



The aesthetics of the city-image

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I will examine the aesthetic implications of the theories which regard the city as an image. Essentially, I will focus on the positions of the two practitioners, Kevin Lynch and Juhani Pallasmaa, who are an urban planner and an architect respectively, in order to confront two very different approaches to the 'image'; namely, an empirical approach and a phenomenological one. I am interested in what the city becomes when it is looked upon as an image and I will reflect on the experiences of the city-image in its various aspects. The aim of this discussion is an attempt to outline certain research areas for exploring the aesthetics of the city centred on the image, with the practitioners' theories enabling us to widen the scope of this exploration.

KEYWORDS

image; city; urban aesthetics; Kevin Lynch; Juhani Pallasmaa

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This city which cannot be expunged from the mind is like an armature, a honeycomb in whose cells each of us can place the things he wants to remember.

Italo Calvino (1972: 13)

In one of his books Joseph Rykwert writes that ‘because there is constant interaction between society and the urban fabric, we cannot tinker with our cities without making some adjustment to society as well — or vice versa. [...] The modern city is a city of contradictions [...] it must therefore have many faces, not one’ (Rykwert, 2002: 7). The issue of the image of the city is examined here from two distinct angles. The first one concerns the image which, not unlike a portrait, blends together all the characteristic, intrinsic features of the city. This image is located on the side of the matter, urban fabric, as well as on the side of society, with the interplay between those two orders determining the dynamics of the whole system. The image of the city emerges from demolition or construction of its sections; and the impulse for transformation may come from a vision of a new social order, either imposed by force or worked out by the community itself. The embodied vision of the city can also become a way of shaping the community, as Le Corbusier believed. The second angle calls into question the possibility to construct one image of the city. Rykwert implies that such an image would be unable to reflect the condition of modern metropolises, multicultural cities characterized by a diversity of contrasting faces, but he also claims that ‘the lack of any coherent, explicit, image may therefore, in our circumstances, be a positive virtue, not a fault at all, or even a problem’ (Rykwert, 2002: 7). From this perspective the mutual interdependencies between society on the one hand and the urban fabric and the image on the other become even less clear. What is interesting, however, is that the image appears to be a vital component of a model description of the city.

While reflecting on the image of the city we enter a very specific territory, since we have at our disposal various theories of the image developed by philosophy or contemporary history of art and visual study as a result of long-running debates, as well as the tradition, in the fields of urban planning and architecture, of regarding the city in terms of the image or depiction, the example of which we find in the quotations from Rykwert’s book. At the same time, independently and as if parallel to the above, artists, residents and urban explorers engage in their own urban activities, also involving the use of the image. What I am principally concerned with is what the city is when it becomes an image; however, rather than examining the issue from the perspective of direct perception I have chosen to base my analysis on the theoretical approaches proposed by Kevin Lynch and Juhani Pallasmaa. The comparison of these two positions holds particular appeal as it shows the city from two different angles: two alternative conceptions of the image as either optical or

tactile, each of which results in a entirely different type of experiencing the city through the image. I have decided on the aesthetics as the reference point for my discussion, since I share Lambert Wiesing's sentiment that aesthetics is one of the classical places of support for the theory of the image (Wiesing, 2008: XXIV). All the same, the conception of the image as I understand it here derives not so much from philosophical discussion as from the way it is applied by the practitioners of the art of building, with the aim of showing a panorama of various alternative ways of conceptualizing the city through the image. And with a wide range of conceptions of the image underlying certain visions of the city we can assume the existence of an equally wide range of aesthetics of the city.

In the times of peace and economic stability the fabric of the city undergoes modernization and revitalization, and with places becoming transformed, some old images of the city are consigned to the realm of memory and photographic or film records.¹ Also, as it goes without saying that various redevelopment initiatives tend to deviate from their original plans, the city can be seen as a structure under permanent construction, as Jacques Derrida suggested. Even more so since not all the changes follow a well-planned design: some of them occur spontaneously, beyond any control. New architecture springs up with no architects involved while residents, artists and visitors manipulate the urban fabric filling it with structures which, although hardly spectacular, are quite visible from the level of the street and the pavement. The city's growth and transformations owe as much to professionals as to amateurs and bear testimony both to human ingenuity, material affluence and cultural riches and to people's helplessness in the face of the architectural and social poverty of sprawling suburbs. These dynamics, both on a macro and micro scale, the modernization of the city, its growth as well as a wide variety of residents' activities filling its fabric all combine to create a multitude of realities making up the city, as well as an abundance of views perceived. They all work together to form a mosaic arranged in sets, which comes to be called the image of a particular place. And the image of the place-city can be understood as a private set of memories marked by an individual experience of a place or it can assume a shape of a sign, a symbol of the place and serve as a calling card used for political, economic or cultural purposes. In this case a semantic aspect of the image of the city comes to the fore. These two approaches to the image of the city — a set-collage and a calling card-sign — have very different objectives and involve very particular types of reception. The former is marked by an individual, highly personal perception, it is intimate and sometimes it is nothing more than a series of images in a person's memory, although it frequently acquires a material or immaterial

¹ The question of memory and the image of the city is a separate issue, which needs to be examined on its own.

form as a collection of the photographs taken by a tourist, an amateur photographer, an artist, a sociologist or an ethnographer. The latter, on the other hand, exists exclusively in a specific medium: it can be a picture on the flat surface (in graphic arts, painting or photography) or a picture on a television or computer screen. It is a work of art, like a veduta, or an image used by the authorities or consumption-oriented tourist organizations for their persuasive strategies. Reproduced in hundreds of copies it consolidates into a stereotype and obscures other images of the city. The view of Florence from San Miniato al Monte is like the last glimpse of the city seen by Petrarch on his departure, or so guidebooks authors make us believe, whereas the image of Berlin had several political variants before it acquired the current one after the German reunification. If we compare, for instance, photographs of different images of Berlin — of the Dadaists' city with the Nazis' city, the city divided by the Wall with the city reunited — we see clearly that the task of constructing a complete image of the city-calling card proves all but impossible.² Thus what we have in mind while talking about the image of the city is either images founded on the individual perception of the place or signs, which, although based on perception, have become largely independent from it, having been repeatedly used in contradictory discourses.

I

Kevin Lynch offered us what must be considered the most representative, now classic, conception of the image of the city. Lynch, an urban planner, convinced that the art of city construction deserves the highest regard, defines the city in three complementary ways: for him it is an exquisite artefact,³ constitutes a form and is the object of the resident's perception. The perception which is attentive, focused as opposed to the transitory, superficial perception characteristic of the tourist. The practice of everyday life and the need for security form the basis for the sense of being at home,⁴ the most conducive layout to which is what Lynch refers to as imageability and describes as sharp, logically strong view, which form an integrated scenery, like the Manhattan skyline, which 'crystallizes and reinforces the meaning' (Lynch, 1960: 9–10).

² This is the message conveyed by the book *After-images of the city* (Resina & Ingenschan, 2003: xii–xiii of the temporal and fragmentary experience of the city, 9–13); regarding Berlin cf. Seltzer, 2003: 49–60.

³ This provides yet another example of seeing the city as a work of art, he writes: 'As an artificial world, the city should be so in best sense: made by art, shaped for human purposes' (Lynch, 1960: 95).

⁴ The mental picture of the city has two sources: cognitive and emotional. It serves the practice of life, it is a cultural form of adapting to surrounding conditions, similar to the adaptation and survival instinct of an animal.

Imageability is intrinsically linked with legibility and visibility, which combined provide the residents with the sense of security and make the city both functional and beautiful. These correspond to how strongly the layout of the city stimulates the viewer to create and retain the mental picture of a given place and orient themselves in the space of the city with its maze of buildings, streets and junctions. Imageability is characterized by such properties as vividness, sharpness and distinctiveness, and it can be high or low depending on whether it is unique enough to be noticed as a dominant feature. It belongs to the fabric of the city, not to the perceiving subject, and it only acquires a mental character as an image-impression, and then it enables the consciousness scan the space of the city freely. It is an unforgettable view and can easily form the basis for metaphors and symbols. The practice of everyday life and the effort to maintain a sense of security makes the resident constantly compare the mental images in his or her memory with the raw experience and adjust them if necessary, although they are always incomplete and full of gaps. Each and every resident fills this basic image of the city with the content and emotions known only to him or her, so every image is individual and unique. Nonetheless all these individual images are based on the similar background, logical grid of routes, sites and roads in the city, and thus they constitute a social image, which is close to printed maps only as far as transportation goes. The mental and physical map can constitute this one and only image of the city, which is rather like a template we needed to read the writing on a sheet of paper, one has to know it to recognize and decode the graphs (Lynch, 1960: 3).⁵ Therefore, according to the urban planner, the pleasure is derived from the visual cognition rather than from the attractiveness of scenery and this is this cognitive nature of experience that enables us to appreciate the beauty of the city. 'Looking at cities can give a special pleasure, however commonplace the sight may be' (Lynch, 1960: 1). A direct perception, a certain representation taking place in the present time is retained as an individual memory subjected to constant revision and updating whereas a social image, as a kind of reflective image, becomes a common property, an image of the collective consciousness. It is much more than an abstract picture, a map, as it acquires layers of generational meanings and emotive qualifications. This extra content, the keystone defining the identity of a given community and determining its behaviour and activities, is what makes various communities so different. The sight of Lenin monuments in the squares of Polish cities in the times of Communism evoked radically different memories depending on an individual's political viewpoint and background while after the collapse of Communism and the removal of the monuments

⁵ Italo Calvino expresses a similar sentiment while describing Tamar 'Your gaze scans the streets as if they were written pages: the city says everything you must think' (Calvino, 1972: 12).

young people are not even aware of where they were located, not to mention the controversial content related to them. What I want to emphasize here is that an individual image of the city may be completely unrelated to the social one and functions independently from practical issues of getting around effectively. Inspired by Lynch's work Sam B. Warner writes about a multiplied image of the city; he takes into consideration ideologies which have grown with time around the images unifying very diverse communities (Elwin, 1999: 284, 296). In order to preserve and restore the memory of the place and regain the identity it is extremely essential nowadays to study the memory, whose images, preserved in private notes or literature, build up the sense of security. The social image, regardless of how we define it in terms of time, generation or ideology, is always a manifestation of human freedom and this situates it outside the consensus required by public space governed by the need for information. Nevertheless, choosing the examples of legible views Lynch uses images which are far from trivial. He considers Florence, the old town with the Duomo range, to be a model example of a distinct and widely recognizable view, especially the view from *viale Dell Colli* (south side), where 'the open country penetrates almost to the heart of the city, setting up a clear contrast, and from one of the last steep hills a terrace gives an "overhead" view of the urban core' (Lynch, 1960: 92). The quality of effective getting around the city, the legibility of its scenery is not only a principle underlying the construction of the city but also a criterion contributing to how people assess the reality of living in this city. Furthermore, it determines the level of aesthetical, sensual and cognitive satisfaction.

The proposition of the city which is legible, safe, beautiful and can be presented in an image combines several types of images characterized by varying degrees of sensuality, memory and meanings, from the individual, through communal, to a map and an image-calling card. Each of them has its own specific dynamics, with the first two being dynamic and changing alongside the city and the other two, after having become outdated, turning into works of art and viewed for their qualities which have nothing to do with the legibility of the city. There is a strong, and not quite proven by empirical evidence, assumption that all the images which the resident holds within him — or herself form an integral whole constituting the core of a strong subject identical and fully integrated with the place and the community. According to Rykwert's model, the relationship between society, the urban fabric and the image is symmetrical. This, however, is the ideal situation and, as Lynch points out, few cities meet the requirements of imageability understood in such a way, which is why in his successive papers and books he attempted to rectify this situation. From the perspective of the aesthetics of the city it is crucial that the issues related to imageability can be examined starting from the empirical sources of beauty and going on to carefully analyze a multiplicity of images of the city with their

connections to other kinds of art as well as memory. Lynch himself endeavours to establish a new position for aesthetics when he argues that rather than being confined to closed sacralized art enclaves it needs to be redefined culturally and placed in the context of urban design and the activities of architects and residents involved in creating urban environment (Lynch, 1996: 254). This public aesthetics, as he calls it, should be based on the current research in the fields of environmental psychology and cognitive geography, which, in fact, is currently being successfully developed (Pipkin, La Gory, & Blau, 1983).

II

Lynch's theory is situated somewhere in between the abstract optical experience of the city and the tactile city experienced and represented somatically.⁶ Its location is between what Michel de Certeau calls the position of a static observer and the one of a mobile walker (Certeau, 2008: 93–95). The observer trusting his or her eye wants to see the city from the sky, to have a bird's-eye view so as to satisfy the desire to take in the city in its entirety, and this scope drive is, according to de Certeau, the origin of panoramas, planners' and cartographers' maps. The experience of the walker, on the other hand, is somatic, as immersed in the maze of the streets teeming with crowds he or she derives his or her pleasure not from reading the routes but relishes the chance of being lost in the tangle, groping his or her way as if in the dark. And although in Lynch's theory the eye has an important role to play, it is but one of the components of the widely understood, multisensory perception. In contrast, the flâneur's attitude to the image is of another kind altogether, as more important than the arriving at the destination is wandering, observing and collecting the sights of places and faces. The incongruity of these images can prompt the work of an ethnographer or a detective, to follow Benjamin's suggestions. Heinz Paetzold concludes: 'The flânerie [...] are completely devoted to viewing, hearing and smelling in order to grasp the atmosphere of the place, the architectural scene and the doings of the crowds on the streets and squares' (Paetzold, 2008: 120). The desire for danger in this slow strolling plays a dual role of stimulating aesthetic sensibility and giving rise to the art of the city (Paetzold, 2013). Ultimately, perceptual images, both the ones being experienced in the present and those which are now memories, serve no vital purpose: they do not determine the course of practical activities, neither do they function as tools used for regulation or selection. Instead they constitute an integral component of participating in events, encounters in which surprise and emotional tension play the most important role. De Certeau emphasizes the

⁶ Nan Elwin places it in the holistic view of the city, represented also by Paul Goldman and Jane Jacobi (Elwin, 1999: 61–63).

linguistic work done by the walker who, through the activity of walking itself, defies the functionality of buildings and the structure of city, since he or she reads the names of the streets not to follow the topography but to reminisce and dream. Lynch's purposeful mobility necessitates the organized image of the urban environment, while the flâneur wanders around and in so doing exposes him or herself to the unknown, and with almost full awareness puts him or herself at risk of losing his or her identity. He or she is not focused on the work of an internal human, does not conceptualize but surrenders to the wave of external sensations. When mobility is seen as more important than learning about the structure of the city, the road is no longer an axis organizing architecture, no longer a passage, but becomes an end in itself. For the walker mental and photographic images do not make any kind of map, if they form a set it is more like a cabinet of curiosities. If we take the role and the character of the image as our point of departure, we can outline two perspectives for the aesthetics of the city: the aesthetics of form, legibility, on which the experience of the spatial order is based, and the aesthetics of fragments, kaleidoscopic scenes of the urban life, directed towards the experience of intensity, surprise and a dangerous adventure.

III

Nowadays it seems hardly possible to restore legibility or the consistency of the image to metropolises. Such requirements are met by the fragments specially modernized for this purpose whereas a sense of security is now achieved by residents, tourists or emigrants, thanks to new communication technologies: the eye is supported and augmented by virtual images of GPS. Nevertheless, the need arises to regain a full experience of the place based on a holistic approach to architecture and the city, the approach which could constitute an alternative to the architecture of high-tech business centres and the historical eclecticism and regionalism of shopping malls, the setting for consumption. Parallel to the reflection developed by Lynch, another tendency, differing from empiricism, emerges with the theories of architecture and the city emphasizing the primacy of emotions, sensuality and imagination. Steen E. Rasmussen underlines the importance of a feel of the place and its atmosphere brought on by being bodily inside the urban environment, by the reception of integrated acoustic, olfactory, visual and motor sensations (Rasmussen, 1999: 40). The shift of emphasis from the eye's activity to the emotional and multisensory experience of the place diminishes the significance of the image as a means of experiencing the city. This theoretical stance is part of a broader trend in cultural criticism, which sees the image as a tool of political and economic oppression as well as consumption. Therefore, theoreticians search for such an interpretation of the

image that will differ from the optical one or, like Richard Shusterman exclude it completely from both theory and experience.⁷

The holistic view of a human being inhabiting the environment directs architects towards philosophical argumentation, which allows them to reinforce their conviction that a place has an existential and metaphysical dimension and to broaden the scope of the discussion of the city beyond purely mathematical and economic parameters without reducing perception to a person's activities aimed at adapting to a place. Christian Norbert-Schulz deserves a special mention as far as this approach is concerned, since he attempts to combine developmental psychology (Jean Piaget) and the psychology of Gestalt with Martin Heidegger's philosophical thought,⁸ by which he paves the way for the phenomenology of architecture centred on the existential experience of a given place. Therefore, he accepts Lynch's perceptual image, conforming to the principles of Gestalt perception, as a base for his reflection, but at the same time he emphasises the environmental character of the image (Norbert-Schulz, 1971: 17; Norbert-Schulz, 1980: 5). While describing the unique atmosphere of Prague in order to convey the spirit of the place, its *genius loci*, he entitles the chapter *Image*. The reader, however, is presented with an individual description of the city filtered through the experience of an architect: the walk along the streets of the old Prague offers him an opportunity to touch a mystery and terror resulting from being so close to the ground, the experience of which being one of the aspects of Prague's *genius loci*, but also the sensation of warmth and tender care (Norbert-Schulz, 1980: 78). While according to Lynch the perceptual image of the city should facilitate effective getting around, with emotions, memory and individual sensations constituting its incidental aspects, Norbert-Schulz accepts the place as it is found and within it discovers the existential content making up the phenomenological image given in the description. The aesthetics of the city reduced to its descriptive aspects is an individual testimony of articulating the atmosphere of the city, its *genius loci*.

Phenomenology is also the centre of reflection for Juhani Pallasmaa, whose conception of the image could become another inspiration for the aesthetics of the city, since the architect dismisses no manner of the image functioning

⁷ The philosophical logic of his theory is based on the absolute primacy of the body in every area. Instead of five senses the philosopher proposes *somaesthetic sensis*, and he regards the awareness of one's own body as primary. From this perspective, the image loses all its cognitive functions and is denied even an auxiliary role, while other parameters of the place, such as space and atmosphere, undergo a transformation, with space losing its discursive character, exploited extensively by textual tendencies of the urban planning and architectural theories inspired by postmodernism, and with atmosphere being found rather than created and possessing a cosmic dimension like air. Cf. Schusterman, 2012: 219–238.

⁸ Following the evolution of Norbert-Schulz's thought, we also encounter the references to Karl Jaspers, Gaston Bachelard and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, but the fundamental intention of his reflection is to name the existential parameter of architecture regarded as primary.

as less important. Instead he hierarchizes a multitude of their various types according to the principles deriving from phenomenology. His objective is to re-establish the metaphysical perspective of architecture and the city. In his short paper, *Geometry of feeling*, he gives examples of images taken from poetry, photography, film and painting in order to demonstrate that architecture shown by them does not originate from mathematical calculations, neither is it governed by the rules of building, and although gravity and the practice of life could be added, these are the images which, according to Pallasmaa, constitute what Edmund Husserl called essential seeing, the *eidōs* of architecture (Pallasmaa, 1996: 451). The discussion on the image of architecture and the city leaves the territory of empirical perception and material form and is transported into the realm of intentional consciousness, its emotive and corporeal aspects. With Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology enabling him to place intentionality in the dimension of the body, Pallasmaa makes touch an initiator of images⁹, while Bachelard's transcendentalism helps him to explain why all artistic images refer to one another: they are not autonomous or freely constructed since their common *pleroma* and driving force is the transcendental reservoir of anticipatory pre-images (Bachelard, 1998). Merleau-Ponty's and Bachelard's theories are crucial for Pallasmaa's thought.¹⁰ Deriving from them, he is able to formulate an original theory concerning mental and artefactual images of architecture and the city, the images which originate in the an *a priori* non-visual sphere, in the depths of the unconscious self. Naive realism is dismissed as a position which not only prevents us from arranging in order a multitude of various types of images, but even allows for a multiplicity of equally accepted ways to arrange them. Pallasmaa valorizes them: he singles out artistic images on the grounds of their creative origins, but he draws a clear distinction between vivid pictures capable of stimulating imagination and memory, involving a number of senses and the images arising from sensory deprivation, as illustrated by the sights of the commercial district in Brazil (Pallasmaa, 2005: 43).

It is worth noting that architects' theoretical works, situated somewhere in between a coherent and consistent discourse of philosophers and a description of technical parameters, tend to combine fragments of distinct approaches, mix up various discourses, with the primary aim of such a syncretic discussion being to demonstrate the nature of art, even at the cost of the logic of argumentation.

⁹ 'We are inside and outside of the object at the same time. [...] A remarkable factor in the experience of enveloping spatiality, interiority and hapticity is the deliberate suppression of sharp, focused vision' (Pallasmaa, 2005: 13).

¹⁰ M. Reza Shirazi's opinion is different. He asserts that Norbert-Schulz's phenomenology derives from Heidegger's philosophy, while Pallasmaa draws on Merleau-Ponty's theories. What he fails to take into consideration, however, is the theory of the image, particularly important for Pallasmaa's reflection (Shirazi, 2014: 3, 35, 40, 65).

Thus Pallasmaa, without much regard to theoretical discipline, quotes Jean-Paul Sartre, John Dewey, Martin Heidegger, Richard Rorty and the poets, Le Corbusier and Louis Khan, casually combines phenomenology with the findings of neuroscience. What he emphasizes is that the art of building neither expresses nor imitates philosophical notions, and rather than being their material interpretation it constitutes the embodied form of thinking. Whereas Arthur C. Danto, Jean-François Lyotard or Wolfgang Iser criticized the philosophy of art, each from the perspective of his own position, for treating art as a tool for its own argumentation, imposing external rational criteria alien to art, Pallasmaa and other architects theoreticians adopt an opposite approach, employing philosophical theories to articulate the qualities of art. As a result, any attempt to find common grounds for various stances cited by the architect or to unify them is essentially futile.¹¹ In essence, Merleau-Ponty's and Bachelard's theories are, in my opinion, the fundament for Pallasmaa's thought.

Following Bachelard Pallasmaa believes that a human being is equipped with a set of primal images (pre-images), a kind of transcendental umbilical cord linking him or her to the cosmos as a whole, which enables him or her to grasp the sense of the surrounding reality. Non-visual pre-images assume a visual (mental, material) form in confrontation with the materiality of the world and become the basis for creation of new images as well as the measure of feeling at home. The city situated on a mandala moves us deeply since it sends us back to the source, that is the pre-conscious unity with the cosmos. Those pre-images, imbued with emotions, are corporeal: 'I experience myself in the city, and the city exists through my embodied experience. The city and my body supplement and define each other. I dwell in the city and the city dwells in me' (Pallasmaa, 2005: 40). This primal, living world of pre-images constitutes a source for imagination, which creating artistic images in the emotional sensory medium, at the same time restores and transforms images-memories, and produces new ones which can take on a material form. Pallasmaa rearranges the classical hierarchy of senses giving priority to touch and taste instead of the eye and hearing. The eye, traditionally seen as an originator of perceptual and eidetic images, is absorbed by the body to become the extension of the sense of touch: not only the eye in the act of seeing touches the world but it originates in touch, 'the sense of touch as the unconscious of vision' (Pallasmaa, 2005: 42). Tactile and oral aspects are present in a visual experience. What is visual is neither free nor self-contained, but depends on the more corporeal of senses, on the pre-conscious perception. This order follows from transcendentalism and psychoanalysis, rather than from phylogeny, and

¹¹ M. Reza Shirazi draws a distinction between the phenomenology practised by architects and philosophical phenomenology (Shirazi, 2014: 2–5). Aleksander Serafin, on the other hand, doubts whether the phenomenology of architecture has any connection to philosophical phenomenology (Serafin, 2014: 519–535).

aims at revealing a unifying force of perception achieved through corporeality where peripheral perception and the body's knowledge about movement precedes what the eye shows us. The integration takes place outside consciousness, in the intentionality of the body. According to Bachelard, emotionally charged primal images determine our relationship with the world as well as being autonomous and governed by their own rules. When, in the name of rationalism, they are purified, cleansed of emotions they can assume a shape of abstract scientific notions. Alternatively, they can become a poetic creation in day-dreaming, which reinforces, as Jean-Jacques Wunenburger maintains, all their charge of existential sense (Wunenburger, 2011: 59). Pallasmaa, in a similar spirit, accentuates the difference between the rational components of architecture and an artist's autonomous imaginarium, the active tension between which is what becomes creative in the existential sense. Hence the weakness of the art of building which results from the fact that the link between rational calculations and an imaginarium has been broken; the buildings whose qualities are purely technical and functional cannot make a person feel at home. 'Deep architectural experiences are relations and acts rather than physical objects, or mere visual entities' (Pallasmaa, 2011: 123).

The issue of pre-images, however, is a complex one. Hans Belting and W. J. T. Mitchell also refer to images dwelling in a human being, but their theories are indebted to psychoanalysis and social sciences. Bachelard, in contrast, sees the pre-image, the source of all mental and material images in the group of four elements, which are non-visual and build the cosmos and a human being. Pallasmaa, in his turn, rather than resolving the problem of the status of pre-images shows multiple types of them, common in all arts: a metaphor, an iconic, epic, poetic, incomplete, multisensory, living, embodied images, among others, are all examples of the image and each of them has its architectural manifestation (Pallasmaa, 2005). And although Pallasmaa's suggestion that building a place that could be called home should be determined by a variety of pre-images could be considered insufficiently explained on theoretical grounds, it still opens the door for a number of alternative solutions and offers the opportunity to build autonomous conceptions within various aesthetics of the city. One possibility involves refining the status of pre-images, examining whether the city can be seen as originating in some common transcendental source. It could be Bachelard's four elements where the city is not opposed to nature but they share the same roots. This approach reveals the unity of nature and the city, offers the opportunity to trace this unity as well as establishing the reasons why it is being destroyed, also such research would necessarily entail the question of cultural differences. Alternatively, the above-mentioned source could be looked for in technological skills, which would transfer the debate to a more empirical level. The issue of the pre-image gives rise to a number of solutions implying some consequences of adopting a certain stance, the eclectic

one in case of Pallasmaa, but also searching for the key in other approaches: psychoanalysis, new phenomenology and hermeneutics. Another set of themes emerging from the research into various aesthetics of the city concerns the attempt to find certain elements shared by visual arts, painting, cinematic art and photography, which rather than being entirely autonomous fields are seen as those which together reveal the polyphony of the city.

Various aesthetics of the city¹² are like the accounts of the cities written by Italo Calvino, who in his descriptions of each city, condensed to succinct essence, likens a city to a painting or to a catalogue of activities, or to the experience it generates (Calvino, 1972). The aesthetics of the city centred on the image takes into consideration the anthropological fact that people are cognizant beings, who live in and experience themselves and places by means of images imbued with sensations, emotions and meanings. Most importantly, however, we should listen to what architects and urban planners have to say, since they offer original theories of the image, which correspond to the nature of the city and take into account the specific character of this processual artefact. Drawing on these sources, the aesthetics of the city-image, can develop their ideas in a creative way.

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¹² Arnold Berleand, talking about the aesthetics of the city, treats it as part of the environmental aesthetics (Berleant, 1992). Arto Haapali's book offers a different view (Haapala, 1998).

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