INTRODUCTION
The reflection paper is an obligatory part of the graduation thesis. The Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences track at the Technical University of Delft uses this document as reflection on the design project. This paper has been submitted during the final phase of the design and gives a subjective overview of the taken steps, challenges and accomplishments. Not only does this document describe the projects, it also gives insight on the design process ranging from research to design.

HERITAGE & DESIGN
For my Msc1 I was enrolled for the Public Building track and for the Msc2 I went abroad and did a studio that was similar to the Hyperbody track at the Technical University of Delft. For the graduation year I selected the Heritage & Architecture track because of my interest in designing with existing urban and architectural fabric in a complex situation. These three different studio give me a comprehensive portfolio that illustrates designs on multiple levels.

Heritage & Design graduation studio is a part of the Heritage & Architecture track and is one of the four studios. I selected the Heritage & Design track because of the scale of the project, complex social and historic situation and future perspective of the site.

The site is located in the historic city center of Amsterdam (The Netherlands) and has a particularly complex history of change. Over decades the site changed pragmatically as well as structurally. The site has been occupied with Monasteries, Cloisters, Hospitals, Housing and eventually as it is now, University Campus for the University of Amsterdam (UVA). The former hospital buildings, named “Binnengasthuisen”, are now occupied by the university buildings, with some additions and a 80’s housing complex in the same site.

Already from our first visit to the site I interpreted the location as a collage of buildings that was functioning as a one single image. This image reminded me of the ‘La Tendenza’ group view on architecture as the Architecture of the City. The image constructed by Arduino Cantaforo was most appealing to me in describing my view on the current configuration of the site. Like the images illustrates, the single architectural objects work together to form a specific image that is named the city, all of them unique but depending on one and other object.

From this point on I was interested in the site as a single body and how I could intervene in this existing configuration of buildings and manifest my design for the future inner city campus, using the existing buildings. The research question was formulated as follow:

“How can the existing buildings within this collage of co-existence be “used” to contain and harbor a new program?”

RESEARCH AND DESIGN.
The research developed through the aspect of ‘using the exciting’. From this point of view, reference projects and case studies were analyzed to get a clear view on how existing buildings can be ‘used’. The term parasitic architecture came up several times during this research. Already early on in the design phase I started researching what parasitic architecture is and how this was deployed in the design with heritage and existing urban situations.

The term parasite is well known as a harmful organism that can invade the human body. But the adaptation of the word to the architectural profession by architects such as Mechthild Stuhlmacher, OMA office or MVRDV was unclear to me for a long time. During the research phase I tried to use the word parasite as an invader to the site and that this invader was able to change the site to something better, something future proof.

After analyses of several projects that were named ‘parasties’ I started to understand that these projects were called parasites because of their appearance. Most of the parasitic architecture projects demonstrated a harsh contrast between the existing buildings that they were using and the object itself. I specifically mean object because most of the designs described themselves as attached
architectural objects. In order to use these reference projects and the term parasitic architecture, I had to find a logical understanding of the method in which parasitic architecture can be used and how intense it could use the existing. In more general words, I was researching what parasitic architecture is for my design thesis and how I can interpret it.

The research phase consisted mostly out of dissecting several projects that named themselves parasites and projects that I had in mind that use the existing.

Eventually a diagram was set up as a sort of conclusion and input for the design to demonstrate how the existing can be used. The diagram can be divided in plug-on use, extensive use of existing and mimicry. The conclusion states that the plug-on architecture is mostly interpreted by architects and audience as parasitic. These projects are usually in high contrast with the existing. The extensive use of existing projects demonstrate how new additions or interventions use the existing structure to ad a new space, change existing space and alter the appearance. The projects show how the existing is complemented by the new and vice versa. Projects that were described as mimicry show such change and alteration of the existing that the existing has almost disappeared. The existing is kept to such a minimum, that is has become a plug-on itself, or perhaps a parasite.

The range of projects that belong within the 'extensive use of existing' were used in the design phase as future test subjects and research topics.

Although the diagrams and method were helpful to understand how I can use the existing, It was still a puzzle in how I could implement this within my design. Gradually is started to design within the existing buildings trough a trail and error method and just looking on what can be done and what can't in terms of program and configuration. Reflecting upon this it could have been helpful to research projects that combined several buildings to implement a new design. This could have then been researched on urban and architectural scales. Another topic to research or to test could have been using the conclusion diagram and testing it on the current site extensively and eventually setting up a second diagram that could have been used as system of design.

The eventual design demonstrates that I have consciously and sometimes unconsciously been using the conclusion diagram and reference projects to aid my design process. The existing buildings have been altered to aid the needs of a future education and a future inner city campus. Some parts of the buildings have been added and use the existing building to be able to exist themselves and some parts have been removed to make place for a program or intervention. The final image illustrates how the existing is being used and how the new has become a mediator of a change within the campus and future education.
STUDIO THEME VS. DESIGN
As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the studio theme is Heritage & Design. It mainly focuses on the design of a new campus within an existing context with a certain value. ‘The tolerance for change of the building complexes of the UvA is the main theme of the studio. For the campus of the University of Amsterdam two discussions are relevant within this theme; the first one is; the challenge of change in historic inner cities and the second is the user and program.’ (Semester Manual Heritage & Architecture, p18, 2014-2015)

Within this studio we were free to explore and research whatever we felt like was best. From the beginning of the studio I was helped and supported to research this topic of parasitic architecture although it was complex to understand for me and the tutors. At the P2 presentation I was not able to fully demonstrate how I wanted to implement my research within the design and this could have been done more extensively as I mentioned in the former paragraph. The second line within the semester manual description states that the focus of the studio is also about the user and program.

Already early on I was interested in this idea of a Utopian vision on education within the campus, I even wrote my Position Paper on Values of Modernist Utopias. The research and design was also influenced by a new vision on education and how academic education is changing within the University of Amsterdam. The current Humanities faculty is located on the design site and is going through a rough time. Several courses are being dropped from the curriculum and there is lack of future perspective on new courses. With this in mind I first created a Utopian vision of working, learning and creating. This vision slowly transcended in to the design and the configuration of the buildings and their relationship. The following diagram explains a strategy on how the site should be configured to manifest new spaces and configurations.

By developing such a strategy I was able to determine how the buildings could be used and what parts of it I wanted to use programmatic and structurally.

The vision of having a new sort of education influenced the projects significantly. Not only was the design focused on developing new spaces but also on improving current spaces and the site itself. I wanted to create a inner city campus that expressed itself on site and that it showed that the buildings were working together to offer future education the spaces they need. On the other hand the site had its representation towards the city. With the program in mind and the studio theme I kept the representation towards city as minimal as possible, thus creating an introvert site for the University of Amsterdam.

METHOD STUDIO VS. METHOD CHOSEN
The methodical line of the studio has been of great value to me at the start and later on in the end. In my previous studios the analyses of the site was in some sense a bit neglected. Within this studio we started to critically analyze the urban fabric, architectural configuration an programmatic distribution. Not only what there is now, but also what there has been. By doing this the design had more background an backup of information.

My personal research, about parasitic architecture, was not historically bound to the site or existing situation. During this research I tried to link the site to parasitic architecture and other ‘using the existing’ type structures. I was able to construct several images that illustrated how the current program used the existing buildings and how some structures were able to attach themselves to the existing, but nothing substantial enough like the conclusion diagram (image 3). After this general analyses on historical development, buildings technology and configuration I researched more on types of buildings that are labeled ‘parasitic’ (see paragraph Research and Design).

The studio method originally illustrates a triangle method of approach where Design, Cultural Value and Technology are being discussed.
From this triangle the Heritage & Design studio states the following method: ‘Answers or architectonic solutions will be found by questioning relevant issues in the analyses. The analyses are a joint work. It will be the basis for interpretation and conclusion of the individual research and design questions. The studio debate will be the platform to discuss the student’s position within the academic field of reuse and cultural heritage and towards the individual assignment. We will discuss theoretical work as well as best practices to take up a position. Furthermore we aim to translate outcomes into design approaches.’ (Semester Manual Heritage & Architecture, p23, 2014-2015)

As described, I saw the whole site as a single image constructed out of loose buildings that worked together. During the analyses and joint work I was constantly looking for the bigger picture, assembling facades, collages and sections over multiple buildings. This then led to my interpretation of the site as a whole. From this interpretation I moved to how I can use the existing. In this part I shifted a bit from the studio method and started to analyze my own interest. Looking back at it now it could be interesting to once again use the interpretation for the collective image and analyze this thoroughly on the site, instead of the thorough research on parasitic architecture and use of existing.

As seen in diagram image 7, I shifted towards a more of off site research on heritage and use of current buildings. By perhaps researching more on site and existings buildings during the research instead of design phase, I could have had a different outcome of the project. None the less, I am excited about the current design and in my opinion it has a strong link to the parasitic design research, my vision of a collective image and a definition of a inner city campus of the University of Amsterdam.