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Multigenerational Dwelling and its Conceptual Roots

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Abstract

Driven by recent demographic and social shifts multigenerational dwelling is gaining increased attention. This paper focusses on the need for an underlying vision on this phenomenon in order to understand and develop concrete (architectural) realisations. More specifically the paper questions how the static phenomenological approach of dwelling (Heidegger/Bollnow) can be related to postmodern rhizomatic (Deleuze & Guattari) and spherical (Sloterdijk) thinking. Within this paper the argument is developed that the achievements of the phenomenology of dwelling can be described as in symbiosis with the rhizomatic and spherical nature of multigenerational dwelling. In this way the paper creates an underlying conceptual vision that can be of use in the current debate on changing housing needs in our postmodern society.

Keywords: multigenerational, dwelling, phenomenology, postmodern

1 New Need for Multigenerational Dwelling

Impelled by current social and demographic changes multigenerational dwelling gains more and more attention in Flanders (Declerck et al., 2012; De Bleeckere & Gerards, 2012). With people living longer, increasing opportunities arise for three and more generations to live together. Higher housing and children costs and an increased life expectancy have sparked a renewed interest in multigenerational dwelling. Recent realisations in Germany, Austria and Scandinavian countries demonstrate that these extended families usually live in several, separate, self-contained household units that are connected through the use of shared spaces.

Within this paper we will focus on the need for an underlying vision of the phenomenon 'multigenerational dwelling' in order to understand and develop concrete (architectural) realisations. More specifically the paper questions how the phenomenological approach of dwelling (Heidegger/Bollnow) can be related to the rhizomatic (Deleuze & Guattari) and spherical (Sloterdijk) thinking seen from the perspective of multigenerational dwelling. Combining the phenomenological essence of dwelling with those two postmodern, dynamic and complex concepts (rhizome & sphere) helps to articulate the concept of interweaving private and communal spaces within communal housing projects as one of the parameters for intergenerational cohabitation. Inside intergenerational housing projects the achievement of the phenomenological concern for the essence of dwelling can be described as in symbiosis with the rhizomatic and spherical nature of multigenerational dwelling. In this way the paper develops an underlying vision that can be of use in the current debate on changing housing conditions in postmodern society. Additionally, with this vision the debate on multigenerational housing can transcend the current arguments for

multigenerational housing, which are mostly of an economic ('housing market') and sociologic ('demographical statistics') nature.

2 Phenomenological Essence of Dwelling

Despite its historical roots, a clear conceptual definition for a renewed way of multigenerational dwelling is inexistent. Given the difficulties to explain and define dwelling itself (Coolen, 2009), the lack of a conceptual definition for multigenerational dwelling as a new housing concept isn't surprising at all. Nevertheless, to understand the conceptual roots of modern multigenerational dwelling, we begin our study by investigating the phenomenological essence of dwelling as it is described in the work of the founding authors of the phenomenology of dwelling: Martin Heidegger and Otto Friedrich Bollnow.

2.1 Being a Dweller

Dwelling in itself has a central focus within the discipline of phenomenology (Moore, 2000). Perhaps the starting point for its inquiry was Heidegger's interest in place and dwelling (Lefas, 2009). From our point of view, the fact that dwelling has become a theme in the twentieth-century philosophy is a very telling sign. It suggests that there is a close connection between dwelling and the questions and problems of the post-war period, especially in Germany. For the first time, dwelling itself became a real issue.

According to Heidegger, dwelling identifies the essential element of what it means to be a human being living in the world (1971). Within the context of reconstruction after World War II in Germany, Heidegger started reflecting about the phenomenon 'space'. Space as a phenomenon uncovers dwelling, which is only possible if thinking and dwelling are open and aligned to each other. This is missing in the pure rational, functional and technological thinking in post-war Germany and implies the forgotten roots of the phenomenon 'dwelling' (Lefas, 2009).

In *Sein und Zeit* (1926) Heidegger describes the basic constitution of '*Dasein*' as a formal way of 'being-in-the-world'. In *Bauen Wohnen Denken* (1954) / *Building Dwelling Thinking* (1971) he takes a more concrete approach to describe the way in which human beings are on earth. 'To be a human being means to be on earth as a mortal. It means to dwell' (Heidegger, 1971: 145). The first part of his essay deals with the question what it means to dwell. According to Heidegger, we are inclined to think that we build a house or a shelter in order to dwell somewhere, so that we attain to dwelling by means of building. From this perspective, dwelling and building are related as end and means. Heidegger, however, criticizes this end-means relationship. In his view, building is not merely a means in which human beings are on earth. Only if we are capable of dwelling, we can build. 'We do not dwell because we have built, but we build and have built because we dwell, that is because we are dwellers' (Heidegger, 1971: 146). This 'being a dweller' refers to an anthropological characteristic of human being. Human beings ever search anew for the future of dwelling.

It seems that 'being at home' in Heidegger's writings does not always have the same meaning. In *Bauen Wohnen Denken* he writes: 'The truck driver is at home on the highway, but he does not have his shelter there; the working woman is at home in the spinning mill, but she does not have her dwelling place there, the chief engineer is at home in the power station, but he does not dwell here' (Heidegger, 1971: 143-144). It appears from this quotation that 'being at home' is used here in a weak sense compared to the pregnant meaning in *Sein und Zeit* (Moore, 2000). In *Bauen Wohnen Denken* being at home means something like having practical knowledge of the situation and knowing how to act. Consequently, being at home - in this weak sense - is not the same as

dwelling somewhere.

In the next part of *Bauen Wohnen Denken*, Heidegger broadens his scope, paying attention not only on the physical, but also on the inter-relational and theoretical aspects of dwelling by introducing a theory of what he calls the *fourfold* (*Geviert*); which is the ensemble of earth, sky, divinities and mortals. To preserve the fourfold, to save the earth, to receive the sky, to await the divinities, to escort mortals – this fourfold preserving is the simple nature, the preserving, of dwelling (Heidegger, 1954). In *Bauen Wohnen Denken* Heidegger does not provide any ontological foundation for the concept or idea of the *fourfold* (Heidegger, 1971). Heidegger only argues that ‘on earth’ already means ‘under the sky’, and that both of these also mean ‘remaining before the divinities’, and include a ‘belonging to men’s being with one another’. The *fourfold* simply means that there are four aspects, which are one at the same time. When we say ‘earth’ we are already thinking of the other three along with it ‘by way of the simple oneness of the four’. The same holds for the sky, the divinities and the mortals respectively.

Even though in *Bauen Wohnen Denken* an ontological foundation for the *fourfold* is missing, Heidegger’s analysis is insightful for two reasons. First, it reminds us of his earlier description of human ‘*Dasein*’ as ‘being-in-the-world’. The basic character of dwelling is to spare and to preserve. Mortal human beings are in the world - they dwell - by preserving the *fourfold*, that is by saving the earth, receiving the sky, awaiting the divinities and initiating their own mortality. Second, the idea of the *fourfold* illustrates that dwelling not only refers to an activity amidst a material environment, but also to the existential dimensions of human life. Being human is dwelling, that is, staying with and among things under one roof (Heidegger, 1971).

In his essay *Bauen Wohnen Denken* Heidegger offers a concrete paradigm of what dwelling ‘has been’ by pointing to the Black Forest farmhouse and ‘how it [namely, the dwelling of previous times] was able to build’ – without thereby linking it with the demand ‘that we should or could go back to building such houses’ (Heidegger, 1971: 158). Heidegger describes a handicraft that itself is rooted in rustic dwelling, and therefore not only stands in close connection with peasant life, but in fact the peasant’s dwelling.

Here the self-sufficiency of the power to let earth and heaven, divinities and mortals enter in simple oneness into things, ordered the house. It placed the farm on the wind-sheltered mountain slope looking south, among the meadows close to the spring. It gave it the wide overhanging shingle roof whose proper slope bears up under the burden of snow, and which, reaching deep down, shields the chambers against the storms of the long winter nights. It did not forget the altar corner behind the community table; it made room in its chamber for the hallowed places of childbed and the "tree of the dead"-for that is what they call a coffin there: the Totenbaum-and in this way it designed for the different generations under one roof the character of their journey through time. A craft which, itself sprung from dwelling, still uses its tools and frames as things, built the farmhouse. (Heidegger, 1971: 157-158)

In *Gelassenheit* (1959) Heidegger continues his argumentation and asks: ‘Does there exist anymore a peaceful dwelling of man between heaven and earth?’ Does there exist anymore the homeland capable of receiving roots, in whose earth man stands firmly (*steht standing*), i.e., is on solid ground (*boden-ständig*) (Heidegger, 1959)? Heidegger’s answer could not have been clearer. He argues that many German people lost their homeland, had to abandon their villages and towns, and they were driven from the land of their home. Countless others, for whom homeland has been preserved, nevertheless left, fell into busyness of the big cities and had to move to the desolateness of industrial

regions. They have been alienated from their native place. We have lost our rootedness, Heidegger says, and thus we can no longer dwell the way earlier generations could (Heidegger, 1959). However, Heidegger's vocabulary has its own peculiar colouring that rather evaporates than articulates the realm of dwelling.

2.2 Real Dwelling

In his essay *Der erlebte Raum* (1961), but also in his more extensive work *Mensch und Raum* (1963) / *Human Space* (2011), Bollnow argues that philosophy at his time was mostly concerned with the problem of the temporal structure of human existence and neglected the spatial constitution of human life. According to him, we need a reflection on the problem of lived space (*elebter Raum*). Bollnow's phenomenological approach is based on the observation of the lived space as men's place to dwell. From Bollnow's point of view phenomenology of human dwelling has four modifications of spatiality, which are not mutually exclusive (2011). They cross each other, they form structural layers which are always simultaneously present. The first modification of spatiality is a primary naive spatial confidence, the feeling of security like that of a child. This is contrasted with the second modification which might be described as the fear of homelessness, which results in the feeling of being lost. This again is countered by the third modification, the institution of the house to provide protection. But, Bollnow states, since no protection is absolute, the consciousness of a higher level of security in larger spatial dimensions is of great importance and definable as the fourth modification.

In *Mensch und Raum* Bollnow uses a phenomenological language. For him concrete lived space, the space in which a human being remains and moves, is entirely different from the abstract space of mathematicians and scientists. According to him, a house or home is the centre of the spatial life of the individual. Within his phenomenological work Bollnow comes to the insight that the main characteristic of a house is related to the difference between the inner and outer space. Through building a house or home, man carves out of the universal space his secure and private space. The walls of this private house represent the boundary between inner and outer space. Of course, this boundary is not a static or fixed one. Moreover, we are able to cross this boundary. Inside and outside are not just elements in an objective geometrical space to be described along a couple of objective axes. The fact that a house has windows and doors, demonstrates Bollnow's understanding of a threshold, a boundary as something to cross or an invitation to pass (2011). Although the house is an area of peace, security and safety, a human being would pine away if he locked himself in his house to escape from the dangers of the world outside. He must go out into the world to fulfil his role in life. According to Bollnow, security and danger both belong to the human condition, and consequently to both areas of the inhabited space (2011).

Obviously, Bollnow's philosophical viewpoint gives priority to 'protecting space' (Bollnow, 2011). In accordance with Bachelard, Bollnow argues that the house is the primary world of human existence (Bollnow, 2011). Before he is 'thrown into the world', a human being is laid into the cradle of the house. A human being is a spatial being because he spent his entire existence accompanied by a feeling and sense of well-being (*Wohlsein*). In the later stage of consciousness, depending on the hostile outside world, the conscious description of the original, first experience of being one with space is needed. Here Bollnow follows Heidegger and argues that man needs to learn to dwell (Bollnow, 2011; Heidegger, 1971). To dwell is not an activity amongst others, but a determination of human beings in which they realize their real existence.

As mentioned above, the four modified stages of human spatiality cannot be understood in a

chronological sequence. Throughout life they cross each other in a rich context. Yet the perception of spatiality isn't evident. Spatiality also reclaims man. Concretely this is shown through the responsibility of human beings towards dwelling. Since spatiality is no coincidence, but an existential essence of human existence, the concern for dwelling is paramount and of great importance. Through dwelling, the whole being of man is involved. Bollnow's concern for real dwelling (*das wahre Wohnen*) constantly moves between two antipodes: not-dwelling in the sense of a feeling of being thrown into the world on the one hand and a false dwelling inside a locked house on the other hand. According to Bollnow, the task of real dwelling consists of three claims. First, to settle at a particular place in space and create an area of privacy and security. Second, to challenge and involve the threatening and dangerous outer space in human life because there should always be a tension between these two areas which are both essential to the human, spatial existence. And third, Bollnow argues, man must overcome his naïve believe in the strength of the house. While dwelling in a house (inner space) man must try to entrust universal space (outer space).

Just as Heidegger, Bollnow situates real dwelling inside a house, a home (Bollnow, 2011; Heidegger, 1971). Nevertheless with one significant difference. Unlike Heidegger, Bollnow argues that real dwelling is not determined by the design of the house but the life inside of it. Bollnow goes further than Heidegger through noticing that dwelling is only thinkable as dwelling-together. Dwelling is only possible within a community, and, Bollnow adds, the true house longs for a family (2011).

The dwelling of a bachelor could hardly appear intimate to us, and it will never be possible to a widower to preserve this intimacy that formerly held sway here. In such a case it inevitably vanishes away by degrees. It is equally true that one must be a couple, as human nature demands, to create intimacy around and between ourselves. (Bollnow, 2011: 145)

According to Bollnow, real dwelling is only possible when man, woman (and children) come together under one roof as a nuclear family. In *Mensch und Raum*, Bollnow clearly demonstrates that dwelling is not only searching for intimacy [*Geborgenheit* (Bollnow), initially based on *intimité* (Minkowski)] in space (*Raum*) and at a certain place (*Ort*), but, above all, between other human beings. In itself, Bollnow's finding that real dwelling is only possible as dwelling-together is valuable, but the fact that he visualizes this dwelling as the living together of a nuclear family makes it difficult to use this concept as a potential answer to the current housing need and need for housing (in Flanders).

3 A Postmodern Approach

By explaining the *fourfold*, that is by saving the earth, receiving the sky, awaiting the divinities and initiating their own nature, Heidegger comes to a similar definition of dwelling as Bollnow who uses the eternal link between inner and outer space. In essence, for both philosophers, dwelling is a constant quest for balance and stability – shaped inside a house, a home. What is striking and problematic within the writings of Heidegger and Bollnow is their representation of this house/home. Both seem to be captured by their specific social and historical contexts. In spite of the fact that a general definition of dwelling is achieved, Heidegger in his mythical *Bauen Wohnen Denken* visualizes a real house as a historical Black Forest farmhouse. Although he adds that he does not want to turn back to this traditional way of housing, a contemporary solution is missing in his approach. And also in Bollnow's *Mensch und Raum* we encounter a problematic gap. In comparison with Heidegger, Bollnow does not use concrete images to explain dwelling inside a house, but he argues that dwelling

itself is only possible when man, woman (and children) come together under one roof as a nuclear family. In fact a certain dynamism is missing within the phenomenology of dwelling. It's static character hinders us to rethink contemporary dwelling concepts.

To explore the conceptual roots of multigenerational dwelling we therefore need to investigate supplementary concepts that can be linked better to our current housing needs. Our aim is definitely not to reject the essence of dwelling we found in phenomenological thinking, but to demonstrate that this dwelling should be broadened by a postmodern approach. Consequently we enrich the phenomenological essence of dwelling through rethinking it in a more dynamic way.

3.1 Rhizomatic Thinking

In the work of Deleuze and Guattari conflicts between the static and the dynamic play an important role. Deleuze and Guattari introduce numerous concepts like the rhizome, smooth space and the nomad which they place opposite to the tree-structure, striated space and the State. The concepts both philosophers introduce are in a continuous struggle with each other. The dynamic concepts are regarded as productive, the fixed structures as non-productive. In the work of Deleuze and Guattari, production is regarded as creativity, innovation, the development of concepts outside the existing routines and expectations.

In the introduction of *Mille Plateaux* (1980) / *A thousand Plateaus* (1988), Deleuze and Guattari summarize the main characteristics of a rhizome: unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs. The rhizome is neither reducible to the One nor to the multiple. It is not the One that becomes two or even directly three, four, five etc. It is not a multiple derived from the One, or to which One is added. It is not composed of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion. 'A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between thing, interbeing, *intermezzo*' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 27). According to Deleuze and Guattari, it constitutes linear multiplicities with 'n' dimensions having neither subject nor object. When a multiplicity of this kind changes dimension, it necessarily changes in nature as well, it undergoes a metamorphosis. 'Unlike the graphic arts, drawing or photography, unlike tracings, the rhizome pertains to a map that must be produced, constructed, a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entranceways and exits and its own lines of flight' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988: 21). Beside the phenomenological view in which dwelling is a form of a nest (Bollnow and Heidegger), where people open a space of being, an intimate and secure bordered place, sheltering themselves for the outside world, a conceptual view could be distinguished in which dwelling is driven by a need to free oneself from a binding order and border of home, through a constant be-coming and estrangement, hence by constantly othering oneself.

In order to understand contemporary multigenerational dwelling there is a need to relate these two ends of the dwelling continuum. Recent architectural realisations in Germany (e.g. Stadthaus statt Haus, 2002), Austria (e.g. Sargfabrik, 2000) and Scandinavian countries (e.g. Lange Eng, 2008) demonstrate that the borderline between private and communal space inside multigenerational dwellings necessarily moves between a crucial need for privacy and communality as an antipole, making borders in an ontological sense intrinsically and unavoidably always a shifting line in the sand (Deutsch, 2007; Fuchs & Orth, 2003; Scherf, 2006).

3.2 The Foam Metaphor

In our view, Peter Sloterdijk's imaginative *Sphären* (Spheres) trilogy could help as a conceptual

stimulus to create that much needed bridge between the bordering efforts of nesting and the desire to escape from it. A sphere, according to Sloterdijk, can be understood as a socially created, self-animated space, in which a commonality of experience is rendered possible and where human beings find protective refuge from the outside world (1998). Sloterdijk calls this space a sphere in order to indicate that we are ourselves 'space-creating beings', and that we cannot exist otherwise than in these 'self-animated spaces' (1998). For Sloterdijk social forms of togetherness thus acquire a somewhat 'morphological' connotation (Klauser, 2010: 329). Being-in-the-world, for the German philosopher, is always being-in-spheres: that is, living under commonly semiotic skies (Sloterdijk, 1998), in self-animated spaces of togetherness. Latour therefore argues that spheres are useful for describing local, fragile, and complex 'atmospheric conditions' (2011). Sloterdijk is not concerned with form as an immutable value, but with formation as a process (Klauser, 2010). Sloterdijk claims that a theory of spheres always converges with a theory of mediation (1998). His main emphasis lies on the processes and modes of mediation of human relationships that create and articulate vital spherical geometries of individuals and social groups (1998).

The three volumes of the spherology *Sphären* unfold life's spherical constitution on several different scales (Van de Ven, 2002). The first volume, *Sphären I: Blasen*, is about micro-spheres, more specifically so-called bubbles, i.e., dyadic relations that make up the tiniest possible forms of sociality (Borch, 2011). Examples of such bubbles include pair relations such as that between foetus and placenta (Sloterdijk, 1998). 'One of the key ideas in the analysis of bubbles is that the pair or couple is always primary to the individual' (Borch, 2011: 30). In fact Sloterdijk's position corresponds to Bollnow's finding that real dwelling is only possible as dwelling-together (1963). However, Sloterdijk himself neglects this possible link.

The second volume in the trilogy, *Sphären II: Globen*, studies macro-spheres, or globes. This part offers a history of globalization, as it demonstrates how, from Greek mythology to Christian theology, the notion of the One Sphere (the One Globe, or God) formed a predominant 'thought-figure' (Sloterdijk, 1999). Yet God's death implied the implosion of the One Sphere, which was replaced with a plurality of minor spheres (Borch, 2011).

The third volume of Sloterdijk's trilogy, *Sphären III: Schäume*, investigates this spherical diversity under the name of foams. Actually, the transition from the second to the third book refers to a modernization theory. It demonstrates how, in our modern society the belief of a grand unity has dissolved and how, instead, a heterogeneous social order has emerged which has no centre and which is characterized by no overarching logic (Borch, 2011). Indeed, when faced with a world of foams, we are confronted with an image of a rather fragmented society where different life forms are only scantily related to one another. This is also the key message Sloterdijk delivers when he defines foam as 'co-isolated associations' or as 'connected isolations' (Sloterdijk, 2004: 302). A certain association can be recognized, but in social foam human beings live their lives as isolated bubbles that only share membranes with their neighbours.

Although it only constitutes one part of the entire sphere project, Sloterdijk's foam is a very complex and multifaceted phenomenon. Linked to the theme of this paper three aspects of Sloterdijk's foam metaphor should be emphasized. One relates to how foam is composed, the other one is broader and regards the rhizomatic relations of foam bubbles, finally the third aspect concerns the architectural dimension pertinent to foam.

First, as mentioned above, Sloterdijk develops a theoretical argument according to which 'the globe as an all-encompassing meaning sphere has imploded and been replaced by a plurality of co-isolated foam bubbles' (Borch, 2011: 30). The metaphor of foam refers to its physical counterpart, as

it appears in a wash tub of soap bubbles. Every bubble represents a singular entity or unit, which is at once detached and isolated from other bubbles and connected to its direct neighbours through the membranes they share. The shared membranes imply co-fragility. If one foam bubble bursts, this will always affect the neighbouring bubbles in the 'spherical society'. Within this framework Sloterdijk rejects usual conceptions of society and launches his own alternative: By 'society' he understands an aggregate of micro-spheres (couples, households, companies, associations) of different formats that are nearby to one another like individual bubbles in a mound of foam. Additionally, they are structures one layer over/under the other, without really being accessible to or separable from one another (Borch, 2009; Sloterdijk, 2004). Each cell in the structure of foam establishes a self-animated world of its own, whilst being defined by the fragile boundary it shares with its direct neighbours. Sloterdijk's emphasis on the resulting state of co-isolation and co-fragility (2004: 255) highlights each cell's need to create and preserve mediated relationships with the exteriority.

Second, foam per definition compromises a large variety of bubble sizes and shapes, without presenting a clear centre (Sloterdijk, 2004). Sloterdijk's foam metaphor captures the pluralism of contemporary world creations, allowing to understand modern individualism as multiplicities of loosely touching cells of life worlds (Klauser, 2010; Sloterdijk, 2004). Foam, in this case, can certainly be linked to the above mentioned rhizome. Foam allows us to picture the rhizomatic bubble or sphere not as a singular unit, but in ever present contact with a multitude of other monadic bubbles, appearing and disappearing over time (Frichot, 2009). 'The beauty of bubbles is in their irregular, not quite spherical instantiations: when bubbles, individuals, or beings, human and non-human, amass and cohere, their influence on one another creates all manner of formal distortion' (Frichot, 2009: 4). If we consider the behaviour of foam as a medium, and transfer this medium isomorphically into an understanding of modern dwelling, composed of co-isolated, but adjacent bubbles, then, Sloterdijk argues, whatever the degree of isolation established by receptive individuals might be, they are always co-isolated islands that are connected to a network of adjacent islands constituting rhizomatic structures (Sloterdijk, 2004). These structures are all 'confederations of life, and in each instance they circulate the midst of material stuff of architectural surrounds, which should not be divided off, or considered distinct from these networks' (Frichot, 2009).

The third and final point is Sloterdijk's interest in the architectural dimensions of foam. This interest in architectural matters is a reflection of his concern with the spatial embeddedness of foam and spheres. Most importantly for the present purposes, architecture is a crucial way of establishing immunity, whether this is done by creating thick, stable walls or by living in mobile architectures that allow for pre-emptive escape (Borch, 2011). The emphasis on the immunity created by architecture leads Sloterdijk to describe the residence as a spatial immune system (Sloterdijk, 2004). It is through the medium of foam that we can address the idea of contemporary dwelling as a foaming mass of relations that is ever-transforming, that is composed of bubbles of affect and percept that spring up only to disappear again, fleetingly. Bruno Latour, a particular champion of Sloterdijk's work for architecture, insists that 'Sloterdijk is the thinker of architecture' today (Latour, 2008: 125). If we take foam as a medium that only fleetingly allows the identification of provisional identities (or bubbles) then the task for the designer, Latour suggests, is to create the conditions of cohabitation. According to Sloterdijk, one of the challenges of modern collectives, is that of 'creating spatial conditions that enable both the isolation of individuals, and the concentration of isolated entities into collective ensembles of cooperation and contemplation' (2004: 607 – own translation). And, he adds, 'this calls for a new commitment on the part of architecture' (Sloterdijk, 2004: 607 – own translation).

4 Towards a Spherical Understanding of Multigenerational Dwelling

In order to find the conceptual roots for postmodern multigenerational dwelling we studied two generations of thinkers. With the first generation, Heidegger and Bollnow, we learned that dwelling is not only searching for intimacy (*Geborgenheit*) in space (*Raum*) and at a certain place (*Ort*), but, above all, between other human beings. Both, Heidegger and Bollnow, use a phenomenological language to demonstrate that lived space, the space in which a human being perceives and moves, is entirely different from the abstract space of mathematicians and scientists. For both, Heidegger and Bollnow, the house or home is the center of spatial life.

Since Bollnow' and Heidegger's search for the phenomenological essence of dwelling results in a static and inflexible approach on dwelling we set our sights on a second generation of thinkers: Deleuze, Guattari and Sloterdijk. From our point of view, especially Sloterdijk's foam theory succeeds in re-describing dwelling through defining its creation-potential, rhizomatic character and architectural applicability. The phenomenological essence of dwelling, like it is described in the work of Heidegger and Bollnow, is not completely rejected here – it is further developed and enriched. The example of multigenerational dwelling makes this very clear.

Through a critical study of Heidegger and Bollnow we learned that dwelling is an everlasting search for intimacy in space, at a specific place, but, most of all, between other human beings. In the 21st century we have to admit that this can no longer exclusively result in the cohabitation of one nuclear family inside a detached house. Sloterdijk's foam theory allows us to rethink dwelling in a postmodern and dynamic way. Of course dwelling remains seeking for intimacy (*Geborgenheit*) in space (*Raum*), at a certain place (*Ort*), between other human beings, but one specific housing concept is not imposed here. Like other housing concepts, multigenerational dwelling receives its right to exist as a sequence of bubbles accompanying a state of co-isolation and co-fragility.

Additionally, and in contrast to the traditional dwelling of a nuclear family, where all family members occupy hierarchically structured positions, the foam metaphor allows us to rethink dwelling in a more rhizomatic and thus anti-hierarchical way. With some courage one might say that postmodern dwelling concepts as multigenerational dwelling, might be a more appropriate cornerstone for our postmodern society than the traditional nuclear family. In small, spherical communities - in state of co-isolation and co-fragility – human beings realize what democracy in essence means.

All being-in-the-world possesses the traits of coexistence. The question of being so hotly debated by philosophers can be asked here in terms of the coexistence of people and things in connective spaces. That implies a quadruple relationship: Beings means someone (1) being together with someone else (2) and with something else (3) in something (4). This formula describes the minimum complexity you need to construct in order to arrive at an appropriate concept of world. Architects are involved in this consideration, since for them being-in-the-world means dwelling in building. A house is a three-dimensional answer to the question of how someone can be together with someone and something in something. In their own way, architects interpret this most enigmatic of all spatial prepositions, namely the "in". (Sloterdijk, 2009)

Last but not least, Sloterdijk directs our attention to the role of architecture as an often forgotten player in the theory of dwelling. Architecture certainly regulates the conditions of cohabitation. When housing needs change and new dwelling concepts arise, a new commitment on the part of architecture should not be neglected. Perhaps this is Sloterdijk's main contribution to the phenomenological essence of dwelling.

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