

# ENTRANCE

## IN SEARCH OF SPACE

In professional jargon, architects often refer to the *entrance* of a particular building. This is a direct allusion to, *inter alia*, the design and the way in which it influences the aesthetic sense-impressions with which a specific space is entered. In the corresponding space which will be entered in this study, the search for a relevant *theologia habitus* that has meaning for the future workplace will be mapped out. This quest for an appropriate presentation of a relevant *theologia habitus* for the future workplace will be informed from the vantage point(s) of an interdisciplinary dialogue between practical theology and futures studies, as formulated and guided on the basis of narrative (auto) biographical accents. In the entrance – which can be regarded as the foyer of the building to which the study pertains – it is thus important to articulate design accents in order to escort the reader towards an understanding *and* experience of the space(s) that is (are) delineated.

The entry into this design is guided by – and in – the use of metaphorical value and meaning. Fainsilber and Ortony (1987:240-241) aptly sum up the communicative value of metaphors by indicating that there are at least three communicative functions that a metaphor fulfils: Firstly, a metaphor formulates that which is difficult or impossible to put into words. Secondly, it embodies compact meaning; and thirdly, metaphors have the ability to record phenomenological experience and meaning. Atwood and Levine (1991:202) point out, *inter alia*, that in the creation of metaphors, it is necessary to make use of so-called “fresh metaphors” that

will wrench us to new awareness by opening our eyes to hidden likenesses or analogies. They lead us to notice what otherwise might not be noticed by drawing attention to a newly created and discovered system of relations.

In this study, the metaphor of *architecture* plays an important role. This can be expressed even more strongly by asserting that the research *itself* aims to become architecture. Not only is the tentative nature of the proposed design thereby accentuated, but emphasis is also placed on the creation of newly chartered spaces.

As an initial motivation for the use of the metaphor of architecture, I subscribe to the views of Lakoff and Johnston. In their well-known work, *Metaphors we live by* (1980), the authors accord recognition and expression to human existence, which, in essence, is metaphorical in nature, and which can also be interpreted thus:

... metaphor is not merely a matter of language. It is a matter of conceptual structure. And conceptual structure is not merely a matter of the intellect – it involves all the natural dimensions of our experience, including aspects of our sense experiences: colour, shape, texture, sound, etc. These dimensions structure not only mundane experience but aesthetic experience as well (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:235).

In the recognition and use of associative networks of meaning that are facilitated by metaphors (Müller & Maritz 1998:66), an *attribution of meaning* (Fourie 1991:64) occurs, with an a-theoretical understanding in which the greatest content of meaning is possible.

In the specific use of the metaphor of architecture, I see a possibility for the creation of space, understood in the broadest sense as a multidimensional activity within which a conceptual structure is created. Thus, Miles (2000:57) rightfully points out that “[t]he production of space is more than the building of walls.” In addition to the indication of the conceptual structure that is created by the use of metaphor, I will base the central role of the metaphor of architecture in research, in particular, on the foundation of the following seven levels:

Firstly, the metaphor of architecture offers a bridge to a professional space other than that which relates exclusively to theology. Thus, right from the outset, a clear interdisciplinary emphasis is present, with a particular focus on the new and future workplace, which will shortly be further considered and developed in the course of the research.

Secondly, the research has a strongly (auto)biographical emphasis, which is already clearly present in the title. The therapeutic significance and value of the metaphorical is thereby accentuated, amongst other factors. The act of recognising and expressing what is personal brings about a recognition of, and receptiveness to, the perspective of the renowned psychoanalyst, Carl Gustav Jung, who regarded a house comprised of several storeys as a symbol of the human psyche (Van Rensburg 2000:48). In the description thereof, the architecture of personality, *inter alia*, is postulated. In the pages of this research, and from an (auto)biographical perspective, I will accord pre-eminence to the interpretation, not only of the lives of others, but also of my own (Roberts 2002:172).

A third reason for the use of the metaphor of architecture is found in the work of Manuel Castells, a renowned contemporary philosopher in the field of macro-theory, who points out that architecture entails much, much more than conspicuous constructions of concrete, steel and glass, since it frequently happens that architecture indeed gives expression to the inexpressible:

... all over history, architecture has been the “failed act” of society, the mediated expression of the deeper tendencies of society, of those that

could not be openly declared but yet were strong enough to be cast in stone, in concrete, in steel, in glass, and in the visual perception of the human beings who were to dwell, deal, or worship in such forms (Castells 2000:448).

According to Castells, architecture is thus the representation of deeper accents that often cannot be put into words. In themselves, these deeper, inexpressible accents to which he refers, imply an anxiety, a limitation, a restriction of space. In the further acknowledgement that “practical theological enquiry is critical” (Swinton & Mowat 2006:6), the words on the pages of that which is documented also become descriptions of the experience of the limitation of possible restricted structures, in the broadest sense of the term. However, it is precisely in the act of setting foot in these spaces that the possibility arises for the creation of new space(s). In the spaces that are created within the pages, a connection is effectuated with those aspects of architectural science that presuppose place, design and the aesthetic, *inter alia*. Therefore – without lapsing into a laboured style, in which the meaning of the metaphor as a *leitmotiv* for the study becomes over-stretched – the strokes made by letters inscribed on paper are used in order to facilitate the creation of space(s).

It is precisely this above-mentioned factor that presents a fourth reason for the use of the metaphor of architecture. Inherent in the use of the concerned metaphor of an architectonic design, lie accents of a new and future reality. Even though this reality has not yet been formally construed, these accents already offer a plan, on paper, of what such a future reality might be like. In this regard, inspiration is found, albeit not exclusively, in the theological concept of eschatology (Louw 2008:434), which represents aspects of temporality and dimensions of hope, *inter alia* (Lester 1995:4). This emphasis on that which is in the future, is already accommodated in the title of the design, and is accentuated by the reference to the *future* workplace.

It is thus important to emphasise, from the outset, that this design is a *proposed* design, which implies, precisely, a *non-static, provisional, dynamic* character. In addition, it is thus also implied that this design is not intended to solve problems, so much as to map out perspectives for further reflection. In the study, and in pursuance of the interdisciplinary discourse already referred to earlier, this accent is represented, in particular, by the developing scientific field of futures studies. Futures studies are traditionally conducted within the space of the economic and management sciences, with the purpose of futures research being “to systematically explore, create, and test both possible and desirable futures to improve decisions”. Likewise, “futurists with foresight systems for the world can point out problems and opportunities to leaders around the world” (Glenn, Gordon & Florescu 2008:Foreword). Distinct accents of an experimental design are thus indeed present in the use of the

metaphor of architecture, confirming that “[u]nderstanding and communicating complex ideas calls for a new type of language” (Judge 2008:1). Precisely because of the nature of this research, and as an outcome of the meaning of the metaphor of architecture, I refer to the documentation thereof as a *design*, which implies a certain tentativeness in the character of the research.

A fifth reason for the use of the metaphor of architecture is found within the domain of meaning that arises from associated networks of meaning, as already mentioned earlier on. Indeed, a single word like *construction*, as Volf (1991:x) points out, evokes associations such as, *inter alia*, the erection of a building by means of the use of specific building material. However, in order to portray the fluidity of the construction that is to be effectuated by means of the research, the metaphor of architecture indeed offers a specific dynamics, on the basis of which another possible structure can be erected by another researcher, through the use of the same foundations. It would thus also not be strange if one were to visit the world of construction and associated domains of meaning through the development of the research.

A sixth reason for the use of the metaphor of architecture, which intrinsically implies a functional space, relates to the facilitation of the use of the concept “ordinary theology” (Astley 2002), with a distinct pragmatic accent, in which “[a]cademic theologians should be more curious about what ordinary believers have come up with” (Astley 2002:149). It is thus with good reason that, in the documentation of the research, through the pivotal use of the metaphor of architecture, *inter alia*, I have made it my endeavour to achieve an authoritative scientific description, on the one hand – but also a highly accessible one, on the other.

The seventh and final reason for the choice of the metaphor of architecture lies in the strategic character thereof. A proposed plan offers a specific strategy, with distinct pragmatic accentuations of functionality. The same strategic character traits of both practical theology and futures studies are thereby put into words and accommodated as “de analyse van de bestaande praxis en het bijdragen aan de ontwikkeling van een nieuwe praxis” (Ganzevoort 2006:159). In view of the extensiveness of human experience, however, I will exercise discretion regarding the need to restrict the nuancedness of this praxis exclusively to the proposed discourse between practical theology and futures studies. For example, perspectives from, in particular, pastoral care, as well as developments within psychology, such as positive psychology, could indeed further enrich the design with a view to interdisciplinary dialogue.

The selection and use of the metaphor of architecture, therefore, can indeed be related back to the design and construction of a space (or spaces) of meaning. The constructed space(s) of meaning, which – in keeping with the narratively informed (auto)biographical methodology – is (or are) often

presented in the research in the format of a first-person narrative (Roberts 2002:87), displays (or display) design-related accents that have a bearing on an own life that is highly personal and private, but which – precisely in the recognition thereof – also has general and public significance. It was the renowned author of spiritual works, Henri Nouwen, who said that what is most personal is also most general. These personal accents, in conjunction with the perspectives of various co-researchers participating in the concerned research, and also with the aid of a variety of perspectives from a number of recognised qualitative research methods, are further mapped out, with specific emphasis on the facilitation of the interdisciplinary dialogue between practical theology and futures studies, *inter alia*. Within the architectonic plan of the research, my voice, and the voices of my co-researchers, will be indicated by means of italics and an indented text format.

In order to give shape to these spaces of meaning, the distinctive relationship between theology and narrative, as interpreted on the basis of practical theology, *inter alia*, will be used as the primary medium. Regarding the nature of this relationship and its meaning for Christian identity and practice, Stroup (1981:85) makes the following significant observation:

Rather, it is something in between the first-order language of faith and the second-order reflection of systematic theology and serves as a bridge between them. Christian narratives – poems, short stories, novels, and autobiographies – would be primary resources for understanding and interpreting the more abstract, discursive arguments in Christian doctrine and systematic theology.

It stands to reason that this understanding and interpretation of the texts must occur through the medium of language, and that – as indicated in Stroup's observation cited above – a variety of genres are involved. It is precisely this factor that offers a motivation as to why the documentation of the research, along with the style thereof, expresses a sensitivity towards the "interconnection between (narrative) genres" (Roberts 2002:59) in which the use of the metaphor of architecture is linked to the fragments from the narratives of the co-researchers. Precisely by virtue hereof, expression is given to a postmodern hermeneutics, in which a new meaning of the whole is of importance, and which is also fundamental to the study.

In subscribing to the pivotal use of the metaphor of architecture, the research space is mapped out in such a way that specific architectonic movements of design and shaping become discernible therein. The study is mapped out on the basis of four movements that are closely related to the design of the so-called architectonic *gestalt* or figure, namely the movements of *terrain*; *path*; *threshold* and *destination* (Norberg-Schulz 2000:144). With, and within, each of these four movements, specific design accents are formulated. These four

movements, in turn, are ultimately related to three core perceptual categories, namely *background*, *centre* and *foreground*, against which the study is mapped out. This design is continually brought up during the course of the study, and becomes an important expression of a proposed method in order to facilitate an interdisciplinary dialogue.

During a visit to the world-renowned Opera House in Sydney, Australia, in 2009, I read – inscribed on a plaque on the outer wall of the edifice – the following words of the celebrated architect of this famous landmark, Jørn Utzon: “As time passes and needs change, it is natural to modify the building to suit the needs and technique of the day.” The research that is documented in the following pages links up with the metaphor of an architectonic design which, on the one hand, takes cognisance of existing needs, and on the other, aims to reflect the latest movement of practice and theory in addressing these needs – with a view to possible future developments in “performing the faith” (Swinton & Mowat 2006:4) – and in which expression is given to the dynamics of life, since “[l]ife is about change” (Astley 2002:21).