JOURNAL OF THE NUS TEACHING ACADEMY VOLUME 3 ■ NUMBER 3 ■ AUGUST 2013

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Teaching ethics in architecture: contexts, issues and strategies

Jeffrey CHAN Kok Hui[1]

[1] Assistant Professor
Department of Architecture, School of Design and Environment
National University of Singapore

Address for Correspondence: Dr Jeffrey Chan Kok Hui, Department of Architecture, School of Design and Environment, National University of Singapore, 4 Architecture Drive, Singapore 117566.
E-mail: akickhj@nus.edu.sg

Recommended citation:
Chan, J. K. H. (2013). Teaching ethics in architecture: contexts, issues and strategies. *Journal of the NUS Teaching Academy, 3*(3), 85-99.
https://doi.org/10.24112/ajsotl.33063

Teaching ethics in architecture: contexts, issues and strategies

Abstract

An exposition on teaching ethics in architecture is long overdue. While all research on ethics in architecture agrees to its importance, none has ventured further to consider how to teach ethics in architecture. It is presumed that ethics is either transmitted tacitly in the architectural design studio, or introduced within a seminar on professional practice. But neither option is adequate if the goal of teaching ethics in architecture is the capacity for heightened ethical awareness, sound moral reasoning and keen judgment. What then, is the recourse for the educator interested in developing this capacity in the student? In this paper, I suggest that the context where ethics in architecture is taught is just as important as how to teach it. Subsequently, I suggest four pedagogical strategies for teaching ethics in architecture. This paper should appeal to every educator in higher education, especially to educators teaching architecture, urban design and planning.

INTRODUCTION: ETHICS IN THE MODERN UNIVERSITY?

> "*Can you tell me, Socrates – can virtue be taught? Of if not, does it come by practice? Or does it come neither by practice nor by teaching, but do people get it by nature, or in some other way?*"
>
> Meno

How to teach and to acquire virtues remains an important question for higher education today. But today, it is presumed that the task of teaching ethics and the acquisition of virtues rest primarily with the institution of the family and religion, and not with the institution of higher learning. The primary mission of the modern (research) university lies in the development of specialised, technical and scholarly competence rather than moral development (Wilshire, 1990; Fish, 2003). And while there are universities that have integrated ethics into the general curriculum, the debate on the exact role and extent of ethics in higher education – even within the professional schools – remains a contested topic (Kiss & Euben, 2010a).

At the same time, social diversity and value pluralism today further reinforce moral relativism: that insofar as moral questions are concerned, there are many

answers relative to the time and place (Lukes, 2008, p. 18) – and they are all "correct". While moral relativism may be interpreted as an indicator of ethical maturity (Kiss & Euben, 2010a, p. 10), in the university moral relativism may just as likely consolidate the belief that there is no teacher who is sufficiently authoritative to teach ethics. This belief, coupled with the fact that not every educator interested to teach ethics in the professional schools has specialised training in moral philosophy, renders the prospects of teaching ethics very dim indeed – despite growing interests in higher education to embrace some kind of moral education today (Berube & Berube, 2010).

Even so, the university is ceding precious strategic ground by its tentativeness towards ethics. After all, the university occupies a pivotal position in educating and grooming tomorrow's future leaders: managers, scientists, policy-makers and professionals all will pass through the university. Inadvertently, the university also occupies the last frontier where moral development for these future leaders could be made through the formal process of learning (Bok, 1976, p. 26).

As future leaders, it is vital that our students have the ability – and also the willingness – to advise others who would come to them for counsel, and at the same time, to judge competing claims brought before them in a judicious manner (Selat, 2010, p. 39-40). Furthermore, ethics is also an advanced form of critical thinking, as Immanuel Kant reminds us in this enduring question – "what ought I do?" It is thinking that enables the student to reason and further, to act responsibly beyond known and internalised rules against the threat of paralysis or the corruption of recklessness. And in this process, the student attains his or her status as an autonomous moral agent (Frankena, 1973, p. 4). Without mastering this advanced form of critical thinking through ethics, the student's education in critical and independent thinking remains incomplete at best.

The student engaged in professional studies is likely to face an additional challenge without ethics. This student, who will go on to accept various professional and leadership roles, would eventually discover that traditional morality or norms provide little guidance on many issues and problems in the workplace (Gardner, 2012). In the professions, these issues and problems are likely to emerge from the unintentional and long-range consequences of applying new technologies to human problems (Jonas, 1984; Verbeek, 2011), or from the conflict of values in the globalised workplace (Lukes, 2008), or the many unforeseeable dilemmas and quandaries encountered in professional practice (Spector, 2001; Salomon, 2012) – all for which no traditional moralities or code of ethics could be counted on for substantive guidance.

Therefore, this gap between the need for ethics today and the university's tentativeness for ethics is very great indeed. But in no place is this gap more

salient than in schools of architecture, where "interest [for ethics and architecture] exists, but there is neither clarity nor consensus on the subject, either within or beyond the practices of architecture and urban design or moral philosophy" (Bess, 1996, p. 373). This gap is rendered even more perplexing when one considers – by a landmark study commissioned by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching on architecture education – that slightly less than half of all students surveyed who have elected to study architecture did so not because of money or prestige, but because they wanted to improve the quality of life in their community and the built environment (Boyer & Mitgang, 1996, p. 7). Yet to these students who come into our schools eager to do good work (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi & Damon, 2001), we have comparatively little to offer from an ethical perspective.

In this paper, I suggest – along with Bok (1976), Boyer and Mitgang (1996), and more recently Hoekema (2010) – that there are students in our universities who are both interested and disposed to act morally, but they do not know how, and would benefit from some degree of deliberate and discursive moral education. I will first describe how ethics is being taught today in the architecture school. I will then argue why the current strategies and venues for teaching ethics in architecture are inadequate. Subsequently, I suggest an opportune venue where ethics can be taught and also strategies for teaching ethics in architecture. Finally, I conclude by grounding ethics in the larger system of contemporary world events today.

ETHICS IN SCHOOLS OF ARCHITECTURE: THE DESIGN STUDIO OR THE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE SEMINAR?

In schools of architecture today, ethical knowledge is either tacitly transmitted through the design studio or more explicitly, through the introduction of the professional codes of conduct within a seminar on professional practice usually required before graduation.[1]

The design studio has long served as an ideal venue for imparting virtue (Fisher, 2012). According to Dana Cuff, the studio is the *sine qua non* of design education

1 Here, it is important to note that there are other venues where ethics may be taught, for example in architectural theory classes and the community service studio. Consider the former: I co-teach AR5221 Contemporary Theories in Architecture at the National University of Singapore, where out of the eleven topical issues covered in this course, one is architectural ethics. Then there are specialised elective classes on ethics in architecture, for example, taught by Professor Graham Owen of Tulane University (Owen, 2009). And then there are community service studios, where students go to underserved communities to help design and build (for example, see Hyde, 2012, p. 84). But these examples suffer from the limitation that each is an exception rather than the norm. For this reason, I have only focused on the design studio and the professional practice seminar for teaching ethics, which are standard staples in any architectural curriculum in the world today.

(Cuff, 1991, p. 43-44). In the design studio, a professor (or studio-master) – who can also be a professional practitioner – directs a dozen students on developing a solution to a design problem carried out over the entire semester. In this design studio, the student usually meets with the professor at least twice a week in a one-to-one session where the student presents his or her progress and also shares the problems encountered in this design process.

Although Fisher did not specify why the design studio is an ideal venue for imparting virtue – hence presumably, also ethical knowledge – it is however not difficult to understand the reasons behind his choice. First, although not all ethical issues can be solved by design, arguably many can be resolved along with the student's emerging design solution (Lagueux, 2004). In other words, in the process of learning how to solve design problems, the student also learns how to resolve ethical issues that are raised by design. Consider an example where the value of fairness (i.e., non-discriminatory) should be factored into the design of a civic building: the student may then rely on a symmetrical design to his or her building such that the spatial concept of symmetry also coincides with the ethical concept of equity (Scarry, 1999, p. 93). Second, because of the extended amount of time spent in the design studio, the student becomes acculturated to the norms and standards of what is deemed as good and acceptable design by the design community, made up of his or her professor(s) and peers (Stevens, 1998). This inherited *ethos* then become part of the student's own ethical repertoire from which the student could draw to evaluate design solutions.

But even if there are merits to this manner of transmitting rather than teaching ethics, these merits remain tacit and uncertain at best for developing ethical knowledge. Consider the seminal studies of Donald Schön on design studio teaching (Schön, 1983, p. 76-104). In his studies, Schön discovered that as the learning experience between the professor and the student in the design process deepens (i.e., that the student understands the professor's direction better, and vice versa), their dialogue tends to become "elliptical and inscrutable to outsiders" (Schön, 1983, p. 81). In other words, design learning has a tendency to become increasingly closed and obscured, rather than open and communicable, the deeper the professor and the student delved into the design process.

While Schön did not go on to analyse the ethical implications of this pedagogical process, he suggests however that the communication that occurs between the professor and the student during the design studio is problematic in several ways (Schön, 1987, p. 96-99). For example, the lesson that the professor conveys in design is usually rich and packed with different meanings, but some of these meanings cannot be made explicit (Schön, 1987, p. 96). It is therefore clear that even if some ethical concerns were communicated with design suggestions

this way, these concerns are ineluctably tacit or worse, these ethical concerns have little chance of being openly scrutinised and debated by the community of learners in the design studio. In this context, the least desirable aspect of ethical education as indoctrination (Kiss & Euben, 2010b, p. 62-63) thereby becomes its most plausible prospect. And, conversely, because ethics – if any – becomes so intertwined with the emerging design solution, the student is unlikely to understand the implications for ethics when the design solution has to be modified due to other concerns.

This is not to suggest that the design studio is an ill-suited venue to teach ethics. On the contrary, the design studio is a robust venue for teaching ethics because it is there where students inevitably interface with ethical considerations on a first-hand basis through the design process. This analysis only goes to show that if there is any ethical instruction here at all, ethics is only at best tacit and inscrutable, and will benefit from being more explicit, focused and openly discussed with other learners present in the design studio.

If these are the limitations of the design studio in teaching ethics, then what about the seminars on professional practice? In schools of architecture, lectures on ethics are common in professional practice seminars (Fisher, 2012, p. 313). But here, it is important to make a distinction between lectures introducing the professional codes of conduct, and lectures instructing ethical reasoning: lectures introducing the professional codes of conduct are likely to comprise of only a familiarising lesson on the professional codes of conduct, while lectures instructing ethical reasoning are likely to rely on an issue-based approach for training moral reasoning. Using Ryle's dichotomy, at the risk of some simplification, if the former is the declarative knowledge of "knowing-that", then the latter is a procedural knowledge of "knowing-how" (Ryle, 1949, p. 27-32). It is the rare professional practice seminar that can move from "knowing-that" towards "knowing-how" as moral reasoning for architecture.

However for most professional practice seminars, there is an overwhelming consensus suggesting that just learning the declarative form of the professional codes of conduct is insufficient to address the complex ethical demands of practice (Cobb, 1992; Boyer & Mitgang, 1996; Fisher, 2000; Spector, 2001; Saint, 2005; Fox, 2009; Fisher, 2010; Till, 2009).

First, while the professional codes of conduct may address the business, fiduciary and liability functions of the architectural practice, they however do not address the ethical issues of architecture that arise out of design considerations (Fisher, 2000, p. 172): for example, is there a code that guides the architect on the beauty (or ugliness) of architecture? Clearly not, if one is to survey the growing stock of aesthetically challenged buildings in the world! To design an aesthetically

fitting building remains the domain of ethics (Fox, 2009).

Second, codes only apply if, and when, a decision has been made to design and build a work of architecture. However, one of the perennial ethical dilemmas for the architect is: should a building be built in the first place (Goodman, 1971, p. 96; Somerville, 1994, p. 70-71; Fisher, 2010, p. 39)?[2]

Third, even if codes were to apply, they cannot substitute for the architect's ethical judgment of prioritising values. After all, the architect is hired because he or she alone has the overview and capacity to make difficult choices among competing constituencies – the clients, the building's users, the neighbours and the general public, as well as "voiceless others" that include the poor and marginalised, as well as the environment, both natural and man-made – all of which will make different claims on this architect's sense of duty (Cobb, 1992). Which of these constituencies should the architect prioritise and which should the architect de-prioritise, and at whose expense? And how justifiable is the architect's decision? These important questions are not ones that can be answered by appealing to the professional codes of conduct or to the technical expertise of the architect, but to ethics alone.

And finally, the architect has other social and aesthetical responsibilities that are not addressed by the professional codes of conduct (Crawford, 1991; Saint, 2005, p. 8; Till, 2009, p. 182). Should an architect design a "super-brothel" to increase tourism and vibe for the city (Day, 2012)? Is not the brothel first an exploitative space, and second, a place degrading human dignity for the sake of carnality – and much more now packaged in a "super" form? The professional codes of conduct is silent; and in the case accounted by Day, the clients, fellow professionals, and the public are even happy and permissive. But what is legal may not be right; and further, what about the social and aesthetical implications of this design, which despite all permissiveness and commercial promise, now represents the concrete institutionalisation of prostitution?[3] Hence to address all of these issues and questions raised by architecture, the architect must also be capable of moral reasoning.

From this analysis, it is clear that the professional codes of conduct remain necessary and legitimate but insufficient. Importantly, knowing the professional

2 It may be useful to cite Somerville (1994) in full: "The architectural drawings for the concentration camp at Auschwitz were discussed earlier at the conference. If the primary question had been about the ethics of what was being planned rather than about the camp's architecture, those 'beautiful' drawings would have never been made…We need to be aware that when we take the starting points of our analyses as givens, we are not necessarily correct in doing so. We have already made a choice – often a very important value choice – in determining these starting points." (Somerville, 1994, p. 70-71).

3 I credit this insight to Professor Jean-Pierre Protzen.

codes of conduct in its declarative form does not necessarily lead the students to know first-hand what it means to be caught in an ethical dilemma or to rely on moral reasoning as the first recourse to resolve the dilemma. Moral reasoning is also necessary to reap the benefits of knowing these codes (Fisher, 2010, p. 13). To respond to the limitations of both the design studio and the professional practice seminar, as well as to draw on each of their key advantages, next, I will suggest where and how ethics can be taught in the architecture school.

THE JURY REVIEW: AN OPPORTUNE VENUE TO TEACH ETHICS?

While landmark studies have been done on understanding the design studio from the pedagogical perspective (Schön, 1983; Schön, 1987), from a sociological perspective (Cuff, 1991; Stevens, 1998) and even from the perspective of the design jury (Anthony, 1991; Anthony, 2012), none of these studies alludes to the educational potential of the design jury for teaching ethics. On the contrary, in one recent account, it is suggested that at its worst, the design jury fosters a "destructive atmosphere" where jurors exhibits insensitivity and erodes students' morale (Anthony, 2012, p. 400). Despite these findings, I suggest that the design jury remains unexplored as a potentially important venue where ethics can be openly taught and discussed in architecture school today. This is primarily because the design jury combines the advantages of both the design studio and the professional practice seminar without suffering from their respective limitations.

The design jury is a pedagogical institution created to openly examine, evaluate and judge the student's design solution. First used by the French Ecole des Beaux-Arts system where jury reviews occurred behind closed doors (Anthony, 2012, p. 396), the design jury subsequently evolved into the present open system currently practised in most architecture schools today. In the design jury, a panel of different professors and external practitioners convenes as jurors to evaluate the student's design. Following this presentation, jurors then discuss issues pertaining to the design solution before all the students attending the review. This evaluative institution is similar in structure for all students in the architecture school, and only differs in duration and depth depending on the seniority of the student involved. Finally, it is common to have up to three design juries every semester – the first a design jury on the conceptual phase of the student's design; then a design jury on the developmental phase of the student's design; and finally, a final design jury upon the completion of the design project. Cumulatively, a student upon his or her completion of a five-year architecture programme would have had at least 30 design juries – not an insignificant amount of curricular time.

What then are the advantages of the design jury for teaching ethics? First, the ethical issues that emerge in the student's design are experienced on a first-hand basis by the student rather than through the theoretical manifold of the professional codes of conduct. One of the primary obstacles for learning ethical reasoning is under-appreciating the ethical issue in question because one is approaching these issues vicariously (Bok, 1976, p. 27). But by knowing the parameters surrounding these ethical issues on a first-hand basis, the student is then argued to have a better grasp – and also an incentive – to understand and to resolve these ethical issues in a responsible way.

Second and unlike the design studio, the design jury process is characterised by openness, transparency and many voices. One of the strengths of the design jury is that this process allows for the debate and discussion about design from many different viewpoints (Anthony, 1991, p. 158). In such a process, it is nearly impossible for moral indoctrination by any one party to occur because of the plurality of persons involved. In order to convince, the interlocutor is burdened to make coherent arguments and to persuade by reason, which in turn are either further supported or refuted by other participants present under conditions of communicative discourse. The many-horned aspect of an ethical issue can be pursued under different viewpoints within this confluence of openness, transparency and many voices, all of which are also promising factors for broadening the student's moral horizon.

Third and most importantly, the design jury is a sustained pedagogy stretching across the five or six years of architecture school in varying intensities but nonetheless, in regular frequency. This characteristic permits the determined educator to persistently recall and reinforce ethics in varying degrees but regularly throughout the student's career in the architecture school. In doing so, the educator avoids a common pitfall where ethics in architecture is taught in a piecemeal, independent and disconnected fashion, rather than the more effective approach of reinforcing ethics repeatedly throughout the curriculum (Owen, 2009, p. 91).

However, there are clearly some practical constraints that limit the potential of design jury for teaching ethics. Time is always too short for explicating every relevant issue pertaining to the student's design solution; and not everyone is interested, or feel sufficiently confident or motivated, to raise and explicate ethical issues.

Yet even if substantive ethical issues could be raised, the jurors' main obligation is to attain an overall assessment of the student's design. Ethics is surely an important factor in design; however, ethics is also only one of the many important factors for design evaluation. Because of this, it is therefore unclear just how

the design jury should be weighted for teaching ethics despite its suitability. Should the design jury seek to increase the student's awareness of ethical issues and thereby sharpen his or her ethical perception? After all, the student cannot know about an ethical issue until he or she is aware of it! Or should the design jury help the student in analysing the ethical issues in question, and through this effort, trains this student's moral reasoning skills? Or should the design jury focus on the ultimate goal of keen ethical judgment for complex moral problems? Unfortunately, the jury review as a pedagogy – coupled with the contingent choice and disposition of the panelists involved – cannot in itself prioritise these important pedagogical goals even when it provides room for them, and therefore holds no exact answer to these questions. Nonetheless, these are not insurmountable questions – it remains possible for the jurors to agree to some order of prioritisation beforehand. As alluded to earlier in the paper, the main obstacle is primarily one of ideology: are the jurors sufficiently convinced of the importance of ethics to warrant a place for moral education in the design jury?

HOW TO TEACH ETHICS IN THE DESIGN JURY: KEY PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES

How to teach ethics is a broad and important question that has many implications for other learning venues, courses, and disciplines within the university. While I intend these four strategies as direct suggestions to educators in architecture, urban design and planning where all share the common pedagogy of design jury, these strategies are also sufficiently general in nature to be applicable and adaptable for educators interested to teach ethics in other disciplines.

The first strategy, which I also suggest as the most important, is for the aspiring teacher of ethics to educate himself or herself (Callahan, 1980, p. 71). There is a cognitive and also a moral aspect to this suggestion. On the cognitive end, many ethical quandaries do not immediately yield clear solutions. But students who witness their teachers educating themselves in trying to wrestle with ethics will be persuaded by their efforts and persistence to try ethics out. And on the moral end, teachers are also role models to their students (Bok, 1976; Callahan, 1980; Hoekema, 2010). While this is no exhortation for saintliness, the task of teaching ethics becomes more streamlined when the student is able to see the teacher – as well as the institution that this teacher belongs to – striving to act consistently in ethical ways.

The second strategy is to develop ethical awareness. Ethical concerns in architecture are notoriously difficult to recognise because they are internal to the practice of architecture (Pérez-Gómez, 1994). On this, the teacher may rely

on a series of general but provocative questions, for example, "what is going on in this case?", or "by what criteria should this design decision be made?" (May, 1980, p. 212-213). The aim here is to provoke the student to surface the ethical dimensions that might have been taken for granted during the student's design process without immediately engaging in questions of goodness and rightness. Or the teacher can direct the student's attention to certain clear indicators of ethical misadventures (Kaufman, 1981). Returning to the example of the "super-brothel", the teacher should be able to immediately tell that even in a situation where nearly everyone is happy and permissive about the design, the idea that this remains a brothel that not only supports prostitution (which is surely inequitable even if it is a legal profession in many places) but further reinforces this practice in a "super" form, must be morally problematic.

The third strategy is to help the student build his or her own ethical toolbox. The different frameworks of ethics, such as utilitarianism, deontological ethics, justice and virtue ethics can be considered as different tools used in moral reasoning. Admittedly, not all educators in architecture have training in moral philosophy. However, this is not an insurmountable challenge. Pared down to the essentials, with some risks of simplification, these tools are measured perspectives of how we reason and value. Take the example of a recurring controversy in architecture: "does the end justify the means"? Returning to the case of the "super-brothel", suppose that the "super-brothel" eventually improves tourism and job prospects, and ultimately, also increases the general level of happiness in the city: but then can all these benefits justify the degeneration of a thriving urban area into a seedy, red-life district? A utilitarian perspective would likely weigh the issue in terms of dollars and cents, or more abstractly, on some measure of happiness; but a deontological or justice perspective would set certain limits, beyond which the end stops justifying the means. On the other hand, a virtue perspective may suggest that unless this building edifies the people who use it, it is counterproductive for this building to exist despite the architect's good intentions. Despite a well-equipped ethical toolbox, it is unlikely that one will have a final and uncontested answer on the case of the "super-brothel". But to seek a final and uncontested answer is missing the point. The paramount task is to reformulate what is suspected as hazy quandaries into objective ethical questions or propositions. One can only do this with the help of these ethical tools. With some patience and practice, there are excellent books for example, by Baggini and Fosl (2007), and Fisher (2010), where one can refer to, to build this ethical toolbox necessary for sound moral reasoning. Here, it is important to remember that while these ethical tools may not always eliminate quandaries in architecture, they are however capable of opening up a new horizon where things may be seen for what they are and thus, have become other than what they were (May, 1980, p. 241). Hence, even the effort

of using these tools is capable of extending the student's moral awareness in an expanded moral universe.

The fourth strategy is to cultivate moral tolerance in the student. In design juries as in today's classrooms, moral disagreements are likely to be intense and unforgiving especially given the range of different moral viewpoints possible. The last thing we desire as educators is to open the Pandora's Box of ethical issues only to discover later that we have also considerably worsened civility in the classroom. But moral tolerance does not mean unthinking permissiveness as well. To foster moral tolerance, it is important first for the student to recognise that others may hold on to different but equally consistent moral values. Returning to the case of the "super-brothel" again, a student may rightfully argue that prostitution can be considered ethical under certain conditions, for example, when a mother has to prostitute herself to feed her starving baby. But this reality is checked by another student's realisation that this conditionally legitimate practice does not automatically grant moral acceptance of the brothel, which is the normalisation of prostitution. From this example, it is possible then to cultivate moral tolerance by holding two opposing yet consistent arguments within a single view. Subsequently, with the aid of the teacher, the student must find the common points he or she shares with these others, and from there, discover exactly where they might have come to disagree. The disagreements discovered through this measured process of deliberation can only be less prone to bitter discords and more likely to result in respectful enlightenment and moral tolerance.

These four pedagogical strategies are by no means the only strategies available. However, they are the key strategies that aim to consolidate the cognitive or theoretical aspects with the character or developmental aspects of moral education. Furthermore, these four strategies are strategies that one would naturally count on in a design jury to question, understand, analyse and judge architectural issues within a community of other learners. For this reason, they are neither entirely novel nor untested strategies that would burden the teacher.

CONCLUSION: MORAL RESPONSIBILITY AND MORAL CHARACTER

In this paper, I addressed the gap in existing literature on teaching ethics in architecture. I further highlighted why the present practice of teaching ethics in the design studio and the professional practice seminar is insufficient. Subsequently, I highlighted the design jury as a hitherto unexplored venue for teaching ethics and offered four different strategies for teaching ethics in

architecture. In all, I underscored the importance of a sustained engagement with ethics across the architecture curriculum. To the extent that ethics is presently taught – if at all – in a piecemeal and disconnected fashion in architecture, there remains much room for the integration of ethics into the architectural curriculum.

Here, I conclude by suggesting that much of why we are concerned with ethics in architecture today has to do with the ethical issues that are raised by architecture. In recent decades, it has been noted that architecture has been produced to chiefly satisfy the aims of city marketing (and imagery), and serving as investment vehicles, rather than actual needs (Hyde, 2012). At the same time, the larger social and natural environment in many places has visibly deteriorated, and for the first time in the history of architecture, there is recognition that architecture can become a social ill and an environmental liability. Therefore, the question of why we build – and how to justify that ethically – has become as important, if not antecedent, to the design and technical questions concerning how we build.

But this question of "why we build" is ultimately cognitive in nature. To realise the potential of ethics the architect must answer the Kantian question of "what ought I do", which in other words, is to consider just the kind of ethical problems and situations that would call for the service of the architect and architecture (Somerville, 1994, p. 70). Urbanisation is anticipated to accelerate worldwide. For the billions of people that would ultimately come to inhabit in growing cities around the world, the discipline of architecture has yet to offer a compelling ethical solution to this problem of rapid and unprecedented urbanisation.

On this note, teaching ethics has to go beyond the goals of developing ethical awareness, sound moral reasoning and keen judgment. Ultimately, teaching ethics must also develop the architect's sustained moral character in taking special care to avoid harm, and in seeking out pressing issues and problems where the public mission of architecture could again be reaffirmed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful for the comments from Associate Professor Cheah Kok Ming, Mr. Roland Sharpe Flores and Professor Jean-Pierre Protzen on an earlier draft of this paper.

REFERENCES

Anthony, K. H. (1991). *Design juries on trial: The renaissance of the design studio*. New York, NY: Van Nostrand Reinhold.

Anthony, K. H. (2012). Studio culture and student life. In J. Ockman (Ed.), *Architecture*

school: Three centuries of educating architects in North America (pp. 396-401). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Baggini, J., & Fosl, P. S. (2007). *The ethics toolkit: A compendium of ethical concepts and methods*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Berube, M. R., & Berube, C. T. (2010). *The moral university*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Bess, P. (1996). Communitarianism and emotivism: Two rival views of ethics and architecture. In K. Nesbitt (Ed.), *Theorizing a new agenda for architecture* (pp. 372-382). New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press.

Bok, D. C. (1976). Can ethics be taught? *Change, 8*(9), 26-30.

Boyer, E. L., & Mitgang, L. D. (1996). *Building community: A new future for architectural education and practice*. Princeton, NJ: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Callahan, D. (1980). Goals in the teaching of ethics. In D. Callahan & S. Bok (Eds.), *Ethics teaching in higher education* (pp. 61-80). New York, NY: Plenum Press.

Cobb, H. N. (1992). Ethics and architecture. In P. Coombe (Ed.), *The Harvard Architecture Review 8* (pp. 45-49). New York, NY: Rizzoli.

Crawford, M. (1991). Can architects be socially responsible? In D. Ghirardo (Ed.), *Out of site: A social criticism of architecture* (pp. 27-45). Seattle, WA: Bay Press.

Cuff, D. (1991). *Architecture: The story of practice*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Day, S. (2012). *Super brothel 'positive addition to Auckland'*. Retrieved from http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/industries/7938291/Super-brothel-positive-addition-to-Auckland [Accessed December 2, 2012].

Fish, S. (2003). Aim low. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 16, 2003. Retrieved from http://chronicle.com/article/Aim-Low/45210 [accessed December 2, 2012].

Fisher, S. (2000). How to think about the ethics of architecture. In W.Fox (Ed.), *Ethics and the built environment* (pp. 170-182). UK: Routledge.

Fisher, T. (2010). *Ethics for architects: 50 dilemmas of professional practice*. NY, NY: Princeton Architectural Press.

Fisher, T. (2012). Ethics: A pervasive and often overlooked presence in architectural education. In J. Ockman (Ed.), *Architecture school: Three centuries of educating architects in North America* (pp. 313-315). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Fox, W. A. (2009). Architecture ethics. In J. K. B. Olsen, S. A. Pedersen & V. F. Hendricks (Eds.), *A companion to the philosophy of technology* (pp. 387-391). UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Frankena, W. K. (1973). *Ethics* (2nd ed.). NJ, Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.

Gardner, H., Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Damon, W. (2001). *Good work: when excellence and ethics meet*. NY, NY: Basic Books.

Gardner, H. (2012, September 23). Reinventing ethics. *The New York Times*.

Goodman, R. (1971). *After the planners*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Hoekema, D. A. (2010). Is there an ethicist in the house? How can we tell? In E. Kiss & J. P. Euben (Eds.), *Debating moral education: Rethinking the role of the modern university* (pp. 249-266). Durham, MD: Duke University Press.

Hyde, R. (2012). *Future practice: Conversations from the edge of architecture*. New York,

NY: Routledge.

Jonas, H. (1984). *The imperative of responsibility: In search of an ethics for the technological age*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Kaufman, J.L. (1981). Teaching planning ethics. *Journal of Planning Education and Research, 1*(1), 29-35.

Kiss, E. & Euben, J. P. (2010a). Debating moral education: an introduction. In E. Kiss & J. P. Euben (Eds.), *Debating moral education: Rethinking the role of the modern university* (pp. 3-26). Durham, MD: Duke University Press.

Kiss, E. & Euben, J. P. (2010b). Aim high: a response to Stanley Fish. In E. Kiss & J. P. Euben (Eds.), *Debating moral education: Rethinking the role of the modern university* (pp. 57-75). Durham, MD: Duke University Press.

Lagueux, M. (2004). Ethics versus aesthetics in architecture. *The Philosophical Forum, XXXV*(2), 117-133.

Lukes, S. (2008). *Moral relativism*. New York, NY: Picador.

May, W.F. (1980). Professional ethics: settings, terrain, and teacher. In D. Callahan & S. Bok (Eds.), *Ethics teaching in higher education* (pp. 205-241). New York, NY: Plenum Press.

Owen, G. (Ed.). (2009). *Architecture, ethics and globalization*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Pérez-Gómez, A. (1994). Introduction. In L. Pelletier & A. Pérez-Gómez (Eds.), *Architecture, ethics, and technology* (pp. 3-14). Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Ryle, G. (1949). *The concept of mind*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Saint, A. (2005). Practical wisdom for architects: The uses of ethics. In N. Ray (ed.), *Architecture and its ethical dilemmas* (pp.7-22). London, UK: Taylor & Francis.

Salomon, D. (2012). Plural profession, discrepant practice. In C. G. Crysler, S. Cairns & H. Heynen (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of architectural theory* (pp. 430-443). London, UK: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Scarry, E. (1999). *On beauty and being just*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Schön, D.A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Schön, D.A. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Selat, M. (2010). *A leadership perspective on decision making*. Latvia: Cappelen Damm AS.

Somerville, M.A. (1994). Ethics and architects: Spaces, voids, and traveling-in-hope. In L. Pelletier & A. Pérez-Gómez (eds.), *Architecture, ethics, and technology* (pp. 61-79). Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Spector, T. (2001). *The ethical architect: the dilemma of contemporary practice*. New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press.

Stevens, G. (1998). *The favored circle: The social foundations of architectural distinction*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Till, J. (2009). *Architecture depends*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Verbeek, P. P. (2011). *Moralizing technology: Understanding and designing the morality of things*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Wilshire, B. W. (1990). *The moral collapse of the university: professionalism, purity, and alienation*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.