

# Landscape in architecture: A place between culture and civilization

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## Abstract

This paper evaluated two alternatives to rightfully conceive the relation between landscape and architecture: a historical reconstruction and some interpretations of philosophical sources, as. This evaluation was achieved by an identification of precedents in order to characterize the context of the problem; by a selection of representative examples for illustrating the type of difficulties that arise from historical reconstructions or from interpretations of philosophical sources; and by a proposal of some criteria to articulate both historical and theoretical sources, based in the analysis of the selected examples. As a conclusion of such evaluation, it was stated that by keeping in mind the distance between the philosophical sources and its interpretation, and by appreciating an architectural theory by its performance, rather than by its production of truths, it is possible, at least partially, to overcome the found difficulties. This conclusion invites to understand civilization as a project to contribute to a common heritage. In its turn, such understanding would help to reach a balance with interests tied to local cultures.

## Keywords

Architectural theory, Place-based thinking, Landscape theory.



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## 1. Introduction

This paper is about the usefulness of the concept of landscape in the realm of architecture. It is grounded on a research project on the concept of landscape in architectural composition's learning processes, developed by two architecture schools in Bogota, Colombia, during 2015.

In Latin America, some schools of architecture regard special relevance to landscape in the design studio. The school at Universidad de Talca is an example of this. Landscape "as an element linked to the spatial account of the architectural object" (Uribe Ortiz, 2013, p. 32) besides "[t]he material quality" and "the formal and constructive acknowledgment of rural typologies", is an element of the local status in the architectural oeuvres that the school of Talca looks for. In contrast with this interest in giving a local status to the architectural works, in other parts of the world, there is a tendency that rejects any place-based thinking, as Leach's "The Dark Side of the *Domus*" (1998) illustrates. It seems to reedit the former controversy between civilization and culture, registered in writings like Rapoport's *House Form and Culture* (1969) or Frampton's "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six points for an architecture of resistance" (1983).

In accordance with such contrast, there would be a problem for architectural theory that could be summarized in the question: How to rightfully conceive the relationship between landscape and architecture?

This paper contributes to solve the problem of how to rightfully conceive the relation between landscape and architecture with an evaluation of two alternative ways in which this relationship has been argued. The first alternative considered is a historical reconstruction, while the second one is an interpretation of philosophical sources. Such evaluation provides some criteria, useful to identify, select and articulate historical and theoretical sources.

In order to evaluate these historical and theoretical alternatives it was needed first to characterize the context in which a conception of the relation between the concepts of landscape and architecture is required, then to illus-

trate the type of difficulties the mentioned alternatives offer to a rightful conception of the relation between landscape and architecture, and finally to consider how to merge historical and theoretical approaches.

An identification of precedents, in which the necessity to conceive the relationship between the concepts of landscape and architecture was recognized, provided a characterization of its context. Moreover, some representative examples were selected to illustrate the type of difficulties that arise from historical reconstructions, or from interpretations of philosophical sources. Finally seeking to articulate both historical and theoretical sources, some criteria were developed based on the analysis of selected examples.

## 2. Methodology

Identifying precedents was useful to consider references to architectural theory and practice at the moment in which the concept of landscape was introduced to Western culture. Thus, some works from the Architecture and Landscape research programme of the Faculty of Architecture at the TU Delft were found. One of them, *Palladio, the Villa and the Landscape* (Smienk & Niemeijer, 2011) studies the writings and architectural works of this sixteenth-century's Italian architect, as an example of the moment mentioned above.

But the Palladian villas seem to belong to a context quite different from the metropolitan one, which predominates nowadays. For this reason, it was also invoked a precedent related to the starting point of the theoretical thinking about the relationship between metropolitan landscape and architecture. This precedent comes from Aureli's *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture* (2011). The fourth chapter of this book refers to the work of Étienne Louis Boullée, as an illustration of a response of a monumental architecture to this new, at his time, type of landscape.

Both of them refer to the precedents they consider as an implicit conception of the relationship between the concepts of landscape and architecture that they contributed to make explicit.

In this way, their research recognised an absence or, at least a silence, about the mentioned relationship in the theory of architecture.

Some examples of historical reconstructions were found at the aforementioned *Palladio, the Villa and the Landscape* (Smienk & Niemeijer, 2011). One of them is related to some assumptions that this type of attempt must accept. Another one is, to some extent, the speculative nature of the result of inquires like this, as a consequence of its assumptions, that led them towards uncertainty (Smienk & Niemeijer, 2011)

One of the selected examples of the difficulties in using philosophical sources comes from another attempt to fill an absence. It is Hunt's *Greater Perfections: The Practice of Garden Theory* (2000/1999) and the emptiness that it tries to fill is the absence of interest in a theoretical base for the practice of landscape architecture. The author went backwards in order to find the point of departure for the landscape architecture practice and theory. At this point, Hunt's inquiry follows a quite similar methodological approach as the one adopted by Smienk and Niemeijer.

However, he went even further looking for the philosophical sources behind its historical precedents. In this way, this example added other questions to those about the difficulties of a historical reconstruction. These questions, related to the use of philosophical sources are: "Are there some clues or limits for this use?" and "Are there forbidden sources? An affirmative answer to the second question was found in Leach's "The Dark Side of the *Domus*" (1998). The review of the sources also depicted an argument against Leach's answer, in *Heidegger's Topology. Being, Place, World* (2008) by Malpas.

In regard to the question about the limits for a fair use of sources, Hunt's book offered an opportunity to approach an answer, particularly around its interpretation of Cicero's *De natura deorum*, whereas Leach's article provided another case to consider how far must the loyalty to philosophical sources go, for the use he gave to Lyotard's "Domus and the Megalopolis" (1991/1988).

In accordance to the examples of difficulties found in the selected sources, the analysis of them suggested some questions: How to manage the speculative character of a historical reconstruction? Which criteria could be established in order to avoid an unfair use of philosophical sources? Does some merging of both help to conceive rightfully the relationship between landscape and architecture?

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. The tale of an absence

Looking for precedents, in which the necessity to conceive the relationship between the concepts of landscape and architecture had been recognized, implies to accept some assumptions. One of them is the historical character of the landscape concept and of some social practices connected with it. Accepting this, on the other hand, implies refusing that landscape is something like a natural place, and avoiding the temptation of assuming that landscape had already exist before mankind appeared in surface of the Earth. An existence of landscapes, previous to mankind, could be suggested by statements like this from Norberg-Schulz's *Genius Loci*:

From the beginning of the time man has recognized that nature consists of interrelated elements which express fundamental aspects of being. The landscape where he [the man] lives is not a mere flux of phenomena, it has structure and embodies meanings. These structures and meanings have given rise to mythologies (cosmogonies and cosmologies) which have formed the basis of dwelling. (Norberg-Schulz, 1980 [1979], p. 23)

From this point of view, the landscape is what would have moulded the culture, not the culture what would have produced the landscape<sup>1</sup>. Of course, there are some reasons to think like this, as well as for recognizing a sense in which landscape is a result of human action. Accepting the historical character of the landscape could be easier for people who live in a man-made landscape. It could be for this reason that precedents that recognize the necessity to conceive the relationship between the concepts of landscape and architecture, were found in Netherlander authors. The way in which

<sup>1</sup>Nowadays, it is possible to find authors that quoting Rappoport's *House Form and Culture* to stand: "Culture has always been an essential dimension in the life of man who has manifested in the production of his living" (Layachi, 2016, pág. 80)

some of these authors interpreted “the process of accessing, reclaiming and developing the land for the purposes of agrarian production” in the Veneto since 1556, as a re-creation of the landscape, seems to confirm this sensitivity to man-made landscapes (Smienk & Niemeijer, 2011, p. 18).

According Smienk and Niemeijer (2011), Palladio “[...] worked in a time when an interest in aesthetics and autonomous value of landscape was growing” (p. 10). They associate such interest in landscape with painting, saying that “[f]or the first time the land around the cities was being mapped extensively, and since the invention of perspective at the beginning of the fifteenth century, landscapes and vistas had become a theme in Italian painting” (Idem.). This reference to painting serves them to highlight the absence of an equivalent development in the architectural realm, in their words: “But until Palladio’s time the landscape had never been regarded as an object to be manipulated by architectonic means” (Idem.). They also show a difference between “[t]he large-scale land reclamation and development of the swampy delta of the Veneto between Vicenza, Padua and Venice” (Idem.) and an Italian fifteenth-century’s precedent “[t]he “eternal” Arcadian landscape of the Tuscan hills, as it extended, for example, beyond the rigidly ordered, terraced gardens of the Villa Medici, built by Michelozzo near Florence in 1455” (Idem.). In their opinion, this difference represents a challenge for the tradition, successfully faced by Palladio, who “[...] was confronted with the task of connecting his designs for villas with lands newly recovered through the efforts of hydraulic engineers, technicians and surveyors, if only for reason of efficiency” (Idem.).

Although successful, Palladio’s task of connecting his architectural works with the landscape, there would be a silence in his writings about the way to achieve it, which Smienk and Niemeijer (2011) try to fill by studying his villas in order to reveal their secret. As this reference to Villa Rotonda illustrates:

Then there is the way in which the Villa Rotonda, lying on the edge of a

hill ridge, dominates and directs the surrounding landscape. It is a silent witness, because while Palladio indeed mentions the panoramic view over the fields and farms all around, he is silent about the way in which he has joined the villa and the landscape. (Smienk & Niemeijer, 2011, p. 10)<sup>2</sup>

According to Smienk & Niemeijer, such domination and direction of the surrounding landscape was possible in a context of politics, economics, and military change. Political circumstances allowed the Venetian Republic to recover its former boundaries. In contrast with such a positive change in local politics, Venice lost its privileged position in the intercontinental trade because of some deep changes in the geopolitics conditions. Consequently its economy moved from trade to agricultural production. In a context like this, some members of the ruler class moved to the countryside, outside the safety of the city. In Venice, safety was not provided by a wall but by the lagoon: it was an impregnable city without walls. Thus, the sprawl of aristocratic residences in the *terraferma* is equivalent to an expansion outside the city walls. In this sense, the context of Palladio’s villas would be similar to the context that Aureli (2011) associates with the monumental architecture of Boullée, when he says:

With Louis XIV’s demolition of the city walls in 1670, the form of the city finally broke its ancient constraints. The bollwerk—the expansive system of fortifications that used to enclose cities within geometrically complex earthworks—became the boulevard, a broad system of circulation that acquired its scale precisely by incorporating the new “extra-city” space created by the removal of the city walls. Significantly, what had once limited and enclosed the city was now transformed into a system that expanded the city’s circulation and, by implication, produced the possibility of endless growth. The demolition of the fortifications was the most clear and aggressive manifestation of the way economic transactions and urban development were linked, ready to become the very form of the new urban expansion. With the removal of its walls, the city could no longer be conceived as an [159] autonomous entity placed within a territory from which it had been disconnected by its defen-

<sup>2</sup>Smienk and Niemeijer added to this: “He [Palladio] has even exploited the given situation here so well that he, and not Alexander Pope (a few centuries later), would appear to have invented the concept of *genius loci*” (Smienk & Niemeijer, 2011, pág. 10)

<sup>3</sup>The phrase *alteram naturam* could be read as a reference to the other that is not nature, as the Arendt’s idea of worldliness from *The Human Condition* (1998 [1958]): “Work in the activity which corresponds to the unnaturalness of human existence, which is not imbedded in, and whose mortality is not compensated by, the species’ ever-recurring life cycle. Work provides an “artificial” world of things, distinctly different from all natural surroundings. Within its borders each individual life is hosed, while this world itself is meant to outlast and transcended them all. The human condition of work is worldliness.” (Arendt, 1998 [1958], pág. 7)

sive system. The new metropolis now became the hub of the nation-state, where concentration and decentralization were simultaneously organized as part of the process of the circulation and distribution of people, resources, and commodities. (Aureli, 2011, pp. 158-159)

This association allows a connection between two ways of thinking about the relationship between landscape and architecture, separated by the industrial revolution, to characterize the context in which a conception of this relationship is required, as one of urban expansion. Such an urban expansion would urge to conceive the relationship between landscape and architecture.

<sup>4</sup>[...] on one occasion, when the topic of the immortal gods was made the subject of a very searching and thorough discussion at the house of my friend Gaius Cotta. It was the Latin Festival, and I had come at Cotta's express invitation to pay him a visit. I found him sitting in an alcove, engaged in debate with Gaius Velleius, a Member of the Senate, accounted by the Epicureans as their chief Roman adherent at the time. With them was Quintus Lucius Balbus, who was so accomplished a student of Stoicism as to rank with the leading Greek exponents of that system." (Cicero, 1967 [1933]/45 a. C., pág. 17 y 19)

<sup>5</sup>After saying: "I think that I have said enough to prove the existence of the gods and their nature" (Cicero, 1967 [1933]/45 a. C., pág. 193), at the end of the II Book's 28th chapter, Balbus' character begins next chapter declaring: "Next I have to show that the world is governed by divine providence." (Cicero, 1967 [1933]/45 a. C., pág. 195)

### 3.2. Getting back into landscape (Analysis of examples)

As it was mentioned above, Smienk and Niemeijer (2011) recognize some difficulties that are faced by any attempt to reconstruct a past event. Thus, about their "[...] attempt to reconstruct the multiple relationships between the villa buildings, the farmyard with its gardens, and wider surroundings" (p. 31) they noted how it "[...] is complicated by the fact that much has changed over the course of time" (Idem.). So, they claim: "Much has disappeared, changed in function, or is only present now in rudimentary form" (Idem.). Based in considerations like these, they conclude: "Any reconstruction of what was realised almost five hundred years ago will thus be in part speculative, and is therefore necessarily shrouded in uncertainty" (Idem.). They also recognize that they had to make some suppositions. For example, they assumed the existence of a remarkable consistency in Palladio's architectural work. This assumption allows them to deduce "[...] that he also applied the principles which were the basis of the ordering and architecture of the villa itself, with its component parts, to the relation with the surrounding land, to the extent that it was within his power." (Smienk & Niemeijer, 2011, p. 31). This past consideration, although it shares a methodological character, it is different from the others, in attention to its logical consequences. It is like the foundation of a building, if it fails, the whole building collapses. Although plausible,

without documents, it is almost impossible to demonstrate that Palladio applied the same principles to the villa and to the surrounding land. Problems like these might justify the use of philosophical sources in the realm of architectural theory.

If Smienk and Niemeijer went back to Palladio to find the start point of the relationship between landscape and architecture, Hunt in *Greater Perfections: The Practice of Garden Theory* (2000/1999) went back to the origin of the reflection on landscape architecture, in the writings of two authors of the mid-sixteenth century: Bartolomeo Taegio and Jacopo Bonfadio. But Hunt, unlike Smienk and Niemeijer, went back one more step, towards their philosophical sources. Hunt notes, in the preface of this book that "[...] members from the profession of landscape architects [...] are not likely interested or impressed by conceptual essays on the making of gardens [...]" (p. xi), and also that "[l]andscape architecture is uncertain of its way and at the same time profoundly skeptical of intellectual demands upon it." (Idem.). To help overcome these shortcomings, the work in reference proposes a "[...] deep scrutiny and understanding of the practice from within" (Idem.) that assumes the theory, not as the opposite of practice, but as "[...] the far oldest idea of theory as contemplation [...]" (Idem.). Such deep scrutiny takes him back to the philosophical sources of Taegio and Bonfadio, to Cicero's treatise *De natura deorum* (1967 [1933]/45 a. C.):

For in the gardens ... the industry of the local people has been such that nature incorporated with art is made an artificer and naturally equal with art, and from them both together is made a third nature, which I would not know how to name. [Bonfadio quoted by Hunt] This is, I believe, along with a virtually identical formulation by Bartolomeo Taegio quoted as an epigraph to this chapter [L'industria d'un accorto giardiniere, che incorporando l'arte con la natura fa che d'amenude ne riesce una terza natura.], a hugely important passage. Though Bonfadio's final remark seems casual and the phrase *terza natura* is apparently thrown out without much thought, I doubt whether anything in this epistle is unstudied, in particular,

“third nature” is emphatically neologistic. After he has cited so many classical authorities, it is at the very least an oddity to hear Bonfadio claiming to be baffled or nonplussed. In fact, it is very doubtful that he is foundering on his own: he alludes –I believe– to remark of Roman writer Cicero in the treatise *De natura deorum*, a well-known classical text that circulated in at least a dozen manuscripts and had already been printed four times in the year leading up to these two occasions in which the phrase *terza natura* was coined by Bonfadio and later by Taegio. (Hunt, *Greater Perfections: The Practice of Garden Theory*, 2000/1999, p. 33).

The Cicero’s fragment quoted by Hunt says: “[...] *nos campis nos montibus fruimur, nostri sunt amnes nostri lacus, nos fruges serimus nos arbores, nos aquarum indictionibus terris fecunditatem demus, nos flumina arcemus derigimus avertimus, nostris denique manibus in rerum natura quasi alteram naturam efficere conamur.*” (Cicero, 1967 [1933]/45 a. C., p. 270). Its standard translation into English is:

We enjoy the fruits of the plains and of the mountains, the rivers and the lakes are ours, we sow corn, we plant trees, we fertilize the soil by irrigation, we confine the rivers and straighten or divert their courses. In fine, by means of our hands we essay to create as it were a second world within the world of nature. (Cicero, 1967 [1933]/45 a. C., p. 271)

Although, Hunt presents his own translation of Cicero’s passage:

Cicero, in describing landscape, writes of what he calls a second nature: “We sow corn, we plant trees, we fertilize the soil by irrigation, we dam the rivers and direct them where we want. In short, by mean of our hands we try to create as it were a second nature within natural world. (Hunt, 2000/1999, p. 33)

On the basis of its reading, he supports the existence of such as a “second nature” that would explain the expression *terza natura* found in Taegio and Bonfadio’s quotations. Thus, he associates his “second nature” to the cultural landscape, saying: “This second nature is what today we would call the cultural landscape: agriculture, urban developments, roads, bridges, ports, and other infrastructures.” (Idem.). The main and the weakest point of Hunt’s argument is the equivalence between *alteram naturam* and “second nature”, in his words:

“Cicero uses the phrase *alteram naturam*, an alternative nature, or a second of two” (Idem.)<sup>3</sup>. From this “second nature”, he attributes to Cicero the statement of the existence of a first one: “[...] his etymology therefore implies that there is also a first nature” (Idem.). If the second nature corresponds to the cultural landscape, the first one would be something like a natural landscape:

This is “the natural word” to which he refers at the end of the passage quoted above and “within” which his second is created; for the Cicero of *De natura deorum* this primal [34] nature is both the raw materials of human industry and the territory of the gods. (Hunt, *Greater Perfections: The Practice of Garden Theory*, 2000/1999, pp. 33-34)

The reference to the title of Cicero’s work, *De natura deorum*, would prompt the question: What is the role of existence of two natures in an argument on the nature of the gods? An attempt to answer this question would maybe note that the quoted text was written as a dialog, in which three points of view are represented, each one by a different character. The three points of view correspond to the epicurean, the stoic, and the academic, whose associated characters are called Velleius (the epicurean), Balbus (the stoic), and Cotta (the academic)<sup>4</sup>. Indeed, the passage quoted by Hunt corresponds to Balbus’s character, who depicts the theological doctrine of stoics. One of the main aspects of this stoic theological doctrine is divine providence<sup>5</sup>. This doctrine is the context in which appears the reference to a “*quasi alteram naturam*”, a doctrine that is refuted by Cotta’s character, who sets forth the arguments of the academics.<sup>6</sup> So, Cicero himself would have refuted the argument partially quoted by Hunt. Nevertheless, this British author acts as if his interpretation were self-evident, forgetting any distance between it and the original text. Such is the case in *The Venetian City Garden. Place, Topology, and Perception* (2009) where he refers to “[...] what Cicero had named second nature (*ateram naturam*) in his treatise *De natura deorum* [...]” (p. 46)

Despite the way in which Hunt remarks Cicero’s authorship of the phrase “second nature, in a note [9 to Chapter 3] he declares the ownership

<sup>6</sup>An example of how Cotta’s character refutes the stoic divine providence doctrine is: “[...] similarly, if men abuse the faculty of reason, bestowed on them with a good intention by the immortal gods, by employing it to cheat and wrong their fellows, it would have been better for it not to be bestowed upon the human race than to be bestowed. Just as, supposing a doctor to know that a patient for whom he prescribes wine will be certain to drink it with too little water and will die on the spot, that doctor would be greatly to blame, so your Stoic providence is to be censured for bestowing reason upon those whom it knew to be going to use [363] it wrongly and evilly. Unless perhaps you say that providence did not know. I only wish you would! but you will not dare to, for I am well aware how highly you esteem its name.” (Cicero, 1967 [1933]/45 a. C., pág. 363 y 365)

<sup>7</sup>“Balbus the Stoic is speaking here, but Cicero has revealed elsewhere his appraisal of the power of men to change the earth about them.” (Glacken, 1967, pág. 145)

<sup>8</sup>“In short, what advantage and convenience could have been realized from the brute creation, had not men assisted? Men, undoubtedly were the first who discovered what useful results we might realize from every animal; nor could we even at this time either feed, tame, preserve, or drive from them advantages suited to the occasion, without the help of man. And it is by the same that such as are hurtful are destroyed and such as may be useful are taken. Why should I enumerate the variety of arts without which life could by no means be sustained? [Cic., *De officiis*, II, 4.]” (Glacken, 1967, pág. 145) After this quotation Glacken adds: “With Cicero surely it was not a matter of philosophy alone; it must also have been the observation of past and present Roman technical achievements: mining, commerce, trade, the Cloaca Maxima, the land surveys, and the roads were evidences that the power of man was not only great but of a different order than that of any other kind of life,” (Glacken, 1967, pág. 146)

of the translation and mentions “[a]n introduction to Cicero’s book as a whole [...]”, as well as, “[...] a commentary on this crucial passage [...]” at Glacken (1967). This commentary refers to a quotation of the mentioned passage taken from the standard translation into English, and recognizes the dialogical style of Cicero’s writing<sup>7</sup>. The commentary also alludes to other writings by the Roman author (*De officiis*) whose interpretation brings him closer to the Arendt’s concept of “worldliness<sup>8</sup> that allows him to summarize the antique thinking on nature as: “If the earth was divinely ordered for life, man’s mission on earth is to improve it.” (Glacken, 1967, p. 148)<sup>9</sup>. This passage by Glacken could have inspired Hunt’s title *Greater Perfections*, as well as, “Creating a Second Nature”, his title for the third chapter of the part one, which could be an inspiration to Hunt’s translation of the Cicero’s fragment.

The way in which Hunt interprets Cicero’s quoted passage arises a question about the rightful use of philosophical sources. But, what can one find in philosophical sources? An answer from the historical moment in which Taegio and Bonfadio wrote would be: “The ancients’ authority”, as it is suggested by Hunt’s commentary on how Bonfadio “cited so many classical authorities” (Hunt, *Greater Perfections: The Practice of Garden Theory*, 2000/1999, p. 33)<sup>10</sup>. However, does Cicero’s authority make for a better architectural landscape theory nowadays? Or is its strength what should be appreciated in this type of theory? The second alternative is what Cicero himself chooses at the beginning of *De natura deorum* (1967 [1933]/45 a. C.)<sup>11</sup>

### 3.3. Forbidden sources

An answer to a positive question about the sources that must be used to support an architectural theory is to invoke the ancients’ authority. But, it is also possible to ask the opposite question: which are the forbidden sources? An example of an answer to this negative question could be found in Leach’s “The Dark side of the *Domus*”, who argues:

Within recent architectural theory architecture as ‘dwelling’ has become

something of a dominant paradigm amid calls for a regionalist architecture and celebration of the concept of *genius loci*. This is an approach which emanates from the work of the German philosopher, Martin Heidegger, and which has been pursued by those who have developed his thought — architectural theorists such as Christian Norberg-Schulz and philosophers such as Gianni Vattimo. Many have looked to an architecture of ‘dwelling’ as a means of combatting the alienation of contemporary society and of resisting the homogenising placelessness of International Style architecture. What I wish to argue, however, is that taken to an extreme ‘dwelling’ itself — the logic of the *domus* — can have negative consequences. There is, I would maintain, a negative side to ‘dwelling’ — a dark side to the *domus*. (Leach, 1998)<sup>12</sup>.

According to this argument, Heidegger would be a forbidden source. For Leach, there are two types of reasons that make this architecture of dwelling suspicious. One of them is a historical and personal reason, which corresponds to Heidegger’s political background. After recognizing that “It would be wrong to associate Heidegger’s thought too closely with the excesses of fascist ideology” (Leach, 1998), Leach adds:

But equally, the point should be made that his work lends itself to a nationalistic outlook, and that his own life was inscribed within a nationalistic outlook. Thus it hardly seems inconsistent that a philosopher such as Heidegger should have belonged at one stage to the National Socialist party, a stand for which he has been highly criticised (Idem.)

In this respect, Jeff Malpas in his book *Heidegger’s Topology : Being, Place, World* (2008) has noted that “Indeed, Heidegger’s Nazi association, coupled with the evident centrality of place and associated notions in his thinking [...], seems often to be taken as providing a self-evident demonstration of the politically reactionary and dangerous character of place-based thinking.” (Malpas, 2008, p. 18). For this Australian author, this is a mistake, because of “[...] the strategy that appears in Harvey, Massey and Leach seems to be one that attempts to discredit ideas explicit in the later thinking largely in the basis of the political

engagement apparently present in the earlier.” (Malpas, 2008, p. 20)

The other reason is more philosophical and was brought out from Lyotard’s “Domus and the Megalopolis”. In this piece, as it is read by Leach, the French author “[...] contrasts the traditional domus with our present condition, that of the megalopolis. In other words he is contrasting two models of existence, two ideals of living.” (Leach, 1998). This description is followed by an interpretation, in which the mentioned contraposition between *domus* and megalopolis is brought up as an argument against what Malpas calls “place-based thinking”<sup>13</sup>, in the following terms:

For Lyotard there can be no more domus; the megalopolis has now stifled the domus, and has ‘gnawed away’ at the domus and its community. With the advent of the megalopolis the traditional values of the domus have been transformed, and the hegemony of the natural order has been supplanted by the artificial [For Lyotard what takes over from the ‘control’ of the domus in the megalopolis is a form of techno-science which offers a new form of control, one that is no longer territorialised and historicised, but computerized.] (Leach, 1998).

As much because of its political background, as because of its lack of actuality, such a “place-based thinking” would be an unacceptable source to support an architectural theory nowadays. Nevertheless, both formal and substantive objections could be opposed against these two reasons.

From a formal point of view, Leach reading contrasts with some statements from Lyotard’s text such as the one that says “[...] at any rate, it is only for the last of men, to the nihilist, that the disaster of the domus and the rise of the megalopolis to the stars can procure an (evil) delight” (Lyotard, “Domus and the Megalopolis”, 1991/1988, p. 198). Moreover, the way in which Leach refers to Lyotard’s text does not seem to notice the ironic style within the paragraph from which he extracts the quote “The control is no longer territorialized or historicized. It is computerized.” (Lyotard, “Domus and the Megalopolis”, 1991/1988, p. 199), where a parody of a sci-fi tale is almost given.

A substantive objection against Leach’s argument is found in Maplas’ *Heidegger’s topology. Being, Place, World* (2008)<sup>14</sup>. Malpas synthesizes Leach’s argument as “[...] place-based thinking is out of kilter with the character of the contemporary world—in Leach’s case with the impact of technology and globalization” (Malpas, 2008, pp. 324-325) His response to the radical statement, according to which “[...] place no longer has any significance” (Malpas, 2008, pp. 292-293) invites to consider “[...] that, in as much as all revelling is bound to place, so the particular mode of revelling that occurs in technology must also be so bound. What technology does, however, is to hide its own character as a mode of revelling, and, in so doing, it hides its own place-bound character while also transforming and, indeed, obscure place as such.” (Malpas, 2008, pp. 292-293)

The selected examples illustrated the type of difficulties that arise from a historical reconstruction or from interpretations of philosophical sources. In the first case, the found difficulties were related to speculation and uncertainty of their results, whereas in the second, the sense given to their use and loyalty to them, were difficulties shown by the examples. On the basis of an analysis of the selected examples it is possible to state some criteria to articulate both historical and theoretical sources. The problem of the lack of loyalty to the philosophical sources could be solved by keeping in mind the distance between the sources and their interpretation. On the other hand, a criterion to avoid, as much as possible, the speculative character and the uncertainty could be to appreciate a theory by its performance in order to enrich the study of the works of architecture, rather than by its production of truths.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1. A price for overcoming the objections

It could be asked if historians would find acceptable to appreciate theory by its performance to enrich the study of architectural works, seeking to overcome the speculation and uncertainty

<sup>9</sup>“In antiquity, Panaetius, Posidonius, Cicero, and the Hermetical writers came closed to giving philosophical significance to the environmental change made by man. If the earth was divinely ordered for life, man’s mission on earth is to improve it.” (Glacken, 1967, pág. 148)

<sup>10</sup>Palladio also explicitly supports his *Four Books of Architecture* (1570) in Vitruvius’ treatise, as he declare in the first paragraph: “I proposed to myself Vitruvius for my master and guide, who is the only antient writer of this art, and myself to search into the reliques of all the antient edifices, that, in spite of time and the cruelty of the Barbarians, yet remain [...]” (Palladio, 1965 [1738] /1570, pág. 5)

<sup>11</sup>"In fact I am not disposed to approve the practice traditionally ascribed to the Pythagoreans, who, when questioned as to the grounds of any assertion that they advanced in debate, are said to have been accustomed to reply "He himself said so", "he himself" being Pythagoras. So potent was an opinion already decided, making authority prevail unsupported by reason." (Cicero, 1967 [1933]/45 a. C., pág. 13)

<sup>12</sup>In a note, after mentioning Norberg-Schulz and Vattimo, Leach indicates: "Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, London: Academy Editions, 1980; Gianni Vattimo, *The End of Modernity, The End of The Project?*, trans. David Webb, *Journal of Philosophy and the Visual Arts*, Academy Editions, pp.74-7.

<sup>13</sup>In respect of Leach's text Malpas argues "[...] Leach [...] seem to argue that place-based thinking is out of kilter with the character of the contemporary world [...] with the impact of technology and globalization. I would argue [...] that such a claim rest in a misunderstanding concerning the nature of place and the contemporary world." (Malpas, 2008, págs. 324-325).

that often arises from historical reconstructions. Maybe they would not. Such a negative answer suggests that this criterion provides more of a rethinking of the problem than its actual solution. In the case of the criterion of keeping in mind the distance between the philosophical sources and their interpretation, it is possible to advance some difficulties to classify and situate a source in relation to others.

#### 4.2. Comparing apples and oranges?

Some differences between the origins of the mentioned sources could be noted within the main realms of architecture and philosophy. For instance, the philosophical sources include one from the Antiquity (Cicero, 45 a. C.) and other from the present century (Malpas, 2008). The variety within the architectonic sources is wider. It includes a classical one from Renaissance (Palladio, 1570), three contemporary works in architectural theory, without any explicit connection between them (Aureli, 2011, Smienk & Niemeijer, 2011, and Leach, 1998), and another one, also contemporary, but coming specifically from the realm of landscape architecture (Hunt, 1999, 2009). In this respect, it could be said that their analysis have shown or constructed communicating vessels between them: Smienk & Niemeijer (2011), as belonging to the specific realm from which the interest in connecting architecture and landscape comes, provided something like a conductive thread. Aureli (2011) represents a metropolitan counterpart to the latter, while Hunt (1999) is an example of going a step back, from some historical point of departure towards its philosophical origins. In its turn, Cicero (45 a. C.) appeared as an important source for Hunt (1999, 2009). If Hunt's quotation of Cicero suggested an argument of authority, as an example of a positive way for selecting philosophical sources, Leach (1998) represented a negative one. In what concerns to Malpas (2008), it made an explicit criticism to Leach.

#### 5. Conclusions

Palladio placed some architectural solutions to local problems in the

context of a civilization project. In this context, his contributions became useful in other times and places, as Smienk & Niemeijer illustrates. If he had reproduced the *castellum*, as a solution for the landowners' residence, perhaps his work would never have helped others to overcome architectural difficulties in different contexts. This observation invites to understand civilization as a project to contribute to a common heritage that helps to reach a balance with an interest in a "local status". From such understanding, the concept of landscape could be a link between culture and civilization, whose means would be the proposed criteria: appreciating a theory by its performance in order to enrich the study of the works of architecture and keeping in mind the distance between the philosophical sources and their interpretation.

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<sup>14</sup>Malpas says: "More recently [than David Harvey's *The Condition of Post-Modernity* (1989) and Doreen Massey's "Power-Geometry and Progressive Sense of Place" (1993)], and from within an architectural frame, the architectural theorist Neil Leach argues against Heideggerian idea of "dwelling" (closely associated in the later thinking with notions of place) and associated notions, on grounds that echo that the criticism found on Harvey and Massey." (Malpas, 2008, pág. 19)