

Rethinking Dwelling and Building. On Martin Heidegger’s conception of Being as Dwelling and Jørn Utzon’s Architecture of Well-being

Repensar el habitar y el construir. Sobre la concepción del ser como habitar de Martin Heidegger y la arquitectura del bienestar de Jørn Utzon

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Abstract / Resumen

The German philosopher Martin Heidegger’s seminal essay “Building, Dwelling, Thinking”, published in 1954, is one of the texts which has had most influence on architectural thinking in the second half of 20th and early 21st century. What much of modern and postmodern architectural thinking extracts from Heidegger’s text and revolves around is the understanding of building and dwelling as more or less abstract forms of being without taking into account the people inhabiting space. In these traditions little has been said about what the Danish architect Jørn Utzon adds to the term “being” and announces as the most important aspect of architecture: Well-being understood as human well-being. The present paper means to re-interpret Heidegger’s text critically in order to rethink dwelling and building within an architectural context, presenting Jørn Utzon’s work and thinking as a lifelong search for the architecture of well-being.

El ensayo “Construir, habitar, pensar” del filósofo alemán Martin Heidegger es uno de los textos que más influencia ha tenido sobre el pensamiento arquitectónico en la segunda mitad del siglo XX y a principios del siglo XXI. Lo que muchos en las tradiciones modernas y postmodernas extraen del texto de Heidegger es una concepción de construir y habitar, basada en formas más o menos abstractas de ser, que contempla a la gente habitando el espacio como algo secundario. Poco se ha hablado en estas tradiciones de lo que el arquitecto Jørn Utzon añade al término “estar” y anuncia como el aspecto más importante en arquitectura: bienestar entendido como bienestar humano. Este ensayo pretende ofrecer una re-interpretación crítica del texto de Heidegger para repensar el significado de habitar y construir dentro de un contexto arquitectónico, presentando la obra y el pensamiento de Jørn Utzon como una búsqueda vital de la arquitectura del bienestar.

Keywords / Palabras clave

Building, dwelling, being, Heidegger, well-being, Utzon.

Construir, habitar, existencia, Heidegger, bienestar, Utzon.

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Introductory remarks

In one of the last interviews which he gave, Jørn Utzon stated that for him architectural building is first of all about furthering “human well-being”¹. It may seem obvious that the primary concern of architecture is to create surroundings in which dwellers can stay, be and live well. However, this is not as obvious as it seems and it is far from all architects who would agree with Utzon in privileging well-being as one of the first principles of architecture. Much of the built environment of the 20th and early 21st century can be seen as a reflection of this in so far as it shows little intentions of promoting human well-being. This has been one of the recurring points in the critique of certain modernist and postmodernist movements that in their search for new ideas and original visual images they lose touch with the persons who inhabit the material reality, constructed by the architects themselves².

The paper is not going to enter into a discussion about who is right or wrong in this modern debate nor is it about establishing criteria for evaluating which architectural constructions are truly promoting human well-being and which are not. The truth about these matters can probably not be stated once and for all. The paper is about something else which it is hard enough to shed light on, as it has not played any important part in many of the modern or postmodern architectural traditions. Utzon points to this, using the term “well”, or in Danish “*vel*”, which refers to the same thing, namely something good.

One of the key sources to modern and postmodern architectural thinking is the German philosopher Martin Heidegger’s seminal text “Building Dwelling Thinking”, published in 1954 (English 1971). What much of modern and postmodern architectural thinking extracts from Heidegger’s text and revolves around is the understanding of building and dwelling as more or less abstract forms of being, but without taking into account the people inhabiting space. In these traditions little has been said about what Utzon adds to this term and announces as the most important aspect of architecture: *Well*-being understood as human well-being. As hinted at in the title, the paper means to re-interpret Heidegger’s text critically in order to rethink dwelling and building within an architectural context, presenting Jørn Utzon’s work and thinking as a lifelong search for the architecture of well-being.

Re-interpreting Heidegger

Heidegger’s “Building, Dwelling, Thinking”, which he first gave as a conference in Darmstadt in 1951, is one of the philosophical texts which has had most influence on architects in the second half of the 20th century and their way of thinking about architecture. Mark Jarzombek ascribes this to “the rather simple historical fact that this was the first time in over a century that a major philosopher had expressed himself directly on the subject of architecture”, and he goes on to assert that “after Heidegger, *all* architecture, philosophically speaking, underwent a transformation”³.

Jarzombek may go too far in his last assertion and he himself recognizes that Heidegger does actually not address architecture as such, but rather “building” or, in German, “*bauen*”⁴. This terminological replacement makes the transformation of which Jarzombek speaks rather paradoxical. Maybe it is not all architecture which undergoes a transformation after Heidegger. Could it be that architecture itself and some of its representatives create and keep creating their own distinct way of thinking? I shall argue that Jørn Utzon is one example of an architect who through his work develops his own way of thinking about architectural building which in a certain sense goes beyond the vocabulary of academic philosophy. So it may not be all architecture which undergoes a profound change after Heidegger, but the German philosopher’s approach to building and dwelling remains one of the most

¹ Michael Juul Holm, Kjeld Kjeldsen, Mette Marcus, ed. *Jørn Utzon: The Architect’s Universe*. Humlebaek, Louisiana Museum of Art, 2008, p. 6.

² One of the most critical voices in this modern debate is Juhani Pallasmaa, see *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and Senses*, 3a ed. Chichester, Wiley, 2012, in which he elaborates on his critique of modern visual culture.

³ Mark Jarzombek. “The Cunning of Architecture’s Reason”, *Footprint* 1 (Autumn 2007), p. 31.

⁴ Mark Jarzombek. “The Cunning of Architecture’s Reason”, p. 35.

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important and thought-provoking interventions in the field of architecture, worthwhile a critical re-interpretation, which will lead into the next paragraph's presentation of Utzon as the architect of human well-being.

Heidegger makes it clear from the beginning of his text in which direction he wants to take his reader: "This venture in thought does not view building as an art or as a technique of construction; rather it traces building back into the domain to which everything that is belongs."⁵ He highlights the word "is" and being as such, the central theme of Heidegger's thinking, forms the horizon within which he will elaborate on building and dwelling, "*Bauen*" and "*Wohnen*". Both words can, according to Heidegger, be traced back to the High German word "*buan*" which refers to staying and dwelling, but not only that: In it are hidden the German verbs for being, "*bin*" and "*bist*". Heidegger ends up having a series of words at his disposal which all circumscribe the way we human beings are on earth: *Buan*, being, building, dwelling, or in German, which may sound more convincing, *Buan*, *bin*, *bist*, *bauen*, *wohnen*⁶.

For Heidegger the real meaning of worldly phenomena lies hidden in language, especially in its deeper layers, which the philosopher will do well to dig out and make appear again in its original way. Words and their meanings are without a doubt important when trying to rethink building and dwelling, but it remains an open question whether Heidegger's etymological deductions and the conclusions which he draws, are all valid: "*bauen*" and "*wohnen*" may well be traced back to the same word "*buan*", but this does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that "building (*bauen*) originally means to dwell (*wohnen*)"⁷, as Heidegger states. In many of his works Heidegger seems to presuppose that the further you go back or the deeper you dig down into the most profound layers of language, especially Greek and German, the truer are the meanings you get hold of and the more we will know about how things really are.

It goes without saying that Heidegger's as well as any other's etymological deductions are based on interpretations which by their very nature highlight certain aspects, while at the same time leaving other aspects in the shadows. In addition, Heidegger's predilection for Greek and German carries him on to certain interpretations which may be contested if we take our starting point in other languages. If we go to Old English and focus on the word *dwellan*, from which "dwell" originates, then it means "to stray from the path" or "to be led astray", but it "was modified in meaning by the Old Norse *dvelja* "abide" to present-day "dwell".⁸ Old English and Old Norse are considered to be proto-Germanic languages which influenced each other and what often happens in this linguistic give and take is that in one of the two languages the pronunciations and the meanings are slightly or sometimes completely different⁹.

What seems to be an odd extension of the meaning of dwelling, which originally referred to something as dynamic and dispersive as straying, but came to signify the opposite, static act of staying and lingering, makes more sense in the light of the English philologist Henry Cecil Wyld's interpretation of dwelling and its cognates as ways of expressing delay and doubt. According to him, dwelling does not originally refer to living in a place, but rather to making a halt and lingering on a path in doubts about where to go. Following this line of thought, the original setting of dwelling is neither the house nor any kind of built environment, neither is it the free, peaceful place nor the act of freeing, sparing and cultivating, as Heidegger sustains in "Building Dwelling Thinking". The setting for *dwellan* is characterized by lacking clearness and connotes the unknown in which someone is stuck, but it is this state of not finding a way out which allows for an extension of the word "to dwell", through the influence of the Old Norse *dvelja*, to mean "remaining or staying where one is"¹⁰.

5 Martin Heidegger. "Building, Dwelling, Thinking", in *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*. London, Routledge, 2005, p. 95.

6 Heidegger. "Building, Dwelling, Thinking", p. 96.

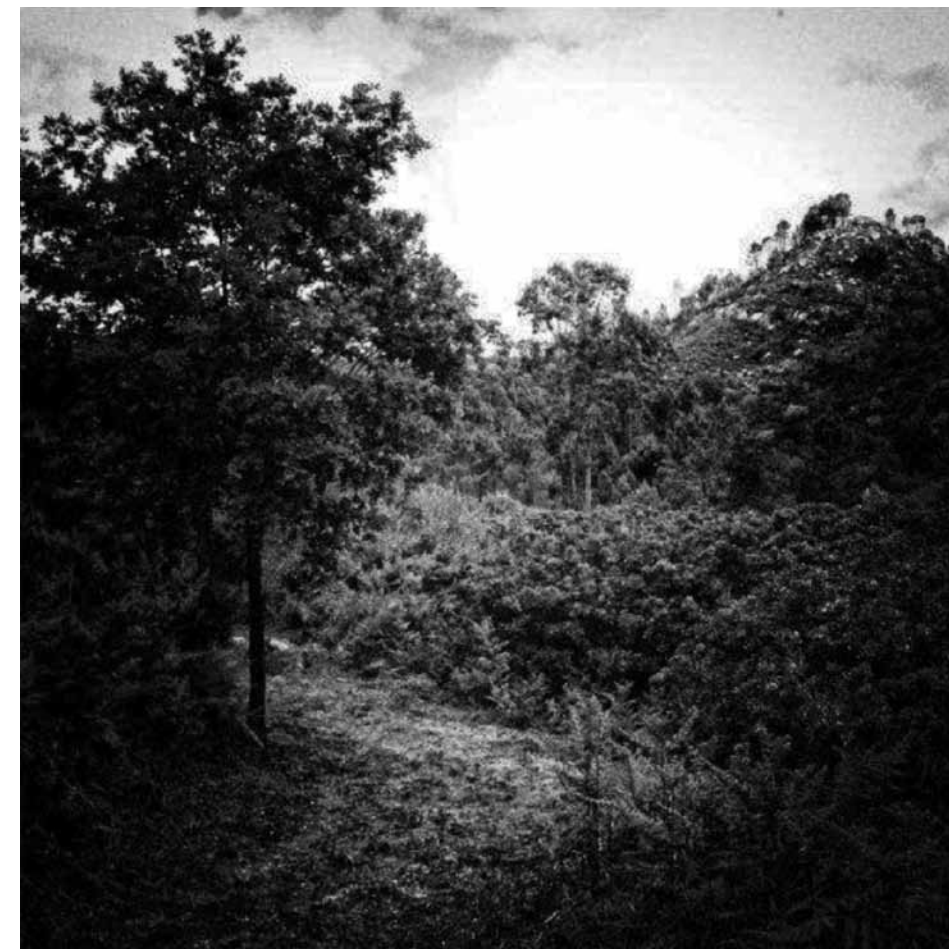
7 Ibidem.

8 Winfred P. Lehmann. *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction*. London, Routledge, 1963, p. 213.

9 Charles Barber. *The English Language: A Historical Introduction*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 130-31.

10 Anatoly Liberman. *An Analytic Dictionary of English Etymology: An Introduction*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2008, p. 60.

[Fig. 1] Holzweg.



As said before, analyzing the etymological meanings of the word "to dwell" does not reveal the original truth about dwelling, but it may give us a richer picture of what it means to dwell and it leads us onto other Heideggerian paths, the famous *Holzwege* or *Pathways*, which are not directly evoked in "Building, Dwelling, Thinking". In 1950, a year before he gave his conference on building and dwelling, Heidegger had published a compilation of texts in a volume titled *Holzwege* which in German refers to paths in a forest where timber is carried away leading to no human settlement. In German, *Holzwege* therefore also means to be on the wrong track or straying from the beaten path, as these ways are not meant for human circulation and they are in this sense misleading. *Holzwege* conveys the old meaning of *dwellan* and forms a kind of backdrop to Heidegger's reflections in "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" in which he is mainly concerned with dwelling in the sense of abiding and being at home in the world. This is what "to dwell" came to mean, but if we follow the meaning of the word back to *dwellan*, another unknown world appears in which man is neither at ease nor at home. He is rather lost and straying on paths in doubts about where to go, but it is out of this state of not knowing one's way that dwelling in the sense of abiding and staying springs.

Considering the significance which these paths have for Heidegger's thinking, it is remarkable that there is almost no trace of them in "Building, Dwelling, Thinking"¹¹. In his *magnum opus Time and Being* from 1927, Heidegger presented human existence as being thrown into the world without having any safe haven or already given instructions to take refuge to. Many years later in another compilation of texts called *Wegmarken* or *Pathmarks*, first published in 1967, Heidegger goes even further and sustains that man "is always astray in errancy"¹². Yet, in "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" these reflections on the human condition do not play any important role, although they could have proved to be relevant for his meditation on building and dwelling. Is it not building and dwelling which can protect and even free human beings from going astray all the time and being always exposed to the

11 I say almost no trace because the way in which Heidegger begins his essay, referring to it as a "venture in thought", does evoke the pathways of thinking along which he takes his reader, but these pathways have no impact on his concept of dwelling. See Miguel de Beistegui. *Thinking with Heidegger: Displacements*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2003, especially chapter 6, "The Place of Architecture", for a combined reading of *Being and Time* and "Dwelling, Building, Thinking" which, like Heidegger, focuses much more on the ontological sense than on the architectural sense of dwelling.

12 Martin Heidegger. "On the Essence of Truth", in William McNeal, ed., *Pathways*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 151.

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elemental forces of the earth and the sky? When Heidegger describes us mortals as being, in the sense of Buan, on the earth under the sky awaiting signs from the Gods, he makes it sound as if this fitting into the fourfold of things, as he calls it, were in itself peaceful, preserving and free of strain¹³. The fitting into the fourfold is what Heidegger understands as building, *Bauen*, in the form of dwelling, *Wohnen*, and this presupposition explains why he can do without any architectural expressions and dismiss dwelling in buildings as something secondary to the philosophical course.

Heidegger claims that we have forgotten to dwell in the same way as we have forgotten what it means to be in the original sense of the word; but how can mere existence on earth, being exposed to straying around on the wrong track and to elemental forces such as water and wind, give us back the real meaning of dwelling and building? How could we mortals ever dwell on earth and take care of it without a building which forms a refuge and allows us to withdraw temporarily from the haphazardness and hardship of earthly life? If we take these questions into account together with Heidegger's existential reflections on human finitude, we will be led back to the meaning of dwelling as making a halt, withdrawing in order to be less exposed and so resist being swept away onto unknown pathways. Dwelling runs counter to being thrown into the world and delimits a space in which an inhabitant resides in the sense of sitting back or remaining behind and, in that way, gets a reference point to orientate him- or herself.

This approach makes room for imbuing dwelling and building with architectural meaning¹⁴. Heidegger is right in linking building closely to dwelling: "we build and have built because we dwell, that is, because we are *dweller*s"¹⁵, but according to our interpretation of the two terms, building is not in itself or really dwelling, as Heidegger claims in the same passage. Building is a dweller's way of creating a space into which he or she can withdraw in order to be less exposed, get a reference point for orientation and come to live well. In "dwelling" we should still hear the act of lingering in a vast landscape of multiple unknown pathways, as in William Wordsworth's ode *She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways*. Remarkably enough, on the dedication page of *Holzwege*, Heidegger evokes indirectly the old meaning of dwelling as *dwellan* when he mentions the mostly overgrown pathways that come to an abrupt stop in the forest at the point where what lies beyond them is "untrodden" (*Unbegangenen*)¹⁶. It is not only the way that comes to a stop here, but the person straying from the beaten path stops in front of what is inaccessible and can either try to find his or her way back or, if there is no way back nor a home to return to, make a pause and linger on the verge of the unknown. We must not forget that it is this pause, while going astray, which stands at the beginning of dwelling in the sense of staying in a place. The old Nordic word *dvelja* first referred to making such a pause on the way in order to dwell on something or "*dvåle*", as we say in the Nordic countries when taking our time to give our full attention to something. It is this sort of dwelling as *dvelja* that is presupposed in building which would never take place if no one ever lingered in a place on his or her journey through life. Building is not identical with dwelling, but makes it possible for a dweller not only to stay for a while, but to make the world habitable and dwell in the full sense of the word.

In the western tradition, architecture has often been seen as covering the basic needs of man, giving him a shelter, but this is only one of the purposes of building and architecture is more than just building. It entails a vision of being embedded in a world of endless pathways, less exposed and without going astray, but still in contact with the surroundings. Architecture allows the inhabitants to reside in the sense of sitting back and dwell. Dwelling, however, does not only mean to withdraw from the world, but involves withdrawing into the world which is experienced in a different light from the inside. Light, colours, air and materials become essential

components in architecture in order to let inhabitants dwell among multiple ways and dwell on things living in a building which opens up towards its surroundings and becomes a reference point for orientation. Heidegger dismisses air, light and living in buildings as lesser aspects in dwelling and he thereby dispenses with fundamental dimensions in architecture, but there is more to man than just living on the earth under the sky. He can come to live still better and architecture plays a vital role in fulfilling this human aspiration.

Jørn Utzon, the architect of human well-being

In 2004 Jørn Utzon gave one of his last interviews to Poul Erik Tøjner, art critic and director of the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art. In his introduction to the interview, Tøjner calls Utzon "the great architect of human well-being"¹⁷; a concept which Utzon introduces in the interview to stress that architecture for him is about furthering the well-being of the people who use and dwell in the buildings. It is this word, "well-being" or in Danish "*velbefindende*", which Tøjner highlights as the main intention behind Utzon's work as an architect.

In the same interview, Utzon goes on to explain that this architectural principle implies studying the causes and the factors involved in human well-being: Light and sounds, stairs and walls, things and surroundings¹⁸. These factors have in themselves always played a key role in architecture and we can also find them in modern architecture and in Heidegger's text "Building, Dwelling, Thinking". Heidegger is especially interested in things as the center out of which everything else finds its place and place in itself is important for a certain strand of modern architecture to which Utzon belongs¹⁹.

Things, places and surroundings do undeniably play a key role in Utzon's work as in so many other modern architects' edifices, but what needs to be taken into consideration is that Utzon shows an interest in these factors in so far as they can make a contribution to human well-being. He is not specifically interested in any formal or abstract analysis of things, places or surroundings, although it may form part of any architectural project, and especially in modern and postmodern architecture, formal analysis often plays a key role in projects. Utzon shows an interest in how these fundamental factors influence and become causes of human flourishing; not being in itself, but well-being, not things in themselves, but human beings in relation to the things of everyday life is what Utzon centers on in his architecture.

This is important to bear in mind so as not to think that one can adequately uncover the cornerstone of Utzon's architecture using Heideggerian concepts²⁰. For Heidegger, human beings become integrated into the fourfold through things and places, but in his text on building and dwelling there is no possibility of heightening the feeling of being alive and living on earth. It seems sufficient for him to return to an original sense of being as dwelling which does not, actually, let human beings dwell, but it is rather being which lets earth and sky, the mortals and the gods fit together and dwell in the fourfold. Heidegger bases his understanding of building and dwelling on being and in this scheme of things human beings play only a minor role. Utzon proposes another understanding of dwelling and building based on human well-being. Where Heidegger dismisses architectural observations and reasoning about light and air, assemblage and economy as secondary in relation to the original meaning of dwelling and building, Utzon displays an architect's sensibility for these elements' significance in visualizing and creating places where people can integrate the building process into dwelling as a way of furthering human well-being.

We shall later return to this utzonian idea of integrating building with dwelling, but let us first take a look at how Utzon envisages that architecture can make the earth

13 Martin Heidegger. "Building, Dwelling, Thinking", in Neil Leach, ed., *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*. London, Routledge, 2005, pp. 97-98.

14 It should be mentioned that the Norwegian architect and thinker, Christian Norberg-Schulz, has made Heidegger's thinking applicable to architecture in a way which is very much in line with the reflections developed in this paper. However, it surpasses the scope of the present paper to go into a discussion of Norberg-Schulz's original interpretation of Heidegger.

15 Martin Heidegger. "Building, Dwelling, Thinking", in Neil Leach, ed., *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*. London, Routledge, 2005, p. 97.

16 Martin Heidegger. *Holzwege – Gesamtausgabe* 5. Frankfurt am Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 1977, p. 4.

17 Michael Juul Holm, Kjeld Kjeldsen, Mette Marcus, ed. *Jørn Utzon: The Architect's Universe. Humlebaek*, Louisiana Museum of Art, 2008, p. 4.

18 Holm, ed., *Jørn Utzon: The Architect's Universe*, pp. 6-7.

19 For a thorough analysis of this strand of modern architecture, see Michael Asgaard Andersen, *Places in Utzon's Architecture*. Copenhagen, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, 2006, especially chapters II and III.

20 Christian Norberg-Schulz and Kenneth Frampton go quite far in applying Heideggerian concepts in their interpretation of Utzon's work; but going into this discussion here will take us too far away from the present task, which is rather to show the difference between Utzon and Heidegger in their approach to and thoughts about architecture. See Tyrrel/Carter, "The Utzon Paradigm" (2013), for a recent example of a rather Heidegger-inspired approach to Utzon's work.

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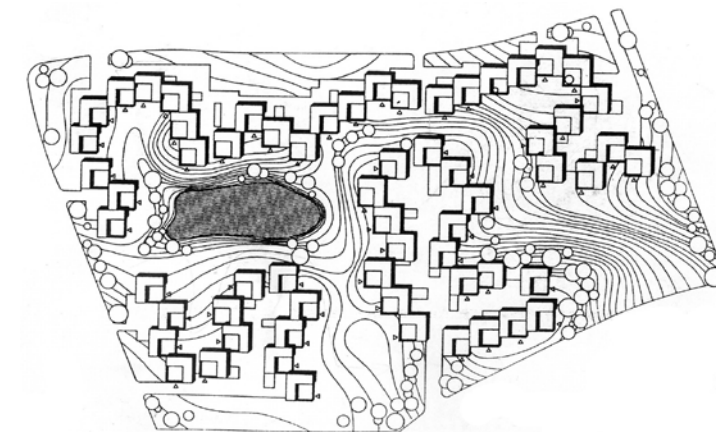
a better place to live. In an article, which Utzon wrote together with Tobias Faber in the 40s, he states that “architecture forms the setting for existence”²¹. Utzon and Faber advocate for living in and feeling architecture as if it took place inside a shell with its naturally curved and folded form, which becomes paradigmatic of Utzon’s work. The shell is both a material manifestation and a visual representation of human existence as a unique life form which is in need of architectural building as the setting not only for living, but for living well.

Choosing the shell as a material manifestation and a visual representation of dwelling, we are reminded that architecture, first of all, safeguards its inhabitants against wind, weather and intruders, creating a place into which they can withdraw without losing contact with the world. In contrast to Heidegger whose natural setting was the immense forest in Southern Germany, Schwarzwald, Utzon’s life horizon, since he was a child, had been the Nordic sea and the water surrounding Denmark. Where Heidegger relates dwelling and being to freeing and abiding in a clearing, Utzon links dwelling to a protected place in the middle of a landscape where the sea, which is not always calm and clear, is always near. In so far as being on the earth under the sky does not mean to dwell in any original sense, but it can rather refer to being lost without a place to stay, architecture is the art of building places where people can feel rooted to the earth and stay in contact with the forces of the sky, the air, the light and the sun, without being directly exposed to them. The careful study of the influences of these elements on human well-being is what Utzon proposes as the basic architectural principle.

The Danish word which Utzon uses for well-being is “*velbefindende*”. It is an enhancement of what in Danish is called “*befindende*” which refers to how one feels physically and emotionally. The German cognate is “*Befindlichkeit*” which Heidegger analyzes in *Being and Time* and explains as disclosing “*Dasein* in its thrownness”²². *Dasein* is man’s way of being open towards his own existence and *Befindlichkeit* refers to the fundamental way in which man finds himself being thrown into the world. The key word is “*find*” and corresponds to the Spanish expression “*encontrarse*” in the sense of how one feels, which is something that cannot be controlled from the start, but rather happens to us human beings. This is what both Utzon and Heidegger want to refer to: A state of being which is not provoked by man himself, but whereas Heidegger stays there and elaborates on what being means, Utzon goes beyond the mere state of being and envisions how the “surroundings affect us with their dimensions, light, shadows, colours”²³. This observation is taken from a text, “The Essence of Architecture”, which he wrote in 1948 and in which Utzon already talks about “well-being” as “the basis of architecture if we want to achieve harmony between the space that is created and what is to happen in it.”²⁴

Utzon actually comes close to Heidegger in this text when he talks about how a man finds himself in space feeling pleasure, joy or discomfort, but the Danish architect believes that architecture can have a significant influence on these states and transform given conditions into a heightened awareness of the surroundings. “This should be our starting point: moving unconscious reactions towards conscience”, he states programmatically and continues: “Nurturing our ability to perceive these conditions and their influence on us, being in contact with our surroundings, we find the path to the essence of architecture.”²⁵ This is not a path like Heidegger’s Holzwege on which the thinker dwells on untrodden ways. Instead, it leads to human dwelling places where the inhabitants are in contact with their natural surroundings and through the act of dwelling and building get an enhanced perception and a heightened feeling of belonging to the place.

Utzon’s understanding of dwelling is almost a reversal of the Heideggerian dictum that building is dwelling. Dwelling is, according to Utzon, a dynamic state in which



[Figs. 2-3] The Kingo houses.

the dwellers are invited to participate in an on-going building process which extends and assembles the already given parts of the dwelling in new ways. Utzon opens the way for the inhabitants to partake in what he himself calls “additive architecture”, which resembles the organizing principle of natural life forms when they add to their state of being, their “*befindende*”, further components or pieces in keeping with the ground structure and without having to cut to measure anything first²⁶. This extension of their own being through which the dwellers participate in adding something vital to their own life form, aware of the nature of the elements and dimensions in the building process, contributes to the heightened state of well-being, “*velbefindende*”, which Utzon sees as the principal aim of architecture. Human beings do not have to remain in a state of finding themselves thrown into the world, disclosed in *Befindlichkeit*, but they may find a source of well-being, *velbefindende*, in dwelling and building.

This explains why Utzon links the study of human well-being, in the interview with Tøjner, to the capacity of visualizing space and creating buildings in which the materials can be combined and assembled in new ways that resemble nature²⁷. This organic way of dwelling and building, in which the dweller does not stand under the architect, but understands him- or herself as partaking in architecture and the architect sees him- or herself as a dweller, shows “a strong desire for getting away from the box-type house”²⁸, Utzon says in “Additive Architecture”. Instead, the utzonian form of building – and in this respect, Utzon is clearly under the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright – opens the dwelling from the inside and lets dwellers interact with their surroundings. Utzon’s housing schemes for the Kingo and Fredensborg settlements from the 50s and 60s, respectfully placed out in open nature, are based on additive principles which allow the inhabitants to remodel their “settings for existence” in an organic and economic way. Additive architecture follows natural growth patterns by assembling pre-fabricated modules through what Utzon considered to be “a new architectural expression”²⁹ and opens the possibility of going beyond the already given sizes, measures and partitions of a house without breaking up the basic structure of the building. Dwelling still covers the basic meaning of remaining in a place, being well and sheltered, but for Utzon being well involves being able to give form to one’s own life form and thus “to avoid sinning against the right of existence of the individual expression”³⁰.

Again the image of the shell comes to mind and seems to embrace the meaning which Utzon wants to reinvest architecture with: A protected, but at the same time open and potentially extendible life form which is simultaneously folded in on itself and discretely turned outwards. The Sydney Opera House with its curved and folded roof construction, which looks like an immense structure of overlapping sea shells, can illustrate this point. In an essay titled “Architecture as Contemplation”,

21 Jørn Utzon, Tobias Faber, “Tendenser i Nutidens Arkitektur”, *Arkitekten* 7-9 (1947), cit. from Michael Juul Holm, Kjeld Kjeldsen, Mette Marcus, ed., *Jørn Utzon: The Architect's Universe*. Humlebaek, Louisiana Museum of Art, 2008, p. 28.

22 Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 17a ed., Tübingen: Niemeyer Verlag, 1993, p. 136.

23 Jørn Utzon, *Obras y proyectos, Works and projects*, in Jaime J. Ferrer Forés, ed. Barcelona, Gili, 2006, p. 23.

24 Utzon, *Works and projects*, p. 24.

25 Utzon, *Works and projects*, p. 23.

26 Utzon, *Works and projects*, p. 245.

27 Michael Juul Holm, Kjeld Kjeldsen, Mette Marcus, ed., *Jørn Utzon: The Architect's Universe*. Humlebaek, Louisiana Museum of Art, 2008, pp. 8-9.

28 Jørn Utzon: *Obras y proyectos, Works and projects*, in Jaime J. Ferrer Forés, ed. Barcelona, Gili, 2006, p. 245.

29 Ibidem.

30 Ibidem.

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[Figs. 4] The Sydney Opera House.

Poul Erik Tøjner describes this construction in the following way: “The whole point of the sails or shells – or whatever we should call this floating roof construction – is that they refer to the geometry of the circle. Each shell rises from the ground with resilient poise, but returns just as naturally again – for if you extend the line of each pointed arch, they curve inwards in an embrace rather than lift themselves towards the skies.³¹”

Utzon aimed at drawing people into the world through his buildings, letting them partake, when possible, in building, but first of all letting them dwell in the sense of *dvæle*, the Danish term for giving dwellers time to contemplate the world from a calm place and so furthering human well-being. The Kingo and Fredensborg settlements as well as Utzon's two houses on Majorca are constructed around a gathering place which opens up towards the world, or as Utzon himself put in one occasion: “I feel that I began from inside. I consider that if I design a space for people to meet in, I place them around a table, pour some light over them, and encase them with walls, and perhaps make an eye-level opening for a view onto, say, a tree [...]”³².

Concluding remarks on rethinking architecture

Dwelling and building are fundamental concepts in architecture. Rethinking these concepts leads to rethinking architecture. Heidegger bases his understanding of building and dwelling on being, the fundamental way in which we mortals exist on the earth under the sky. This understanding can do without architecture as the art of building places for human dwelling. In his final remarks on building and dwelling, Heidegger repeats what he has claimed throughout the text that these concepts are not sufficiently defined if we take our starting point in architecture as constructing places in which to reside and he states that a deeper, but still insufficient understanding of building lies concealed in the tectonics of architecture as *technē*³³.

Tectonics should, however, not be confounded with *technē*, although the two words come from the same word *titktō*, as Heidegger says. Tectonics is a concept which can be traced back to the ancient Greek tradition: tektones refer to those artisans who work with heavy instruments in hard materials which they cut up and often also unite again to make them fit into a building project³⁴. Tectonics cannot, as Heidegger wishes, be separated from basic construction processes as little as architecture can be separated from building places for human dwelling.

This paper has reinterpreted dwelling and building in order to place them in another setting which is not foreign from Heidegger's landscape of Holzwege, but the difference is that in our interpretation there is room for architecture to work on building places for human dwelling which are defined by opening a space into which a dweller can withdraw and be less exposed. Utzon, who develops his thinking through his work with light, sounds, colours and materials, sees this dimension of dwelling as fundamental for the creation and furthering of human well-being. At the same time, the dwellers in Utzon's vision of architecture remains connected to their surroundings and are invited to partake in forming their own setting for existence. The utzonian approach allows for an integration of building with dwelling in which new components can be added to an already existing structure without breaking up or cutting to measure anything. The essential idea is rather “to achieve harmony between the space that is created and what is to happen in it”, or to use another expression of Utzon, “to further well-being”.

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31 Poul Erik Tøjner, “Architecture as Contemplation”, *Hotel Magazine*, 2004 (checked March 31 2014), <http://hotelmagazine.dk/blog/articles/architecture-as-contemplation/>

32 Jørn Utzon, Royal Gold Medalist, *RIBA Journal*, Oct. 1978, p. 426.

33 Martin Heidegger, “Building, Dwelling, Thinking”, in Neil Leach, ed., *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*. London, Routledge, 2005, p. 103

34 See Maria Karvouni, “Demas: The Human Body as a Tectonic Construct”, in Alberto Perez-Gomez, Stephen Parcell, ed. *Chora 3: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*. Montreal McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999, pp. 105-106.