SARTRE IN SPACE:

RETHINKING ARCHITECTURE
& REBUILDING PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis considers spatial and architectural language used in philosophical text to determine the value of a cross-disciplinary relationship between architecture and philosophy. It approaches architectural figure as more than just metaphor for philosophy, and proposes that philosophy relies on the spatial nature of architectural language to constitute itself. The case studies provided elucidate a realm where architecture and philosophy have been explored simultaneously; where architecture is used as a tool to develop philosophical propositions and where philosophical text generates architectural design. Ludwig Wittgenstein and Adolf Loos worked in this way, rethinking how architecture is done while rebuilding philosophical propositions. Wittgenstein's work as an architect was not a break from philosophy but an exploration in architectural space that developed his philosophical perspective. The house he designed is considered here as an extension of the 'visual room', an aphorism about image forming in *The Philosophical Investigations*. Loos's writing on an ethics of style is philosophy bound to a body of architectural work. His architecture, in particular the House for Josephine Baker, and its conflicts of modernity and the relationship between interior and exterior, is inextricably linked to his normative theories of how we should live. Maurice Merleau-Ponty defined phenomenology in spatial terms that depend heavily on the experience of architectural space. His description of the 'phenomenal body' and its ability to understand the 'spatiality of a situation' is evidence for an epistemological link between phenomenology and architecture. The architecture of Steven Holl is analysed for its reconstruction of Merleau-Pontian spatiality in the Residence for the Swiss Ambassador, a commission that offered Holl a generous affordance of space with which to explore this influence.

The main philosophical text used in the thesis is the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre due to the largely ignored latent spatial nature of it. It is significant that the text relies on spatial relationships to convey its meaning. Sartre's concepts have been defined, developed and implemented by architecture in the resulting design, 'A House for Sartre'. The design builds on Sartrean concepts of the self, other people, objects in the world and consciousness. It does this by rethinking and rebuilding on this philosophy, while at the same time rethinking and rebuilding the architecture of the house, a domestic space. The programme of a 'house' offers concepts of domesticity as context for the design project, and this adds another dimension to the philosophy. The project pushes the limits of Sartre's descriptions and tests his examples in the tangible realm of architecture. Through inhabitation of such an architecture, one can better gain an understanding of this philosophy. As Sartre so often appeals to his readers to inspect the state of their own consciousness, then perhaps most significantly, the architecture provides not only a conscious experience of the house, but an experience where inhabitants are conscious of their own consciousness in 'A House for Sartre'.

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INTRODUCTION

The use of architectural language can be found throughout many philosophical texts. When writing on phenomenology, analytical philosophy and ethics, philosophers employ spatial language and concepts to explain ideas. These ideas are often considered entirely distinct from their architectural analogies. Aphorisms and propositions described in terms of spaces and spatiality could be considered metaphors. However, it is significant that this kind of language extends across a wide range of philosophical writing. Philosophy is actually bound to the architectural figure. Wigley writes that although “philosophy appeals to architecture to constitute itself, only to immediately subordinate architecture as mere material”¹, architecture is not a metaphor amongst many in the realm of philosophy. Architecture is the foundation of philosophy; the framework in which philosophical problems can be described and solved; the method for practicing philosophy. Architecture provides a tangible means for an exploration of concepts relating to our existence in the world: philosophy. At the same time, philosophy describes analytical and experiential concepts that give meaning to architecture. The two disciplines do not merely borrow language from one another; their very experiential nature makes them epistemologically linked in dealing with the essence of our living in the world.

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Architectural phenomenologists and philosopher-architects, such as Pallasmaa, Pérez-Gómez and Diller + Scofidio, attempt to bridge the gap between lived experience – the experience

1 Wigley, M. (1993). The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida's Haunt. Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press. p. 18

of architecture and our spatial environment – and conceptual motives for design. Pallasmaa uses the term ‘lived space’ to mean space that has been injected with existential meaning: “Lived space is always a combination of external space and inner mental space, actuality and mental projection”². These philosopher-architects attempt to understand the person-environment relationship³ and the nature of existence. In architectural history we have seen philosopher-architects use abstract metaphysical concepts as source material for design, and conversely for architecture to act as a spatio-visual medium for investigations about existence, being and meaning. Metaphysical values are embodied by the spatial practice of architecture.

The aim of this thesis is to examine cases where philosophical text is laden with architectural meaning or architecture is constituted by philosophical concepts, and determine the value of this cross-disciplinary relationship. This is dealt with in Part 1 where case studies are provided as architectural precedents. Part 2 analyses a philosophical text for its dependence on the architectural figure and its possible contributions to architecture. Part 3 describes the design component of the thesis, an architecture rooted in the philosophical concepts assessed in Part 2. The resulting design by research aims to provide an understanding of certain philosophical concepts through the experience of architectural space. In other words, through inhabitation of the architecture one could gain a better understanding of the philosophical meaning of the text.

The case studies in this thesis show architecture as representing the nature of the world and human understanding of what ‘is’. The first case study is the Stonborough-Wittgenstein House in Vienna, designed by 20th Century philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. This house is an example of the practice of architecture contributing to the development of philosophy. Wittgenstein’s central areas of philosophy were meaning, understanding and language. The house elucidates how language “operates within a fluid territory of practice with the world it represents”⁴. Thus spatial and visual constructs are inextricably linked with the concepts of philosophy of language. With a different approach, Adolf Loos wrote on an ethics of style in the modern world and simultaneously experimented with philosophical concepts in his architecture. The subject-object dichotomy in the House for Josephine Baker,

2 Pallasmaa, J. (2000). Lived space in architecture and cinema. The architecture of image: Existential space in cinema. Helsinki, Finland, Finnish Building Centre. p. 3

3 Seamon, D. (1990). Awareness and reunion: A phenomenology of the person-environment relationship as portrayed in the New York photographs of André Kertész. Place Images in the Media. L. Zonn. Totowa, New Jersey, Roman and Littlefield p. 87-107.

4 Last, N. (2008). Wittgenstein’s House: Language, Space, & Architecture. New York, Fordham University Press. p. 1

a cabaret star in Paris in the 1920s, is a demonstrative example of this. The final case study examines Maurice Merleau-Ponty, as his philosophy is often linked to the architectural phenomenologists. Rather than writing generally about his phenomenology, this thesis assesses a particular passage and the success of its use as a generator for design in the architecture of Steven Holl.

Jean-Paul Sartre, a leading 20th Century philosopher in Paris, did not write directly on architecture although he spent much of his life considering questions about phenomenology, which, I argue here, is spatial by nature. Unlike other philosophers concerned with phenomenology, his work has not been investigated in terms of architectural space (with the exception of an interpretation of his writing on the imagination with respect to architecture dealing with absence⁵). However, his work on the ego, transcendence and the existence of others – phenomenological concepts – beg spatial questions. Sartre's interpretations of concepts are in relation to the world, to objects and to spaces we encounter. This thesis describes Sartre's spatial metaphors and aphorisms pertaining to spatial concepts that are significant in the realm of architecture.

The role of design in this project is to, through rigorous application of method, represent these spatio-visual abstractions of phenomenology in the design of 'A House for Sartre'. The programme of a 'house' provides objects and concepts pertaining to domesticity that are useful material for design. The architecture provides a novel perspective of domestic architecture as the 'house' now appeals to our phenomenological ontology. In other words, an experience of the architecture would involve recognising it as a 'house' but submitting our notion of 'house' to an ontological inquiry of existence.

Sartre questions the existence of concepts by appealing to the reader to use introspection to examine the state of their own consciousness. The architecture similarly depicts these concepts by forcing the inhabitant to inspect their own understanding of what 'is'. Architecture is normally understood through experience, so it is significant that 'A House for Sartre' now appeals to its inhabitant to be *conscious of* their conscious experience of the house.

5 Herrington, S. (2008). "You Are Not Here: Sartre's Phenomenological Ontology and the Architecture of Absence." Architecture and Phenomenology(Autumn 2008) p. 51-64.

PART 1

WHEN PHILOSOPHY MEETS ARCHITECTURE

Philosophy, the study of the fundamental problems of existence, knowledge, truth, reason, reality, meaning, mind, and value, has influenced architecture before. It is not the intention of this paper to analyze the parallel developments of philosophy and architecture throughout history. This paper is concerned with the *direct* influence of philosophical aphorisms in architectural spaces and architecture's role in the formwork of philosophy. The spatial metaphors of philosophy, the physical analogies of metaphysics, and the experiential nature of existential philosophy have ramifications for architecture. Architecture is the framework of our being in the world, and thus articulates "the surface between the experiencing self and the world"⁶. Architecture is the physical construal of the essence of existential space. Although this chapter addresses 20th Century philosophy and its ramifications for the built form it is not an attempt to define architecture as applied philosophy; this would be a "cliched misunderstanding"⁷. Rather, architecture is shown to be a medium for the development of philosophy and vice versa. At the same time as architecture appeals to philosophical concepts, philosophy is understood and described by its practitioners within the realm of the architectonic.

CHAPTER 1

PHILOSOPHY IS SPATIAL: *WHERE AM 'I'?*

Architectural language appears in many philosophical texts from Descartes to Derrida⁸. Employed in the form of metaphor, it is often too easily dismissed as just metaphor. Stephen Priest

6 Pallasmaa, J. (2000). Lived space in architecture and cinema. The architecture of image: Existential space in cinema. Helsinki, Finland, Finnish Building Centre. p. 2

7 Leitner, B. (2000). The Wittgenstein House. New York, Princeton Architectural Press. p. 10

8 Wigley, M. (1993). The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida's Haunt. Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press.

argues that transcendental philosophy in particular (the subject of Sartre's work) is "contaminated"⁹ by spatial metaphors and images in the text. He recommends disregarding any physical construals of the spatial language in fully understanding the meaning of the text; that the spatial relationships between concepts should not be thought of as physical relations. However, Priest admits this is "psychologically difficult...perhaps because we are used to thinking about the external world"¹⁰. This is a significant admission as phenomenology *is* about the physical world and relationships within it. Its usefulness is located in the world, dealing with experience of the real world. Rather than freeing oneself from the spatial metaphor in philosophy, we can make use of it in our understanding.

Wigley goes a step further. Following Derrida's notion that architectural metaphor is never innocent, he writes that "the discourse [of philosophy] is within the spatial metaphor rather than the metaphor is within the discourse... More than the metaphor of foundation, [architecture] is the foundational metaphor. It is therefore not simply a metaphor"¹¹. Architectural figure in philosophical text cannot be removed or ignored in the way that an analogy in everyday speech may be replaced with another. Its role is not of an analogous discourse among many. It is bound to philosophy just as philosophy is bound to architectural space, "there is no philosophy without space"¹².

Architectural language appears in philosophical text in the form of conspicuous architectural discourse as well as spatial metaphor. While Kant and Heidegger describe metaphysics in terms of a building, Nietzsche refers to "self-experience through architecture"¹³. Nietzsche dismissed historical symbolism and styles and believed architecture should seek "to affect – and to strike 'reflections' from – the beholder's psyche"¹⁴. He feels the absurdity of the physical world, and only finds meaning in it through focusing on the individual experience of the human being. Finding ourselves in architecture is an important practice in finding this meaning for Nietzsche, as he writes that we want to find "*ourselves* translated into stones and plants; we want to have *ourselves* to stroll in, when we take a

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- 9 Priest, S. (2000). The subject in question: Sartre's critique of Husserl in The Transcendence of the Ego. London, England; New York, USA, Routledge. p. 8
 10 Ibid.
 11 Wigley, M. (1993). The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida's Haunt. Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press. p. 17-19
 12 Ibid. p. 22
 13 Buddensieg, T. (1999). Architecture as empty form: Nietzsche and the art of building. Nietzsche and "An architecture of our minds". A. Kostka and I. Wohlfarth. Los Angeles, USA, The Getty Research Institute. p. 262
 14 Ibid. p. 262

turn in these porticoes and gardens”¹⁵. He demands that new architecture must reject past ecclesiastical influence, which is meaningless now that we are “godless people”¹⁶, and to reflect the true image of man.

When Nietzsche mentions architecture it is not segregated from his philosophy; it is an important part of his metaphysics. Buildings and places exist not in any world but in *our world*, granting them the highest metaphysical significance human beings can experience and participate in. Architecture protects man from the godless situation he has found himself in by embodying his modern values; it “guards the ‘I’ against the consciousness of his own weakness”¹⁷.

Nietzsche influenced a variety of architects who attempted to capture the essence of his thought in their revolutionary designs¹⁸. His references to building and architecture perhaps allow architects to interpret his work. Erich Mendelsohn and Bruno Taut come to mind. However, there is no evidence in one architect’s built repertoire for the rigorous application of his particular philosophical thoughts; rather, vague post-justification for architecture that seems to speak of the same ideals. For a more entangled relationship between the aphorisms of modern philosophy and meaningful architecture we will now turn to philosophers of the 20th Century.

The analytic philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein grew from existential origins also. Wittgenstein worked with logical propositions and language in his first work *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*¹⁹ to show the limits of human knowledge. In his later philosophy, Wittgenstein became less abstract and spatial concepts emerged in his philosophy of mind in *The Philosophical Investigations*²⁰. Inhabitation, boundaries and surroundings enter in his philosophy. Wittgenstein designed the Stonborough-Wittgenstein house in 1925, between writing these two major works. The house is crucial in understanding the development in his philosophy. The practice of designing appears to have been a process for Wittgenstein in which his philosophy developed and included spatial concepts.

15 Nietzsche, F. (1988). *Die froeliche Wissenschaft. Saemtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*. G. Colli and M. Montinari. Munich, Germany, Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag and de Gruyter. **3**. p. 264

16 Ibid. p. 524

17 Breitschmid, M. (2007). “Nietzsche’s “Architecture for the perceptive”: From sacred space towards a space for reflection.” *Spaces of Utopia Spring*(4) p. 86

18 Neumeyer, F. (1999). Nietzsche and modern architecture. *Nietzsche and “An architecture of our minds”*. A. Kostka and I. Wohlfarth. Los Angeles, USA, The Getty Research Institute.

19 Wittgenstein, L. (1922/2007). *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. New York, Cosimo Inc.

20 Wittgenstein, L. (1953/2009). *The Philosophical Investigations*. West Sussex, UK, Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Aphorisms in Wittgenstein's *Investigations* include references to image forming and the hypothetical 'visual room', which explores spatial qualities involved in imagining and thinking and shows the limits of language and thought in terms of space. The house he designed is an important application of the concepts he describes in this aphorism about an image of a room. The room is a metaphor but its spatiality is explored in both his writing and his exploration in architecture. The built form and written philosophy inform one another. In this later philosophical work, Wittgenstein also began to use the word *phenomenology*, and his philosophy is linked with phenomenology due to its concern with immediate experience with the world²¹. The direct connection between Wittgenstein's philosophy and his own work of architecture will be further explored in the first case study.

In addition to the advantage of his extremely wealthy background to provide an opportunity to freely experiment in architecture, Wittgenstein was living and working in one of the intellectual centres of the world at the time. In the first two decades of the 20th Century, it was from Vienna that many of the ideas that defined and shaped the century emerged²². Artists, political and social theorists, philosophers and architects provided much creative discourse in the city, although this discourse was admittedly dominated by the "ambitious bourgeois intelligentsia"²³. Nevertheless new doctrines and disciplines were shaping the modern world and an important characteristic was the merging of art, science and culture. Wittgenstein's attempt to reduce the complexity of the world to an abstract reduction in philosophy – coined "orthodox modernism"²⁴ – was the theme in the work of many of his Viennese contemporaries. Klimt's paintings, Schönberg's twelve-tone scale, and Adolf Loos's architecture and gift for journalism²⁵, all indulge in their own subjective abstractions of the world.

Architect Adolf Loos, author of the essays *Ornament and Crime*²⁶ and *Architecture*²⁷, has been described as a phenomenologist as he "reflects on ornament and visual patterns as they relate to explorations of character (as

21 Hintikka, J. (1996). *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Half-Truths and One-and-a Half-Truths*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands, Kluwer Academic Press. p. 209

22 Springer, K. (2006). A "Romanticism of the Nerves": The Literary Fin-de-Siècle. *Vienna 1900 and the heroes of modernism*. C. Brandstätter and H. Bisanz. London, Thames & Hudson. p. 363

23 Ibid.

24 Metzger, R. Ibid. *Vienna Around 1900: The Duration of Denial*. p. 26

25 Kurdiovsky, R. Ibid. *Joseph Maria Olbrich*. p. 293

26 Loos, A. (1908/1931). *Ornament and Crime*. *Trotzdem, 1900-1930*. Vienna, Prachner.

27 Loos, A. (1910/2006). *Architecture*. *Architecture and Design in Europe and America, 1750-2000*. A. Harrison-Moore and D. C. Rowe. Oxford, Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

habit) and environment (as habitat)²⁸. Although he writes normative theories for architecture, he does so from a standpoint reflecting on the nature of reality. His theories are based on the cultural situation in Vienna in the early 20th Century, showing him to be highly sensitive to the circumstances surrounding him, despite sometimes-conflicting judgements regarding how people should live. His critiques of Viennese life and architecture are ethical ones, spurring from an empirical approach, qualifying him as an architect-philosopher. Loos is an important figure in this thesis, as his architecture is ontologically linked with his philosophical style of writing.

Loos's logic is parallel to his approach as an architect. The contrasting dichotomies of the form and content of his criticisms of culture are analogous to the sharp conflict between the facades and interiors of his buildings. He wrote scathingly about bourgeois lifestyles in his own extravagant *fin-de-siècle* style, while his architecture fronted with austere, ornament-free exteriors and indulged in theatrical spectacle inside. Explicitly concerned with the “essential condition of modernity”²⁹ lying in mankind's direct contact with the essence of the world, his buildings are an attempt to arouse these sentiments in people.

While Loos's writing is loosely connected with phenomenology, it is expressed more clearly in his architecture. The connection between concrete essences in one's environment and oneself is inherent in the spatial configurations and relationships in his buildings. His built work is an extension of the theories he propagated, revealing in much more detail his claims for how one must live in one's environment. As an architect and a philosopher, Loos's phenomenology is best expressed through his buildings. The relationship between Loos's writing and his architecture forms the second case study.

Neither Wittgenstein nor Loos are normally associated with phenomenology, the method of philosophy most popular with architectural discourse. Phenomenology is a philosophical method that aims to provide an essential contribution to the foundations of science³⁰. It primarily analyses structures of consciousness and phenomena in relation to consciousness. It is considered an objective study, as it looks at consciousness not from the perspective of 'me', but of all consciousnesses alike. This is why Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and other phenomenologists consider it to be a foundation for knowledge; it is about the essence of being. Phenomenology can be described as the

28 Zielinski, M. (2003). “A Semiotic Phenomenology of Aesthetic Systems.” *The American Journal of Semiotics* **19**(1/4).

29 Tournikiotis, P. (1991). *Adolf Loos*. New York, Princeton Architectural Press. p. 30

30 Koestenbaum, P. Husserl's Philosophical Position. *The Paris Lectures*. E. Husserl.

method of inquiry concerning the nature of consciousness, the relationship between consciousness and the world, and the essence of being. It is the realm between one's consciousness and the world that provides phenomenology a spatial grounding. If 'being' relates directly to its physical surroundings or if consciousness transcends the body are dilemmas situated in a spatial context.

It is significant that in the aphorisms of phenomenology, spatial metaphor and imagery pervade the work. Metaphors situated in physical space are just metaphors, they are about phenomenological concepts such as mind, body, self and thought. However, these metaphors are relevant in form and content, as mind, body self and thought depend on the spatial relationships befitting their analogies. Phenomenology is never specifically about architecture, and when 20th Century phenomenologists write about buildings, room and spaces it is almost never an architectural critique. Nor is architecture ever the total embodiment of phenomenological thought. Architecture is, however, a spatial context and an entirely relevant standpoint from which to understand concepts of phenomenology.

Martin Heidegger viewed philosophy as addressing the immediacies of human existence. This was significant in the age of industrial and technocratic revolutions. As Heidegger dealt with human experience, his philosophy includes ideas about living and inhabiting, which inevitably have consequences for architecture. In his essay *Building Dwelling Thinking*³¹ Heidegger describes building as located by human existence and built according to and shaped by the characteristics of the place and inhabitants. Buildings and bridges alike impact on peoples lives physically but also experientially. The building of a bridge "ha[s] phenomenological significance much greater than the sum of its technical expedencies"³².

Like Wittgenstein, Heidegger believed that although man sees himself as a master of language, it is really language that reigns as the master of man³³. He differentiates between mere *objects* and the more significant *things*, which bring humans into contact with the essence of life: a bridge or a building is not just an object, it is a built thing, a "part of an ongoing human experience of building and dwelling"³⁴. Building, dwelling and thinking are not separate

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- 31 Heidegger, M. (1954/1975). Building, Dwelling, Thinking. Poetry, Language, Thought. New York, Harper and Row.
32 Sharr, A. (2007). Heidegger for Architects. Oxon, UK, Routledge. p. 48
33 Heidegger, M. (1954/1975). Building, Dwelling, Thinking. Poetry, Language, Thought. New York, Harper and Row.
34 Sharr, A. (2007). Heidegger for Architects. Oxon, UK, Routledge. p. 46

concepts of architectonics and function, merely means and ends, they are essentially interrelated and a culmination of one another, one and the same. Heidegger calls for his readers to conjure up an image of a hypothetical bridge, refers to an existing well-known bridge and asks them to imagine a hypothetical farmhouse to elucidate his points about architecture, thinking and being.

*The Phenomenology of Perception*³⁵, by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, deals explicitly with space and its relation to the body. Merleau-Ponty describes his “phenomenological reduction [as] that of an existential phenomenology”, meaning it is about existence in the world. He, like Sartre, aimed to reduce fundamental structures of consciousness to concrete essences. The body is recognized as “inherently expressive of existence as a whole”³⁶ and is the mediator of our perception of the world. Perception is not the passive reception of sense-impressions, it is the act of consciousness being towards-the-thing through the intermediary of the body. As the body acts towards things in the world, there are important spatial relationships underlying Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology. The body, as a subject for perception, becomes the central core for the realm of space. Space is orientated to this locus, creating what Merleau-Ponty calls a third kind of spatiality that underlies any distinction between form and content. This spatiality is the result of the subject of perception arranging the world into figure-ground configurations, where the focus of objects makes them into objects for the bodily gaze or grip. To further illustrate the spatial nature of his phenomenological interrogation Merleau-Ponty uses a unique notion of depth. His phenomenology in relation to the architecture of Steven Holl will be dealt with in the third case study.

The existential philosophers and phenomenologists mentioned here write about the experience a person has with the world. This tendency for philosophers to “return... to the proto-phenomena of lived experience”³⁷ is guided by the desire to find concrete essences and relationships with what ‘is’. Such relationships between the self – whether this is represented by the body, the ego, culture or a series of propositions – and what is outside the self, are essentially spatial ones. In the next chapter I will examine the three case studies where philosophy is construed through the built form. I have chosen these case studies to reflect not just the interpretation of phenomenologists

35 Merleau-Ponty, M. (1945/1962). *Phenomenology of Perception*. Paris, Gallimard. p. 9

36 Langer, M. M. (1989). *Merleau-Ponty’s Phenomenology of Perception: A Guide and Commentary*. London, The Macmillan Press Ltd. p. xiii

37 Grier, N. F. (1981). *Wittgenstein and Phenomenology: A Comparative Study of the later Wittgenstein, Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty*. New York, State University of New York Press. p. 228

that have been looked at in the past, but examples from a broader scope to illustrate the spatial *foundations* of philosophy. The philosophies of Wittgenstein, Loos, and Merleau-Ponty will now be analysed for their spatial implications and evidence they have been explored physically by architecture.

CHAPTER 2

CASE STUDY: THE VISUAL ROOM

The completion of the Stonborough-Wittgenstein House in Vienna in 1929 – designed for his sister after taking the project over from Paul Engelmann – gave Wittgenstein the chance to return to working on philosophical problems. The design of the house was not a break from philosophy, but an opportunity for Wittgenstein to explore the problems of analytical philosophy in a physical context. Working in architectonics enabled him to see the concepts of philosophy in three-dimensional space, with spatio-visual relationships with one another. To understand this interrelated context in which Wittgenstein developed his later philosophy, it is appropriate to look at a discussion in which Wittgenstein mentions spatial relationships as philosophical metaphor: the example of the visual room. It is a discussion about images and image forming where the philosophical concepts involved are expressed visually and spatially. The discussion invites the reader to imagine the image of a room as an example to provide evidence for his point regarding private thought. Although the visual room is a metaphor, its spatial qualities are significant in supporting Wittgenstein's claim. These spatial qualities, which would never have entered into a Wittgensteinian

Figure 1
Stonborough-Wittgenstein
House, Vienna

discussion before the design of the house in Vienna, are the same qualities Wittgenstein explored in the design of the house.

When Wittgenstein addressed the question ‘*what is the mental image?*’ he quickly dismisses it for more pressing issues like *image forming* and *images and sensations*³⁸. He realized that images are not concrete phenomena, but psychological concepts; the act of conjuring up an image of something. The example he uses is the *visual room*, an object with spatial and architectonic qualities³⁹. This is significant as it shows spatial concepts to be essential to the philosophy of the image and image forming. The importance of the spatial construal of Wittgenstein’s philosophy, with regards not only to images and image forming, but to his private/public issues and the inner/outer issue can be shown through an analysis of the Stonborough-Wittgenstein House. In fact, it is significant that Wittgenstein theorized about the image only after his experiment into architecture. After working in the spatial and architectonic dimensions that architecture is concerned with, Wittgenstein returned to philosophy with the empirical and spatial (as opposed to solely analytical) approach to philosophical problems, including image forming. With its foundations in visual space, the visual room concept is an example of Wittgenstein’s spatial approach to philosophy influenced by and integral to his work in architectonics and design. The discussion of the visual room is the “strongest

38 Wittgenstein, L. (1967/1981). *Zettel*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishing. Paragraph 621

39 Wittgenstein, L. (1953/2009). *The Philosophical Investigations*. West Sussex, UK, Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Paragraph 398

evidence for Wittgenstein's association of the spatial and the linguistic⁴⁰, leading to a crossing back and forth of concepts between the realms of philosophy and architecture.

Wittgenstein's aphorisms regarding the image were characteristically rooted in a concern with the use of words that describe the concept. He differentiated the image from sensations; auditory images and visual images are distinct from heard sounds and the sensation of sight⁴¹. Wittgenstein rejects that images are derived from perception and considers imaging as a unique phenomenon.

Rather than regarding the image as a *thing*, Wittgenstein suggests that image forming is temporal, occurring over time and is therefore an action or activity. Moreover, image forming is voluntary, unlike the observation involved in sense-impressions and hallucinations⁴². He concludes that the image cannot be a concrete *thing* inside our consciousness, because if this were the case, we would passively receive images rather than wilfully conceive of them. This image forming process, Wittgenstein says, should be thought of as "visual experience in terms of our each having access to images that no one else is privy to"⁴³. This visual experience is unique as it transcends qualities that can be applied to other real-world experiences. Wittgenstein's example to show these characteristics of visual experiences is the *visual room*.

*"The 'visual room' is the one that has no owner. I can as little own it as I can walk about it, or look at it, or point to it. Inasmuch as it cannot be anyone else's it is not mine either. In other words it does not belong to me because I want to use the same form of expression about it as about the material room in which I sit. The description of the latter need not mention an owner, in fact it need not have an owner. But then the visual room cannot have any owner. 'For' – one might say – 'it has no owner outside or in.'"*⁴⁴.

It is significant that the example Wittgenstein gives for visual impressions is a room – a three-dimensional, spatial, architectonic thing rather than anything else. It is the objective of this chapter to show the spatial nature of the image and image forming and the role of architecture in this aspect of philosophy.

40 Last, N. (2008). *Wittgenstein's House: Language, Space, & Architecture*. New York, Fordham University Press. p. 185

41 Wittgenstein, L. (1967/1981). *Zettel*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishing. Paragraph 621

42 Kose, G. and D. Corriss (1996). Imaging: Theoretical Alternatives. *Problems of Theoretical Psychology*. C. Tolman. Ontario, Captus Press Inc.

43 McGinn, M. (1997). *Wittgenstein and the Philosophical Investigations*. London, Routledge. p. 183

44 Wittgenstein, L. (1953/2009). *The Philosophical Investigations*. West Sussex, UK, Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Paragraph 398

Figure 3
... does not appear as a
perfect square

Figure 2
A perfectly cubic room
Figure 4
... but appears with
perspective

The visual room is the visual impression one constructs when trying to understand what someone means when they say they are sitting in a room. By saying you know what they mean, you are saying you know how to think of the object that they mean⁴⁵. We are compelled to think of the visual room as a quasi-physical thing; as possessing physical qualities, relationships in space and the ability to be assigned grammatical concepts. However these qualities for which a real-world room may be true are inappropriate and nonsensical for the visual room. For example, it makes no sense to *possess* a visual impression, nor to speak of its *outside* if the impression is of the inside. One cannot enter or exit the visual room in the sense one can in the world.

Wittgenstein concludes that the visual room shows “a new way of speaking, a new comparison”⁴⁶. He compares the visual experience of the room with a picture of it: both appear to be perspectival in nature. In addition to the visual impression being incapable of having features its real-world counterpart exerts, the visual impression has its own objective features that are not also features of the object it is an image of. The perfectly cubic room does not appear as a symmetrical object with edges of equal length, the image from inside the cubic room appears with a vanishing point, the image is with a one or two point perspective. Similarly artefacts in the room like tables act in the same way. The visual impression of a square table is not a square, it is seen

45 McGinn, M. (1997). Wittgenstein and the Philosophical Investigations. London, Routledge.

46 Wittgenstein, L. (1953/2009). The Philosophical Investigations. West Sussex, UK, Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Paragraph 400

in perspective. This comparison, between the visual room and a picture of it, is a comparison of two-dimensional representations and relies on the spatial qualities of the three dimensional objects being represented. The visual room shows that the problem of image forming is a spatial one.

The visual room shows that this particular philosophical problem, of image forming, is sited in space. This is not altogether conflicting with the notion that philosophical problems are situated within language. It is perhaps evidence of an inclusive realm where language and space intersect, what Nana Last calls a “shared territory between the spatial and the linguistic”⁴⁷. The intention of the visual room is to address private mental imagery, the relation between inner and outer and no doubt publicly accessible language, however, *language* is no longer the “specific outward criterion”⁴⁸ for Wittgenstein. Other criteria, such as space, vision and architectonics become frameworks for comparison. This somewhat more generous gesture of Wittgenstein’s to allow for a foundation for definition other than language could not have occurred in the *Tractatus*. In fact, the first documentation of Wittgenstein’s overt change in thinking and return to philosophy are dated in the months immediately following the house’s completion⁴⁹. It is important that only after his work designing the Stonborough-Wittgenstein House did Wittgenstein use visual space as a foundation for the solution to a philosophical problem. After this experiment he had more freedom to discuss philosophical tasks in spatio-visual terms, and the spatial realm was a new framework in which philosophy could situate itself.

15

Issues involved in the visual room example have their application in the architecture of the House. The act of envisioning a room that is not there is the task of the architect, and Wittgenstein’s role as ‘architect’ influenced his use of the visual room and the topic of the image. Furthermore, the topic of the image and its example of the visual room is evidence for the spatial nature of these kinds of philosophical problems and the language we use to describe them. Rather than considering the House as a distinct entity from Wittgenstein’s philosophy, it is considered as an extension of the visual room. The House is an experiment with spatial limits that makes the boundaries of architecture, philosophy and language less distinct.

47 Last, N. (2008). *Wittgenstein’s House: Language, Space, & Architecture*. New York, Fordham University Press. p. 183

48 Ibid. p. 184

49 Wijdeveld, P. (1994). *Ludwig Wittgenstein, Architect*. London, Thames and Hudson. p. 183

Figure 5
Stonborough-Wittgenstein
House, an extension of the
'visual room'

When Wittgenstein says of the visual room "it has no master outside it, and none inside it either"⁵⁰ he discloses the image's absence of true spatial qualities: its lack of ownership as well as the non-existence of boundaries. He alludes to spatial and visual (as well as material and non-material) conflict. Seemingly the visual room can be inhabited, if the image conjured is of someone in a room, but it does not make sense for its boundaries to be crossed. This is a problem with language and exposes the latent spatial nature of language itself. This kind of language is introduced after the completion of the house and contains implicit spatial interpretations. In using language that refers to space, Wittgenstein is showing the significance of spatial relationships in language and hence philosophy. He writes in the *Investigations* that the relationship language has with the world is not the "formal unity" he had previously imagined. Rather, "we are talking about the spatial and temporal phenomenon of language, not about some non-spatial, non-temporal phantasm"⁵¹. We can infer that discussion of boundaries, inhabitation and accessibility need not be separated from their spatial connotations.

The articulation of boundaries, an issue Wittgenstein finds with the visual room, is also a significant aspect of the design of the Stonborough-Wittgenstein House. All of the interior doors between rooms are double-layered, like the exterior doors. However, unlike the exterior doors, this is not a functional solution. The interior doors are metal framed with either glass or

⁵⁰ Wittgenstein, L. (1953/2009). *The Philosophical Investigations*. West Sussex, UK, Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Paragraph 398

⁵¹ Ibid. Paragraph 108

Figure 6
Sheet metal to this side,
clear glass to far side
Figure 7
clear glass to both sides

Figure 8
Double-layered doors with
opaque glass infill to this
side, clear glass to far side

metal infill. The glass is either transparent or opaque. This creates a hierarchy of thresholds throughout the House. Boundaries between rooms are completely opaque and solid, entirely transparent and fluid, or partially translucent. Moreover, due to the double layering the threshold is different depending on which way you are crossing the boundary. The doors represent a complexity with respect to boundaries, both physical and metaphorical. The physical boundaries in the house allude to the nature of the boundaries of language.

The materiality of the numerous double-layered doors in the house refers to a concept of privacy. Margarethe's private rooms are separated from the salon by doors with transparent glass on the inside and opaque sheet metal on the outside, the most complex boundary for the most private section of the House. Protecting the personal spaces with visually and spatially impenetrable materials links the House to the notion of private mental space portrayed on the visual room example. Image forming is an exclusive or privileged act, shown to be performed in private mental space, a realm analogous to the demarcation of private space in the House. Again the House has lessened the distinction between architectonics and language by exploring private mental space and private personal space literally as space. The privacy of one's exclusive image of the visual room is analogous to the privacy of the boudoir.

The floor plan of the House refers to the concepts of inhabitation and accessibility. To reach Margarethe's bedroom from the hall, one must pass through the salon and then her private living room.

Figure 9
Plan of the ground floor,
Stonborough-Wittgenstein House

Figure 10
Diagram of materiality of boundaries
between rooms, relating to privacy

Figure 11
Metal runner between
inner and outer door leaves

Spatially, the salon acts with connective properties between the hall and Margarethe's private living room, and her private living room mediates access from the salon to her bedroom. The delayed accessibility into the private rooms is reminiscent of the difficulty of entering or inhabiting the visual impression of a physical space. Accessibility is an issue that blends the physical and spatial with language.

The use of various mechanical systems to achieve precise results is essential in the House. The metal runner between the inner and outer door leaves allowed the double-layered doors to open in both directions smoothly and seemingly weightlessly. The metal curtains for covering the windows are raised by a "precisely calculated counterweight ... With the up and down movement of the opaque curtains, one gets a haptic feeling of light"⁵². The movement of these door and curtain mechanisms creates a temporal gesture by the architecture. A sense of time is brought into the building with the smooth motion of the vertical and horizontal sliding planes. Similarly, image forming is temporal; it is an action that occurs over time. The act of opening and closing can be likened to the forming of an image and conversely one can form an image of a blind or door opening and closing. While the visual room embodies these atmospheric attributes, recall that language too is a "spatial and temporal phenomenon"⁵³. Just as architecture permits time and motion, so too are language

⁵² Zou, H. (2005). "The Crystal Order that is Most Concrete: The Wittgenstein House." *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 39(3). p. 27-8

⁵³ Wittgenstein, L. (1953/2009). *The Philosophical Investigations*. West Sussex, UK, Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Paragraph 108

Figure 12

Metal curtain rising on
mechanical system from floor

Figure 13

Top of curtain flush with
floor when not in use

and philosophy inextricably entangled with these properties. The visual room highlights the complexity of the philosophical problem of a private mental image and its dependence on our understanding of space.

The image forming process, a private psychological action, is the activity of construing visual impressions of objects in the real world. Wittgenstein's philosophy of the image is bound to language when attempting to describe the concept, and now it is shown as bound to another formwork: the realm of architectural space. The aphorism of the visual room undergoes analyses of space and language, and in conjunction with the Stonborough-Wittgenstein House it is evidence for the inseparable links of linguistics and space. The visual room is not a mere metaphor that is by chance a room; it is its spatial nature that lends itself to a description of imaging. Wittgenstein is describing philosophy within a blurred boundary of language and space. The characteristics of the visual room as an analogy for language are explored further in the Stonborough-Wittgenstein House, showing the spatial nature of language and philosophical problems. The visual room describes language, but it has its limits. What is beyond the limits of the visual room is described by the architecture of the House. Architecture, the physical construal of the spatial nature of language, is the perfect framework for a philosophy grounded in language.

CHAPTER 3

CASE STUDY: LOOS'S LOGIC

Although his architecture is immediately recognisable by its distinct aesthetic, Loos's architectural style was not driven by personal taste⁵⁴. Architecture is the formwork for his highly developed arguments for civilized culture and sophisticated normative theories on how we should live. The Project for the House for Josephine Baker (1928) was designed by Loos but never realized. Baker, a popular cabaret singer, captivated Loos with his fascination for "cabaret culture and the extravagance of the music hall"⁵⁵. However, his attraction to the exotic and erotic was the source of great ethical conflict for Loos, who wrote scathingly about the immorality of decadent bourgeois life. This violence between his theories for equality in culture and contact with the practical needs of society, and his purported indulgence in *fin-de-siecle* Viennese theatrical lifestyles is explored in his design for this unique house.

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To understand his ethical argument for culture, Loos begins his 1910 essay *Architecture* by inviting the reader to imagine a lakeside scene, with mountains, trees, farmhouses and churches, in all its tranquility. He asks the reader to form an image of the scene, to which we can direct the questions of his critique⁵⁶.

"May I take you to the shores of a mountain lake? The sky is blue, the water is green, and everything is at peace. The mountains and the clouds are reflected in the lake, as are the houses, farms and chapels..."

54 Tournikiotis, P. (1991). *Adolf Loos*. New York, Princeton Architectural Press. p. 30

55 Jules-Rosette, B. (2007). *Josephine Baker in Art and Life: The Icon and the Image*. New York, Harper and Row. p. 150

56 The use of image forming to provide an example from which to philosophise is not altogether unlike Wittgenstein's reliance on the image as the base of his critique of understanding.

“What is the discord, that like an unnecessary scream shatters the quiet? Right at the center of the farmers’ houses, which were not built by them, but by God, stands a villa... beauty, peace and quiet have been dispelled... why is it that every architect, good or bad, desecrates the lake?”⁵⁷

Like Wittgenstein’s visual room, the lakeside scene is a metaphor, in this case for the stunted evolution of humanity caused by the uncivilized mimicry that is contemporary ornament. The villa in the scene represents ornamentation and its architect the culture-less urban dweller of Austria. Loos’s reputation as a writer or philosopher is secondary to his reputation as an architect. Hence, it is not surprising that his argument for an ethics of culture begins with an example involving architecture. However, it is the intent of this case study to show the significance architecture plays in forming Loos’s argument and how the design of his own villas display the inherent conflict in Loos’s critiques.

When he goes on to write “the architect, like almost every urban dweller, has no culture... By culture I mean that balance of man’s inner and outer being which alone guarantees rational thought and action”⁵⁸, Loos is referring to a dichotomy of inner and outer, interior and exterior, and form and content. There is a need for a resolution of modern man’s new way of thinking and his exterior appearance. While this dichotomy of inside and outside is introduced conceptually here, it has since been developed physically and spatially in Loos’s architecture throughout his career. In particular the House for Josephine Baker is an exploration of inner and outer, subject and object, and the voyeuristic gaze.

The house in the lakeside scene is shown to be inconsistent with and detrimental to its surroundings; similarly the city-dweller is living without culture, “outside the spirit of their age”⁵⁹. Loos is proposing that modern people should strive for authenticity in their lives. It is their responsibility to live in a civilized manner, which according to Loos is in the new American and British fashion. That way the culture of the city dweller will befit the recent advantages in technology, thought and dress, and this “authenticity” would spread to country people too. This concept of authenticity is shown through the use of the house in the example. The house similarly has a responsibility to

57 Loos, A. (1910/2006). Architecture. *Architecture and Design in Europe and America, 1750-2000*. A. Harrison-Moore and D. C. Rowe. Oxford, Blackwell Publishing Ltd. p. 355

58 Ibid. p. 356

59 Tournikiotis, P. (1991). *Adolf Loos*. New York, Princeton Architectural Press. p. 29

Figure 14
Section through House for
Josephine Baker

display authenticity. The house has this responsibility as it is in the public realm of life, as opposed to objects belonging in the private realm of life such as art⁶⁰. This ontological distinction between the realms of public and private is a comment on the fundamental nature of things in the world, described by an architectural metaphor. Moreover, this concept is explored through the use of design in Loos's houses.

The tension between formal public space and private, intimate space is an important theme in Loos's interiors. In the House for Josephine Baker, a grand stairway leads to a large salon, and a circular café is situated in the front corner of the house. These spaces are particularly open and public spaces, befitting the celebrity status of their patron. The central space however is a narrow hallway that follows the entire perimeter of a swimming pool, at the level beneath the pool's surface. This is a very private space for the guest, or spectator, who would be hidden from a swimmer, yet the swimmer would be in full view of the onlooker. This is a more complex relationship between public and private than in most of Loos's interiors due to the more public nature of his client, a showgirl. Her art, the movements she makes with her body, is not hidden in a separate poolroom; it is displayed in the center of the house, unashamedly, authentically.

Like Loos's other interiors, the interior is not only designed for
comfort but with an inherent psychological

60 Frampton, K. (2002). In Spite of the Void: The Otherness of Adolf Loos. Labour, Work and Architecture: Collected Essays on Architecture and Design. K. Frampton. New York, Phaidon Press Ltd. p. 208

Figure 15
Plan of first floor of House
for Josephine Baker

- Privileged view from subject to object
- Unclear or reflected view only
- Diffused view and ingress of light

Figure 16
Diagram of clear, unclear
and reflected views

dimension⁶¹. With a swimming pool on the second floor and windows beneath its surface into a hall around the pool, it forms a sort of “*underwater revue*”⁶², reversing the roles of subject and object.

Loos’s conception of the relationship between subject and object is clearly one of detachment, analogous to his self-proclaimed belief in the detachment of the exterior and the manifestation of richness and splendour of the interior in a building. This relationship could be extended to the conclusion that Loos values bodily experience of space over abstract mental concepts. He is essentially reversing the Cartesian view between “the perceptual and conceptual... [While] Descartes deprived the body of its status as the seat of valid and transmissible knowledge”⁶³, Loos privileges the body as this reference point. In this case the seat or reference point of the subject is constantly displaced between the presumably male visitor and the female inhabitant.

Another reading of the lakeside scene image uncovers Loos’s apparent apotheosis of humble farmhouses, chapels and natural scenery. The farmer, the mason, the carpenter and the joiner do not desecrate the lake; the products of their labour are in tune with the spirit of the world. This is because these tradesmen are “only capable of building houses in the style of [their] time... he who had lost contact with his time, the one who was uprooted and remoulded, he became the dominant man, he was the architect”⁶⁴. Here Loos is making a parallel between the architect and members of bourgeois society. The verisimilitude of the craftsmen is championed over the “masking... [of] mediocrity”⁶⁵ and misrepresentation of principles of the bourgeoisie. This conflict of grandeur and humbleness is a tension implicit in Loos’s philosophy, and explicitly explored in the House for Josephine Baker.

Loos’s indictment of the bourgeois is not always as subtle as it is in his passage about the lakeside scene. In other publications he wrote “scathing, satirical reviews of Viennese society and cultural groups, diagnosing hypocrisy and cultural anachronism everywhere”⁶⁶. The style of both the societal writings and the passage about the lakeside image, however, are written in the form of the Viennese feuilleton. This style of aphoristic prose is flamboyant

61 Colomina, B. (1990). “Intimacy and Spectacle: The Interiors of Adolf Loos.” *AA Files* 20.

62 Ungers cited in Ibid. p. 10

63 Ibid. p. 11

64 Loos, A. (1910/2006). Architecture. *Architecture and Design in Europe and America, 1750-2000*. A. Harrison-Moore and D. C. Rowe. Oxford, Blackwell Publishing Ltd. p. 357

65 Tournikiotis, P. (1991). *Adolf Loos*. New York, Princeton Architectural Press. p. 24

66 Maciuka, J. V. (2000). “Adolf Loos and the Aphoristic Style: Rhetorical Practice in Early Twentieth-Century Design Criticism.” *Design Issues* 16(2). p. 79

Figure 17

The theatrical and extravagant interior of the Müller House, Prague

Figure 18

The detached and austere exterior of the Müller House

and easily lends itself to embellishment. His aphorisms, despite their self-effacing content, locate him amongst the intellectual milieu of his time, the educated and wealthy elite. His philosophy is grounded in a conflict of theatrical and anti-theatrical forces. The form and content of his aphorisms are in tension; while their content is filled with noble claims for an ethics of style, their form exposes Loos's own situation amongst the privileged. This conflict is an essential theme in Loos's interiors, especially in the House for Josephine Baker. While the exterior of the House is volumetrically simple, dichromatic and characteristically unadorned, the interior is extravagant and spectacular.

"Architectural introversion"⁶⁷ is a fundamental intention in the Baker House. The exterior gives no clues as to what the other sides of its walls are like. Although the project was never realized, we can read from the plans that once inside, one would be immediately confronted with the house's highly suggestive and provocative imperatives. Not only are the spaces intended to be sensual, but there is also a "psychological dimension"⁶⁸ to them. From the second floor, where the private rooms are, the inhabitant can see down to the grand staircase, overlooking the internal space that brings guests up to the first floor upon entry. This design move, characteristic of Loos's interiors⁶⁹, creates a

67 Gravagnuolo, B. (1982). *Adolf Loos: Theory and Works*. New York, Rizzoli International Publications Ltd. p. 191

68 Colomina, B. (1990). "Intimacy and Spectacle: The Interiors of Adolf Loos." *AA Files* 20. p. 5

69 Ibid. p. 8

Figure 19
Living room of the Müller House, Prague, designed by Loos. The internal aperture into the 'theatre box' ladies room is positioned above the entrance

Figure 20
Seating in the 'theatre box' ladies room, located around the view across the living room

theatre box inside the house⁷⁰, where the inhabitants become spectators of the drama of guests arriving. Loos on occasion even refers to the inhabitant of architecture as the "spectator"⁷¹. In turn, the guest may feel like a spectator too, as their eyes catch a glimpse of the most intimate spaces on the top floor through the atrium space. The inhabitant would begin to assume her role in this spectacle, feeling herself becoming an object for the gaze of others⁷². When the guests explore the narrow corridors of the first floor, they can see through the thick glass windows in the walls of the second floor swimming pool, with views from each side of the body swimming beneath its surface. This is the pinnacle of the theatre analogy, with the object, Baker, likely unable to make out the identities of the spectators due to the water over the glass and their access to all sides of the pool. Her location, in the pool, is centre stage.

The consistent spatial detachment of the voyeur and the object of voyeurism is also significant as it "re-establish[es] the distance between critic and object of criticism, architect and building,

70 This architectural device is used to differing degrees in Loos's other houses, including the Müller House in Prague. The 'theatre box' in the Müller House is shown in the images here in absence of images of the unbuilt House for Josephine Baker

71 Loos, A. (1898). The Principle of Cladding. Spoken Into the Void: Collected Essays by Adolf Loos, 1897-1900. New York, MIT Press. p. 66

72 This notion of becoming the object for another's gaze is reminiscent of Sartre's passage concerning the 'other' making us aware of our own 'subjectness'. When Sartre's character believes someone can see him listening in to another's private conversation, he immediately becomes aware of his shame that otherwise was not there. This is discussed further later in the thesis.

subject and object”⁷³. Loos is the harshest critic of the culture of his contemporaries in Viennese society, yet he rejects that his own status is situated amongst theirs. He consistently distances himself from the society he criticises. Despite this rejection, Loos indulges in the design of highly theatrical architecture, with dramatic spaces and devices such as Baker’s swimming pool. The design for Baker’s House, with its formal exterior and theatrical interior, is analogous to Loos’s writing on the lakeside image. The content of his philosophy is a strictly analytical critique of culture, yet the form of his writing suggests an extravagant, theatrical critic.

Loos’s logic embodies his theory of culture and in turn his architectural method. Behind the austere facades and harsh criticisms lie interiors of theatricality. His theories are sophisticated and sensitive to circumstances of his time, however on the other side of their introverted walls lie a plethora of hyperbole and conflict. In the paper *Architecture* Loos writes about architecture and also about a normative ethical theory, the latter depending on the discourse of the former to make its point. His philosophy cannot be separated from its architectural language without losing its meaning.

Like Wittgenstein, Loos appeals to the reader to conjure up an image and inspect its properties. The images are specific examples intended to corroborate concrete ideals. It is significant that the images they invoke are loaded with architectural language as they establish an ontological link between

73 Colomina, B. (1992). The Split Wall: Domestic Voueurism. *Sexuality & Space*. B. Colomina. New York, Princeton Architectural Press. p. 35

CHAPTER 4
CASE STUDY: MERLEAU-PONTY'S FLAT

architecture and philosophy.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty was a contemporary of Sartre and likely influenced by Heidegger⁷⁴. His seminal phenomenological work *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) was written two years after Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*⁷⁵ (1943) and almost 20 years after Heidegger's *Being and Time*⁷⁶ and deals with similar themes like 'being-in-the-world'. Perception, for Merleau-Ponty, is the key to understanding phenomena and our relationship to the world; only to Merleau-Ponty perception is mediated by the body, in "an holistic sense"⁷⁷, in our involvement with the world. The body is an essential intermediary to gain a consistency of perception. Objects in the world are objects for a bodily gaze or grasp, and this phenomenal body structures the world of objects into figure-ground type configurations to understand them⁷⁸.

These relationships have ramifications in the spatial realm and Merleau-Ponty refers specifically to space as forming a world around the locus that is the phenomenal body. He admits that the kind of space defined by 'sensing' is not the intellectual construction of space by some non-spatial ego defined by the Cartesian paradigm for describing three dimensions, but a special kind of spatiality. Reflection upon an action refers to

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- 74 Chaplin, A. D. (2001). Phenomenology: Merleau-Ponty and Sartre. *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*. B. Grant and D. M. Lopes. Oxon, Routledge. p. 167
- 75 Sartre, J.-P. (1943/1968). *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*. New York, Citadel Press.
- 76 Heidegger, M. (1927/1962). *Being and Time*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- 77 Chaplin, A. D. (2001). Phenomenology: Merleau-Ponty and Sartre. *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*. B. Grant and D. M. Lopes. Oxon, Routledge. p. 167
- 78 Langer, M. M. (1989). *Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception: A Guide and Commentary*. London, The Macmillan Press Ltd. p. 83

our intellectual sense of space, but *pre-reflective* existence, the existence encountered by bodily perception, occurs in a more primordial spatial realm. Pre-reflective experience of the world occurs in the primordial spatial realm in which “the body-subject fastens itself on to its environment”⁷⁹. Merleau-Ponty’s example for this – what he calls a “*spatiality of situation*”⁸⁰ – is the intrinsic ability to locate one’s body in space when casually smoking a pipe: “If I stand here holding my pipe in my closed hand, the position of my hand is not determined discursively by the angle which it makes with my forearm, and my forearm with my upper arm, and my upper arm with my trunk, and my trunk with the ground. I know indubitably where my pipe is, and thereby know where my hand and my body are”⁸¹. It is important to understand that this kind of engagement is pre-reflective, as it is different from analytical intentionality, where movement is abstracted from the “flow of engagement of a situation”⁸². Pre-reflective, bodily intentionality does not disrupt one’s engagement with a situation; it is a fundamental skill of the phenomenal body. It is significant that in his account of the phenomenal body Merleau-Ponty relies on a concept of spatiality, in this example our elemental haptic sense of locating a part of our bodies in space.

Steven Holl is considered by some theorists to be an architect who makes manifest the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty in a “self-conscious philosophical program for his work”⁸³. His work aims to capture the provocative and sensuous qualities of light, texture and colour to engage people with the architecture. Holl describes his intentions to enmesh architecture and phenomenology: “Phenomenology concerns the study of essences; architecture has the potential to put essences back into existence. By weaving form, space, and light, architecture can elevate the experience of daily life through the various phenomena that emerge from specific sites, programs, and architectures”⁸⁴. It has been argued, however, that Holl’s work is “less concerned with manifesting phenomenological architecture and more concerned with what he defines as perceptual phenomena”⁸⁵. August

79 Ibid. p. 85

80 Merleau-Ponty, M. (1945/1962). *Phenomenology of Perception*. Paris, Gallimard. p. 115

81 Ibid. p. 115

82 August, K. (2008). The Thinking Body: A study of the architectural ramifications of Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s rendering of the human body’s capacities”. *School of Architecture*. Wellington, Victoria University of Wellington. p. 50

83 Perez-Gomez, A. (1996). Introduction. *Intertwining: Steven Holl Selected Projects 1989-1995*. S. Holl. New York, Princeton Architectural Press. p. 9

84 Holl, S. (1996). *Intertwining*. New York, Princeton Architectural Press. p. 11

85 August, K. (2008). The Thinking Body: A study of the architectural ramifications of Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s rendering of the human body’s capacities”. *School of Architecture*. Wellington, Victoria University of Wellington. p. 67

Figure 21
Residence for the Swiss Ambassador,
Washington, designed by Steven Holl

argues that Holl's emphasis on phenomena such as light, colour and materiality is not sufficient for a Merleau-Pontian justification for his program. By aligning himself with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and at the same time referring to 'intentions' as "existences of *mental* phenomena"⁸⁶, Holl reveals a misinterpretation or at least over-simplification of Merleau-Ponty's pre-reflective, *bodily* engagement with phenomena. The phenomenal body concept offers an account of spatiality that may be more appropriate and valuable to architecture than his more visual characteristics alone.

This case study examines Holl's architecture, in particular the Residence for the Swiss Ambassador in Washington, rather than his written work, for manifestations of Merleau-Ponty's spatial phenomenology. Merleau-Ponty explains the notion of bodily engagement with phenomena in the image he describes of his flat in *Phenomenology of Perception*:

"When I walk around my flat, the various aspects in which it presents itself to me could not possibly appear as views of one and the same thing if I did not know that each of them represents the flat seen from one spot or another, and if I were unaware of my own movements, and of my body as retaining its identity through the stages of those movements. I can of course take a mental bird's eye view of the flat, visualize it or draw a plan of it on paper, but in that case too I could not grasp the unity of the

⁸⁶ Holl, S. (2006). Questions of perception: Phenomenology of architecture. *Questions of perception: Phenomenology of architecture*. S. Holl, J. Pallasmaa and A. Perez-Gomez. San Francisco, USA, William Stout Publishers. p. 42

*object without the mediation of bodily experience, for what I call a plan is only a more comprehensive perspective: it is the flat 'seen from above', and the fact that I am able to draw together in it all habitual perspectives is dependent on my knowing that one and the same embodied subject can view successively from various positions"*⁸⁷

Here 'space' (Merleau-Ponty's home) is being described as the synthesis of the spatial situations encountered by the body. The body's engagement with physical space as a means of understanding is a more appropriate focus for architecture in this passage than the total reliance on sensory qualities such as light and colour. From this passage we can establish a set of criteria less superficial than those mentioned by Holl and examine the ramifications for space. Characteristics that can be applied to the *spatial* qualities of the building are the architecture's manipulation or engaging of the body, the uninterrupted affordance of space, and the use of objects indeterminate without human engagement⁸⁸. August applies criteria like these to Carlo Scarpa's architecture, however Holl's work intertwines these spatial concepts despite the shortcomings of his theoretical justifications.

The flat and its "various aspects" are encountered as it "presents itself to me". This suggests that the architecture acts on the body; the body is the subject for space. Recall that this kind of spatiality is a pre-reflective spatiality for Merleau-Ponty, as when the flat presents itself to him, his body acts instinctively or primordially to the space around it. Just as it did in the pipe example, the phenomenal body possesses the fundamental skill of locating itself in space. The space engages the phenomenal body, forces it to try to understand its spatial situation, but not in a conscious analytical way that the mind understands a situation, but with a bodily understanding. The first criterion for an architecture describing this kind of spatiality then is the ability to manipulate the body through space or engage the conscious body with the space.

When Merleau-Ponty describes his ability to imagine the flat from all of its different visual and non-visual perspectives, it is only possible because he knows that he has experienced it bodily from various positions. Looking at its various aspects proves nothing about the nature of the space, however after experiencing it as the embodied subject one can understand it. The continuity of bodily intentionality, without abstraction or disruption of the flow of bodily experience, is necessary for experiencing the space. Purely visual abstractions of space, such as the birds-

87 Merleau-Ponty, M. (1945/1962). *Phenomenology of Perception*. Paris, Gallimard. p. 235

88 August, K. (2008). *The Thinking Body: A study of the architectural ramifications of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's rendering of the human body's capacities*". *School of Architecture*. Wellington, Victoria University of Wellington. p. 72-86

Figure 22

Plan of ground floor of Residence for Swiss Ambassador, Washington

Figure 23

Diagram with green arrows showing large feature doors between public spaces and red arrows showing small doors through to private spaces, manipulating the body through space

eye view, architectural drawings or the view from a particular perspective, fail to grasp the unity of the space that only an embodied subject can appreciate through continuous occupation of and movement through the space. Spatially, architecture can allude to this kind of bodily intentionality through the continuous affordance of space. This is the next criterion for an architecture pertaining to the phenomenal body.

When walking around a flat, we cannot make sense of what we are experiencing if we are “unaware of [our] own movements, and of [our] body retaining its identity through the stages of those movements”. We are constantly aware of our movements, even if we do not consider we are thinking about what we are doing, because we are moving with our body. Bodily intentionality and movement is essential to one’s identity even, as one is always aware of the position of one’s body, despite not being able to describe it geometrically. This is why instigating movement is necessary to engage with space. Architecture is responsible for initiating movement by prompting engagement with the architecture. Spaces with objects or features that are indeterminate without human engagement instigate movement in a space. This is another factor against which we can analyse architecture dealing with Merleau-Pontian spatiality.

The Residence for the Swiss Ambassador in Washington, designed by Steven Holl, employs tactics to manipulate the user’s movement through the space. The cruciform plan, referring to the Swiss icon, is disrupted by forcing a diagonal line of movement through the building for guests inhabiting the more

Figure 24

Residence for Swiss Ambassador manipulates the body of the user by drawing them across space diagonally

Figure 25

Large sliding and pivoting doors instigate bodily movement in the space

public part of the house⁸⁹. Being an ambassadorial residence the house dedicates around half of its floor space to the hosting of guests, and this invisible diagonal line subtly guides their occupation. While this line is not visible, its path is defined by the over-sized doors that open the way through the corners of the orthogonal rooms. The user is drawn through the space by this gesture. This is how the architecture engages the body of the user, manipulating its direction through an otherwise wide-open rectilinear space.

The architecture attempts to engage guests in the public part of the house by using a series of apertures. In this part of the house doors are enlarged panels in the walls, some of which pivot on a hinge not on their edge. These doors force users to actively understand the movement of the door with their bodies. They instigate movement through space by engaging the body with the motion of swinging or sliding the large veneered door leaves.

The continuous affordance of space is expressed in the house to facilitate bodily intentionality. To avoid abrupt spatial moments the stairs, for example, protrude by one large square step and a half out from behind the wall concealing them. This move has the stairs flowing both down to the ground and spilling out into the large hall space. This creates an affording of space that establishes a more continuous flow up the stairs, rather than the abrupt revelation of the stairs that would occur if they were hidden entirely behind the wall.

⁸⁹ Holl, S. (2007). *House: Black Swan Theory*. New York, Princeton Architectural Press. p. 23

Figure 26
The stairs extend into the hall space
creating a continuous affordance of space

By using Merleau-Ponty's philosophy to inform the spaces in the house rather than just the textures and light that define the exterior of the house, Holl has intertwined phenomenology and architecture. Space is configured to engage the phenomenal body with its spatial situation. In plan the building appears to be a very large house with an visually symbolic floor plan. Inhabitation of the spaces however appeals to the phenomenal body's ability to understand space through its innate skill of assessing its own spatial situation. The house, with its relatively unconventional and unfamiliar layout, employs architectural devices to engage and manipulate the body through its continuous arrangement of spaces. The affordance of space in the house implies that when experienced through continuous embodied occupation one can better understand a sense of the Merleau-Pontian *spatiality of situation*.

CHAPTER 5
ARCHITECTURE AND PHILOSOPHY ENTWINED

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These case studies show, in the first case how a philosopher has used architecture to develop philosophy; in the second case how philosophy and architecture have been used concurrently; and in the last case how an architect has used philosophy to develop architecture. They are all examples that show a resonating link between the two disciplines. Significantly, passages about the forming of an image have been used to examine the spatial qualities of a philosophical aphorism. In each case, a reference to a space provides us with philosophical text that uses architectural language in discussing a philosophical concept. It is significant that the concepts are discussed using spatial metaphor, as the relationships between philosophical concepts are spatial. The spatial nature of architecture allows it to be used as the medium for reworking these concepts, and similarly philosophy is exploited for its phenomenological nature to provide essential meaning to spaces.

It is logical that these three houses are examined for a philosophical interpretation given that the designers have all operated within the realm of philosophy. Wittgenstein and Loos, in early 20th Century Vienna, designed their respective houses with more concern for their own theoretical interpretations of the world than in line with any pre-existing style. At the time of building their houses were not “belonging to a particular architectural tradition [or] as independent of any extra-disciplinary influences”⁹⁰. Neither building is trying to engage people through stylistic references or aesthetics; they “ignore the arbitrary dictates of style”⁹¹. Nothing

90 Paden, R. (2007). Mysticism and Architecture: Wittgenstein and the Meanings of the Palais Stonborough. Plymouth, Lexington Books. p. 36

91 Ibid. p. 55

in the interiors of their houses was applied in an arbitrary or inappropriate manner. Similarly, Holl is not merely a follower in some architectural tradition or striving to fit into an established style. His aim is to “explore architecture as more than just an aesthetic undertaking”⁹². An approach to looking at these houses from the standpoint of modern philosophy is entirely appropriate. Moreover, looking at modern philosophy from the realm of architecture can create spaces informed by the essences of existence and the relationships between body, mind and world.

Elizabeth Grosz, exploring philosophy and architecture from ‘outside’, argues that because the disciplines are exclusive, they must interact within a third space, outside of them both⁹³. Rather than submitting one discipline to the demands and constraints of the other, they must be explored adjacently, one feeding the other instead of allowing one to dominate the other. I propose that a more “productive interchange”⁹⁴ that Grosz suggests but doesn’t define would involve the simultaneous exploration of the rigour of philosophical investigation and phenomenological concepts, with the architectonic manipulation of space. Philosophical concepts that suggest spatial relationships can feed architecture but the architecture must always provide something more, something of its own that poses philosophical questions. Grosz asks what the place of philosophy is in architecture, or that of architecture in philosophy. Projects that come the closest to answering this question are those that rethink architecture, that are “in part about thinking, about how to think, to think while making or rather while doing: to think as doing”⁹⁵. It is significant that what Grosz is suggesting is not a solution but a method for thinking and doing architecture, a realm where philosophy and architecture operate co-dependently.

Operating within a fabric of philosophical aphorisms and architectural space, the boundaries between the two are indistinguishable. The next chapter will endeavour to examine the philosophy of a modern philosopher who never associated himself with architecture, but due to his work in phenomenology deserves a place in this new realm. Jean-Paul Sartre was concerned with concrete essences and the nature of existence; concepts, it is argued here, with a spatial grounding. By extracting spatial relationships from the text to use for design, this project is rebuilding Sartre’s philosophy as an architecturalisation of space. The implications for such an architecture that expounds theories of consciousness and existence is the creation of spaces in which we can rethink about philosophy.

92 Gannon, T. (2004). *Steven Holl: Simmons Hall*. New York, Princeton Architectural Press. p. 11

93 Grosz, E. (2001). *Architecture from the Outside*. Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press.

94 Ibid. p. xvi

95 Ibid. p. 58

PART 2

SARTRE IN SPACE

In the second half of the 20th Century Sartre was described as being not the greatest philosopher of our time, but the “only philosopher of our time”⁹⁶. He is a philosopher associated with existentialism and phenomenology, as well as a writer of novels, plays and political theory. His literature, much like his life, is based on the themes of his philosophy; philosophy was how he lived his life. His most significant works, aligning him with existentialism and phenomenology, were *The Transcendence of the Ego* (1937), *The Imaginary* (1940), *Being and Nothingness* (1943), *Existentialism is a Humanism* (1946), and *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1960). His early influences were phenomenologists Hegel and Husserl, as well as Heidegger’s ontology of existence⁹⁷. He claimed he would rather read detective novels than the analytic philosophy of Wittgenstein⁹⁸. He was a contemporary of Merleau-Ponty and in fact knew him personally as they shared the same social circle of intellectuals in Paris at the time⁹⁹. A recurring philosophical concern in his philosophy and literature was consciousness: consciousness of the self, of others, of things in the world, of being, and imaginary consciousness. Consciousness, for Sartre, is not an object that can know itself. “Is there room for an ‘I’ in such consciousness? ...evidently not”¹⁰⁰.

96 Cumming, R. D. (1965). Introduction. The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre. R. D. Cumming. New York, Random House. p. 46

97 Ibid. p. 24

98 Ibid. p. 2

99 de Beauvoir, S., Ed. (1983). Witness to My Life: The Letters of Jean-Paul Sartre to Simone de Beauvoir 1926-1939. Hammonds Worth, England, Penguin Books. p. 151

100 Sartre, J.-P. (1937). The Transcendence of the Ego. Paris, France, Gallimard. p. 41

CHAPTER 6

SARTRE'S TRANSCENDENTAL
PHENOMENOLOGY AND SPATIALITY

Sartre's theories of consciousness, self, objects, the image and the body have implications for space. The nature of these issues entails spatial relationships between their concepts. The language Sartre uses suggests they are related spatially, and it is significant that such descriptions cannot be explained without spatial parameters. Philosophy need not be considered as merely concrete descriptions of our interactions with the world, it is an active production of deductions and criticisms, a "process of making... arguments, propositions, discourses"¹⁰¹. The philosophy of Sartre is not provided here as *the* philosophy with connections to architecture, as many philosophers have been associated with architectural theory. Rather, Sartre's philosophy constructs propositions and situations for contemplation and these situations can feed architectural space just as architectural space offers a location in which to understand them.

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To introduce Sartre's conception of consciousness, we can refer to his comparison of it with Descartes' renowned maxim: *cogito ergo sum*, or 'I think therefore I am'¹⁰². Sartre challenges Descartes' identity of *I* and *think*. He is not doubting that we exist in the world, or commenting about scepticism or realism, as Descartes was when he posited this statement. Sartre rejects the phrase *I think* as it is a phrase that can only ever be claimed through *reflective consciousness*, not the kind of consciousness that is actually thinking. While reflecting on thinking, or reflecting on, for example, drawing, we refer to an *I*: *I was thinking* or *I am drawing*. The consciousness we are referring to when we think

101 Grosz, E. (2001). *Architecture from the Outside*. Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press. p. 5

102 Descartes, R. (1644/2007). *Principles of Philosophy*. Whitefish, USA, Kessinger Publishing. p. 18

this does not contain an *I* however, at the time of thinking or drawing I am in a “world of objects [such as the lines I draw, the objects I am drawing]; it is they which constitute the unity of my consciousness... *I* have disappeared”¹⁰³. The problem is that we are referring to a concept that we call *I* that manifests itself as the source of our consciousness. This *I*, or the ego, Sartre argues, is not an inhabitant of consciousness. By synthesizing selective acts, one’s consciousness constructs an ego or sense of self. However, consciousness knows itself only as inwardness, the ego transcends it.

The example Sartre draws to portray this unreflected consciousness is set in daily life, in the world:

*“When I run after a streetcar, when I look at the time, when I am absorbed in contemplating a portrait, there is no I. There is consciousness of the streetcar-having-to-be-overtaken, etc., and non-positional consciousness of consciousness. In fact, I am then plunged into the world of objects; it is they which constitute the unity of my consciousnesses; it is they which present themselves with values, with attractive and repellent qualities – but me, I have disappeared; I have annihilated myself. There is no place for me on this level. And this is not a matter of chance, due to a momentary lapse of attention, but happens because of the very structure of consciousness”*¹⁰⁴.

He is portraying the world as containing consciousnesses acting in a world of objects, yet it is the objects that unite my consciousnesses, there is no reference point that is *me* that unites them. If someone asked what I was doing when contemplating the portrait, I could tell them, and the *word I* is useful syntactically. However, for the *concept I*, the ego, as soon “as I turn my gaze toward it and try to reach it... it vanishes”¹⁰⁵. This is because of the nature of the transcendental ego.

Caillois terms this lack of distinction between the milieu and the subject the “depersonalisation by assimilation to space”¹⁰⁶ and likens it to the experience of the psychotic person. The psychotic person’s thoughts are separate from their body and fill the space around them. They abandon themselves as *the* focal point in space, abandon their locality as themselves for themselves, and the barrier between their ego and the world is “ever permeable, suffused

103 Sartre, J.-P. (1937). *The Transcendence of the Ego*. Paris, France, Gallimard. p. 49

104 Ibid. p. 49

105 Ibid. p. 88

106 Caillois, R. (1987). *Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia*. *October: The First Decade, 1976-1986*. A. Michelson, R. Krauss, D. Crimp and J. Copjec. Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press. p. 72

Figure 27
Orthographic drawings are read
analytically as a sum of points in space

not only by objects but by spatiality itself¹⁰⁷.

This concept of the depersonalisation of space, the loss of the self as a reference point in space, is the driver for my process of designing in orthographic drawings such as sections and axonometrics. These kinds of drawings are from a non-perspectival view, a depersonalised reference point. When we refer to ourselves as *I*, for example when we say *I am standing by the window*, we are anchoring our own subjectivity in our body, in a particular position in space, in relation to other objects. This anchoring of our subjectivity is what creates our identity as *I*. From this position, we have a particular perspective on the world, from the reference point of our person. In the technical architectural drawing, this union of a subjectivity and location of body in space does not exist. The space of the orthographic drawing is considered analytically as a sum of points in space, without the reference point *I* appearing in an effort to describe it. The dependence on an identity or ego located in the space has disappeared.

Now it may seem impossible to consider the ego, if it is really just a unity of all my consciousnesses. If the ego is transcendental, then why am I compelled to refer to it as my identity and situate it in my body? When I occupy space, I am sometimes vividly aware of my experience of the space. This is because there is a viewpoint from which we can view the self, and that is from the viewpoint of others. Just as our consciousness selects

107 Callois in Grosz, E. (2001). Architecture from the Outside. Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press.

actions consistent with one another from the past to falsely construct an ego or sense of self, so is our sense of self given to us by other people treating us as objects rather than pure consciousnesses. We get the most vivid and compelling sense of ourselves when we see ourselves in the eyes of others¹⁰⁸. Just as fundamental to human reality as the being-for-itself of consciousness, is being-for-others. The 'look' of others turns the act of consciousness from acting pre-reflectively at objects to acting reflectively at oneself as an object. We realise, when being looked at, that *we are* what others see us as. Sartre's example is of shame when caught eavesdropping behind a door:

*"Let us imagine that moved by jealousy, curiosity, or vice I have just glued my ear to the door and looked through a keyhole. I am alone and on the level of a non-thetic self-consciousness. This means first of all that there is no self to inhabit my consciousness, nothing therefore to which I can refer my acts in order to qualify them... My consciousness clings to my acts, it is my acts; and my acts are commanded only by the ends to be attained and by the instruments to be employed. My attitude, for example, has no 'outside'... But suddenly I hear footsteps in the hall. Someone is looking at me!... I now exist as myself for my unreflective consciousness. This irruption of the self has often been described: I see myself because somebody sees me"*¹⁰⁹

In this example, I am acting without directing my attention towards the way I am acting. My consciousness is focused on what I am doing without reflecting upon itself and judging my actions. It is only when another person sees me – or even when I become aware of someone possibly seeing me, such as when I am disturbed by the sound of footsteps approaching – do I turn my attention to what I am doing, and the *I* appears only now. The gaze of the other, whether directly visually or indirectly alluded to, objectifies me and forces me to look at myself, as a *self*.

This description, of discovering I am an object under the gaze of the other, suggests spatial configurations of being caught by another's gaze. Architecture can create moments where its inhabitants are manipulated so as to become in view of other inhabitants. Sartre's example, located in perhaps the hallway of a house, on the other side of a door from an inhabited space, produces an image of conventional architecture. This can be extended to spaces where

108 Detmer, D. (2008). *Sartre Explained: from Bad Faith to Authenticity*. Illinois, Carus Publishing Company. p. 92

109 Sartre, J.-P. (1943/1968). *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*. New York, Citadel Press. p. 235

Figure 28
Architecture can
manipulate inhabitants
into the gaze of another

Figure 29
I see myself when
someone else sees me

one is manipulated into the gaze of the other¹¹⁰. In generating space synonymous with the concept of being-for-others, the presence of the other is instrumental in forcing the user to reflect upon his or her actions and providing him or her with a sense of self. The architectural device of manipulating inhabitants into the gaze of others is used throughout the design component of this thesis. Overhead balconies and internal apertures create possibilities of being caught in another's gaze.

Caillois's 'depersonalisation of space' is reversed under the look of the other. The subject regains their right to occupy a perspectival point and is located as themselves again, from the point of view of the other and their own consciousness. The ego is returned to the body and the barriers between self and outside space present themselves. Space becomes organised around *the* focal point of the subject, rather than one of many focuses of consciousnesses acting in a world of objects.

Another important part of knowing about our own and others' existence is due to the role of the body and its relationship to objects in the world. For Sartre, the body is united with consciousness and it would be "in vain to suppose that the soul can detach itself from this individualization by separating itself from the body at death or by pure thought, for the soul

¹¹⁰ This is reminiscent of Adolf Loos's use of changes in floor level between the positions of subject and the object in his interiors. His theme of the theatre, as well as suggestions of surveillance, creates spaces forcing users into the gaze of the other.

is the body”¹¹¹. This is an ontological claim for an embodied consciousness. Significantly, Sartre’s account is the most comprehensive account of the body in phenomenology with the exception of Merleau-Ponty’s, and Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology has always rested heavily on the basis of Sartre’s writing¹¹². Rather than trying to discover a place where mind and body interact, Sartre describes the body as “*lived* and not *known*”¹¹³. He examines the body from two ontological points of view: the body as it is for the person himself or herself and the body as it appears for others.

The body as it is for the person himself/herself is the instrumental body. The body is not an object we use to gain knowledge of the physical world, it is the manifestation of our selfness and how instrumental things relate themselves to us. The world of objects is an infinite number of systems of instrumentality that always refer back to the body. The spatial connotations of the body for-itself are of the body as a centre of reference for objects in the world.

The second ontological condition of the body that Sartre proposes is the body as it appears to others. As well as the body being-for-itself, the body exists for-others. We can understand how our body is for-others by realising how others’ bodies are for us. Recall how the look of the other made us into an object, confirmed a misguided conception of our self when seen through the eyes of the other. Just as his/her gaze objectified us, we objectify the body of the other. However, on close examination we do not conceive of the other as merely a thing among other things in the world, but as an object with a subjective point of view. We accept that the other has a character, based on past behavioural patterns from which we draw conclusions about his/her personality. His/her bodily actions provide this past and the potential ways he will act in the future, thus constituting his character, and qualify him/her with the point of view we grant him/her. And just as we are the point of reference for potential systems of instrumentality, the other is the centre of an instrumental complex, a consciousness from whose standpoint meaning is given to the other objects in the room¹¹⁴.

111 Sartre, J.-P. (1943/1968). *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*. New York, Citadel Press. p. 310

112 Barnes, H. E. (1999). *Sartre and Feminism: Aside from The Second Sex and All That*. *Feminist Interpretations of Jean-Paul Sartre*. J. S. Murphy. University Park, PA, The Pennsylvania State University Press. p. 36

113 Sartre, J.-P. (1943/1968). *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*. New York, Citadel Press. p. 324

114 Detmer, D. (2008). *Sartre Explained: from Bad Faith to Authenticity*. Illinois, Carus Publishing Company.

Figure 30

The body is a centre of reference for objects in the home
Figure 31 (opposite page)
 Objects in the home refer to the person who lives there as a subject, not just another object

"This room in which I wait for the master of the house reveals itself to me in its totality the body of its owner: this easy chair is a chair-where-he-sits, this desk is a desk-at-which-he-writes, this window is a window through which there enters the light-which-illuminates-the-objects-which-he-sees. Thus it is an outline complete with all its parts, and this outline is an outline-of-an-object; an object can come at every instant to fill the outline with content. But still the master of the house 'is not there'. He is elsewhere; he is absent"¹¹⁵

All of the objects in the home refer to the subjectivity of the person who lives there. Their meaning is reliant on the interests of this other person. Our encounter with another person is an encounter with a consciousness, a centre of reference, which arranges objects in the world according to its own subjective interests and uses. Spatially, this evokes a sense of all things in or aspects of a room being directed at another point of reference, other than one's own body. Furniture, objects used or held by part of a person's body, and spaces designed to the scale of the human body refer to the existence of the other, another subjectivity. We do not need to see another person to know that they, as both a body and consciousness, exist, we need only see objects and architectural features that refer to their interaction. This is an important concept for design, and sketched initially in figure 31.

In addition to seeing objects as referring to another subjectivity in the world, interacting with another's corporeality, objects interact

115 Sartre, J.-P. (1943/1968). Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology. New York, Citadel Press. p. 317-8

Figure 32

A step too high to climb, a chair too close to the edge of a ledge. This adversity is how architectural features indicate themselves to the body

**Figure 33
(opposite page)**
Concept drawing:
Rethinking architecture and
rebuilding philosophy

with the body. As the body interacts with the world, it interacts with objects in the world, including architecture. It feels the affects of the 'coefficient of adversity'¹¹⁶ of things: the resistance of objects to the instrumentality of the body. The adversity of objects will always extend back to the body as a centre of reference: something is not heavy unless it is heavy for the body to pick up; the fire is not threatening unless it threatens the house, which impacts on the body. Architecture impacts on the body and therefore has the ability to create this sense of adversity. Architectural features act as objects in the sense that they can have a certain level of resistance to the body. Objects in the world are not encountered by the body; rather they indicate themselves to the body.

*"it is in relation to an original instrumental complex that things reveal their resistance and their adversity. The bolt is revealed as too big to be screwed into the nut; the pedestal too fragile to support the weight which I want to hold up, the stone too heavy to be lifted up to the top of the wall, etc."*¹¹⁷

Objects present themselves to the body with all their resistance and adversity that we see relevant in them. This adversity we find in objects, the frustration we can encounter at their resistance to our intention for them, is significant in our knowing of our existence. The less objects or architecture display this resistance

¹¹⁶ A term Sartre uses, borrowed from Bachelard in Bachelard, G. (1942/1983). *Water and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Matter*. Cambridge, Pegasus Foundation.

¹¹⁷ Sartre, J.-P. (1943/1968). *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*. New York, Citadel Press. p. 301

to the body, the less impact they have on our corporeality and the less we would notice things that point out our very existence to us. Spatially this example can be extended to a hallway that is wide enough to be a hallway but too narrow to carry something through, a step that is too high to casually climb, an opening to look through that is too short to move through. Existentially, one is directly faced with the realities of existence when confronted with discomfort and struggle. This idea is portrayed in figure 32.

It is these significant ontological conditions and relationships in Sartre's writing that drive the design component of this thesis. The transcendent ego and the depersonalisation of space, the relationship between the self and others, and the role of the body and objects in the world, are investigated spatially in the design of a House for Sartre. Recall that philosophy has been described as a process of constructing propositions. Thinking philosophically is building on knowledge and revealing the structure behind the way we think. For philosophy and architecture to operate together with an inseparable bond, architecture is a tool for constructing such propositions. The realm Grosz describes where we must rethink architecture, rethink it as doing or making, is the realm in which philosophy and architecture can operate together. Rethinking and rebuilding on Sartre's philosophy of self, while at the same time rethinking and rebuilding the architecture of the house, a domestic space, is the aim of part 3 of this thesis. Through design of the house, Sartre's philosophy is explored further, pushing the limits of his descriptions and testing his examples in the tangible realm of architecture. Through inhabitation of such an architecture, one may gain a better understanding of this philosophy.

PART 3

DESIGN

Concepts central to Sartre's phenomenology have been extracted from his writing and analysed for the connotations they have for space. The role of design in this project is to further explore these concepts through architecture, a discipline dealing with physical space rather than philosophical space, and the foundational metaphor of transcendental phenomenology. It is through representation of three-dimensional spaces (using plans, sections and axonometric drawings) that Sartre's phenomenology is explored. The resulting design, of a three-dimensional space, is space where his philosophy can be experienced. By inhabiting such an architecture, one can better gain an understanding of the nature of experience and the essence of the physical and metaphysical world.

CHAPTER 7

THE HOUSE

This part of the thesis will begin with brief descriptions of the programme, site and representational method for the design component. Then the resulting design for 'A House for Sartre' will be presented. Finally, the design of particular spaces in the 'house' will be documented by way of experiential accounts of the design and philosophy integral to the spaces. The form of the first person account will read like an example written by Sartre, Wittgenstein, Merleau-Ponty or Loos, like the description of an image or a spatial metaphor describing a philosophical concept. I hope to discover firstly that architecture generated by Sartre's philosophy communicates his essential concepts to the user. Secondly, through the descriptive accounts of spaces in the building, I expect the architecture to propagate philosophical text.

Returning to the case studies in Part 1, the programme of the

Figure 34
Concept drawing
The house offers both concepts of domesticity, such as privacy and boundaries, and objects of domesticity, such as furniture

‘house’ was used by both Wittgenstein and Holl to embody their philosophical intentions. The house offers itself as an armature on which to project analytical propositions, yet at the same time it formalises the subject’s experience of the propositions. The house, for Wittgenstein, offered an open programme with which he could explore his philosophical problems, as well as domestic boundaries, which in turn influenced his philosophical claims. Likewise for Holl, the house is shaped by the ‘phenomenal body’ of Merleau-Ponty’s writing, yet at the same time the considerations of the domestic setting provide the substance with which to formalise the experience of the body. Domestic boundaries such as public and private space, subject and object, and the voyeuristic gaze can be dealt with in the house, both spatially and visually.

Bachelard and Heidegger privilege the house or dwelling respectively as both an emotionally and ontologically significant place¹¹⁸. Home is both something we inhabit and something that inhabits us. The home is significant as it represents human space, the space of the *self*, and the “relationship between Home and Ego, meanwhile, borders on identity”¹¹⁹. The house, as ‘self’, is an opportunity to explore Sartre’s philosophy of the self, the ego, and the boundaries associated with it in his work.

118 In *The Poetics of Space* Bachelard links representational spaces with the intimate and absolute space that is the house. Objects and elements in the house are paralleled with their ontological equivalent – drawers, chests and wardrobes are compared with nests, shells and corners – the latter being associated with our cardinal sense of inhabiting.

119 Lefebvre, H. (1974/1991). *The Production of Space*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishers. p. 121

Figure 35
Existing building at
42 Rue Bonaparte, Paris

Figure 36
(opposite page)
Site Plan

Rather than a single residence, the brief for this project is for a set of four apartments. The existence of other people is so central to Sartrean phenomenology that the presence of neighbouring occupants was exploited, with the design privileging a variety of standpoints throughout the apartment building. Moments in the building where the existence of other people is felt are in tension with our expectations for domestic space. The expression of co-existence through the apartments' tendencies to impinge on one another's space will be further defined in the existential accounts.

In order to provide a physical context for the project, a site was chosen at 42 Rue Bonaparte, Paris. A corner site, it is currently occupied by a six-storey building housing Le Bonaparte café and a retail store at ground level, and residential apartments on the upper floors. The building, in Saint-Germain-des-Prés, in the 16th arrondissement, is significant as Sartre resided in an apartment on the fourth floor from 1946 to 1962¹²⁰. His occupancy here was the longest time he ever lived in his own home, as for most of his adult life he resided in hotels. The view from his study "looked across the cobblestone square to the old church, the terrace of the Deux Magots, [a café he, Simone de Beauvoir and many Parisian intellectuals and artists frequented] and right up the Rue de Rennes"¹²¹. The interior of his apartment was destroyed in 1962 by a plastic explosive thrown through a window as an act of hostility against Sartre and his political views at the time

120 Rowley, H. (2005). *Tête-a-Tête: Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre*. New York, HarperCollins. p. 164

121 Ibid. p. 164

Figure 37
Render of exterior of design
'A House for Sartre'

Figure 38 (opposite page)
Orthographic design
process drawing

(although no one was home to be injured)¹²². The building is a pre-Haussmann structure, with stone street facades following the strict ornamental constraints of Paris at the time.

Due to these historical factors, the intervention of this project has been predominantly confined to the interior and the upper floors. The ground floor café, retail store and entrance to the apartments' central courtyard have been retained so as not to disturb the strict adherence the street level frontages have to their context. The exception to this is where three important internal spaces protrude through the existing façade and hang from their roofs to the existing external walls. From the exterior, one gets the impression of something happening in these transparent pods suspended above the street, they hint at the interiority of what is behind the glass. In his description of *the self*, Sartre refers to a consciousness of "absolute inwardness", forcing him to conclude, "one *lives* interiority... that one '*exists inward*'... for absolute interiority never has an outside... It is too much present for one to succeed in taking a truly external viewpoint on it. If we step back for vantage, the *me* accompanies us in this withdrawal. It is infinitely near, and I cannot circle around it"¹²³. This description is rich in spatial metaphor. Interiority suggests the existence of borders, strict borders in this case. It is only when we look out a window and consider our consciousness as one of many things acting amongst a world of objects that we can appreciate the transcendence of the ego. Occupying the small, glazed parts of

¹²² Ibid. p. 261

¹²³ Sartre, J.-P. (1937). *The Transcendence of the Ego*. Paris, France, Gallimard. p. 84-6

the rooms that puncture through the heavy external walls and hover above the outside world, one gets a glimpse of this sudden immersion in the outside world, before retreating back into a world of interiority that normally dictates one's relationship to one's ego.

Due to the analytical nature of the project, where propositional text has been analysed for its spatial content, orthographic drawings were used in the design process and for representation of design. Most of Sartre's philosophical text is written abstractly, with real-world examples provided to corroborate its meaning. It shifts from writing about the absolute to the experiential. Philosophical writing characteristically must follow logical reasoning and rationality. For this reason, the objectivity of orthographic drawings is suited to generating a rational architecture. In particular, sections and axonometric drawings are used to show objects and structures from a non-perspectival standpoint. The section and axonometric show a depersonalised view, where an object can be viewed analytically but not from a personal perspective. This idea is also consistent with Sartre's description of the ego – it is not from the standpoint of *me*, it is amongst the world. Our understanding of Sartre's transcendental ego is that it exists in space but not from a personal viewpoint. The depersonalisation of space is represented by the documentation drawings of the design. The experience of the subject is also important to existential philosophy, and the resulting architecture is finally presented from the point of view of the user in perspective images.

Figure 39
Design process drawing

Figure 40
Design process drawing

CHAPTER 8

DESIGN DOCUMENTATION:

SECTIONS & PLANS OF 'A HOUSE FOR SARTRE'

Figure 41
1:200

Ground floor plan showing internal courtyard and two staircases leading to different apartments. The use of two staircases is inspired by old Parisian buildings with a grand elevator and a servants elevator that lead to different floors. Users are aware of other peoples' occupation in the building. Section cuts shown.

Figure 42
Section 1 showing
disruptions in floor levels

Figure 43
Section 2

Figure 44
Section 3

Figure 45
Plans of each apartment and
how they fit with one another

Figure 46
Apartment 1 Plans, with area of
floor belonging to another apartment
shown in lighter shade of grey

Figure 47
Apartment 2 Plans, with area of
floor belonging to another apartment
shown in lighter shade of grey

Level 2
+6.200 FFL

Architectural floor plan of Level 2, +6.200 FFL. The plan shows a large central hall (2000 x 600) with a staircase (UP/DN) and a large room (1400 x 800). To the left is a smaller room (310 x 1980) with a toilet and a staircase (UP/DN). To the right is a large room (2000 x 600) with a staircase (UP/DN). The plan includes various rooms, corridors, and a large open area. Dimensions are provided for many rooms and corridors. A north arrow is located in the top right corner. The plan is labeled with grid lines A through G and 1 through 8.

Level 2
+6.200 FFL

Figure 49
Apartment 3 Plans, with area of
floor belonging to another apartment
shown in lighter shade of grey

Figure 50
Plan of Apartment 3
on Level 9

Figure 51
Apartment 4 Plans, with area of
floor belonging to another apartment
shown in lighter shade of grey

Figure 52
Plan of Apartment 4
on Level 6

Level 1
+3.100 FFL

CHAPTER 9

WRITING AN EXPERIENCE OF THE HOUSE

Imagine I am a visitor to a philosopher's apartment and I have ascended the first flight of stairs. To my right, the elevator; steel framed and glazed, moving people up to higher floors, so I turn to my left. I enter through the large glazed door to a large open room, empty of people at this moment, but scattered with objects of use. A pair of armchairs, side by side, point toward a grand piano in the corner. A martini glass sits on a side table and a hat stand is placed (expectantly) beside the door. A small set of stairs disappears behind a wall. These objects tell me that this room is a salon; for people to gather, socialise and share ideas in a private retreat. I am the first to arrive. I imagine the room filling with guests, as it surely will tonight. Voices buzzing - mine included - like a muted rush hour in the subway, totally immersed in their surroundings. My voice will be one of many, my consciousness engrossed in the space crowded with others, and I will relinquish my personal space, absorbed by the moment.

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Figure 53 (opposite page)
Plan of Apartment 1 on Level 1
showing position of a visitor to
a philosopher's apartment

But then I notice the balcony overhead. A steel railing runs along its top. Instantly I recognise it as a handrail and imagine a hand resting on it, a hand connected to a body and guided by a watchful eye. The possibility strikes me that the balcony is inhabited by another person, a consciousness, a viewer. Suddenly I forget the image of a full, excited room of guests and realise that I am standing alone. My 'aloneness' is revealed to me, and I am shocked by my audacious anticipation. My confidence is replaced by the self-consciousness of my presence in this large room (in someone else's home!). Did someone up there see me peer around the wall concealing the steps up to the bathroom? So I compose myself, standing straight, and divert my eyes back to the room. I decide to sit, still ever aware of my every move as if being watched.

I move towards the armchairs, and notice the long horizontal window that provides a view down into the courtyard. Walking towards it I notice that from this approach I can see across to another identical window in the adjacent wall. In fact I see through both of these windows and into the space beyond, to the chrome legs and white moulded plastic of chairs gathered around a matching table – a domestic scene, of dining. I imagine a family or group of friends dining there (but they're not there), their legs and backs wrapped in the furniture. Then I see a pair of hips pass closely past the glass and I freeze. From around the corner appears my host. "Bienvenue" he welcomes me, and I feel secure. I am where I am supposed to be after all.

Figure 54 (opposite page)
 Rendering of perspective of a
 visitor to Apartment 1

Simone de Beauvoir's boudoir is situated on the third floor.
The affordance of space in this room draws the inhabitant's
attention to Sartrean spatiality:

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Consider the moment when you wake. I awake to the sun streaming onto the foot of my bed. The east facing windows along the wall adjacent to my bed allow ribbons of light and warmth to stir me from my dream. My thoughts start slowly, passively. Sitting up I see the bathtub across the room, poised on its podium. I get up and head towards it. Along my path I take a quick glimpse to my right, at the railing up in the top corner of the room. A quick rush of adrenalin hits me; I am instantly aware and awake. No, no one is passing its thin grey rails this morning; I was not seen at this fleeting vulnerable moment. I arrive at the bathtub and back to privacy.

Figure 55 (opposite page)
Plan of Apartment 1 on
Level 4 showing Simone de
Beauvoir's boudoir

Level 4
+9.300 FFL

In the bathtub, I am perched above the street below. Only the silhouettes of surrounding buildings can be made out through the translucent glass cladding the room. Light fills the space. I must exit the bath at its end, as the plinth it sits on is just enough for the tub itself, too narrow to stand beside. At the foot of the tub I face the basin, I dry my face. My dressing room is to my left. To get there, I must cross, again, the invisible corridor that slices the room in two. From where the handrail sits high on the wall, this space is delineated by the sightline of someone occupying it. A narrow strip through the middle of my room. I know that the handrail is bolted to a landing of a staircase, which passes from one floor to another, in another apartment. I can't access the staircase myself, as this landing sits far too high up the wall of my room; this visual connection is the only access I have to it from my apartment. I also know it is a staircase for someone as from time to time I hear the sound of their feet climbing stairs accompanying the fleeting sight of a person passing the railings.

Crossing the path of sight and into my dressing room, I am conscious of myself, of my actions, and of my consciousness being mine. It is not the sight of the other person who may be passing up the stairs that I fear, that 'other person' is no threat. It is precisely the other person's 'subjectness' that makes me anxious; them seeing me. It is because I know that they, like me, have consciousness; consciousness of viewing, watching and judging. Before I crossed the corridor of the other's sight, I was pure subjectivity, a transcendental ego, and then suddenly I am an object to my neighbour the subject, and my ego returns to my body.

Figure 56 (opposite page)
 Rendering of Simone's
 perspective in her boudoir

Sartre's study is located on the fourth floor and protrudes through the southern façade. The only room in his apartment located on this floor, it is bordered on two sides by spaces belonging to other apartments:

Sitting at my desk, I hover above the street. People appear on the corner, ascending from the subway, while others disappear down its steps, into the ground. People sip espresso at Le Duex Magots, stroll along the wide footpath in front of the church, shove their way onto buses, and dodge their bikes around unpredictable cars. I see consciousnesses mingling with a world of vehicles, buildings and objects and I am transported down to the ground, existing amongst them, as I watch attentively to their interaction.

I remember reading something. I rise from my chair and turn towards my bookshelves. Traversing this room I pass the balustrade that takes the place of one of the walls of the room. The view from the balustrade is what appears to be a hallway, a circulation space, of another apartment, positioned around a void in the floor of this level. The matte white of the walls forms my view. But then a twinkle of light catches my eye below. Beneath the floor level of the hallway I see a glimpse of what lies below. Sunlight strikes the chrome tap of a kitchen sink. The floor above conceals most of the room from this angle, but I only need to see this tap perching over the stainless steel sink to know I am seeing into a kitchen. I can imagine the rest of the kitchen – the cupboards, refrigerator, stove – and a person.

Figure 57 (opposite page)
Plan of Apartment 3 on Level
7 showing Sartre's perspective
from his study

Through an internal aperture in another wall I spy another chrome fitting. It belongs to a hand basin. From this perspective I cannot see anything else in the room, just the basin, but I immediately recognise that behind the wall must be a bathroom. The tap is an object for a person's hand; it belongs in the instrumentality of another person. Should a person appear in the hall, I would not see them merely as another object amongst these others. That person would be the subject that encompasses all of these things in their instrumentality. Their consciousness gives meaning to these objects, acts as a reference point to which all of the objects refer. Even without the appearance of an inhabitant, the objects refer to the occupancy of another directed consciousness.

Figure 58 (opposite page)
Rendering of Sartre's
perspective from his study

A visitor to another apartment is departing, walking through the corridors to descend the stairs:

When I walk down this hallway I notice its close fit; its narrowness presents itself to me. Its corners are too tight for me to rush around without fear of a collision, its windows too low for me to gaze through. Its resistance presents itself to my body. I approach the stairs. I glimpse the form of another staircase, across from me, beyond the courtyard space. Again, my thoughts switch from their ordinary wanderings to focus on myself. Leaving the occasion early, slipping out unnoticed, I hadn't been embarrassed. Now, as I see legs shuffling and hear voices laughing in the opposite stairwell I am suddenly aware of my embarrassment, ashamed of my desire to leave.

Once again I am disrupted from simply living my desires, of directing my thoughts this way or that. I am forced to inspect the content of these thoughts, the content of my mental state. Rather than simply experiencing a desire to leave, to proceed to the exit unnoticed, I am conscious of these desires, and begin experiencing embarrassment, anxiety and other associated mental acts. This introspection I am coerced into is the closest I come to really feeling a sense of self, and the closest I can get to viewing the unity of my consciousnesses: my transcendental ego.

Figure 59
Plan of Apartment 4 on Level 4
showing a guest's perspective
walking down the hallway

G

F

E

D

C

B

A

Level 4
+9.300 FFL

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS

Architectural practice and discourse offer spatial relationships and frameworks for philosophy, and philosophical analysis brings reasoning, formulating and propositions to architecture. Their mutual investment in one another is significant as it allows for us to rethink how we construct philosophical concepts and how we do architecture.

Rather than dismissing architectural analogy in philosophical text as metaphor, it can be acknowledged as pertinent to the understanding of and meaning of the concept. It is significant that many philosophers rely on architectural language to present their arguments, as the concepts they describe contain spatial relationships. A spatial analogy cannot simply be replaced with a non-spatial one.

Where philosophy and architecture have been explored concurrently before there was new knowledge gained about the limits of each. Wittgenstein appears to have gained valuable insight into the nature of meaning and understanding through the design of the Stonborough-Wittgenstein House. It was after working as an architect that Wittgenstein wrote about the visual room, an example dependent on spatial characteristics, which contrasts with his previously highly analytical methods of philosophy. Loos's philosophy similarly cannot be separated from its architectural language without losing its meaning. He depends upon architectural discourse to write about ethics and style. His architecture is an extension of his philosophy, always invoking the sense of a deeper psychological meaning to its spaces. Merleau-Ponty's philosophy has the most obvious association with space

due to its phenomenological nature and its focus on the body. When closely analysed it can be more useful to architecture than just for its emphasis on visual and textural phenomena. Its complex descriptions of the way we understand the spatiality of a situation is used by Holl to create a rich spatial experience.

Like these other philosophers, Sartre depends on examples that describe spatial situations to convey his philosophical meaning. Because his philosophy is about the world – phenomena, experience and existential thought – the tangible spatial relationships involved are essential to understanding the text, as the meaning is sited in the world. Visual, physical and imagined proximity to other people is an important concept to Sartre's philosophy of consciousness, and provides rich spatial material for architecture. The notion that objects, including architectural features, are incorporated into one's corporeality is another important concept where philosophy and physicality interact. These concepts have been explored and tested throughout the design, creating a new way of thinking about Sartre's philosophy of consciousness: in terms of architecture.

'A House for Sartre', a building comprising four urban apartments, is an extension of Sartre's philosophy in a domestic context. Domesticity provides objects, such as furniture, and psychological concepts, such as privacy, that are valuable to the project. However, the philosophical concepts here are not particular; they are concerned with *concrete essences*. We interact with all architecture primarily by experiencing it. We understand architecture through *conscious* experience of it. Sartre's philosophy deals with the nature of experience, consciousness and existence. Architecture that incorporates or is incorporated by this philosophy can have the ability to engender an experience of the philosophy. This kind of architectural experience is not a passive one, but a *conscious* one; a conscious experience of both the architecture and the philosophy.

Philosophy aims to make clear the nature of essences of the world through its own discourse. Text is relied upon to define, argue and present ideas. Architecture is the physical construal of these ideas. Sartre addresses the loss of the 'self', anxiety, adversity and other maxims of existentialism by directing his reader to look at the acts of their own consciousness. Architecture can make its inhabitants aware of their own consciousness and the consequences of this awareness through the manipulation of their bodies in space. The nature of space is that it interacts not only with our bodies, but also with our consciousness. Perhaps this is why consciousness appeals to architectural space to constitute itself. Architectural space is foundational to consciousness.

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