various parts. His task is finally to unify experience. He must return to us the unity of the experience itself as man knows it in his own experience. ... If the poet ... must perforce dramatize the oneness of the experience, even though paying tribute to its diversity, then his use of paradox and ambiguity is seen as necessary. He is not simply trying to spice up, with a superficially exciting or mystifying rhetoric the old stale stockpot. [...]” (Venturi, 1966, p.20)

In this, Venturi clearly adds more explanation about ambiguity with Brooks’ passage. So, ambiguity shall not be used merely for the sake of diversity in an experience. Brook finds its validity rather in its uniting power which can bring heterogeneous meanings together into a sense of “the oneness of the experience”, yet without synthesising them into a homogeneous whole or falling into a modernistic impulse of *breaking them up into parts* to selectively rearrange and reassemble them for coherent presentation (hence the idealistic oneness).

Having the bigger picture, on the one hand what we have seen before as the first essential point of ambiguity was *its capacity to bring to the fore the inevitable gap between two different modes of understanding –cognitive and pre-cognitive understanding*, and on the other hand the second essential point becomes now clear as *being the remark of a sense of unity presented through its capacity to accommodate heterogeneous meanings*. Note that, by considering those two essential points of ambiguity as a whole, it is important to distinguish what kind of heterogeneous meanings the ambiguity tries to accommodate; it is not mere heterogeneous meanings but those that spring from the two fundamentally different modes of understanding. That way of uniting by ambiguity is thus to accommodate the heterogeneity that lies between a cognitive and pre-cognitive grasp, and so preserving their respective grounds as well –such as Categories (Kant) and the holism by our way of being-in-the-world (Heidegger). Without reducing them into either, ambiguity can, therefore, preserve each mode of understanding as it is with their individualistic meanings and yoke them together for the oneness of experiencing, just like a series of Albers’s work (fig. 45), *Study for Homage to the Square* (1964), and a more ostensive remark by Arakawa’s and Gins’ work (fig. 46), *12. Feeling of Meaning, fig 12.3*, (1963-71, 1978).

At last, we can now clearly conclude what I believe as the essence in Venturi's render of ambiguity: (1) *Ambiguity seen in a work of art can be a means of disclosing what is behind our generally undifferentiated ways of understanding of a thing*, which is an inevitable gap that always lies between its intelligibility based on a *cognitive* grasp and that based on a *pre-cognitive* grasp. During experiencing such gap through ambiguity in a work of art, (2) it has the capacity to bring together heterogeneous or even contradictory meanings, which spring from those two ways understanding, into a sense of oneness in the ongoing experience, in which the heterogeneity in meanings is accommodated as they are without losing their individuality, hence *ambiguity does not offer a homogeneous unity but a heterogeneous unity*. In short, from Venturi's text, I could articulate that ambiguity is a mysterious mediator that lets us experience the two modes of understanding and a sense of a heterogeneous unity of them. Venturi's words thus can highlight a work of art as a privileged medium for bringing what seems to be the background of phenomenon to the fore, upon which the origin of richness of meanings seems to arise.



Consequently, those essences, which we could re-learn from Venturi's illustration of ambiguity, now lay the ground for the next re-interpretation of his investigation of architecture in terms of ambiguity, and complexity and contradiction in architecture. Nevertheless, I better claim that I am not advocating that Venturi intended to picture ambiguity as a concept which draws a clear line between the two ways of understanding, and at the same time yoke them together. What is my point is that his texts alone can offer us various interpretations, and my articulation of his view of ambiguity is just one way to read his work. Thus, this reading is of course not to reject his thoughts but extract a new insight, along which what I articulate as the ambiguity through Tati's films gain full capacity to illustrate some phenomenon of architectural experience in a more appropriate way by not ignoring a precursor of similar views.

In highlighting fundamental points (gap and unity) of what I suggest the foundation of ambiguity in Venturi's text, we now shall move on what we can learn from the way how Venturi could demonstrate such ambiguity in architecture, adapting the insights of those precursors of Fine Art and Literature to architecture.

## 2-5. Ambiguity Reintegrated to Architecture: From Josef Albers's Point of View

Ambiguity and tension are everywhere in an architecture of complexity and contradiction. Architecture is form and substance -abstract and concrete- and its meaning derives from its interior characteristics and its particular context. An architectural element is perceived as form and structure, texture and material. These oscillating relationships, complex and contradictory, are the source of the ambiguity and tension characteristic to the medium of architecture. (Venturi, 1966, p.20)

This passage is where it begins with applying a concept of ambiguity in architecture, which comes after Venturi's introduction of excerpts from Joseph Albers, T.S. Eliot, and Cleanth Brooks that we have seen before. What I like to illustrate with this passage is how Venturi translates a concept of ambiguity into the language of architecture. To make it clear, let us firstly look at the passage in terms of how Venturi renders the excerpt of Josef Albers—"the discrepancy between physical fact and psychic effect"—in a neutral way without Heideggerian sense, for now. In his passage, Venturi comes up with several ways to refer to such discrepancy in architecture: "Architecture is *form and substance -abstract and concrete-* [...]. An architectural element is perceived as *form and structure, texture and material.*" [Venturi, 1966, p.20, emphasis added] With those several paraphrase in mind, one may suppose that every set of them—"form and substance", "abstract and concrete", "form and structure", and "texture and material"—meant, for Venturi, to be corresponding to Albers's articulation of *physical fact* and *psychic effect*. Regardless of his attempt of bringing those various terms, as we briefly have seen before, that all of them basically come to be the derivatives from the relationship between *form and matter* in Kantian sense. Consequently, what I tried to articulate before—the discrepancy between a *cognitive grasp* and a *pre-cognitive grasp*—is 'reduced' or 'distorted' into that between (1) a *unity resultant of the synthesis* of concepts (a concept of chair) and objects in mind (a chair-shaped manifold of sensation) and (2) *the manifold of pure sensation* (the manifold of its parts of the chair-shaped object in mind, such as colours, legs, and surfaces).

Nevertheless, I have intended to prevent this ongoing re-interpretation of Venturi's view of ambiguity from falling into Cartesian impulse of reducing the two modes of understanding into only a cognitive way of understanding, grounded in the subject/object divide. So, I will try to address such

philosophically loaded terms—“form” and “matter”—in the passage can be re-interpreted, substituting this for something else through suggesting a different way of reading it; soon to see substituting them for *the cognitively-intelligible meanings* (its intelligibility that emerge from a cognitive grasp of a thing).

Kantian perspective (seemingly most compatible with an honest way of reading Venturi), on the one hand, supports that Albers’s view of *physical fact/psychic effect divide* can be translated to *form/substance(matter) divide*, as Venturi’s passage literary suggests. That is the divide between (1) *form*—what emerges as the unity by synthesising concepts and objects in mind (an object appears in mind as a result of appropriately uniting every intuition (the manifold of pure sensation such as sensing colour, shape, and the like as they are)— and (2) *matter*—what emerge as the manifold of pure sensation without an essential order, numerous heterogeneous sense of things—. In this perspective, *form/substance divide* in Venturi’s passage, then, certainly stands for the obvious foundation for the subsequent various divides in architecture as he points out: *abstract/concrete*, *form/structure*, and *texture/material divides*. On the other hand, owing to Heideggerian sense to re-learn from Venturi’s view to expand its insightful possibility, Albers’s view of *physical fact/psychic effect divide* should be considered in a fairly different way by addressing an alternative start. Instead of *form/substance divide*, I suggest that *material/texture divide* that is fortunately found in the same Venturi’s passage can, in fact, register itself as a great example of transforming *physical fact/psychic effect divide* into architecture. Note that, this alternative divide is resultant of swapping the original combination of *texture and material to material and texture*, otherwise it is incompatible with Heideggerian view, for which I will be soon to add more articulation.

To make clear this emerging re-interpretation of Venturi’s view in Heideggerian sense, it shall begin with putting emphasis on the divide that Venturi originally calls “texture and material”, one of his several sets of the terms to represent physical fact/psychic effect divide in architecture. Fortunately, this specific pair can offer us a hint for a different way of reading with their etymology. While English *material* has its origin from Latin *materia* (material, substance, wood), which is a derivative of Latin *māter* (mother, in the sense of source, origin, parents), English *texture* has its origin from Latin *textūra* (structure, weaving), derived from *texō* (to weave, construct). (Vaan, 2008) In other words, while *material* refers to *sources or components*, *texture* has its emphasis on *what emerges from bringing components together*. For example, to understand clothes, one may see it as whether it is the sum of raw *materials* or it is the holism of them as the *texture*. Thus, if the relationship between *texture* and *material* can analogically register that between what become intelligible *based on holistic view of a whole* and that *based on the sum of components (and their characters)*, then *texture/material divide* can be underlined to register the relationship between *the intelligibility based on Holistic view* and *the intelligibility based on Atomistic or Reductionistic view*. That is to say, the relationship between *texture and material* may, indeed, analogically illustrate that between *pre-cognitive grasp (based on our undeliberate awareness of holism)* and *a cognitive grasp of a thing (based on thematic awareness of it in terms of the sum of its parts)*. In short, we now can understand that Albers’s physical fact/psychic effect divide can be analogically found also in the relationship between *material* (Atomistic or Reductionistic; cognitive) and *texture* (Holistic; pre-cognitive, i.e. Dasein’s way of being-in-the world).

Instead of Kantian perspective, once the re-interpretation of Venturi’s *material/texture divide* in Heideggerian sense, thus, could illustrate it as Albers’s *physical fact/psychic effect divide* in the sense of *cognitive/pre-cognitive divide*, it allows us to have further reading of Venturi’s other various views of

the similar kinds of divide, which would have been otherwise incompatible with this alternative way of reading. As Venturi puts it as, “Architecture is form and substance”, it now shall be paraphrased to get a better sense in Heideggerian sense, that *architecture is the precognitively-intelligible meanings and substance*. And, his another line—“An architectural element is perceived as form and structure, texture and material”—shall be reinterpreted as *the precognitively-intelligible meanings and structure, and texture and material*. In short, reading Venturi’s text in Heideggerian sense by substituting “*form*” with *what emerge to be intelligible without reflective and cognitive grasp of architecture*, I argue that those various kinds of divides can be re-interpreted fundamentally as the derivatives of cognitive/pre-cognitive divide.

Anyway, the point of repeatedly advocating different ways of reading those various divides proposed by Venturi is to demonstrate and expand the possibility of his view without imposing the idea of *form and matter*, and so extracting a valid way of applying Albers’s view of ambiguity into architecture in terms of Heideggerian sense. In re-interpreting *material/texture divide* as *cognitive/pre-cognitive divide* of the ways of understanding in this paper, what could we learn is that, whatever the meanings that a cognitive grasp of architecture may offer a viewer, a cognitive approach would articulate architecture based on Reductionistic view, like natural scientist often do by breaking it up into parts to identify each of them and theoretical reflection about them.

For instance, understanding architecture as *structure* and how they structurally become a whole is a cognitive grasp of it, which often differs from how people generally understand architecture, such as feeling a sense of home and place. Or, instead of architectural examples, such difference shall be easily appreciated by imagining how we describe a person: Saying whether it is biologically well functioning to sustain its organism like a doctor does by identifying him with the states of all his components such as his weight, height, blood type, and so forth, or saying he is a farther of two kids, in which we already understand him through the way of being a farther in this contemporary society, because our undeliberate awareness of a holistic network of how things become meaningful and significant in the world of a farther precedes our understanding as we are always already immersed into the world we live in. To describe or experience architecture in terms of such discrepancy is of course different from talking about a person and seems less obvious as we feel much familiar with talking about ways of our lives. Yet, the point is the cognitive/pre-cognitive divide can be certainly present in architecture, even though it could be hard to grasp and question. For instance, to describe what makes the façade as it is, we can try to define it by its use of specific colours with its gable-roof shape and its proportion, or by its relation to the town with its involvement into the local history and culture with their conventions, as if how an old couple living in the building for decades would picture its significance by attaching their long life on it. There is the inevitable discrepancy that lies with how we understand architecture, whereby I point out the fundamental dividing line is between the understanding of self-sufficient objects and the understanding of ways of being by taking in a holistic background without noticing it, i.e. a cognitive/a pre-cognitive divide in ways of our understanding.

After all, for architecture like art and poetry it is inevitable to acknowledge the gap between how its meanings emerge—for instance, understanding architecture as structure based on *Concepts* and *Categories* or as an irreducible whole in the world one as Dasein lives in: Like a gap in understanding a work of art by Josef Albers, we cannot reconstruct the richness of meanings by only defining the character of each colour and composition for instance, but it must be experienced as a whole (yet we cannot ignore the impulse of cognitively doing so, hence the gap). And, Albers’s

artworks could bring to the fore such fundamental latent complexity of understanding by registering ambiguity, a means of remaking a gap between a cognitive way and a pre-cognitive way of understanding. So, now we shall move on how such ambiguity could also have the possibility in architecture, for which some of Venturi's architectural examples, I believe, illustrate themselves as those which explicitly remark such gap to a viewer through ambiguity. But, by following the ambiguity as a means of expressing the gap between the two modes of understanding in architecture, some of his examples will appear to be also insufficient, which, in fact, I like to point out as *other kind of ambiguity that is explicitly based on only a cognitive grasp than the ambiguity based on cognitive/pre-cognitive divide*. So, the next investigation of Venturi's view of ambiguity will mainly elaborate on some architectural examples Venturi believed to be ambiguous in order to reach two kinds of ambiguity as conclusive remarks from this ongoing re-interpretation.

## 2-6. Three Kinds of Ambiguity in Architecture Unconcealed

- Cross-World-Oriented Ambiguity
- Subject/Object-Dichotomy-Oriented Ambiguity
- Being-In-The-World-Oriented Ambiguity

If a cognitive/pre-cognitive divide in understanding can take place in encountering architecture, how ambiguity can emerge from architecture? Note that again, what I try to articulate here is the certain kind of ambiguity such as ones we saw in Albers's works, that is, the ambiguity as a means of bringing forth the presence of the gap between a cognitive/pre-cognitive divide, whereby a sense of unity arises from the heterogeneous whole, which would have been otherwise merely the sum of contradictory meanings.

With the ambiguity in Albers's sense in mind, we can finally begin to re-examine how Venturi demonstrate ambiguity in architecture, though, the way I suggest for reading his examples in this paper is mainly to address what can it be the most coherent way to come along with the ambiguity in Albers's sense on which the basis of Venturi's view of ambiguity seems to lay. Put it differently, as I previously introduced Albers's view of ambiguity based on the distinction between a cognitive way of understanding and a pre-cognitive way, the coming examination is my attempt to register an alternative way of reading Venturi's architectural example of ambiguity. As a result, it will allow us to make the distinction between two fundamentally different kinds of ambiguity, which I label *cross-world oriented ambiguity* and *subject/object-dichotomy oriented ambiguity*: The former is the ambiguity, like Albers's works, that can register the presence of a gap between a cognitive/pre-cognitive divide, which I will come back to illustrate why it is so-called *cross-world*. The latter is the ambiguity that can bring to the fore the other kind of discrepancy which can arise within a cognitive way of understanding, because its ambiguous meanings are solely grounded in subject/object dichotomy, which I will come back to add more explanation along with the illustration of *cross-world*. In short, what I attempt to argue with the next investigation is to make the latent distinction of ambiguity in architecture, which otherwise would have been inappropriately presented, so to speak, to fall into the undifferentiated kinds of ambiguity in architecture after all.

To arrive at those two different kinds of ambiguity through re-investigating Venturi's architectural examples, it is helpful to begin with the two architectural examples from the first group of those introduced by him as ones having ambiguity—the ground floor plan of the Villa Savoye (fig.

47) and the north front of Vanbrugh's design of Grimsthorpe castle with its fore-pavilions (fig. 48)—because they will clearly represent the fundamental difference between their ambiguity.

Firstly, let us look at Venturi's view of those two examples:

The conjunction “or” with a question mark can usually describe ambiguous relationships. The Villa Savoye (5): is it a square plan or not? The size of Vanbrugh's fore-pavilions at Grimsthorpe (6) in relation to the back pavilions is ambiguous from a distance: are they near or far, big or small? (Venturi, 1966, p.20)

If I simply follow Venturi's view of what appears to be ambiguity, the ground floor plan of the Villa Savoye raises ambiguity as we cannot really nail down whether or not the plan is a square, and the façade of Grimsthorpe comes up with ambiguity because it offers us a sort of confusion in terms of the distance and scale of their towers in relation to the whole façade.

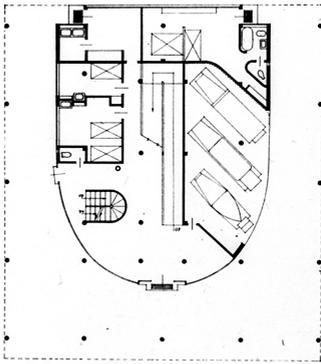


Fig. 47 (left): Le Corbusier, 1929-31. Ground floor plan of the Villa Savoye, Poissy [drawing]

Fig. 48 (right): Vanbrugh, J., 1715-30. North Façade of Grimsthorpe Castle. Bourne photographed by © Country Life (1924) [Photograph]

Yet, if we simply expect those explanation to grasp how those examples bring ambiguity, they seem little oversimplified as they can obscure the essence of ambiguity. For example, Venturi's articulation of the Villa Savoye may lead us to consider the locus of ambiguity as the contrast between the opposing characteristics of some parts in the floor plan. But that may be read without questioning how those characteristics become intelligible to us, hence it seems to overlook what Josef Albers attempted to articulate by saying “the discrepancy between physical fact and psychic effect”. So, how can we re-interpret those examples of ambiguity in architecture with taking into the account of Albers view?

Insofar as Albers's view is put as the ground for the obvious start of Venturi's view of ambiguity in architecture, I suppose Albers's view shall be able to illustrate the ambiguity in the two architectural examples in an analogical manner. With that in mind, what is in common between Albers's colour examples and those two architectural shall be underlined as the oscillation between what become intelligible in both a cognitive way and a pre-cognitive way of understanding of them. That is to say, the ambiguity in each architectural example –the Villa Savoye and Grimsthorpe– can, then, be seen as the presence of the discrepancy that lies with what become intelligible both by understanding it cognitively such as focusing on its components and by understanding it without deliberate awareness of those in some way. To make that alternative reading clear, let me demonstrate them.

In the example of the Villa Savoye, when I look at its floor plan, I can see it as a plan composed of a rigid square and a sort of semi-circle, due to the rigid grid of columns or the shape of ceiling above, and the curved wall that outlines inside. Nonetheless, I cannot help but struggling to experience some kinds of intelligibility that remarks a pre-cognitive mode of understanding to the degree to which it is articulable enough to differ from the former intelligibility risen from a cognitive grasp. In other words, that difficulty to find something more than what a cognitive grasp of it could illustrate leads to the absence of its intelligibility that is grounded in a pre-cognitive grasp of it.

As long as a cognitive grasp of it dominantly supports what can become intelligible as a kind of discrepancy in the floor plan of the Villa Savoye, I argue that the ambiguity in this building is rather grounded in a different kind of oscillation from what Albers points out, which is the contrast between opposing geometrical orders –square and circle– that can be found as its components in the plan, superimposing each other. The same kind of ambiguity can be found in other work by Corbusier, such as the floor plan of Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau in 1925 (fig. 49) bringing forth the superimposition of opposing geometries in the whole. Thus, a sense of ambiguity in the ground floor plan of the Villa Savoye can be rendered from what could be fully intelligible within a cognitive way of understanding; the components that can be seen by breaking up the whole into its parts can independently oppose each other, which fall into what I call *subject/object-dichotomy oriented ambiguity*.

In the example of Grimsthorpe (fig. 48), when I look at its façade, I can see it as a façade composed of the two-story castle with windows placed in a rhythmic pattern, and a three-story tower on both ends, and two other two-story towers as its fore-pavilions having its wing-like low pierced walls from the castle, like the villas designed by Palladio in the sense that he often combined a temple-like villa with symmetrical wings to inflect its symmetrical perfection as well as to implicate the sense of farmhouse. Those interpretations are based on a cognitive way of understanding of Grimsthorpe, since I experience the architecture as the sum of components with its composition in the site, whereby I cognitively judged and become fully aware that the fore-pavilions placed in front of the castle. However, it is also true to me by just merely looking at the building in holistic manner in the picture (fig. 48) that the entirety of its façade seems intelligible to me in the phenomenon that its four towers somehow come to the fore in an almost equal manner with a sense of dominance in the whole, whereby the middle castle starts to oscillate between the sense of being a foreground and that of being a background. For instance, the same kind of discrepancy can be more easily experienced by looking at the photo (fig. 50, 51, 52) of a bridge designed by OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen, whereby we come to understand the people in two drastically different kinds of scale, yet we cognitively know them having more or less the same height. Both Grimsthorpe and the bridge by OFFICE share the same kind of incongruous experience that we encounter in the colour study of Albers (fig. 41), in which we are somehow inclined to take in the set of colours in a holistic manner, and we come to experience single colour as two different colours.

The façade of Grimsthorpe, regardless of viewer's knowledge of its real size, composition, components, and location in the three-dimensional space, thus has the capacity to remark its intelligibility grounded in not only a cognitive but a pre-cognitive way of understanding, by allowing us to explicitly take in the entire building in a holistic manner without deliberate awareness or cognitive reflection about them. And, most importantly, that pre-cognitive grasp of Grimsthorpe could bring forth its intelligibility that is quite different from the cognitive way of understanding of it —i.e. in Albers's sense an obvious remark of the discrepancy between physical fact and psychic

effect. That makes Grimsthorpe clear as an architectural example that can register the presence of a gap between a cognitive way and a pre-cognitive way of understanding, which fall into what I call *cross-world oriented ambiguity*.

Once the two architectural examples presented by Venturi's view of ambiguity could briefly allow us to interpret the latent distinction between two different ambiguity –*cross-world oriented ambiguity* and *subject/object-dichotomy oriented ambiguity*, I suggest adding few more artwork's examples can hereby underline deeper articulation of them from a different angle. In short, this secondary explanation will differentiate them in terms of what kinds of unity they can bring up; based on the distinction between *a holistic kind of unity* and *a self-sufficient kind of unity*.

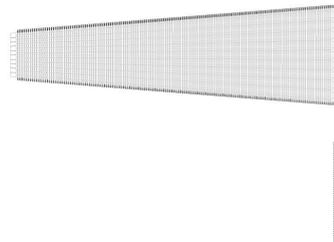
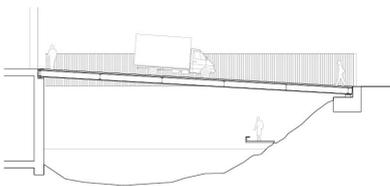
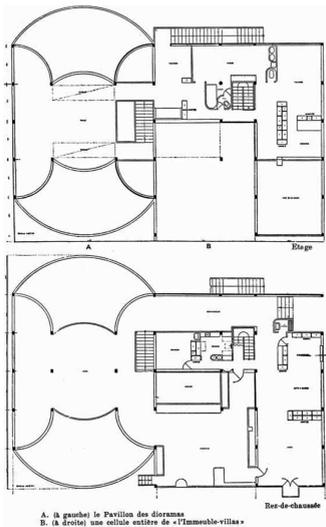


Fig. 49 (top left): Le Corbusier, 1925. Floor plans of Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau. Paris [Drawing]

Fig. 50 (top right): OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen, 2008. OFFICE 23 Bridge, Ghent [Bridge]

Fig. 51 (bottom left): Ibid., Section Drawing.

Fig. 52 (bottom right): Ibid., Plan Drawing.

Like the comparison between the Villa Savoye and Grimsthorpe to demonstrate two kinds of ambiguity, let us briefly look at the contrast between the two paintings, notorious examples in the essay, *Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal*(1963) by Colin Rowe and Robert Slutzky; Moholy's work (fig. 53), La Sarraz (1930), and Léger's work (fig. 54), Three Faces (1926). Nonetheless, one may notice that those should be more appropriate cases for the phenomenon of obscurity or multiplicity in meanings than of ambiguity, but I intend to introduce them solely for a clear demonstration of the difference between holism and self-sufficiency in an exaggerated manner. So, what important to us in prefacing those paintings is quite specific, which is about whether intelligibility of the parts have interconnection or interdependency with how the whole become intelligible or have an explicit capacity to be independent from others. In other words, if the meaning of its parts is unstable and inexhaustible in relation to others and the whole, or if the meanings of its parts is stable and can be defined within itself.



Fig. 53 (left): Moholy-Nagy, L., 1930. *La Sarraz*. [Painting]

Fig. 54 (right): Léger, F., 1926. *Trois profils* (*Three faces*). [Gouache and brush and India ink on paper]

In the work of Moholy (fig. 53) several groups of geometries are superimposed on one another; as if every layer of the group tries to keep their own orders, positions, and characteristics in the universe, despite of how other groups of fundamentally different kinds of geometries are put on top of that, and so the superimposition come to emerge from the discrepancy between their individualities.

In the work of Léger (fig. 54) the absence of layers may first seduce us into a sense of confusion, yet we can roughly understand there seem to be mainly three parts—right, middle, and left—or perhaps four, including a background or framing if we follow the black part; then we come to somehow experience that despite of its absence of presenting the sense of spatial depth due to its flatness it is actually not losing the sense of spatiality, but rather conjuring that up without saying so; for example, once we stare at the white rectangle which includes three faces inside, the rectangle as a positive figure then starts to communicate with a negative such as other white parts in the whole and feed off each other to get characterized in terms of their places, actual figures, and particular situations in relation to their neighbors, which thereby come to expand and cultivate the next relationship to other figures or colours and so forth; which is to say, how the parts become intelligible hardly get fixed into a certain way, and that even involves a constant dialogue and change in how other parts and the whole become intelligible; put differently, the parts and the whole explicitly form interdependent relationships in terms of how they can become intelligible.

Rowe clearly underlines the distinction between the two paintings based on how they become intelligible to the viewers:

While Moholy seems to have flung open a window on to some private version of outer space. Léger, working within an almost two dimensional scheme, achieves a maximum clarity of both 'negative' and 'positive' forms. By means of restriction, Léger's picture becomes charged with an equivocal depth reading [...].

For-in spite of its modernity of motif, Moholy's picture still shows the conventional precubist foreground, middleground, and background; and in spite of a rather casual interweaving of surface and the elements introduced to destroy the logic of this deep space, Moholy's picture can be submitted to only one reading.

On the other hand, through the refined virtuosity with which he assembles postcubist constituents, Fernand Léger makes completely plain the multifunctioned behavior of clearly defined form. Through flat planes, through an absence of volume suggesting its presence, through the implication rather than the fact of a grid, through an interrupted checkerboard pattern stimulated by color, proximity, and discrete superimposition. Léger leads the eye to experience an inexhaustible series of larger and smaller organizations within the whole. (Rowe & Slutzky, 1963, p.48)

On the one hand, in Moholy's work individuality of its parts become self-sufficiently articulable because the way of how the parts interact each other is limited to "one reading"; whereby the articulation of each part come to be exhaustible in that stable universe composed of the sum of the parts. Then, unity of the whole arises from the set of fixable identification. On the other hand, in Léger's work individuality of its parts can be barely articulable or intelligible in the virtue of a holistic grasp them in relation to the whole, because the way of how the parts interact each other is not limited to "one reading"; whereby their intelligibility show themselves in many ways depending on what kind of holistic view can emerge to us, so the articulation of its parts cannot be nailed down for once and for all, but inexhaustibly changing. Unity of the whole hereby arises from ever-changing dialogue of intelligibility of parts with their interdependency, grounded in a holistic view of them.

Owing to the highlight on the difference between self-sufficiency and holism as what respectively characterises Moholy's work and Léger's, a similar kind of difference can now be added as supplementary explanation to the previous distinction of the two kinds of ambiguity latent in the two architectural examples. So, it is to underline how each ambiguity differs to one another in term of what kind of unity they acquire. Like the difference of unity between Moholy's work and Léger's, a similar contrast can be articulated between the floor plan of the Villa Savoye and the façade of Grimsthorpe castle; the former registers unity in terms of having two different opposing geometries in the plan's entirety, grounded in self-sufficiency of their intelligibility; but the latter remarks unity in the virtue of constant dialogue between their parts –for example, how fore-pavilions become intelligible is interdependent with how the other two towers become intelligible– which is to say, grounded in holism in their intelligibility, rather than in their independent facts. Thus, in the floor plan of the Villa Savoye the ambiguity, which I call *subject/object-dichotomy oriented ambiguity*, comes with the unity that emerge from the sum of self-sufficient characters, but in the façade of Grimsthorpe another ambiguity, which I label *cross-world oriented ambiguity*, conveys the unity based on holism of the whole.

To sum up, I have so far chosen two architectural examples that Venturi introduced as ones having ambiguity, from which I intended to make the distinction between (1) the ambiguity based on the discrepancy between what a cognitive grasp brings forth and what a pre-cognitive grasp does so, and (2) the ambiguity based on the discrepancy between the opposing characteristics of things which are explicitly articulable within a cognitive grasp. Moreover, those distinguishable ambiguity make clear their difference also when it comes to what offers a ground for their sense of unity; the former relies on self-sufficient intelligibility but the latter on holistic intelligibility. Thus, I have tried to nail down the distinction of those two kinds of ambiguity with particular labels—*Cross-world-oriented ambiguity* and *Subject/object-dichotomy-oriented ambiguity*—yet these names are still owed an explanation for how those names make sense. So, prior to the conclusion of the study in this section, let me briefly illuminate this.

For Heidegger in *Being and Time*, there are four different sense of what the term “a world” means, in which the first and the third of them come to play fundamental roles in this paper, because each of them corresponds to a world in whose sense a cognitive way of understanding or a pre-cognitive way of understanding respectively takes place as a dominant mode of understanding.

In the first sense, a world means a totality of objects, or we may see it as a universe of objects; which is to say, this world refers to “the system or set of things that are”, such as a world as physical universe, which means the set of all physical objects. (Blattner, 2007, p.43) This totality of things in this sense can be “present-at-hand”, which are captured by *our cognitive ways of understanding of entities*; which is to say, this way of understanding isolates ourselves as *subjects* standing against the world composed of *objects*. So, we as subjects, observing objects, can have pure perception of them (colour, shapes, soft, hard, and so on), synthesis of them, contemplation about them, and formalisation of them by acquiring concepts. For example, when scientists investigate some particles, what lies behind this experience is a world in that particular sense, such as a world as physical universe (the set of all physical objects). Dreyfus names this sense of a world “The Ontical-Categorical sense”. (Dreyfus, 1995, p.89)

For the third sense, Dreyfus label “The Ontical-Existentiell Sense”. (Dreyfus, 1995, p.89) Blattner nicely articulates this sense as such: “The social milieu in which Dasein dwells and with which it is always already familiar”. (Blattner, 2011) For example, the business world means a constellation of practices, equipment, and concern in which business people dwell: The world of architects signifies a constellation of familiar practices (e.g. sketching an interior view, drawing a floor plan, photoshopping facade), equipment (e.g. a roll of tracing paper), and concern (e.g. other art works become inspirational) in which an architect dwells: The world of Japanese refers to a constellation of practices (such as bow), equipment (such as chopsticks), and concern (sense of personal space) in which Japanese dwell. In this sense a world is invariably a vast constellation of practices, equipment, and concern, convolutedly intertwined each other, in which one dwells and feel familiar to be absorbed in such constellation of ways things are in the world: So, for instance, when I live in Japan, in which I was born and grew up, I am always already deeply immersed into the ways that things are in Japan, and that I can just behave and communicate with other Japanese who also happen to be absorbed in a similar constellation in a hitch free manner even without our deliberate awareness or cognitive thinking about those familiar ways. That is to say, since we always already dwell in some kind of worlds, our primary way of understanding of entities always already take place within some kind of constellation of the world *regardless of* the absence of our cognitive or

deliberate ways of understanding. In other words, in this sense of a world, our way of understanding of entities take place in a mode of *pre-cognitive sense*.

Furthermore, insofar as we can have pre-cognitive understanding of things, a world (a constellation of what matter and concern to us) in this sense has been taken in by us as the background against which things can come to be intelligible in certain ways with which they are always already familiar. Therefore, we as Dasein, dwelling in such world becomes Dasein's (being-there) distinctive way of being, i.e. being-in-the-world. We hereby can appreciate that *being-in-the-world* is an essential way of being of us, which lay grounds for how we can have pre-cognitive understanding of things.

My point, introducing two different senses of the term "a world", can be narrowed down into this: "The Ontical-Categorical sense" of a world is where *a cognitive way of understanding* can take place, grounded in *the subject/object dichotomy*, like the traditional philosophical conception of the world: "The Ontical-Existentiell sense" of a world is where *a pre-cognitive way of understanding* can take place, grounded in Dasein's distinctive way of being, i.e. *Being-in-the-world*. In short, the former sense of a world can be seen on the basis of *subject/object divide*, the latter sense of a world can be seen on the basis of our continuous *unity* with the world.

For instance, scientist try to objectify a world by presupposing subject/object divide, but our everyday practice understands a world by presupposing our unity with the world; each situation respectively represents how we may use a cognitive way of understanding or a pre-cognitive way of understanding, depending on what kind of sense the term "a world" means behind.

Now it should suffice to appreciate the reason why the ambiguity grounded in both a cognitive way and a pre-cognitive way of understanding shall be called *cross-world-oriented ambiguity*. That is, to experience what can be intelligible based on both ways of understanding means, in turn, that we come to encounter two different sense of the term "a world" simultaneously. On the other hand, the reason why the ambiguity grounded only in a cognitive way shall be called *Subject/object-dichotomy-oriented ambiguity*, rather than Ontical-Categorical-sense-of-world ambiguity, is that such ambiguity puts more emphasis on the essence of a cognitive-way of understanding (Subject/object dichotomy) than on the presence of the world itself—we will be back to illuminate this point furthermore in the next section (in brief, the whole experience of this particular ambiguity can feed back into the possibility of rational contemplation hence the subject/object dichotomy too).

Thus, in highlighting two different senses of the term "a world", we could illuminate the distinction between the two different kinds of ambiguity as *Cross-world-oriented ambiguity* and *Subject/object-dichotomy-oriented ambiguity*. Now we are ready to understand something new out of this view, that is, there can be the third kind of ambiguity, which I call *Being-in-the-world oriented ambiguity*. (Diag. 1) That is, instead of focusing only on a cognitive way of understanding or on both a pre-cognitive way and a cognitive way of understanding, the ambiguity that is grounded only in a pre-cognitive way of understanding, which seems to be left untouched in Venturi's investigation of ambiguity in architecture. Fortunately, this is the ambiguity which we have seen quite explicitly from the beginning of this paper, such as the ambiguity in Jacques Tati's film, some of Richard Wentworth's photographic works, Herzog and de Meuron's work E, D, E, N, Pavilion, and Richard Wentworth and GRUPPE's work Black Maria (I will elaborate on how this is grounded in a pre-cognitive way of understanding (hence Being-in-the-world) in the next section).

After all, I had firstly proposed the distinction between the two different kinds of ambiguity in Venturi's view of ambiguity in architecture, as a result of a re-interpretation about chapter 3 of *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*. Then. this illustration of the two kinds of ambiguity

could consequently lead us to illuminate the third kind, which in turn falls into the kind of which the two architectural works in the beginning of this chapter did demonstrate (which we will see soon). Yet, make no mistake, this third kind of ambiguity could be explicitly understandable once we start to consider how many possible patterns can be drawn to ensue ambiguity from these two options—a pre-cognitive way of understanding and a cognitive way of understanding—though, the two kinds of patterns have been already exhausted—the first has both a cognitive way and a pre-cognitive way and the second has a cognitive way only; this means, in turn, there is one last possibility left untouched, which is the ambiguity grounded only in a pre-cognitive way. In this sense, the three different kinds of ambiguity—Cross-world-oriented ambiguity, Subject/object dichotomy-oriented ambiguity, and Being-in-the-world-oriented ambiguity—come to form a complementary whole, to the degree to

	Senses of a World	Modes of Understanding (Pre-cognitive/Cognitive)	Base of Our Relations with the World
Cross-World Oriented Ambiguity	<b>Both</b> the Ontical-Categorial sense and the Ontic-Existentiell sense	<b>Both</b> a cognitive mode and a pre-cognitive mode	<b>Both</b> subject/object divide and being-in-the-world
Subject/Object Dichotomy Oriented Ambiguity	<b>Only</b> the Ontical-Categorial sense	<b>Only</b> a cognitive mode	<b>Only</b> subject/object divide
Being-In-The-World Oriented Ambiguity	<b>Only</b> the Ontic-Existentiell sense	<b>Only</b> a pre-cognitive mode	<b>Only</b> being-in-the-world

Diagram 1: Distinctions between the Three Kinds of Ambiguity

which they exhaust all possible patterns to bring forth ambiguity insofar as we are grounded in the two modes of understanding—a cognitive mode and a pre-cognitive mode.

Thus, *Being-in-the-world oriented ambiguity* hereby comes to fill into the last empty piece that was not directly illuminated by the re-examination of Venturi's view of ambiguity, but what we had already seen through the examination of the two architectural examples—E, D, E, N, pavilion and Black Maria—in the beginning of this chapter will perfectly come to merge with this emerging third kind of ambiguity. In making the distinctions between the three different kinds of ambiguity, this will offer us not only an overview of the possibility of ambiguity in architecture but also lead us to appreciate, my main attempt of this paper, the unique significance of *Being-in-the-world oriented ambiguity* over the other two kinds. So, I shall move on a better articulation of *Rhetorical Ambiguity*.

### 3. Distinctions Between the Three Kinds of Ambiguity in Architecture

#### 3-1. Three Types of Re-configuration of How We Understand Architecture

At last, the re-examination of Venturi's view of ambiguity clearly brought us the two distinctive kinds of ambiguity, latent in his view of ambiguity mainly in the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of his *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*. Now, this finding, in turn, highlight the place into which the last piece of puzzle can fall, that is, the third kind of ambiguity, which I call *Being-in-the-world oriented ambiguity*. This third kind of ambiguity is the very ambiguity that we have repeatedly seen before in

Tati's films in the last chapter and the two architectural works (E, D, E, N, Pavilion and Black Maria, the pop-up auditorium) I illustrated in the beginning of this chapter.

Thus, this peculiar ambiguity that I attempted to articulate from the beginning of this paper is now finally labelled and also get associated with the two other kinds of ambiguity, which means that those three kinds must form a complementary whole of the classification of ambiguity in architecture. To have a view of the three kinds of ambiguity is important as far as there are the two distinctively different ways of understanding—a pre-cognitive way and a cognitive way—; that is because those two ways are inevitable resultants of the distinction between the two different sense of the term “a world”—both are ontic sense of world, but one is based on the subject/object divide as our relationship to the world and another is based on Dasein's (our) way of being-in-the-world. In other words, each of the three ambiguity has its own way to get individualised by the two senses of world—based on the subject/object divide, based on Dasein's being-in-the-world, or based on both of them (the divide and the unity).

In highlighting the ambiguity seen in the two architectural works (E, D, E, N, Pavilion and Black Maria) as what I label *Being-in-the-world oriented ambiguity*, let us return to appreciate how this ambiguity can make sense especially in relation to the two other kinds of ambiguity, to place the last piece of puzzle into the re-examination of Venturi's view of ambiguity in architecture. Since several architectural examples found in Venturi's articulation of ambiguity in architecture could demonstrate how the two different kinds of ambiguity—*Cross-world-oriented ambiguity* and *Subject/object-dichotomy-oriented ambiguity*—may emerge, I will hereby bring up again the two architectural works that we saw in the beginning in order to demonstrate. So, like Venturi's examples could show us how a cognitive way of understanding and both a cognitive way and pre-cognitive way of understanding could respectively form its own distinctive ambiguity, I will demonstrate how a pre-cognitive way of understanding, grounded in Being-in-the-world, can solely ensue *Being-in-the-world oriented ambiguity*.

For each architectural work of the two—E, D, E, N, Pavilion and Black Maria—I will show how each its own ambiguous intelligibility of them spring explicitly from a pre-cognitive way of understanding. In the case of Herzog and de Meuron's work, E, D, E, N, Pavilion, where I introduced that the ambiguity lies between the letter D shaped column and the semi-classic-order like column, each is grounded in how a pre-cognitive way of understanding would have otherwise grasped each situation ordinarily: (1) On the one hand, a pre-cognitive way of understanding alphabets and words takes place in our everyday lived experience in a hitch-free manner; which is to say, what lie behind the ambiguity of a letter D-ness is how we always already take in alphabets as alphabets without deliberate awareness or thinking of them, such as thinking of their shapes, colours, or their properties. (2) On the other hand, a pre-cognitive way of understanding architectural “order-ness” takes place, for instance, in walking down a street and passing by some of buildings which I see as following or getting influenced by some certain kind of a classical order, whereas we hardly question why they become intelligible as such; which is to say, what lies behind the ambiguity of the column's order-ness is how we always already presuppose that our way of understanding is often grounded in our everyday attitude whereby we seem to know what we encounter without really encountering them but, in this case, content with reading them superficially with a certain name of order we are familiar with.

In the case of Richard Wentworth and GRUPPE's work, Black Maria, where I presented that the ambiguity lies mainly within how a place become intelligible in a certain way, which also involved

people into the ambiguity though, each is coherently grounded in how a pre-cognitive way of understanding would have captured them ordinarily otherwise: (1) On the one hand, a pre-cognitive way of our understanding of a certain kind of place, related to what we usually call auditorium and atrium in this case, usually takes place, for instance, when we visit a pop-up event space with auditorium, in which we immediately understand where seats can or cannot be found and how we behave in this certain situation; which is to say, what lies behind the ambiguity of a characteristic of place is how we always already take in what is a place in a certain situation in everyday practices without deliberate thinking about it or pondering about objects, and we just know, prior to a cognitive grasp of the space, what is that place in terms of the totality of reference with their individuated places as the background. (2) On the other hand, a pre-cognitive way of understanding of people may take place in terms of their ways of behaviour in a specific situation in public space. For instance, through the glass of a café I see a person in a seat gazing towards my direction, but I would hardly wonder about why the person is looking at me, because I always already understand such person in terms of how people usually behave in a café. So, I already know that the person in café is hereby a well-qualified onlooker, and I am just passer-by; which is to say, how we always already see people within the frame of how we usually behave in a certain situation and place come to take place without us noticing or thinking cognitively about that.

Thus, in the case of *Being-in-the-world-oriented ambiguity* in architecture, its opposing intelligibility which can evoke a sense of ambiguity must have their locus within a pre-cognitive way of understanding. Nonetheless, this clarification would not make much sense only in appreciating *Being-in-the-world-oriented ambiguity*, but in taking account of it along with the two other kinds of ambiguity and of how they differ from each other. That is to say, we must understand how a cognitive way of understanding and a precognitive way can lay the ground for each sense of the three kinds of ambiguity.

Once we can appreciate that the three kinds of ambiguity should form a complementary whole of the view of ambiguity in architecture, I like to sum up this ongoing investigation of ambiguity by integrating the holistic view of the three kinds of ambiguity, distilled mainly from Venturi's view, back into the four parts processes, proposed previously as the essential frame to identify the experience of the ambiguity in the two architectural works –E, D, E, N, pavilion and Black Maria. Put differently, for synthesising what have been discussed in this chapter, the four parts processes presented to illuminate the experience of ambiguity should be applied into each experience of the three kinds of ambiguity, so those both views, two major perspectives about ambiguity in this chapter can be finally merged by integrating the latter into the former. So, let us see each ambiguity of the three in terms of what become distinctive in each experience based on the four parts processes, so that we can start summarising all.

—To experience *Being-in-the-world-oriented ambiguity* can be identified in the following:

1. Discern Strangeness in architecture.
2. Notice Ambiguity in some way, which is a departure from the Ambiguity established within Pre-cognitive way (when we can see the ordinary as the ordinary without us noticing).
3. What may follow the encounter with this ambiguity is to traverse and encounter a totality of reference, which is the background against which what become intelligible to us in an ambiguous manner; this means in turn that we could hereby bring to the fore and survey

the background upon which, if not ambiguity was not present, a pre-cognitive mode of understanding could have otherwise captured them as the ordinary without us noticing. On top of that, to describe how we survey such background of intelligibility, I introduce the notion of Bricolage may offer us a better interpretation of that: The survey is not just to gaze at what is the totality of reference, but like Bricoleur we come to, so to speak, assemble pieces of available references in an ambiguous manner in order to make the best out of it, which is to gain a large picture of the whole situation whereby even the opposing intelligibility make sense to the full extent of both ways without dismissing either one. The point is that, like a real Bricoleur, each of viewers can indeed have his or her own way to reach the best interpretation of the situation, and individuality of them is hereby involved into the experience of this ambiguity.

4. Once our undifferentiated attitude towards the architecture have been shaken by getting tricked by the ambiguity into bringing to the fore what has inconspicuously shaped entities as familiar and ordinary to us, this can in turn throw into question our indifference to the undifferentiated mode of everydayness (our undifferentiated attitude to the reality). So, our ways of encountering architecture can thereby come to be re-established based on concerning ways of being of architecture through the survey of the background, hence the ordinary in architecture can be re-emerged as the extraordinary. Therefore, the whole experience *re-configures* our attitude towards the architecture.

—To experience *Subject/object-dichotomy-oriented ambiguity* can be identified in the following:

1. Discern Strangeness in architecture.
2. Notice Ambiguity in some way, which is a departure from the Ambiguity established within a cognitive way (when we can see entities as objects through a cognitive way of understanding).
3. What may follow the encounter with this ambiguity is to survey how its opposing intelligibility emerges as such. In contrast to seducing us into a vast network of references, this type leads us to identify the source of ambiguity that can be self-sufficient and intelligible in itself. Thus, this encounter is grounded in the subject/object divide for the relationship to the world, where we can break up the whole into parts so that self-sufficient properties in seeing the whole as the sum of objects can be analysed and lead us to capture their opposing characters to explain ambiguity.
4. Once this theoretical attitude towards architecture is encouraged in the course of the succession in defining the reason of the ambiguity once and for all, its grounding subject/object divide comes thereby to keep its role as the ground for the experience of architecture. Therefore, the whole experience with this ambiguity *feeds back into* the subject/object divide.

—To experience *Cross-world-oriented ambiguity* can be identified in the following:

1. Discern Strangeness in architecture.
2. Notice ambiguity in some way, which is a departure from the Ambiguity established between pre-cognitive way/cognitive way.

3. What may follow the encounter with this ambiguity is to realise and bring to the fore the presence of an inevitable gap of meanings raised between two different modes of understanding—cognitive and pre-cognitive understanding. That is because this ambiguity leads us to explicitly experience the architecture in the way that the primary apprehensible intelligibility of architecture somehow differs from what a cognitive understanding of it should illuminate as intelligible to us. So, we cannot help but confronting the gap between them.
4. Once both different ways of understanding architecture come forward equivocally, underlining each its own different result (intelligibility), we must confront the inevitable difference, whereby it is up to us if we take it as the critique of our cognitive encounter (theorising) or the critique of our pre-cognitive encounter or the critique of our failure to become aware of two modes as the ground of understanding. Therefore, the whole experience leads us to acknowledge two different way of understanding the same architecture, which in fact bring up not identical intelligibility—as if one way tries to romanticise it while another tries to objectify it.

As a result of integrating the three kinds of ambiguity into the four steps processes of experience, we now can clearly capture the difference of the three kinds of ambiguity in terms of their speciality that especially lie with what we can experience. In particular, it is worth putting emphasis on the forth part of the processes, in which each ambiguity of the three leaves its own conclusive traces. So, to underline every forth part can offer us an overview of the most encapsulating characteristics of three kinds of ambiguity at once. Let us briefly go through and makes sure the essential characteristics that lies in every forth part of the three kinds of ambiguity.

In the first ambiguity, the whole experience can be significantly characterised by its capacity to reconfigure our primary way of encountering architecture, through *tricking* our primary way of understanding into coming into the spotlight, just like the experience with Black Maria (fig. 36) — perhaps it would be helpful for us to behold one more remarkable example, The Swiss Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale 2018, Svizzera 240 (fig. 55, 56, 57), by Alessandro Bosshard, Li Tavor, Matthew van der Ploeg and Ani Vihervaara.



Fig. 55: Bosshard, A., Tavor, L., Ploeg, M. V. D. and Vihervaara, A., 2018. Svizzera 240, The Swiss Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale 2018 [architecture]



Fig. 56 (left), 57 (right): Bosshard, A., Tavor, L., Ploeg, M. V. D. and Vihervaara, A., 2018. *Svizzera 240, The Swiss Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale 2018* [architecture]

In the second ambiguity, the whole experience can be mainly characterised by its emphasis entirely rather on a cognitive mode of understanding, its capacity to make the entire experience feed back into the possibility of the rational speculation grounded in the subject/object divide, like the floor plan of the Villa Savoye (fig. 47) and Baldassare Peruzzi's work (fig. 58), Palazzo Massimo (1536) –six columns in the entrance can be seen as (II II II) or (III III), as Christoph Baumberger, “Ambiguity in Architecture” (2009), took as an example of ambiguity in architecture. A similar yet more intensive kind of experience, not necessarily with ambiguity though, that tries to enlighten (or rather criticize ironically) our rational mode of understanding can be nicely found in the point where Colin Rowe and Robert Slutzky, in “Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal” (1963), demonstrate through the garden façade (fig. 59) of, a Corbusier's work, the Villa Stein in Garches (1926-1928); that is, the transparency of the meaning of the building may arise as a result of the rational contemplation of the façade (not transparent glass) in which a way of understanding the building is based on the speculation of what is behind what we can literally see, so this result of the rational contemplation can, in turn, feed back into the mode of the subject/object divide in the virtue of their fruitful achievement beyond the limit of what we can literally perceive; “we become aware that here a transparency is effected not through the agency of a window but rather through our being made conscious of primary concepts which 'interpenetrate without optical destruction of each other.’” (Rowe & Slutzky, 1963, p.50)

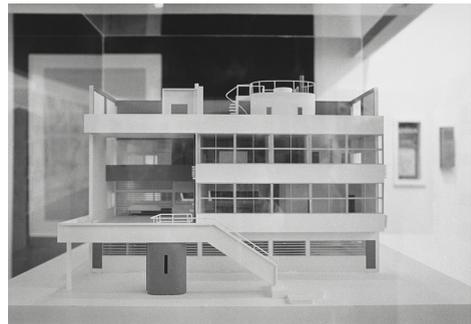


Fig. 58 (top left): Peruzzi, B., 1532-36. *Palazzo Massimo*, drawn by Ferrerio, P. [Drawing]

Fig. 59 (top right): Le Corbusier, 1927. *The Villa Stein at Garches*, reproduced as physical model by Anon [Architectural Model]

In the third ambiguity, the whole experience can be characterized by its capacity to make us explicitly realise the validity of both a pre-cognitive way and a cognitive way of understanding the same architecture and the inevitable difference of the result that lies between them, through a vivid highlight of the ostensive difference in how the phenomenon can be understood, like Grimsthorpe castle (fig. 49), OFFICE's bridge in Ghent (fig. 50), and a Michelangelo's work (fig. 60), Porta Pia (1565) –in fact, Svizzera 240 (fig. 55) can be seen in this way too.

With the emphasis on every forth part of the processes, we can come to notice that there is something to be shared by all of the three kinds of ambiguity, that is, they all become distinctive at the end of experience by reconfiguring our experience with architecture in some way. In other words, if we summarise each of the three kinds of ambiguity on the basis of how they reconfigure our experience, we can have an overview of those ambiguity against the back ground of what they can offer us at the end of experience. Given this overview, as a result of integrating the major perspectives for the notion of ambiguity in this chapter, I address that investigation of the ambiguity in architecture shall hereby reach a conclusion of this paper by nailing down the consequence of each of the three kinds of ambiguity.

To sum up, articulation of the three ambiguity in this paper come to be finalised, in terms of each in own way of reconfiguring our experience with architecture, respectively in the following: (1) *Being-in-the-world-oriented ambiguity* is re-configuration of a pre-cognitive way of understanding (i.e. our indifference towards the undifferentiated modes of being, everydayness), beginning from the closest phenomenon and coming back into the same phenomenon but with different attitude. (2) *Subject/object-dichotomy-oriented ambiguity* is re-configuration of a cognitive way of understanding, enclosing the process of speculation explicitly within rational contemplation (a cognitive way of understanding). (3) *Cross-world-oriented ambiguity* is re-configuration of our indifference towards the two crucially different modes of understanding (a pre-cognitive way and a cognitive way), beginning from the inevitable difference of the intelligibility between them and coming back into the same but with acknowledgement of the oscillation between them.



Fig. 60 (bottom left): Michelangelo, 1561-65. Porta Pia [Architecture]

# CHAPTER 5

## *Conclusion*

## Conclusion—Ambiguity in Architecture Manifested

Ambiguity in architecture, seen in a number of architectural examples throughout the architectural history, has been remarkably discussed before by Robert Venturi (1966), who advocates the possibility of architecture more in heterogeneity, rather than heterogeneity on which Modernism puts exclusive emphasis. My point is that Venturi's view of ambiguity cannot precisely capture a primary kind of ambiguity grounded in Dasein's being-in-the-world, which have the capacity to offer us a chance to re-experience the ordinary as the extraordinary, or that his view of ambiguity even may reduce that distinctive ambiguity to other kinds of ambiguity that is based on the subject/object divide. My other point is that insofar as Venturi's view of ambiguity in architecture prefaces Josef Albers' view of ambiguity (succeeding in demonstrating ambiguity through his art works and description) his essential point has been misinterpreted by Venturi, in the sense, translating from his initial view of ambiguity—grounded in the discrepancy between “*physical fact* and *psychic effect*”—into the other Platonic view of the ambiguity—grounded in the discrepancy between the ‘*form* and *matter*’. So, Venturi, instead of regarding “psychic effect” as what comes to be intelligible to us prior to our rational speculation, explore ambiguity in architecture based only on the subject/object dichotomy.

As a result of that critical reading of Venturi's view and re-learning from it, we can thereby come to realise there should be the distinction between two different senses of the term “ambiguity”. They have been initially latent and untouched within Venturi's investigation of ambiguity in architecture though, re-interpreting his view, based on imagining if Albers' works could have been righteously read and applied to Venturi's architectural examples, can reveal the distinction between the two different sense of the term “ambiguity”, which I label *Subject/object-dichotomy-oriented ambiguity* and *Cross-world-oriented ambiguity*. I claim that—owing to Heidegger's distinction of four senses of the term “a world” (two kinds of Ontic senses and two kinds of Ontological senses)—each ambiguity gets individuated by what kind of a sense or senses of the term “a world” shape ambiguity. The former is grounded in seeing a world rather as a universe of objects (a totality of objects) such as physical universe, so the subject/object dichotomy is its base. The latter is grounded in the discrepancy that lies with seeing a world not only in the former way but also seeing it as a totality of ways things are to us most of the time (such as the world of business, the child's world, and the worlds of physics), a totality of references in which we are always already immersed in, such as a social milieu. So, the base of this sense of ambiguity is on both senses of the term “a world”, the two kinds of Ontic senses, hence so called *Cross-world-oriented ambiguity*. Put differently, the former is grounded only in a cognitive way of understanding, but the latter is grounded the gap between a cognitive way of understanding and a pre-cognitive way of understanding.

Once re-interpretation of Venturi's view of ambiguity for this paper is completed by unconcealing the two kinds of ambiguity, this leads us to notice that there is another kind of ambiguity left untouched, which is the ambiguity grounded in seeing a world as one of the latter way (*Cross-world-oriented ambiguity*), that is, seeing it as a totality of references, such as the world of parents (most of the time it is equivalent to a social milieu we are always already immersed into), so Dasein's being-in-the-world is its base. In other words, this ambiguity is grounded in a pre-cognitive way of understanding, which is not like understanding something through rational speculation, intellectual grasping, or objectification, but more basic way—such as what Heidegger meant by illustrating how we understand a hammer as a hammer. I call this ambiguity *Being-in-the-world-oriented ambiguity*.

*Being-in-the-world-oriented ambiguity* is a primary sense of ambiguity to the degree to which it has its basis explicitly on our primary ways of understanding entities in our everyday lived experience. According to Heidegger, our primary ways of understanding and behaving invariably take place in our everyday practices, in which entities always already become intelligible in a certain way to us, preceding a cognitive way of grasp of them most of the time. And, primary ways of our behaving and understanding happen to us in an undifferentiated manner, whose ways are hardly raised to be questioned but taken for granted and congeal into ‘familiar’ ways of understanding and behaving for us. In this sense, what we see as the ordinary has its basis on this attitude to the reality. And, most of the time we are indifferent to the undifferentiated modes of understanding and behaving.

Heidegger calls those undifferentiated modes of existing (involving how we understand and behave) “everydayness”. So, everydayness is the state in which our primary attitude to the reality is undifferentiated while we are indifferent to this state, where most of the time how we understand and behave tend to fall into familiar certain ways. We always already deeply immersed into such familiar ways in which entities are seen as things in certain ways without us noticing.

What we encounter, understand, or use ordinarily, thus, always already –based on our undifferentiated attitude to the reality– framed in certain ways, and the ordinary is bound to emerge as the ordinary without us noticing or thinking so. Nonetheless, Heidegger also points out that, when an impediment to our understanding-as-usual or behaving-as-usual occurs, this congealment into the undifferenced modes of our ways of being can be shaken and raised to be investigated in front of us. For instance, when a head of hammer gets too loose in driving nails, then we have to look at the hammer and try to cognitively understand it by a kind of rational speculation to figure out what is the problem, as opposed to the moment that we can just pick up a hammer and drive a nail in a hitch free manner, then the way of understanding of hammer is not contemplation about it at all but absorbed into the action or talking with a friend while hammering, prior to our intellectual attitude.

To trick us into facing an impediment in the undifferentiated modes of understanding entities, I thereby come to find *Being-in-the-world-oriented ambiguity* to have a significant capacity –unlike other two kinds of ambiguity– because this ambiguity can be an impediment to our understanding-as-usual or behaving-as-usual *as far as its ambiguous meanings have its explicit root in our primary way of understanding*. This ambiguity accordingly allows us to shed light on our trivialized everyday mode of being in which things become intelligible in a familiar way; this in turn explicitly expose that trivialized everyday mode as the undifferentiated mode of our way of being and averageness, leading us to realise our such primary understanding of entities as things is always already take place in a certain way; this acknowledgement thereby allow us to, so to speak, wake up from our indifference to the undifferentiated mode of everydayness, and to re-experience entities through concerning for their ways of being; which is to say, that is where the ordinary may emerge as the extraordinary.

That is the reason why I underline this ambiguity in this paper, as a means of re-configuring our undifferentiated modes of encountering architecture. Then, my points for this paper can be emphasised in this way; while it is worth drawing the distinctions between the three kinds of ambiguity –based on two different senses of the term “a world”– it is also worth underling and thematising one (Being-in-the-world-oriented ambiguity) of the three in the virtue of its capacity to influence us *from within our primarily undifferentiated ways of encountering*. However, if it (Subject/object-dichotomy-oriented ambiguity) influences us *from our intellectual ways of encountering*, this means we are already isolated as subjects standing against the external world (a universe of objects). And, this beginning –having detached from the world we are immersed in–

comes to mean, in turn, that it is always ‘too late’ to start to reconfigure our undifferentiated mode of understanding. If we want to reconfigure our primarily undifferentiated modes of understanding, it must take place while our primary unity with the world is ongoing, hence the importance of an impediment to our understanding—as-usual or our behaving—as-usual.

With that significance of Being-in-the-world-oriented ambiguity in mind, my points of this paper are concluded with summarising of the experience of Being-in-the-world-oriented ambiguity. This last remark highlights its essential characteristics in terms of the influence on our primary way of encountering architecture, as opposed to other two kinds of ambiguity. So, I advocate this special ambiguity in architecture, that it should require more attention from architectural discourse—neither because of its mere importance to mediate opposing meanings at once, nor because of its mere unexpected effect and a sense of tension and oscillation resultant of such mediation—but because of the possibility to re-configure our primary ways of experiencing and understanding architecture, whereby we come to experience the ordinary phenomenon in architecture as the extraordinary.

To sum up, there are three most crucial points we must understand as the essential characteristics of Being-in-the-world-oriented ambiguity. The first point is that this ambiguity is, so to speak, an opportunist. It always begins with tricking us into further engagement with what lies behind the closest phenomenon. And, most importantly, this trick can nicely work as a cunning skill because the beginning of this ambiguity is always something to do with what is the ordinary to us. In other words, this ambiguity must begin within the horizon of what seems to be the ordinary, self-evident, and closest phenomenon to us, yet presented in an ambiguous manner.

If this way of presenting the ordinary can be called a trick into further engagement, this ambiguity can be nicely characterised as an active seeker awaiting to be engaged by us. To appreciate this opportunist character, it is helpful to see, for instance, what Kenneth Frampton asserts as a certain kind architecture that can bring to the fore the notion of tectonic of architecture, which we may interpret like as a quiet seeker awaiting to be engaged by us (quiet though they are promising if we spontaneously and authentically try to engage with them). (Frampton, 1990) Such difference between an active seeker and a quiet seeker can be found when we compare E, D, E, N, pavilion (fig. 61) and Scarpa’s work Brion Cemetery (1978) (fig. 62) for instance.



*Fig. 61 (left): Adapted from: Herzog & de Meuron, 1987. E, D, E, N, Pavilion. photographed by Hotel Eden, [Architecture]*

*Fig. 62 (right): Scarpa, C., 1969-78. Brion Cemetery, photographed by Nemeskeri, T., 2013 [Architecture]*

The second point is that the ambiguity allows us to bring to the fore the background of what makes us understand the ordinary as what they can ordinarily be in our everyday lived life. In other words, it is to make conspicuous what usually inconspicuously allows us to understand entities as ‘things’ in certain familiar ways in our everyday lived experience. For Heidegger, one of the most crucial background against which we can primarily understand entities as things is a totality of references, in which we can first and foremost understand, for instance, a hammer as a hammer to drive a nail, not a metal blob with wooden shank, because it is an item that belongs to “Equipment”, a vast constellation of our practices and roles that things play in our life and become meaningful to us in a certain way—for example, hammer refers to a nail, then this refers to what is it like to assemble furniture, and so forth. Insofar as we are deeply immersed into a totality of references, somehow taking in this background without us noticing so, we come to see the ordinary as what they ordinarily are, though, this inconspicuous structure can be brought to the fore by ambiguity and become conspicuous.

While the ambiguity let us bring up this background, this unveiled structure that lies behind the ordinary does not become conspicuous only for the sake of plane survey but for the sake of bricolage-like survey. What I meant by bricolage here is that in experiencing this ambiguity we come to assemble whatever the apprehensible references from the background—available pieces of this ‘craft’—for a haphazard ‘project’, that is to achieve a better way of understanding the situation as a whole without dismissing the presented ambiguity. For this bricolage-like survey, the ambiguous intelligibility can come to make sense in the most acceptable way in an improvising manner. In short, we become like bricoleurs by constructing a better view to understand the whole situation when the ambiguity allows us to bring to the fore the background of the ordinary.

The third point is that the ambiguity can re-configures our indifference to the undifferentiated modes of primary understanding of entities. Because ambiguity does not allow us understand entities in a fixed way due to its ambiguous meanings, and ambiguity also leads us to un-conceal what has been inconspicuously shaped our primary ways of understanding, we cannot help but encountering the very entities that emerged in an ambiguous manner, through concerning the entities in terms of their ways of being, thingness, rather than with imposing *a certain way of being of them*, which is concerning entities as beings, things. This means, in turn, we come to re-discover it, not from seeing it as what used to be always primarily intelligible in a certain familiar way without us noticing and questioning that view, but from seeing it explicitly through what it is like for us to disclose it as intelligible once by shedding light on their ways of being in some way. Thus, this reconfigures our indifference to the undifferentiated modes of understanding to the degree to which we shift from concerning entities as beings to concerning entities in terms of their ways of being—from things to thingness. In plain English, we come to experience the ordinary as the extraordinary because Being-in-the-world-oriented ambiguity can reconfigure how we encounter them.

Those three crucial points highlights the most essential characteristics of Being-in-the-world-oriented ambiguity, and all of them together come to form the remarkable influence on *our primarily undifferentiated ways of encountering architecture*, whereby we come to encounter the ordinary as the extraordinary. This experience—dis-closure of what seems the closest phenomenon to us from within itself—can be achieved neither by Subject/object-dichotomy-oriented ambiguity because it is grounded only in a cognitive way of understanding, nor by Cross-world-oriented ambiguity because it does not explicitly seduce us into traversing a totality of references. Nonetheless, insofar as those

three different kinds of ambiguity form a complementary whole to capture an overview of the possibility of the ambiguity in architecture, we may appreciate such unique significance of ambiguity.

*Being-in-the-world-oriented ambiguity* in architectural design is not just about the tension, mediation, or humour in architecture, but we must take account of its significance in terms of its possibility to illuminate much more profound issue that lies with our primary ways of understanding architecture: Primary ways we understand things is the *closest* to us as we familiarise ourselves with them in our undifferentiated everyday pattern of activity, yet the *farthest* to us as we tend to overlook what grounds our own everyday encounters by either objectifying or inconspicuously presupposing the world. At last, let us underline the significance of the world by citing Heidegger's passage:

This everyday way in which things have been interpreted is one into which Dasein has grown in the first instance, with never a possibility of extrication. In it, out of it, and against it, all genuine understanding, interpreting, and communicating, all re-discovering and appropriating anew, are performed. In no case is a Dasein, untouched and unseduced by this way in which things have been interpreted, set before the open country of a 'world-in-itself, so that it just beholds what it encounters. (Heidegger, 1962, p.213)

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