Prolegomena to a Poiesis of Architectural Phenomenology

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by

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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The presence of phenomenology in the discipline of architecture has been tenuous. Often, it is essentialized as a philosophical method that ‘brackets’ out theory, history, and intellection, all for the sake of achieving ‘authentic’ knowledge through conscious intention. Its traces are often vague and disconnected, based on a system of philosophy that claims to produce a universal epistemology for human existence and experience. As it concerns architecture, phenomenology has fluctuated as a theory and an epistemology. More often than not, it has failed to produce a concrete and lasting discourse in the field of architecture. It is the task of this thesis to produce a comprehensive historiography of architectural phenomenology, during the 20th century, from its prehistory to its contemporary presence. To perform this historiography I will examine three key phenomenologists, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, to determine their influence on the discipline of architecture. This historiography
will then be projected through the work of four 20th/21st century architects to trace the evolution of phenomenology in the discipline of architecture. However, it must be noted that such a tracing is projective; the non-linear nature of phenomenology in the discipline proves the difficulty in finding a clear line of historical trajectory. What I hope to propose is that architectural phenomenology often fails to enter into discursive debate, not because of its anti-intellectualism, but because of its claims at producing a universal epistemology. That it attempts to contrive such an epistemology for the world illustrates it tenuous and lingering effects. Architectural phenomenology could have been more fully formed and continuous if it had stepped outside of its epistemological realm and entered into a more pragmatic realm. Thus, the only way for phenomenology to exist in architecture is through a practice of denying the modernist binary of the subject/object, and investing in a phenomenology of shared agency, a world in which all things have the power to determine meaning and be determined as meaningful at the same time.
The thesis of Joseph Anthony Ebert is approved.

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Introduction

It has been nearly a century and a decade since the inception of phenomenology into the realm of philosophy. Its ‘inventor’ was the German philosopher, Edmund Husserl, who first introduced the term in his book, *Logical Investigations* (1900/1901). In a similar light, the presence of phenomenology in the discipline of architecture has been around since, we might say, the publication of Christian Norberg-Schulz’s book titled, *Genius Loci: Toward a Phenomenology of Architecture* (1979). The cause for such an ambiguous word (“might”) is purely symptomatic of phenomenology’s frail and disjunctive presence in the discipline. Between 1901 and 1979 phenomenology was rarely, if ever, mentioned in the discourse of architecture. Such a strange, and rather unfulfilled gap in the history of architecture induces one to question the relevance of phenomenology in a discipline that deals in the construction of buildings. Indeed, the history of phenomenology in architecture is fragmented and discontinuous, and hardly linear. Its lack of consistency has proved its weak presence in the discourse, and has made even more elusive its historiography. This thesis hopes to reveal that phenomenology in the discipline of architecture failed to take hold discursively, as a useful theory and a meaningful philosophy, until Norberg-Schulz began injecting the term and its meaning(s) into architectural discourse.

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1 The term “phenomenology” was first introduced in Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* (1789), but its conceptual meaning was limited to the capacities of an early modernism that had yet to understand the depth of the technocratic society, which followed not too long after the term’s conception. Hegel as well chose the term to elaborate a metaphysics of presence in his book titled, *Phenomenology of the Spirit* in 1807. This book was to precede a volume set known as *Logic*, published between 1812/13. These texts are examples of the modernist tendency to apprehend a pure epistemology for the world, and what offered Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Husserl et al., the ability to challenge previous philosophical dogmas. Husserl is an example of a critic that used mathematics to challenge Greek philosophical dogmas of semantic and syntactic abstraction, elucidated as early as Plato and Socrates.
However, as phenomenology has evolved and expanded to our contemporary moment, its relevance and usage has been called back into question—that is what this thesis is attempting to posit. But before we move further, it is necessary to define the term. Generally, phenomenology is the method by which presuppositions about a phenomena are ‘bracketed’ out, so as to establish an object’s essence based on the intuition of the perceiver. The importance of this method, and the theories that have developed along side Husserlian phenomenology, from here on called classical phenomenology, are homologous of the “importance of analysing the structure of conscious subjective experience.”

For classical phenomenology, the object of perception was an empirical object, with empirical facticity. Each object perceived was imbued with an inner structure that defined what the object was, and only that object could be defined as such. However, Husserl’s investigations were focused on the separation of experience and knowledge of experience; thus in bracketing out presuppositions, that is, the history of the object and all meanings therein associated, the perceiver was able to experience with conscious intention the inner, ‘immanent’ world of the object. Consciousness was the filter by which reality was constructed for the perceiver; the world and all of its infinite complexities reduced to accessible appearances.

As it relates to architectural discourse, phenomenology is, in the words of architectural theorist, Dalibor Vesely, “an attempt to understand from the inside—and not to dismiss or criticize from the outside—the whole spectrum of the current experience which we generally call


This introspective understanding, this “catharsis” of sorts, facilitates a situation by which architects challenge “every-day cultural existence.” The phenomenological approach to architecture “sees the building as a knot of blended perceptions that communicate simultaneously through sensation, intuition, and comprehension to produce a place in the world.” This ‘place’ in the world is concomitant with situations the architect has established beforehand, and situations that are outside of the architect’s control. Delimiting, or undermining the meaning and the possibility of situations within a building reduces the whole of architecture to a “matter of mere technique or aesthetics.” Architectural phenomenology is reliant on both technique and aesthetics, because their fusion produces the knowledge to bring forth objects into existence. Architecture produces a situation and a space, from which the perceiver constructs and extracts meaning from existence. Consciousness is the vehicle by which places are established in the world, and the activity of perception determines the mental vehicle that constructs these places. The relationship between classical phenomenology and architecture is the way in which conscious intuition formalizes a conception of ‘place’ within the structural essence of the architectural environment.

The purpose of this thesis is to unpack and clarify, in a historiographic way, the relationship between phenomenology and architecture, and thus determine the lingering effects phenomenology has had on the discipline. I believe that phenomenological tendencies are

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5 Ibid., 59.
7 Vesely, 61.
recurring because they produce the most useful theory for architecture; a discourse that is both a measure of science and art, but which is most clearly and inevitably understood as the practice of accommodating and amending the human body through built form. That architecture is imbued with aspects of science (it has to stand up) and art (it has to stand up as a measure of the cultural milieu) means that architecture has been the most pertinent and consistent epistemological and cultural discourse throughout human history, from the first primitive hut to the most contemporary and complex assemblage of steel, concrete, glass, etc. The value of such a statement is not meant to be oppressive; on the contrary, it is meant to bring awareness to the power embedded within architecture as a cultural discourse, and as an epistemological discourse. Cultural in the sense that it says something about whom we are, where we have been, and where we are going. Epistemological in the sense that it challenges our basic awareness of existence by acknowledging the forms that surround us and determine our presence—through time and space.

Since architecture’s critical turn that occurred during the 1960s and 70s, the value of human perception has been exposed to post-structuralist systems of semiotics, which posit the impossibility of holistic conceptualization and understanding. What this means is that there is no single perspective that is correct; there is no universal truth, except truths that are pluralistic and multiform. As Don Ihde posits in his book *What is Postphenomenology?*, this type of post-modern/post-structuralist reality takes into account the inconsistent and developmental nature of phenomenology throughout the 20th century. To post-structuralists the only way to position such discontinuous and manifold realities was through the textual interface. The reader was given greater agency than the author who had almost lost his/her agency over the content (and form) of the text. However, as is clear in all of his books, Norberg-Schulz and his successors were
interested in articulating presence and existence in a visual form for architectural discourse, and by extension, culture. Linguistics in architecture could discuss the semantic possibilities of meaning, given by the sign, the signifier, the referent, and the signified, but when it came to the metaphysics of presence for any signified beholder, textual analysis was pragmatically limited.

Architectural phenomenology could have provided the discipline with the most relevant and useful theory for architectural practice and discourse during its critical turn. Its derivative nature was founded on revealing the structural ‘essence’ of the perceived object. This practice is similar to post-structuralist tendencies of providing meaning to perceived structures by exposing the manifold variations of the object’s existence. However architectural phenomenology was largely ignored or abandoned because of its transcendental and existential aspects, and overshadowed by postmodernism and deconstruction. Instead of ameliorating the abstractions of Modern architecture through forms, architecture and its theorists decided to assimilate the theories of linguistics, testing the limits of language. What was ultimately produced was an exclusive architectural discourse that sought its own autonomy.

The deluge of information that our digital and technocratic society has proffered is homologous to post-structuralist theories that fractured any hope of a cohesive and universal discourse for architecture since its critical turn. Critics would counter that such universality, necessarily a Modernist technique, doesn’t take into account the complexity of contemporary culture, and actually reduces culture to an abstract caricature by ‘bracketing’ out its reality and its history. This critique essentializes phenomenology, and critics of phenomenology would continue by saying that a ‘comprehensive theory of human beings’ undermines and relegates the
complexities of reality and existence to something non-human, something illreal. But the practice being criticized is similar to the practices of art and science, where reality is abstracted to generalized and universalized forms, all for the sake of ‘legibility’ and knowledge. Phenomenology, more specifically architectural phenomenology, in its most productive forms (in practice, discourse and culture) pares down and activates the effects of science and art. Thus, when theorists generalize science (concrete) and art (abstract) as two divergent trajectories, phenomenology seeks to synthesize the two at the point of their convergence. Current architectural discourse is confounded by post-structuralist trajectories—a cyclical occurrence no doubt, but my conjecture is that architectural phenomenology is the most useful theory for understanding the transition (called crises) between epochs, helping to synthesize and mend cultural ambiguities and fracturations, thereby providing a universal and accessible voice for architecture and its participants.

This thesis is broken into three sections, with a fourth section for concluding thoughts. The first sections deals with the philosophical historiography of phenomenology, its origin and its prehistory. The reason for this section is to establish a basic understanding of the complex and highly debated nature of phenomenology during the first half of the 20th century. The interest in phenomenology for architecture wasn’t merely attributed to architects that were aware of phenomenology, deciding to superimpose its theories onto their practices and intellectual endeavors. Rather, the concepts that propelled phenomenology as an epistemological project were present before Husserl’s *Logical Investigations*, and long before Norberg-Schulz’s *Genius Loci*. What we will discover is that formalism played a major role in Husserl’s development of phenomenology, and continued to illustrate its influence on architecture throughout the 20th
century, and into the present. Formalism to a certain extent, under generic philosophical concepts like idealism and positivism, was the prehistory to phenomenology and architectural phenomenology. Important figures that helped establish this lineage are Heinrich Wölfflin (1864-1945), Husserl (1859-1938), Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961). The concluding portion of this section will set the stage for our debate concerning the presence and relevance of formalism and phenomenology in architecture throughout the last century.

The second section will determine the historical lineage of phenomenology in the architecture, and provide a projective historiography for a movement in architecture that has been under-represented and under-intellectualized. In the opening pages of *Genius Loci*, Norberg-Schulz admits the shortcomings of his endeavors. This apprehension is understood by the fact that he is reading phenomenology through the lens of Heidegger, instead of Husserl. And it must be noted that Heidegger was the major critic of Husserlian phenomenology, and claimed that Husserl, by challenging the framework of epistemological theories, was on the right track to shifting philosophy away from its Greek origins and into a true contemporary Modern epistemology. However, Heidegger believed that Husserl wasn’t radical enough, and that classical phenomenology’s logico-mathematical origins limited its expansion as a true epistemology for human beings. Thus, Norberg-Schulz’s vision of phenomenology is necessarily derivative of a Heideggerian critique on classical phenomenology, which discounts the primacy of consciousness for an ontology of ‘being’ in the world and ‘being’ affected by the world and the things in it. Such a consumption of a phenomenology in transition inherently positions its presence and usage in architecture as initially problematic. By countering Heidegger with
existential concepts given by Merleau-Ponty we are made aware of the importance of the body in relation to the world, and more importantly in relation to the built world. We begin to understand the relevance of phenomenology within architectural discourse, and can thus methodologically compare it with other theoretical strains occurring in the discipline (i.e. formalism and minimalism). The result of such a comparison will reveal the incompleteness of the Modernist project, not only for architecture, but for philosophy as well, and challenge the position of postmodernism in architecture, as it relates to the concept of phenomenology. The section will end by asking whether phenomenology in our contemporary is more relevant to a world of postmodern fantasies and ambiguities, or whether classical phenomenology’s metacritical position exists as a universal, trans-historical and trans-cultural framework for understanding human existence in the world.

The third section will elaborate on the philosophies given in the previous two sections, and determine phenomenological tendencies as analyzed through several architectural examples, some built, and some un-built. The section will take into consideration four architects: Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969), John Hedjuk (1929-2000), SANAA (Sejima and Nishizawa and Associates; b. 1956 and 1966, respectively), and Jason Payne (b. 1970). The projects for discussion are Mies’ Barcelona Pavilion (1929), Hedjuk’s House of the Suicide and House of the Mother of the Suicide (1980-1986), SANAA’s Toledo Glass Pavilion (2001-2006), and the residence Jason Payne designed in Utah named Raspberry Fields (2010). The comparison of these projects is not undertaken in a linear fashion, because such a linear analysis would inhibit us from expanding upon the two already established strains of phenomenological discourse: classical phenomenology (and the primacy of consciousness), and an ontological/existential
phenomenology (a more complex strain because it values the relationship between humans, objects, and the world as they relate to the threefold sense of being given by the past, the present and the future). The historiography that has been established for phenomenology in general, and architectural phenomenology specifically, are thus shifted and reconfigured to reveal a new contemporary strain of phenomenological practice in architecture. This new strain, which is elaborated through these architectural cases, is the least essentializing because it pulls forth and recasts the latent tradition of phenomenology in the most forceful way. This new strain gives an equality of agency to subjects, objects and the world in which they exist—primacy is shared. The manifold presence of perceptions given by post-structuralist dogma is pushed to an alienable extreme; the measure of reality is overwhelmed by the data deluge of our present, but brings forth into greater focus the realities of the present. The metaphysics of relational presence is stirred, extracting the object’s being outside of its default-setting.

The concluding section extrapolates these three phenomenological strains, and determines why the last, more contemporaneous strain is the most useful for architectural discourse and practice. Again, these strains can be classified as follows:

1. Subject/Object – The world is constructed by consciousness intuition; primacy resides in the beholder (in this case the human subject).

2. Organism/Environment – Primacy is shifted from the beholder to the relationship between the beholder and the object perceived. No longer is purpose given to the object solely, because now it is also given to the beholder.

3. Agency – Shared equality between the subject, the object, and the world; each has their own agency for determining reality. The result is a more productive understanding about the world,
and by extension culture. Through this phenomenological approach, architects are collaborative agents in constructing a world that is unhindered by the power of epistemological reduction and oppression. Architects and beholders can affect their environments, while being affected by the environment and the objects therein contained.

The third strain approaches the discipline of architecture in a basic part-to-whole form. This basic form is homologous to formalist techniques of analysis most commonly used during the end of the 19th century—by determining the basic units of any form, one can begin to construct a totalizing vision (called ‘experience’ in the phenomenological sense) based on perceptual intuition and effort. This totalizing vision, in all of its empathetic constructs, cannot free itself from the subjectivity that hinders an epistemology for the world and its organisms; for even mathematic and scientific proofs are limited by subjective constructions of language. Ian Bogost echoes this claim in his recent book titled, Alien Phenomenology, or What It’s Like to be a Thing, by stating, “Science studies might be one answer [to knowing ‘things’ in a more meaningful way], but that field retains some human agent at the center of analysis—usually a scientist or engineer [or author] (emphasis added).”

Even though our capacities for knowing the world are limited, and may always be limited, in the empirical sense, we shouldn’t let such realities prohibit us from giving credence to our intuitive experiences of the world, wherein we extract meaning from perception and the accumulated moments of experience over time and throughout our lives. The reason this matters for the discipline of architecture is simple: architecture is the most physically concrete measure of our presence in the world. This truth proves its cultural significance all the more pertinent. For

we live our lives by moments, not by overarching narratives, and those moments are experiential ontologies that reach beyond the limits of language.
Chapter 1: Epistemological Abstractions

In the introductory lines of his book, *What Computers Can’t Do: The Limits of Artificial Intelligence*, Hubert Dreyfus states, “Since the Greeks invented logic and geometry, the idea that all reasoning might be reduced to some kind of calculation—so that all arguments could be settled once and for all—has fascinated most of the Western tradition’s rigorous thinkers.” For Dreyfus, such a fascination has driven thinkers of the Western tradition, since Socrates and Plato, to seek a “total formalization of knowledge.” This nearly two thousand-year lineage of epistemological contention and searching was elucidated most rigorously during the Enlightenment period and the centuries of Modernity that followed. Dreyfus’ argument is historiographic and metacritical; he challenges the nature to which epistemological theorizations have attempted to produce a universal knowledge for the world—since the ‘invention’ of logic and geometry.

In another text, Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow illuminate Foucault’s position on the concept of universal epistemology by saying, “Foucault convincingly argues [in *The Order of Things*] that the sciences of man, *like their classical precursors*, could not have a comprehensive theory of human beings, and are similarly doomed to ‘disintegration’ (emphasis added).” However, Dreyfus and Rabinow state Foucault’s belief that the illusory ‘comprehensive theory’ should not discourage or “call into question the very attempt to arrive at a theoretical understanding of

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human beings.\textsuperscript{11} Yet, the Enlightenment and Modernism protracted the debate of a totalizing epistemology as a way to ground the significance of human existence in the world. To begin an introspection of existence required first determining the difference between humans and the world in which they existed—hence the Enlightenment’s focus on the distinction between a rational being and nature. Given as such, it was the goal of the Modern subject to use his/her own mental capacities to achieve a holistic and ‘true’ understanding of the world. However, it must be admitted that when there are an overwhelming amount of subjectivities present—given by freedom—then the totalizing nature sought after by ‘rigorous thinkers’ is limited and paradoxical, if not downright contentious. (This fragmentary nature can be given over to contemporary discourse on post-modernity as such, but clearly, the plurality of human subjectivity has always been a relevant reality throughout human history.)

The 20\textsuperscript{th} century was thus a period in which Modern practices had been exercised and weighed. The resultant endeavor of philosophers and theorists was to test whether Modern epistemologies were relevant any longer and needed saving—if they were, then how can they be reconfigured to have more lasting effects?—or whether a new philosophical/theoretical turn was necessary to fulfill a new tradition? (Which by hindsight and chronological labeling could be described as post-Modern.) Thus, the 20\textsuperscript{th} century proves to be an example of the dialectical and cyclical nature of theoretical development, as it pertains to the capacities of human thought production, which in its most obvious elaboration is a measure of language. Theorists and philosophers push their discourse to a limit, a limit defined by the ability of both theorists and philosophers to explicate the meaning of their words. At some point, even their words are not

\textsuperscript{11} Dreyfus and Rabinow, 44.
enough—it takes a generation, or more (as in the case of Socrates and Plato, nearly two thousand years for Heidegger to shift philosophical discourse) to understand completely and totally what has already been said and apply it historiographically and contemporaneously. The ends’ of epochs are defined by the limits of language, and often, progress is activated by a new vocabulary, and sometimes, even a new means of communication. It was however, Dreyfus’ point that Modernity, founded in the forms of science and technology, had reached its limits of accessibility and translatability. Where words, that is, language, can be limiting, humanity must concede to its basic nature, and remember the body, the structure that contains the mind and provides the mind an armature to perform its projections.

An example of a philosophy that metacritically tested its modernity and offered a universal epistemology was phenomenology. ‘Invented’ in the early parts of the 20th century, phenomenology, under the guidance of its creator, Husserl, sought to recalibrate early Modernist tendencies by re-invoking the importance of the human mind (consciousness) as the active agent for defining human existence, and by extension knowledge. The Industrial Revolutions proved the ameliorating effects of technology and science; to a certain extent, machines had expanded human endeavors, but overwhelmed such endeavors to the point of replacing human potential. The goal for Husserl was to formulate a universal epistemology from logic and mathematics, challenging the intent of mechanization, and recovering Modernist visions of ‘rational man’.

In its metacriticality, Husserlian phenomenology was attempting to synthesize Plato’s contention about universal epistemology, or what Plato called the difference between semantic
and syntactic criteria in relation to knowledge. The former criteria is defined by language and its capacity to produce meaning by association, that is, logic and reason, while the latter criteria is defined by understanding the basic essence of empirical objects as they relate in content and intent to the perceiver. Husserl’s synthesis of “semantic considerations (appeal to meanings) [and] the techniques of syntactic (formal) manipulation” was key to clarifying phenomenology’s derivative and contextual association with psychologism and science. The result was a Modern epistemology that dealt in providing consciousness and its content (noema) a clear structure of understanding. Put another way, Husserl understood the capabilities of eidetic practices, and thus offered a way to validate Modernist abstraction through concrete rationale, logic. Kant and Hegel were early voices of Modernity and it is tenuous whether their philosophical projections understood the capabilities and effects of technology and science on consciousness, as was experienced at the turn of the century and into the first half of the 20th century. Thus, Husserl’s epistemological projections were radical and new, but timely nonetheless.

For Husserl, Logical Investigations was a synthesis of the last fifty years of philosophy on logic and psychologism. And even though Logical Investigations was one of the major critiques of psychologism, Husserl’s foundations were largely indebted to the research and theorizations that occurred under its scope. Psychologism, which stated the central importance of psychology in philosophy, studied “the subjective ideas, the concrete contents (occurrences) of mental activities in particular minds at a given time.” On the other hand, logic studied objective

13 Ibid., 69.
ideas, “propositions, which in turn make up objective theories.”¹⁵ Thus, Husserl was recovering
the initial philosophical meaning of phenomena—all phenomena that we observe and seek to
explain are essential points of departure because they initiate the construction of knowledge,
which are the foundational principles of science.

For Husserl, psychologism produced ‘vague’ “presentations” of objective “instances.”¹⁶
Empiricism too was under scrutiny, because it negated the basic ‘foundations’ of logic and its
‘ideal’ structures. He believed that both “empiricist” and “psychologist” logic were
illegitimate practices for understanding the theoretical basis of knowledge; such practices relied
too heavily on prejudice and the inner workings of things unknown (i.e. unconsciousness).¹⁷ The
consideration between consciousness and the unconsciousness was hardly a topic of Husserl’s
concern. That Freud’s The Interpretations of Dreams (1899) was rarely discussed in classical
phenomenology was due in most part to the repression of tendencies—practical and theoretical—
found in psychologism. For Freud, inner reality wasn’t measured by the perception of ‘outer’
objects; rather, it was measured “despite what we see in outer reality (emphasis added).”¹十八

— Formalist Beginnings —

At this point we can backtrack to see how psychology affected not only science, but
aesthetics as well. Because during the turn of the century, in Europe specifically, architecture

¹⁵ Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.
¹⁶ Husserl, Edmund. Logical Investigation, Volume 1: Prolegomena to Pure Logic. Translated
179-181.
¹⁷ Ibid., 212-213.
¹⁸ Jarzombek, Mark. “The Body Ethos.” In The Psychologizing of Modernity: Art, Architecture,
was testing the relevance of psychological concepts for perceiving, experiencing, and understanding forms. The relation between the conscious intuition of the subject and what he/she perceived determined reality. At the same time, the realm of culture was being transformed because of the creation of a more universalized mass audience, bolstered by mechanization. Thus cultural forms became the testing ground of a waning modernity. The task of architects, designers and artists alike was to reconfigure space between subjects and objects. Most of these experiments and transmutations can be given over to such figures like Bretano, Bolzano, Frege, James, Dilthey, Volkelt, and Lipps. The common voice between these figures was a renewed interest in the human body; there was almost a strange allusion to Renaissance principles of humanism. However, the interest was in associating the body with forms of human production.

The interest in humanizing forms within Modernity is clearly described in Mark Jarzombek’s book *The Psychologizing of Modernity: Art, Architecture, and History* (2000). Jarzombek describes the last twenty years of the 19th century as tenuous ground, in which philosophical trajectories of idealism and positivism were challenging the socio-political status quo. The nature of this “broad shift toward subjectivity” was predicated on the failings of a radical, social Hegelianism that argued the possibility to “stand outside of history and yet claim to be in it.”  

This failing dialectic ‘shifted’ the idea of subjectivity—the first-person perspective—away from the strictures of idealism, because contextually, the monarchical structures that it predicted would be overthrown, in relation to ‘enlightened liberation’, persisted, forming “a sort of hybrid culture that was both feudal and industrial.”  

Under the auspices the ego could no longer persist in all of its endeavors of liberation, clouded by an abstractionism and

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19 Jarzombek, 43-44.
20 Jarzombek, 43.
intellectualism that had “seduced intellectuals [and the bourgeois] into thinking of themselves as liberated.”

What allowed idealism to remain intact, in its less radical form, was the neo-Kantian concept of Gefühlsaesthetik (aesthetics rooted in human feeling). This concept, under the guise of Kant, Goethe and Schiller, helped to restore “credibility to the Enlightenment” and human agency. To elaborate this point of modern agency, Jarzombek states:

“Freedom is not something that realizes itself because it is first a known idea, as Hegel argued, but something that is first real and only then becomes an idea. The trouble, of course, is that in being true to ourselves (and to our history) our actions will appear egoistic from the perspective of rationalist indoctrinations, but that, alas, only proves the importance of egoism. Following this line of thinking, genius cannot be defined by an academic discipline or by a professional organization. A great philosopher might be found just as well among dockworkers.”

Thus we can posit, the human agent, in his/her egoistic freedom from ‘indoctrination’, can intuit reason from perception (aesthetics), and thereby recover his/her birthright of natural freedom (existence). Human agency, based on human feeling (aesthetic-existence), relieves itself from the vulnerability of Modern abstraction and achieves an autonomous purposiveness. As a result, Descartes’ famous line from his Discourse on the Method (1637), “I think, therefore I am” (cogito ergo sum), historiographically provides a subjective shift of emphasis from the cogito to the ego, and the mediation between the conscious and the unconscious.

21 Jarzombek 44.
22 Ibid., 45.
23 Ibid., 44.
24 It is interesting to note that Descartes first introduced the concept in French, so as to reach a wider, more universal audience. “I think, therefore I am”, was only translated into its Latin form seven years later in Descartes’ book, Principles of Philosophy. Compare this to L. B. Alberti’s De re aedificatoria (1443-1452) that was written in Latin to allude to the classical tradition and to appeal to the aristocracy—a limited and exclusive audience. However, Alberti did later translate some of his texts into Italian.
By stimulating the subjectivity of the beholder into a new and critical agency, aestheticism and psychologism became discourses claimable beyond philosophy and science. Towards the end of the 19th century, these two concepts became entangled in the discursive web concerning all reaches of human existence. As part of a neo-Kantian meta-critique of modernity, the attempted consumption and fusion of aestheticism and psychologism invoked the theoretical interests of visual discourse. What these two concepts encouraged was an interest in form, and the relationship between humans and form. Constitutive of psychological methods, it was in the interest of visual discourses like formalism, to achieve a language of analysis whereby forms were perceived in their totality. Basic elemental forms were analyzed as separate entities; only

25 What I think is important to note, but is beyond the scope of this thesis—even though it has been mentioned throughout, is the importance of neo-Kantian ‘critiques’. In a brief and didactic explication, their importance illustrates the development of the human as subject and agent outside of nature. The first critique, the Critique of Pure Reason (1781), discusses how it is possible to understand the world outside of ourselves; there are predetermined concepts that we cannot escape. Our understanding is based on our subjective view, which is based on the dichotomy of humans and nature. The second critique, the Critique of Practical Reason (1788), is an exposition on the relationship between a subject and a subject (a human and a human), which establishes our freedom. This then confers the notion of a sovereign people; for our purposes, this creates the foundation for human agency, the establishment of autonomy. The third critique, the Critique of Judgment (1790), questions how a human becomes a subject, wherein the notion of self-consciousness becomes elaborated. The self-conscious is based on an experience we have with nature, the experience of beauty. Eventually, a shift occurs whereby the subject moves to the collective. Ultimately, what Kant was trying to offer, and what turn of the century neo-Kantians were invested in was the concept of aesthetic experience. In aesthetic experience you (the subject) realize yourself outside of yourself, realizing your environment and subjectivity, and that all of those things realized, are alien to you. The synthesis within these critiques produces a common discursive ground for neo-Kantians trying to determine the distinction between a subject and an object. In a blindfolded nature, Husserl interprets self-consciousness under the guise of consciousness proper. The self is realized by the intuition of consciousness.

26 Kant expands the notion of subjectivity through the notion of beauty and the sublime in his third critique. In short, Kant defines the sublime through the process of mental apprehension. He states, “For he [Savary] has the feeling that his imagination is inadequate for exhibiting the idea
by ‘reflection’ could these disparate, and singular entities be justified as a part of a whole. Techniques that were used in psychological analysis were combined with techniques of art analysis. The point was to determine a reality of/for the object—say a work of art, which was undetermined by the context of the work’s creation. In a Benjaminian sense, the work had an ‘aura’ that defined its essence, its basic structure; but the viewer, in relation to formalist dogma, and not the artist produced reality. This reality is part of a formalist method of strange productivity, because the viewer can both produce reality, and extract reality. In extraction, the reality is not solely contained within the consciousness of the viewer.

To understand formalism more clearly we have to trace its origins as a discourse. To do this, we have to look to the Swiss-born theorist, Heinrich Wölfflin. Heinrich Wölfflin, as the father of 20th century formalism, offers two texts, which help to determine the theoretical investigations concerning psychology and aesthetics. The two texts are his dissertation entitled, *Prolegomena to a Psychology of Architecture* written in 1886, and his book written two years later, *Renaissance and Baroque*. The difference between the two texts is drastic, and it is surprising that Wölfflin was able to write a book with a radically different projection in two of a whole, [a feeling] in which imagination reaches its maximum, and as it strives to expand that maximum, it sinks back into itself, but consequently comes to feel a liking [that amounts to an] emotion [rührendes Wohlgefallen].” From “On Estimating the Magnitude of Natural Things, as We Must for the Idea of the Sublime.” In *Critique of Judgment* [1790]. Translated by Werner S. Pluhar. (Indianpolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), 109. What Kant is saying is that the object exceeds the viewer’s comprehension, but not his/her apprehension; the sublime object exists outside of the viewer’s reason to bundle experiences, which, ultimately means that something in nature exists outside of the viewer’s capacity to ‘own’ nature, based on his/her reason. The result is an apprehension of the formless, and the indefinite. Hence, the absence of the sublime from much formalist discourse, even though its relation to Heinrich Wölfflin’s term *malerisch* (painterly) seems to prod the boundary, while possibly upsetting it.
years time. His dissertation, as the title posits, is indebted to new interests in psychologism.\textsuperscript{27} The usage of psychologism is the key factor that distinguishes the two texts. \textit{Renaissance and Baroque} shifts the focus from an empathetic and anthropomorphic foundation of perceiving forms, to a focus on the creation of forms as alien objects, or rather, as objects that have a will of their own, but whose will is dependent on its purposiveness and relation to other forms. What Wölfflin achieves in \textit{Renaissance and Baroque} is a theory that includes, but to a limited capacity, modes of psychologism, along with modes of visualizing and analyzing forms, aesthetics. This synthesis validates and expands the neo-Kantian model of purposiveness. To be clear, this model of purposiveness, as stated by Harry Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikonomou, “proposed a new principle governing the faculty of aesthetic judgment, one that [Kant] hoped would provide…a measure of universality and at the same time allow it to remain subjective.”\textsuperscript{28} What can be clarified is how Wölfflin’s eclectic dissertation fused with his book \textit{Renaissance and Baroque} to produce a formalist discourse invested in the perceptual relationships between subjects and objects. The emphasis of this discourse was to bring clarity to Kantian purposiveness, thereby incorporating psychologism and aesthetics, bringing forms and their perceivers into greater communication. Yet, the two trajectories, psychologism and aesthetics, when taken into the hands of other theorists, maintain divergent paths but take on new labels—idealism and positivism. What I mean to say is that idealism and positivism became theorized as a new interdisciplinary dualism of formalism.

\textsuperscript{27} A line of trajectory can be drawn between Husserl and the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century theories of psychologism. Husserl’s eventual interest in consciousness and its relation to the natural sciences are based on the influence of the philosopher Franz Bretano. Bretano’s classic text, \textit{Psychology from the Empirical Standpoint} was highly influential for Heidegger and Freud as well.\textsuperscript{28} Mallgrave, Harry Francis, and Eleftherios Ikonomou. “Introduction.” In \textit{Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893}. (Santa Monica, CA: The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994), 6.
Generally speaking, idealism is defined by the belief that only the perceptible is real, lying within consciousness and reason. Positivism is defined by claiming that theology and metaphysics are imperfect models for producing knowledge, and that positive knowledge is based on natural phenomena, their properties and their relations as verified by the empirical sciences. The major distinction between these two neo-Kantian concepts is the former’s reliance on cultural sciences and the latter’s reliance on the natural sciences. For Wölfflin the distinction was tenuous, and helps to explain the dramatic shift between his dissertation and Renaissance and Baroque.

Wölfflin’s indecision expanded when he began studying with the philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey at the University of Berlin. Dilthey’s interest in psychology was symptomatic of European turn of the century philosophy, and the relationship between Dilthey and Wölfflin proved highly influential as the century turned. In her essay “Reinterpreting Wölfflin: Neo-Kantianism and Hermeneutics” Joan Hart elucidates Dilthey’s influence by stating at length:

“Dilthey contended that the one central element that distinguishes the cultural from the natural sciences is ‘consciousness.’ His conception of consciousness is historical; through it one could reconstruct and re-experience another person’s inner world. Dilthey thought that consciousness was the basis of all human knowledge and that only by investigating consciousness would an explanation of knowledge be possible. The method he proposed was antithetical to the naturalistic, causal models of positivism, which he felt could not be used to understand the inner life and experience of man.”

Thus we might conclude that Wölfflin followed the path of idealism over positivism; that his interest in art and architecture was indebted more to cultural aspects of style analysis, than to

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scientific explanations grounded in materialism and optics. We could be content with this conclusion, but it is important to understand that during the early years of the 20th century, Wölfflin again shifted his philosophical focus to the affects of visualization on consciousness, taking into account materiality and optics. During the years of 1898, which saw the publication of his book *Classical Art*, and 1915, which saw the publication of his seminal book *Principles of Art History*, Wölfflin worked through his formalist methodology of visualizing and perceiving forms. Anxious that he hadn’t written anything between these years, he often took to what he is most notable for, teaching. In his lectures Wölfflin established the comparative method, which juxtaposes two slides next to each other for comparative analysis.\(^{30}\) It was his belief that such a methodology could produce an understanding about the art that was separate from the artist and the context of artistic production, thus achieving a greater understanding of the cultural milieu in which the work was produced. This type of analysis, which extracted the authorship of the creator, conflicted with Dilthey’s general principle of reconstructing and re-experiencing the artist’s inner world. This conflict proved anxiety inducing as WWI approached and *Principles of Art History* was still in manuscript form.

The publication of *Principles of Art History* illustrates Wölfflin’s attention to rendering formalism in a more coherent manner. As a totalizing act, Wölfflin finally synthesizes his philosophical conundrums. This synthesis extracts part-to-whole techniques of analysis from

\(^{30}\) Zeynep Celik Alexander’s dissertation, *Kinaesthetic Impulses: Aesthetic Experience, Bodily Knowledge, and Pedagogical Practices in Germany, 1871-1918*, especially the chapter titled, “On the *Malerisch*: Schmarsow and Wölfflin”, provides an elaboration on the prehistory to the comparative method and illustrates the effects it had on the discipline of art history, and by extension architecture history. Alexander’s dissertation and research expound on the pedagogical nature of aesthetics at the turn of the century, with specific interest in technologies that effected aesthetics and the field of psychology.
Renaissance and Baroque and fuses it with Dilthean cultural sciences. Thus, Wölfflin produces a formalist methodology that is based on logically analyzing a work of art and at the same time experiencing that work of art as a knot of blended forms and meanings. As part of his methodology, Wölfflin alludes to his dissertation to claim that the observer gives purpose and at the same time is affected by the object’s “force of form” (Formkraft). Wölfflin uses to give meaning and purpose to objects of perception, and imbibes within such forms a ‘force’ that resists gravity, and thereby releases the viewer and the act of perception from the weight of gravity. By Wölfflin’s own terminology, we can perceive the synthesis between the terms Formkraft with Formgefühl (the human sense of form), as the best method for viewing and understanding art, and thus understanding culture. Ultimately, he orchestrated an event in which human experience was necessary for understanding material affects and cultural affects. These affects were important for the maturing theory of phenomenology.

— Husserlian Pedigree: Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty —

“The idea of phenomenology is: the original science of life. Factual life itself and the infinite fullness of the worlds that are lived in it are not supposed to be researched. What is to be researched, rather, is life as arising, as emerging out of an origin.” These lines come from Heidegger’s Winter Semester of 1919/20 lecture series titled, The Basic Problems of

32 Ibid., 184.
Phenomenology, and they represent a part of Heidegger’s most intense critique of Husserlian phenomenology. When Heidegger discusses the act of “arising” or “emerging” he is relaying that moment of action as an event. This event is imbued with layers of factical life; each layer necessitates reality, not only for the object perceived, but also for the subject perceiving. In Heidegger’s view, Husserl’s concept of intentionality isn’t complex and radical enough to bring forth the reality of the experienced object. The concept of intentionality states that reality can only begin when objects begin to show themselves to the perceiver, and this must be done without the aid of theories that lie outside of conscious experience. For Heidegger, as Graham Harman discusses in his book, *Heidegger Explained: From Phenomenon to Thing*, “We will have radical and serious phenomenology only when people see that direct presence of the world is never possible, and that concealment belongs to the very nature of phenomena.”34 Thus, through the concealment of history, phenomenology, for Heidegger, brackets out the reality and facticity inherently and naturally contained within the perceived object. The object’s reality, its purpose, is submerged below its dormant outward appearance. It is only by conscious effort and analysis that the object arises and emerges into reality for the perceiver.

Heidegger defines such events by categorial intuition. Categorial intuition proposes that not only do objects have layers inherent to their reality, but so too does perception, and it is only by reflective analysis that such layers are extracted or revealed, and meaning is defined.35 As a result, categorial intuition supersedes consciousness as sole purveyor of meaning, and activates the purposiveness of consciousness as a medium by which layers of meaning are sifted and

consumed. Thus, in Heidegger’s critique of classical, Husserlian phenomenology, the method of conscious bracketing is denied importance. The activities of the mind are reconfigured to understand the complexities of reality and the infinite possibilities of existence. The idea of existence as shared and multiform is what structured new meaning for phenomenological theorizations as mid-century dawned, and it was Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty that scripted the most radical and fundamental changes in phenomenological discourse.\textsuperscript{36} We can historiographically project that under Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty phenomenology began to expound upon two new conceptual realms of phenomenology, ontological and existential (respectively).

As stated above, Heidegger was invested in an intuition that relies on the state of an object’s presence, that is, the object’s \textit{being}. And more specifically, the object’s being was only constituted by the reception of the perceiver; the perceiver is determined both by the object and the event of conscious analysis. Through this event, the layers of reality unfold and reveal a presence that is more than three-dimensional. Given by Heidegger’s structuration, the object also exists within the fourth dimension: time, because it follows his three-fold structure of ontology: past, present, and future. By dynamically exposing and being shown the realities of the object in

\textsuperscript{36} Jean-Paul Sartre is a parallel figure to Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty in post-Husserlian phenomenological discourse. His book \textit{Being and Nothingness} (1943) was very important in the realm of phenomenology and politics, because his phenomenological ontology gave primacy to phenomena over consciousness, because he felt consciousness was too easily molded. By understanding phenomena one could, by “deliberate reflection” (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy), apprehend the structure of consciousness, and thereby recover a sense of individual freedom. His ontological studies of ‘being-in-itself’ were key for determining an existentialism of humanism; the result of which politicized the agency of all objects, especially those constituted as ‘Other’. Sartre is important for the historiography of phenomenology, but his politically modern theories don’t specifically relate to the historiography being written here for architecture.
space and time, the object and the perceiver are constituted by an existential location, or place. This place, this location, measures the presence of being-there (*Dasein*). *Dasein* states the presence of being for the object and perceiver; the state of being is an ontological concept that drives the reality of new experience. Similar to a Sartrean ontological phenomenology (save for the politicization of the subject/object), Heidegger is concerned with recovering the manifold meanings within the object’s being. Again, this recovery is constituted by the event in which consciousness acts the sieve through which all perceptions flow. The manifold structures of reality emerge because they are brought forth into consciousness; the effort and structuration of consciousness can be limiting, and thus certain aspects of object-reality remain hidden, and out of place.

For Merleau-Ponty, the practice and purpose of phenomenology was for remembering the body. In a similar vein to Heidegger, recovery too was the practice for re-centering the body and emphasizing its role in human experience. Following a French lineage of Descartes, Merleau-Ponty and existentialist phenomenologists of the like were interested in preserving the importance of the experience gained through one’s lived body, while disavowing the early Modernist dualism of mind-body. The Modernist dualism was problematic because it posited the body as the receptacle of experience, and not the determining factor for defining meaning from experience—this task was given over to consciousness. Thus, Husserl and Heidegger are both invested in an ontology of mental activity; bodily presence is given secondary importance because the body itself is only given purpose when it is engaged with surrounding object-beings. This distinction is a philosophical problematic for Merleau-Ponty, because to take the mind as sole purveyor of meaning, possibly negating the affects conjured for the body, requires an
empirical, epistemological grounding associated with positivism. Merleau-Ponty was an idealist and theorized that sense experience, in cooperation with the mind and the body, was the most pertinent agent for existential development. The sensible world existed as an inner world and an outer world, graspable and ungraspable, visible and invisible. In his notes to *The Visible and the Invisible* he states, “The sensible is precisely that medium in which there can be being without having to be posited; the sensible appearance of the sensible, the silent persuasion of the sensible is Being’s unique way of manifesting itself without becoming positivity, without ceasing to be ambiguous and transcendent.” Thus with consciousness, the body is able to construct reality and meaning in the most real way possible; empirical processing and validation expand the scope of mental capacity, representing the variant layers of reality and possible reality contained within the object’s essence.

Yet, Merleau-Ponty’s theories swerve farther from classical phenomenology when it comes to the technique and methodology of experiencing forms, because for him, experience was based on sense perceptions within a ‘phenomenal field’. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty defines the phenomenal field as the “Space…whereby the position of things become possible.” He continues, “That means that instead of imagining it as a sort of ether in which all things float, or conceiving it abstractly as a characteristic that they have in common

38 Thus we might begin to construct an agent for Merleau-Ponty that is imbued with conscious and bodily capacities. The essence, the structure of any object-being (the “final avatar”), is constituted by the mind and the body, as homologous entities.
[Dasein], we must think of it as a universal power enabling them to be connected.” 39 This power is measured under the concept of ‘pregnancy’, and helps to clarify the technique and methodology by which the human body comes to terms with things perceived, thereby determining reality through sense experience. 40

The two concepts that justify the hypostatization of sense experience are the technique of “style” and the methodology of “schematization.” 41 These two concepts help clarify the unifying process that constitute the ‘sensible thing’, that is, the body or object within a phenomenal field of being. Style represents “a certain manner of managing the domain of space and time over which it has competency, of pronouncing, of articulating that domain, of radiating about a wholly virtual center—in short a certain manner of being, in the active sense, a certain Wesen [being], in the sense that, says Heidegger, this word has when it is used as a verb.” 42 Schematization is the method by which human actions become habitual, behavioral, motor habit, and thus define “the very essence of the living body.” Style animates the interior (object-essence) with a certain directionality, but schematization reorients and challenges the trajectory of the thing, extracting the thing from its presence, to determine a new constellation of transcendence in

40 The term ‘pregnancy’ is a potent agent for Merleau-Ponty’s later writing, which dealt with bringing forth things ‘invisibile’. In the published working notes to the manuscript, The Visible and the Invisible (1964), Merleau-Ponty explicates the meaning of pregnancy as, “Pregnancy: the psychologists forget that this means a power to break forth, productivity (praegnans futuri), fecundity—Secondarily: it means ‘typicality’. It is the form that has arrived at itself, that is itself, that poses itself by its own means, is equivalent of the cause of itself…” From “Working Notes: The principle of ontology: being in division, September, 1959.” In The Visible and the Invisible: Followed by Working Notes. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 208.
42 Ibid., 115.
which the thing, by its style, gives a tone of being, of visions past and visions to come. Thus, ‘visions to come’ projects for invisible futures that have yet to materialize, but are set with potential form. Operatively, we have here a Heideggerian three-fold, wherein the present is extracted because we acknowledge its speculative capacities of movement toward the past and the future.

Within the phenomenal field, and within Merleau-Ponty’s speculation of bodily presence within time, we can begin to construct a more complete understanding of where the body exists in space. Style posits that it has a ‘certain manner’ that understands the sensible thing’s thingness in space and time, and that through schematization its presence is located with greater specificity. Dreyfus elaborates on this idea of relieving the perceiver from certain “indeterminacy” by historiographically pathologizing Husserl and Merleau-Ponty under theories of Gestalt psychologies.43 To understand how elements fall into place to establish a totalized whole, Dreyfus states:

“When we perceive an object we are aware that it has more aspects than we are at the moment considering. Moreover, once we have experienced these further aspects, they will be experienced as copresent, as covered up by what is directly presented. Thus in ordinary situations, we say we perceive the whole object, even its hidden aspects, because the concealed aspects directly affect our perception. We perceive a house, for example, as more than a facade—as having some sort of back—some inner horizon.”44

An inner horizon, as compared to an outer horizon, is defined by our past experience with a specific object; the outer horizon on the other hand is defined by the sense of the whole situation

43 Dreyfus. What Computers Can’t Do, 240. What must be recognized is that Gestalt psychology was one of the many vehicles of critique of Husserlian phenomenology for Theodor Adorno. This critique is explicated thoroughly in his book Against Epistemologies: A Metacritique: Studies in Husserl and the Phenomenological Antinomies (1956). This text is considered one of the most potent and influential criticisms of phenomenology as an epistemology; still, its elaboration was not as vast as Heidegger’s.
44 Ibid., 241.
of experience with the specific object. Thus, with both we sense the whole and are guided toward the details, i.e. context, layers of reality, etc. An example would be like grabbing for a glass of water, but getting milk instead; the immediate reaction is disorientation. One will spit out the milk if one cannot find the right “global meaning fast enough.”45 This global meaning is the data set of knowledge of what milk is—sweet, sour, cold, warm, smooth, curdled, etc. If global meaning is achieved before disorientation overwhelms the perceiver, then a new totalized experience, filled with the memory (data set) of past milk-drinking experiences, will lead to a more developed understanding of oneself within the spatial event-situation—existential being.

Thus we have come to a point where the tracks of phenomenology have taken on a manifold form; specifically for our historiographic purposes, ontological and existential phenomenology were the two trajectories that were most accessible to the discipline of architecture. Indeed, it took nearly forty years of development within philosophy for phenomenology to arise out of and expand from its pre-historical and classical forms. What occurred within these forty years, between Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, was a dramatic shift from the primacy of human consciousness to the primacy of human being in space and time. The divergent nature of phenomenology proper from its origins inhibited it from fulfilling its bold claims: first, that it was the ‘first philosophy’ because it ‘logically’ (called empirically) and psychologically provided universal laws for understanding human existence within the world, and second, that it was the producer of a universal epistemology. These claims were challenged, and, inevitably, so too was human presence. As culture and technology expand, the meanings we produce expand as well; thus, the evaluation of human presence is a cyclical process, often times

45 Dreyfus, 241-42.
found repeating itself. However, phenomenology entered into architectural discourse with a rather ambiguous intentionality. The development that philosophical phenomenology underwent during the first half of the 20th century provided architectural discourse with a new and multiform approach to creating spaces, spaces for everyday-life and spaces that erupt cultural discourse and reconfigure human presence.
Chapter 2: A Historiography of Non-linearity

In his book *Architecture’s Historical Turn: Phenomenology and the Rise of the Postmodern*, Jorge Otero-Pailos discloses the tenuous nature of historicizing a phenomenology for architecture because to do so means to “contend with…historiographical conventions without succumbing to them.” What Otero-Pailos “contends with” is the general understanding that the conventions of an architectural phenomenological historiography are counter to the standard conventions of architectural history, which were determined by art historical conventions. At the outset, the goal of architectural phenomenology was not necessarily to determine a dogma of humanistic preservation and understanding, but rather to determine and establish the agency of the architect within the cultural milieu. Thus, in coming to terms within its own metacriticality, architectural phenomenology was focused on upending art historical conventions that had for centuries written architecture’s history. The effort to expose the nature of its historicity meant assigning the architect several other identifying labels. No longer was the architect merely designer; now he/she was also called theorist and historian. For Otero-Pailos, and Norberg-Schulz, this conceptual umbrella was given as the “architect-historian.” The result of this negation of conventionality thus pushed and expanded architectural discourse to new dimensions. Architectural phenomenologists exposed themselves [and the discipline] to non-linear historization and theorization.

In this sense, architectural phenomenology’s historiography is difficult to write because its lineage is non-continuous; there are no major pedagogical and theoretical threads that link its

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concepts and themes together into a comprehensible whole. The strange irony of lacking holism in architectural phenomenology doesn’t discount its relevance, but posits the notion that its concepts and themes have always been an innate part of human existence and development. The reality this irony produces is one in which phenomenological tendencies have always existed, in some form or another, but not necessarily under the moniker of *architectural phenomenology*. Indeed, the effort to historicize architectural phenomenology admits its influence and the difficulty of departing from its grasp.

The important and unifying principle that strings architectural phenomenological practices/theories together is the theory of formalism. And while formalism serves as the prehistory and basis for architectural phenomenology, carrying through the 20th century in manifold ways, it attempts to undermine architectural phenomenology with new ‘contemporary’ perspectives (i.e. minimalism), while strangely funding its growth through shared terminology (i.e. embodiment, perception, analysis, affects, etc.). Formalism activates the conventions of architectural practice and theorizes them in a universal way; the hope of which is to produce a common language for understanding and perceiving forms. The result is an emphasis on the forms themselves, and not on the affects produced through human experience and apperception. In a way, the strong tendency of mid-century formalism was to focus on the conventions of objective analysis, and later in the century on representation, while consistently negating the consumption of Wölfflinian formalist theories that substantiated classical phenomenology’s transformation (by Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty) and eventual acceptance into the discourse of architecture. In most historiographic respects, the presence of formalism is rather continuous; it
is difficult, even when talking about representation, to negate using the term ‘form’ to describe the objects that humans come into contact with on a daily basis.

Thus, where Otero-Pailos is invested in historicizing architectural phenomenology’s theoretical significance and presence within architectural discourse, this thesis is interested in the homology that articulates the possibility of a sustainable (not in the environmental sense) theory of phenomenology for architectural discourse and the continuation of human existence; a theory that is useful in all manners of Heidegger’s threefold structuration: past, present and future. Otero-Pailos does, in some inevitable way, succumb to phenomenology’s grasp, but he also succumbs to the monographic quality of historiography. He illustrates and discusses the discontinuity and the rare overlaps, attempting to string them together under his three categories of “experience”, “history”, and “theory.” But ultimately he generalizes, monographically, architectural phenomenology generationally: the first generation considers Jean Labatut and Charles Moore at Princeton, and the second considers Norberg-Schulz and Kenneth Frampton in general. Understandably, Otero-Pailos illustrates the discontinuity so as to segue a

 OTERO-PAILOS, xxxiii.

 Otero-Pailos’s generational historiography here appears to be monographical in its purest sense, because he is scripting a projective grouping, which for all intents and purposes, is not realistically convergent. We might even declare, as Otero-Pailos indirectly does, that the writings of Hannah Arendt were more influential than Norberg-Schulz’s. Frampton believed the most rigorous introspection of human existence was given over to an associative discourse between architecture and politics. Here, we
phenomenology of Norberg-Schulz into the thoughts and practices of a select few individuals that end up being major voices and players in the postmodern milieu. And in some regards, Otero-Pailos conceives of architectural phenomenology as a closed system, one that attempted to insert itself as a universal epistemology for the discipline but ultimately withered into near oblivion due to its discontinuous presence in both the academy and in the field.

While one reads Otero-Pailos’ book, one grows a sense of indirect open-endedness about the book’s closing pages. The reader experiences the “Epilogue” as a possible death knell for architectural phenomenology, but the universal nature of architectural phenomenology intuits for the reader an overwhelming optimism that phenomenological practices are deemed universal because they in fact are—because such practices appear so totalizing and real that they become the timeless milieu of universality, the purveyors of something so real and encompassing that it’s hard to recognize its influence on a daily basis.

— Colin Rowe and the Formalist Mentality —

Otero-Pailos, in a similar vein to architectural theorist Colin Rowe, was responding with his historiography in a naturally phenomenological manner—he was challenging the criticality within historical consciousness, questioning the agency of the architect, the perceiver, and the objects designed. Within his historiography, Otero-Pailos pushed a metacritical narrative that was symptomatic of phenomenological tendencies. The task was arduous, because in some regards, phenomenology, under the general sponsorship of Husserlian principles, was claiming 

can address the importance of texts like The Origins of Totalitarianism (1951) and The Human Condition (1958), both by Arendt. The reiterative point is that phenomenology in architecture was never continuous, and often found its presence scattered amongst a plethora of other major and minor theoretical strands.
its position as first philosophy. The acclimation of such a projection for the discourse of architecture proved tedious and problematic; the results of which were bolstered by Enlightenment theories of architecture’s origins and architecture’s importance/position within the arts. The metacritical nature that was being harnessed by the likes of Jean Labatut, Rowe, Norberg-Schulz and Peter Eisenman, to name the major influences for this thesis, sought to propound a manifold introspection about the functionality of the discipline and the systematization of its history and criticism. Unpacking the complexity of the Modern Movement within architecture was one of the most troubling and most relevant factors for identifying a common language, and for some (the avant garde) a righteous autonomy.

Rowe’s take on the lingering contention with the Modern Movement, its effects and after-effects, is elaborated in his “Introduction to Five Architects.” In his introduction, Rowe discusses the impossibility of systematizing such a grand endeavor as the Modern Movement; the systematic reduction of the Modern Movement into universalized and repetitive themes and concepts—a standard language, so to speak—by agents outside of the discipline proves the tenuous nature of architecture within the cultural, political, and economic milieus. The complexity of systematization and its contradictory abdication of meaning to form is something that Rowe discusses in the concluding paragraphs of his introduction. He states:

“…in the opening years of [the 20th] century, great revolutions in thought occurred and that then profound visual discoveries resulted, that these are still unexplained, and that rather than assume intrinsic change to be the prerogative of every generation, it might be more useful to recognize that certain changes are so enormous as to impose a directive which cannot be resolved in any individual life span.”49

What Rowe is concluding is that the change from Modernism to whatever it was the New York Five was doing possibly surpasses the self-reflective criticality of the generation that birthed the change from the start. In some regards, this discounts the tendency of the Modern Movement to constantly perform “continuous experiment[ation]” and “self-renew[al]”; that is the task of the Modern Movement—to be always and perpetually self-aware of its status and to avoid repetition, for fear of falling back on principles of old, history. But, *to be aware* means that all aspects of ‘contemporary’ discourse are constantly put under the lens of criticality. The problem, inherently, is whether such a metacritical focus can be achieved when the change that is occurring is possibly too big to be comprehended—as with Heidegger and his reaching the limits of language, perhaps the Modern Movement, in its “quasi-Utopian vein of poetry”, had reached the limits of meaning through form.

Rowe had the tendency to superimpose meaning, as transhistorical, in a way that bracketed out the originary context, and by extension purposive meaning. Here we can understand the inciting principles of Rowe’s formalism. He was interested in maintaining a certain modernity by bracketing out history. To achieve this he used a methodology of comparison. This methodology, as seen in his essay “The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa,” compared Palladio’s Villa Malcontenta (1550-60) and Le Corbusier’s Villa Stein (1927). The comparison was useful because to all obvious readers there is a transhistorical comparison occurring—a difference of about 370 years. Rowe’s bracketing of what might seem totally obvious is purposive to claiming a universality of methodology and language for formalism. What is even more ambiguously problematic is the transcultural experience that is facilitated for

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50 Rowe, 83, 79.
51 Ibid., 84.
the reader and observer, but denied by Rowe. Under the dogma of formalism, these two disparate villas are given equal agency. For Rowe, this helps to historicize architectural development within the Modern Movement. By using examples like Palladio and Le Corbusier, Rowe is able to illuminate the Modernist perspective of bracketing out history, while allowing Rowe to historiographically describe and evaluate architecture without recourse to a historical context. Hence, all things classical (historical) could be evaluated contemporaneously under the language of formalism without justifying or relying on historical context.

“The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa” was written in 1947, and the “Introduction to Five Architects” was written in 1972. Between these two publications, Colin Rowe published, with Robert Slutzky, the essay, “Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal.” The point of the essay was to establish a lens by which the multivalent term ‘transparency’ could be used to ascertain historiographic clarity through the “characterization of species, [so as] to warn against the confusion of species.” To achieve the systematization of clarity and ‘characterization’, Rowe and Slutzky focused their text around two concepts, literal transparency and phenomenal transparency, as can be intuited by the title of the essay. The goal was to establish a “spatial milieu” in which phenomenal transparency would be the more useful concept for determining historiographic introspection and disciplinary criticality.

53 Ibid., 54.
Phenomenal transparency, as opposed to literal, is based on our “feeling” for things ordered, and yet, maintain certain ambiguity.\textsuperscript{54} Phenomenal transparency questions the dynamic relationships between things visible and things invisible, between things present and things absent. Literal transparency is determined by material qualities of visual coordination—coordination that is empirically logical and perceivable without apprehension or conscious effort. For Rowe and Slutzky, phenomenal transparency is the most relevant for the orchestration of a unified and productive historiography. The reason for this is because it brings to the fore questions of “intellectual imperative.”\textsuperscript{55} Clarity, or rather transparency, of such imperatives makes for a more cohesive architectural language [of formalism] that is layered and robust with disciplinary meanings. Yet, it might begin to seem like such overlaps and ‘interpenetrations’ are symptomatic of and familiar to the non-linear model we have seen of phenomenology in architectural discourse. Because expanding the rhetorical repertoire of [a formalist] discourse creates fusions and disjunctions that obliterate any connective tissue between discursive polarities—or an intentionality of expansion that seek a hegemonic position over all other theories. What we might then conceive of formalist discourse is its will to substantiate a new, metacritical epistemology for architectural discourse, one that dispels Modernist tropes of tabula rasa construction for a speculative projection of all architectural ‘species’.

In a lineal sense, we can begin to unravel a grandfathering relationship from Wölfflin to Rudolf Wittkower to Rowe, and it is true that pedagogical relationships existed between these figures. However, Rowe, in superseding Wittkowerian principles of humanism, assimilated Wölfflinian principles of comparative methodology, because they put aside historical trappings

\textsuperscript{54} Rowe and Slutzky, 46.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 45.
given over to historical contextualization. Through this transfer, Rowe was able to formalize his aesthetic and idealistic projections for a formalist discourse. This type of linear historiography is fundamental for formalism, and helps measure a certain degree of historical and developmental consistency for phenomenological discourse in architecture, but it must be reiterated that the historiography of this thesis, and the historiography of architectural phenomenology in general, are not linear, but fractured and disjunctive.

— Metacritical Expansion and Interdisciplinary Assimilation —

Generally speaking, this disjunctive tension was alleviated by continued disciplinary introspection. As the Second World War ended, European architects became preoccupied with the task of reconstructing cities and the human condition, while American architects took to reconfiguring the human condition within a new atmosphere of pedagogical manifest destiny. The difference between the two geographies was based on the influence of capitalism. In America, capitalistic endeavors were sponsored by victory, and never having to reconstruct whole cities. In Europe, capitalistic endeavors were challenged by the cost of reconstruction and what it means to generalize the human condition through commodification. The Holocaust had produced the human as object, ripping out subjectivity. The meaning of the subject in America after the war was a non sequitur. The subject had been buffeted, but saved from violence. America didn’t feel the irrevocable struggle of defending the human subject-condition on domestic ground. For America, the postwar years represented renewal. For Europe, the postwar years represented struggle. Within the American renewal, pedagogic pressure to challenge the human condition was mild.
The issue that occupied postwar American architectural discourse with the most verve was the shift from a philosophical position of structuralism, which defined the significance of the ‘structure’ and the relationship between subjects and objects (a primary concept of Modernist binary dogma), to poststructuralism, which, as mentioned above, defined the significance of natural and purposeful fracturation—the precursor to postmodern fantasies. Thus we can intuit that the meta-narrative for architectural discourse was making a drastic and fundamental turn. This turn hypostasized the importance of diminishing structuralism’s focus on cognitive relationships between the subject and the object; the weight of introspective primacy in structuralism was given over to the subject. The object was merely a constituent ‘thing’ within the life world of the conscious observer, a constituent whose purposiveness could only be determined by human understanding and reason.

In post-structuralism the object took primary importance. The task was to admit the pluralism that would define the postmodern theoretical milieu, and by extension the new agency and authenticity superimposed on the object. The object became infused with new meaning, and verged on the brink of being more relevant than the subject with whom it was in relation. What exploded as a result was a contentious period that exposed principles of humanism and anti-humanism. The contention, in typical polarizing fashion, brought forth a complex array of theoretical trajectories. One of the many theoretical trajectories that ensued was the theory of minimalism. Minimalism, in its reductive nature, ‘corrects the ideality of conception with the contingency of perception’. Stan Allen states, the goal of minimalism, in refusing “the temptations of formal elaboration,” was to “defamiliarize the object and hence to recuperate its

unmediated perception, not by tearing the object from its context or by using distorted or fragmented shapes [but instead by representing]…known forms in unfamiliar scales, materials, or positions.”\(^{57}\) By minimalist convention, “complex phenomenological effects” determine the object; that is, these effects give meaning and purpose to the form. During the 1960s, minimalism developed its historiographic strain by ‘emptying’ sculpture “of a residual anthropomorphism, [while countering] a tendency toward the decorative in painting.”\(^{58}\) By ‘historiographic strain’ I mean to state the linear development that took place from theories of empathy (‘anthropomorphism’) in turn of the century formalism, to abstract expressionism, and finally to minimalism. What begins to reveal itself to us is how minimalism became an important constituent in the homologous historiography of architectural phenomenology.

Minimalism represents an example of the ever expanding cultural milieu of the postmodern and the ever-hybridizing philosophical milieu of the poststructural. Under the banner of *eidetic reduction*—which as we remember was derivative of classical phenomenological practices—minimalism begins edging architectural discourse into signifying practices (as opposed to Modernism’s universalizing practices). This shift is taxonomic and performs a critique of “self-generated extraneous complexity.” L. B. Slobodkin discusses in his essay “The Role of Minimalism in Art and Science,” the usage of minimalism as a methodology for determining disciplinary intention when it seems clouded with complexity, by stating:

“As science progresses, there may occur periods during which the imagination of investigators exceeds their capacity to acquire data and formally organize information. Then words are used as metaphors, and rhetorical rather than empirical problems dominate the field. At these *junctures*, when a science is not well formulated, it may help to *reconsider* extremely simple situations in order to dispel the rhetorical clouds. This

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\(^{57}\) Allen, 99.  
\(^{58}\) Ibid, 99.
kind of science is ‘minimalist’ in that it is most important as a commentary on the state of a field, in the same sense that ‘minimalist art’ is primarily a kind of art commentary (emphasis added).”

Minimalism, in this sense, is self-reflexive; it critiques its existence by framing a caricature of its origins—that to which it belongs (its familiarity, its form, its color, etc.). Minimalism develops the Wölfflinian concept in which the object is activated by the conscious perception of the human perceiver; minimalism at the same time deploys the Heideggerian admission that language has its limits. Hence, the presence of metaphors and other rhetorical devices that helps to alleviate ambiguity within transparently ‘thick’ disciplinary ontologies. Thus the minimalist object is given purpose by the conscious intentionality of the subject, while being loaded with a history of meaningful associations with other objects that are similarly determined. The discursive challenge is to measure the degree of minimalistic reduction, whereby the former complexity is given an ontology that is both truthful and accessible.

— The Induction of Phenomenology into Architecture —

The phenomenological approach in architecture was first articulated in the 1979, when, as stated above, Norberg-Schulz published Genius Loci, said to be the first text on architectural phenomenology. Norberg-Schulz opens his book, Genius Loci, by acknowledging the shortcomings of his endeavors, and admits “many problems [in the book] could only be treated in a very sketchy way, and need further elaboration.” In the same paragraph he states that the purpose of a ‘phenomenology of architecture’ is to produce “a theory which understands architecture in concrete, existential terms.” Immediately, he draws a difficult and seemingly

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contradictory task for architectural phenomenology by paralleling the words ‘concrete’ and ‘existential’. As part of a later generation of modernists, Norberg-Schulz is claiming—rather ambiguously—that architecture must confront modernist tendencies and refocus architectural endeavors to account for concrete and abstract aspects of human existence. In a sense, it could be argued that he is calling for a real understanding of the seemingly illreal; that architectural phenomenology becomes the most useful theory for explaining concretely experience-based perceptions and the recovery of existence as a result. To theoretically outline such an abstract position, Norberg-Schulz had to create a universal and concrete framework, one that he facilitated through a visual rhetoric laden with images. His point was to put text and imagery into graphic conversation, while at times authoring separate narratives between text and image.

Norberg-Schulz believed that by placing an emphasis on imagery, primordial associations could be drawn, whereby human presence is re-established—in regards to the image, the content of the text, and individual history of the reader/perceiver.

Otero-Pailos, picks up on another, more general contradiction by stating that Norberg-Schulz “undermine[s] [experiential] specificity by limiting its possible manifestations to a set of a priori universal archetypes.”61 These early contradictions seem to end the argument of a phenomenology for architecture before it has even begun; that these theories and ‘practices’ are mere repetitions of modernist tendencies of seeking out and producing universality. What weakens Norberg-Schulz’s argument at the outset is his dismissal of classical phenomenology’s derivatives, mathematics and logic. He attempts to re-configure classical phenomenology and re-

purpose it as an epistemology for understanding the orientation of humans in the natural world, more importantly, the built world.\textsuperscript{62} This type of re-configuration of phenomenology—like many postwar movements—was critiquing, in the words of Jarzombek, “the legitimacy of its own modernity.”\textsuperscript{63} We might then say Norberg-Schulz acknowledged classical phenomenology’s modernist usage of ‘scientific theory’ but renounced it, thus folding phenomenology in on itself even as he was trying to insert it into the discipline of architecture. Obviously, this was not his intention; indeed, what becomes apparent in Norberg-Schulz’z phenomenological project is his reliance on Heideggerian theories and critiques of Husserlian phenomenology. Heidegger becomes Norberg-Schulz’s crutch for determining an “integrated theory of architecture.”\textsuperscript{64}

However, before we elaborate this one-way relationship, we must understand that in Norberg-Schulz’s first book \textit{Intentions in Architecture} (1965), the presence of phenomenology was an “illusory” one.\textsuperscript{65} To a certain extent, what this first publication reveals is Norberg-Schulz’s interest in theorizing architecture, rather than building architecture. His intent is to achieve an integrated theory that develops through the accumulation of knowledge, or what minimalism was attempting to do for the cultured aesthete and the undereducated perceiver both—induce a conscious awareness about what it is that is being perceived and how those immediate perceptions correspond to the perceiver’s individual knowledge bank or how they relate to previous associative experiences. What is revealed is how this fusion between

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\item \textsuperscript{62} It must noted that Norberg-Schulz denies phenomenology’s origins by stating in the opening page, “‘Existential space’ is not a logico-mathematical term, but comprises the basic relationship between man and his environment.” Norberg-Schulz, Christian. \textit{Genius Loci}. New York: Rizzoli, 1979, 5.
\item \textsuperscript{63} Jarzombek, 1.
\item \textsuperscript{64} Schulz, Norberg. “Education.” In \textit{Intentions in Architecture}. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1965), 217.
\item \textsuperscript{65} Ibid., “Symbolization,” 86.
\end{itemize}
immediate experience and past experience begins to contend with classical phenomenological principles of bracketing, even before Norberg-Schulz’s consumption of Heidegger’s critique.\textsuperscript{66}

To clarify this fusion, Norberg-Schulz states:

“The theory of architecture, therefore, cannot take the immediate experience as its point of departure. The theory certainly has to be based upon a direct knowledge of works of architecture, but we must repeat that only an adequate attitude secures its relevance. And we can never be sure that any description of accidental experiences fulfills this criterion. We therefore have to reject the assertion that the description of a work of architecture should correspond to the direct experience. Only through an analysis in terms of objects may we attain an attitude that mediates the adequate experience.”\textsuperscript{67}

As we can see, direct experience (‘adequate’) is based on the conscious intention (‘attitude’) of the perceiver and his/her knowledge bank (in this case, a knowledge bank about architecture). The meaning we extract through experiential perception is based on our apperceptions and our ability to analyze the given event-situation.

Norberg-Schulz’s systematic approach, when measured against other theoretical strains, be they architectural or not, is, as stated throughout this thesis, symptomatic of the turn that was occurring in culture, politics, and economics in the latter half of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. For the most part, his theories were metacritically formalized to answer questions of Modernism’s significance, and whether the Modern Movement in architecture was worth salvaging as a useful epistemology. Remember, phenomenology was a modernist theory to begin with, reaching from Kant to Husserl, but the really significant factor that determined the project that Norberg-Schulz was pursuing was the grander introspection of architecture as an epistemology for humanity. The

\textsuperscript{66} The departure from Husserlian phenomenology at this junction in Norberg-Schulz’s theorization is strange because nowhere in the bibliography of\textit{ Intentions in Architecture} is Heidegger referenced. Thus, we can conjecture that when Norberg-Schulz did take on Heidegger, which is no easy task, it was \textit{almost} serendipitous.

\textsuperscript{67} Norberg-Schulz,\textit{ Intentions}, 86.
major contention for introspection was that of knowledge, and how knowledge—through
analysis—could harness a productive method for determining meaning from experience.
Moreover, such determinations, according to Norberg-Schulz, proved architecture’s significance
as a cultural [and epistemological] discourse. And like Heidegger, Norberg-Schulz took to task
the relevance of previous theoretical foundations; he challenged art historical conventions, and
the epistemological foundations that art historians were trying to establish for architecture. In a
sense, he was attempting to offer architects a theory that would validate the administration of
their discipline for themselves.

*Genius Loci* is the example by which we see how Norberg-Schulz begins to administer
his theoretical projections. In contradistinction to *Genius Loci, Intentions* places all of its
illustrations and figures at the end of the book. *Genius Loci* on the other hand, embeds the
images within the text. Otero-Pailos, in his essay “Photo[historio]graphy: Christian Norberg-
Schulz’s Demotion of Textual History,” states that, “Indeed, the book [*Intentions*] reversed the
traditional primacy of text over image.” However, the significance of “stimulated meditation”
by “constantly moving between image and text (emphasis added)” was not nearly as powerful
and emotive as reading the text and being aware of the weight of the image sharing the page in
*Genius Loci*. All of these visual changes were measures of a shifting view of Modernity for
Norberg-Schulz. Otero-Pailos implies that the inspiration Norberg-Schulz received from
architectural theorist Sigfried Giedion was slowly fading, along with thoughts of preserving
Modernist dogma. In a sense, this radicalism on the part of Norberg-Schulz “suggested that

68 Otero-Pailos. “Photo[historio]graphy: Christian Norberg-Schulz’s Demotion of Textual
History.” In *JSAH*, Vol. 66, No. 2 (June 2007), 223.
69 Ibid., 223.
Giedion’s notion of space-time was no longer the dominant paradigm for viewing the world…[and that] Modernism had failed to restore meaning to human existence, and postwar society had become disillusioned.”

His objective for distributing agency between text and image was to facilitate a more active platform of experience for a reader embedded in a withering Modernism. He was attempting to enliven the experience of reading and seeing, so as to push the meaning of architecture further for architects. The text would produce a familiar and habitual experience for the reader; typical learned reading comprehension would articulate the meaning set forth by the author. However, the meaning procured through the reading of the text could easily become altered by the visual effect of the adjacent image(s), and visa versa. The result is a layered and manifold experience of the author’s argument, and the reader’s created meaning from perception. This idea manifests two dynamically projective arguments, one from the author and one from the reader—something we’ve established as a post-structural concept. As part of Norberg-Schulz’s theoretical speculations, we can begin to understand the power of methodologically comparing two perceptually experiential viewpoints, or ontologies. Thus, its seems curious how Norberg-Schulz was able to administer a [comparative] methodology for the discipline of architecture that was for all intents and purposes ascribed to [Wölfflinian] art historical practices.

Norberg-Schulz was able to administer such a methodology because he was grounding his theoretical discourse in Heidegger’s philosophy of ontology, which for all historiographic purposes, is an expansion and swerve from Wölfflin and Husserl’s primacy of consciousness.

The problematic that must be acknowledged is the type of administrative autonomy Norberg-Schulz was positing for the architect; in its systematicity it was recasting the [modernist] architect as healer of social woes. Hypotheticals like, if the architect can understand his/her own developed and educated intentionality then he/she can intuit an intentionality for the whole of humanity, were common during architecture’s historical turn. Such hypotheticals, as Jarzombek stated earlier, were interested in testing the metacriticality of all theoretical presuppositions. However, the notion of the architect as administrative cultural agent was the sole intention of Norberg-Schulz’s phenomenological project in architecture. His language, while familiar to architects—because of disciplinary jargon—was also familiar and accessible to the lay reader outside of the discipline. Thus, by moderating the conversation between text and image, Norberg-Schulz was allowing the reader, in poststructuralist fashion, to create experiences that are relevant to their past, present, and future. The cultural milieu, in response, began to illustrate disjunctive tendencies of the postmodern that relied on the activation of the past to effect the immediate present, and by extension the nearby future. Theoretical systems like Norberg-Schulz’s architectural phenomenology, while prompting a ‘unified’ theory for architecture, was actually becoming a constituent in the polygraphic dispersal of cultural trajectories that occurred during and after the historico-critical turn.

Norberg-Schulz’s phenomenology for architecture was a theory based on the affect of peripheral experience on immediate experience. With the help of Heidegger he was able to challenge the status of being—with regards to long established debates concerning art and science, subject and object, and expression and reason. In his essay “Heidegger’s Thinking on Architecture,” he recaptures the affects of artistic visualization by stating, “His [Heidegger’s]
thinking on architecture as a visualization of truth restores its artistic dimension and hence human significance. By means of the concepts of world, thing, and work, he leads us out of the impasse of scientific abstraction, and back to what is concrete, that is, to the things themselves.”

Part of Norberg-Schulz’s interest in Heidegger was the opportunity to unpack what for him was architecture’s universal ontology: the systematic and logical arrangement of objects and the affects they produce in giving meaning to the world. These objects are things, and they exist in the world because ‘work’ and the ‘equipment’ to perform the duties of ‘work’ establish them. Work gathers by means of ‘bridging’ together all things perceptible and imperceptible (hidden in layers). In an essay all too often used by architects, “Building Dwelling Thinking,” Heidegger states:

“Our thinking has of course long been accustomed to understate the nature of the thing. The consequence, in the course of Western thought, has been that the thing is represented as an unknown X to which perceptible properties are attached. From this point of view, everything that already belongs to the gathering of nature of this thing does, of course, appear as something that is afterward read into it.”

Thus, in trying to bridge between conscious work and things perceptible/imperceptible Heidegger was able to fundamentally reground phenomenological concept’s ontological presence with a more fully developed and thoughtful (and radicalizing) worldview. And Norberg-Schulz was able to justify giving “thought to the thingness of things in order to arrive at

73 Ibid.
a total vision of our world (emphasis added).” \(^{74}\) This total vision necessitated recasting human presence in the world as a thing, in conjunction with other things. All of which was determined by the concept of dwelling. ‘Dwelling’ establishes presence for the subject in the world, creating the distinction between subjects and objects, things and things. Presence is defined by ‘place’, and Norberg-Schulz states, “architecture may be defined as the making of places,” the making of presence. \(^{75}\) But the question must be asked: was Norbeg-Schulz merely falling back into modernist trappings of assigning importance to things as things, or to humans as subjects which contend with things? Even with his humanist overtones, we can answer this question by stating that he was more interested in establishing the image, the text, and the system, than he was in the possibilities of the manifold orderings of the human condition. Through these manifold orderings architecture progressed into the 1980s and through the 90s, sweeping Norberg-Schulz and his theories of humanist preservation (a metaphysics of presence) aside.

Ironically, it was no surprise that the reordering of things came at the hand of architect-theorist-critic, Peter Eisenman and the project of deconstruction. \(^{76}\) Even before Norberg-Schulz

\(^{74}\) Norberg-Schulz. “Heidegger’s Thinking on Architecture,” 68.  
\(^{75}\) Ibid., 66.  
\(^{76}\) Eisenman’s project of deconstruction was probably the most influential movement in architecture at the end of the 20\(^{th}\) century, and it should not be discounted. It’s influence has determined some of the initial ways in which the discipline of architecture began addressing the end of the modern movement, navigating the postmodern movement, and coming to terms with the inevitable status of the digital. When he took on the role as designer, theorist, and critic, he was developing an autonomy for the architect in ways that Norberg-Schulz had dreamed but never saw come to fruition. This autonomy resulted from Eisenman’s critical introspection into the discipline, an introspection in which everything was up for interrogation. Such an introspection was in fact part of the performance of ‘dislocation’, which was the term Eisenman claimed was “the initial act of architecture. And the essence of the act of architecture is the dislocation of an ever-reconstituting metaphysic of architecture (emphasis added).” [Quoted from Eisenman’s essay, “Misreading” in the book \textit{House of Cards} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 167.]
In Otero-Pailos’ historiography, Kenneth Frampton was the figure that activated the human condition within the realms of politics. (Most of his concepts were based on theories taken from Hannah Arendt—take for example her conceptualization of the ‘Archimedean Point’. This concept helped to clarify the modernist perspective, stating that the modernist view was determined by the act of perpetual distancing from the milieu of the present. This remove substantiated a relief from historical principles, activating a constant historization of the not too distant present. From this point, given from the God’s-eye perspective, the modern human could lord over the world as an authoritarian figure. Hence, in its distancing, the modernist is fraught with a destiny of never being in relation with, coming to terms with, or understanding the human condition—the destruction of the human condition, humanity.) In a similar vein, Eisenman is declaring for architecture the necessity of institutionalizing the history of architecture by measuring its dislocations. Its effects determine the agency the architect has in society and culture, which by extension includes politics. Take for example, his 1989 design of the Wexner Center for the Arts building in Columbus, Ohio. Through his superimposition of two adjacent but different grids—the city grid and the campus grid—Eisenman was able to moderate a conversation between two cultural spheres. To achieve the trace of his cultural dislocation, he superimposed the campus grid on the sidewalks of the city street adjacent to the campus, and visa versa, for the city grid onto the campus sidewalks. The significance was pricey, but determined the influence of the architect as cultural agent and authority.

It was through Eisenman’s usage of the term dislocation that he was able to justify his shift of the architectural paradigm of the time, which in effect, was postmodernism. To achieve his Kuhnian paradigm shift, he attempted to transmute architectural formalism “by insisting on introducing a linguistic model into his work and criticism. At the time he did not see this as running against the grain of formalism, only as somewhat attenuating or dilating its normal categories of analysis. What is formalism, he reasons, if not a particular type of reading, and if so how can linguistics be foreign to it?” [Quoted from Rosalind Krauss’ essay, “Death of a Hermeneutic Phantom: Materialization of the Sign in the Work of Peter Eisenman” in House of Cards, 166-168.] In the act of reading, the reader comprehends and experiences what is being argued by the presence of signs, which for our purposes we might define as phenomena. Under the linguistic model, Eisenman recasts deconstruction as a signifying practice based on postmodern semiotics. This shift from postmodernism (not a break) in deconstruction is elaborated extensively in Jeffrey Kipnis’ essay, “/Twisting the Separatrix/ [1991].” In this essay, Kipnis states that the goal of deconstruction, as a philosophical system, is to “destabilize meaning...To destabilize meaning is to maintain (a respect for) all of the meanings possible, as a consequence of the congenital instability of writing.” [Quoted from K. Michael Hays’ (editor) anthology, Architecture Theory Since 1968 (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2000), 710.] In writing a “textual architecture” for architecture, and the world—in hopes of systematizing the complexity of the human condition with architectural practices—Kipnis states that Eisenman makes the argument “that since Freud, man has discovered himself to be more complex and multivalent than he is represented to be in traditional architecture. Therefore architecture should do something new and different—represent this complexity and multivalency.” [Kipnis, 720] Thus, Eisenman wasn’t interested in destroying postmodernism, but rather sought to test its limits and its concepts, in hopes of determining a more critical projection for architecture as a discipline and practice. He believed the model of deconstruction, in all of its destabilizing efforts, was best challenged through the lens of architecture “because it [architecture] is a scene
could complete his phenomenological project of preservation—for the human condition and the discipline of architecture—the shift took a more radical turn, one that the discipline, has been affected by ever since. Yet, through this radicalization, Jarzombek states his sanctioning of phenomenology in architecture—one which Norberg-Schulz proved through his Heideggerian slippage into the thingness of things—as a “compulsive attachment to the aesthetic.” (Which we might determine is the concept that clouded a synthesis between idealism and positivism, the concept that drove most of the 20th century visions of ontology and perception.) He continues, in discussing phenomenology’s tendency to “still reference the terrible incompleteness of the modernist project,” that the price of giving primacy over to aesthetics was:

of stability unlike any other—physical, aesthetic, historic, economic, social, and political.” [Kipnis, 711] To challenge deconstruction was to challenge the importance of architecture in the world of philosophy and epistemology; it was the chance to recapture the essence of architecture and its metaphysics of dislocation (something it lost with Kant and Hegel, and the Enlightenment). Ultimately, this dislocation set the human condition into retrospection, challenging the post-structuralist/postmodernist concept of variation, open-endedness, and disjunction. But the human condition was lost within the linguistic model of signs and signifiers. What followed was a reconfiguration of the modernist binary, the subject-object. In this case, the object was given primacy because the object was mere a constituent in an important system of grammatology, or ‘objectology’. The task was a metaphysics of presence—for objects and subjects—that is being tested and analyzed to this day. The final analysis has yet to be written because Eisenman’s system, while formulaic and structured, is a grammatology that must admit its limits, that haven’t necessarily been met. 77 In a similar light to the project of Norberg-Schulz, the writings and theorizations of figures like Bachelard, Wittgenstein, Colin St John Wilson, Yi-Fu Tuan, have largely been forgotten. The feeling toward these figures and their writings is one of endearment. They represent a nostalgia for a time when the discipline hoped to recover its metaphysical purpose, and save the world. Saving the world is architecture’s greatest speculation and its greatest problem. For many post-phenomenologists—those that live after Norberg-Schulz—responsibility cannot be determined by nostalgia, but it can be learned by apprehending our nostalgia and taking it to serious, introspective critique. However, theorizing, just like psychologizing, must take into consideration our experiential and mental inheritance. If we forget from where we’ve come then we suffer the possibility of trying to determine “a profound tracelessness in the fabric of architecture’s intellectual history. Bachelard, who was once on the reading list of most enterprising design students, is today completely forgotten. The same is true of Wittgenstein.” (Jarzombek, 203) And Norberg-Schulz. And Yi-Fu Tuan. And Colin St John Wilson, to name a few.
“a poverty of understanding that now stretches through everything aesthetic (and this includes the discourse of history). And yet its fictitious grasp on reality masks every effort to uphold the integrity of its illusions and the myth of its invincibility. Not to join was, and still is, to stand outside its magic circle. But its cynicism is everywhere. Artists, positioned in a grand struggle against their own facelessness, are continually being first constructed and then consumed by its affirmations.”

Such an example proves the tenuous nature of many 20th century theoretical epistemologies, and illustrates the weighted resistance toward phenomenology in both philosophy and architecture, as the 20th century turned.

78 Jarzombek, 205.
Chapter 3: Four Cases: Mies, Hejduk, SANAA, and Payne

The historiography that I am positing for architectural phenomenology is meant to activate the historical consciousness of the reader. The intent is to justify the latent tendencies of a tradition that finds its ‘grasp’ reaching through all parts of many historical traditions. For architecture, this grasp challenges the status of reality on more than an intellectual or pre-intellectual level; it brings to task the capabilities of architects to design real spaces for everyday life. Simply put, architectural phenomenology investigates the reality that is created for humans and their condition. Architecture’s form is given by stabilizing conventions. And in its ‘stability’, architecture is hidden behind levels of manifold convention-abstractions. These abstractions have been codified as drawings, diagrams, sketches, models, collages, charrettes, seminars, symposiums, lectures, and texts; the metaphysics of all professional practices and their theoretical milieu. The tricky part in analyzing these abstractions is the tendency to over-intellectualize all things considered; getting outside of oneself or being lost in convention is the common struggle for achieving what it is we are exactly trying to unearth and bring forth: reality. This ontological struggle, this metaphysics of presence, is a phenomenological problem. To achieve this, we have to, as Vesely puts its, “try to get some sense of a ground for understanding (emphasis added).” Otherwise, our reality dissolves into disjunctive tendencies that induce discontinuity and fracturation, begging us to ask the question, as Vesely does, “Is reality just a

79 Vesely, “On the Relevance of Phenomenology,” 59. The emphasis added should not be perceived as a reference to the recently published text for the 13th International Architecture Exhibition at La Biennale di Venezia (2012), Common Grounds. Nor should it be associated with the fairly recent debates occurring between Mark Wigley and Eisenman at Columbia University, specifically, not the talk entitled “Wobble: The Cat Has Nine Lives,” which was recorded on the 12th of September 2012, and can be accessed on youtube.com by the following link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gu4-ErX6hDA.
If reality is a fiction, then by what mimetic lens must we frame our life and our future? If reality is not a fiction, then what is the metaphysics that determines “meaning, understanding, interpretation, and communication?”

These questions represent the metaphysical purpose of the phenomenological project. And as Norberg-Schulz posited—through a ‘conversation’ with Heidegger—the space where humans live is defined by place, and thus architecture may be defined as the making of place. In this, we can begin to position architectural phenomenology as always a mental and physical understanding of the world. By giving ‘presence’ through built form architects can achieve a level of communication that is facilitated by experience and interpretation. Reciprocally however, human intentionality and intuition perform the construction of a techné-poésis, a conscious bringing/making forth. Techné is a classical Greek term that means more than ‘art’ and ‘technology’. In Vesely’s view:

“The Greeks understood techné as the knowledge of making, as the know-how required to bring something to appearance as this or that particular thing. For the Greeks, making shoes was not different in this respect from other arts. They did not distinguish between the fine arts and crafts, as we do. In classical Greek thought, techné goes hand-in-hand with poésis, which is making or bringing forth.”

The knowledge of making or bringing forth an object was demarcated as an event. Remember that earlier Vesely stated that by eliminating the situation of presence (context-event) architecture becomes “reduced” to technique and aesthetics. Such reductions disavow the practical nature of embodied perception, because they abstract reality to mere convention and ideality, while at the same time transmuting the event to universals and semiotics. What this

80 Vesely, 59.
81 Ibid., 60.
82 Ibid., 62.
The phenomenological task of techné-poésis is to perceive the object in manifold ways, producing an event of experience that is layered and diverse. What this means is that through this process of making or bringing forth, the layers of reality that constitute the object are revealed. But they are only revealed by perceiving the object’s variation. This notion of variation is derivative of Husserl’s interest in mathematics, and it helps to explain Husserl’s idea of epistemologically understanding the world with greater breadth. However, as philosopher Don Ihde positions, variation theory, along with embodiment and life-world, are all necessary factors for determining the answer to the question of reality. By revealing the different variations of an object, the object is exposed to a more refined understanding, and thus becomes a more definite constituent of reality. At the same time this process can be reversed, and the object and its variations, constituted by the subject’s various points of view, can determine the status and reality of the subject. The variance of the subject and the object are both conceptualized in Ihde’s book, *Postphenomenology and Technoscience* (2009), as measures of stability. The presence of several layers of variation exposes systems of multistability inherent to each and every object-subject.
To perform his phenomenologizing practice, Ihde uses several simple, yet variationally complex, examples. His most famous example is the Necker Cube, but its complexity exceeds a far simpler example: the stage/pyramid/robot configuration. In this example, there are present three variations, as posited in the name of the configuration. The first variation, or stability, is the object as stage. This abstract drawing is constructed of four planes: the first is a lower, middle plane, which constitutes the performance surface. The other planes represent the backdrops. Not only is three-dimensionality intuited, but also a point of view. The perceiver takes the location of someone looking down from the balcony, which Ihde recommends is the reality of “embodiment, or perspectival perception.”

This is the first stability. The second stability inverts the space so that the planes begin to protrude out of the page—a Mayan pyramid is produced. The centrally located upper plane is now the top of the pyramid and the other planes represent the downward sloping slides. Three-dimensionality is still present, but radically changed through inversion—at the same time the embodied perspective is maintained, in a God’s-eye-view position. The final stability, known as the robot configuration, suggests a “phenomenologically deeper move.” The robot is determined as headless. His body

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Ibid., 13. At this point Ihde mentions a concept that has been intentionally left out of this thesis because of its complex relationship to psychology: gestalt. Gestalists have long been associated with Husserl, and are historicized as continuing the work of Husserl. Adorno is known for critiquing the gestaltists for carrying on the fantasy of Husserl and his epistemological project of phenomenology. For architecture, gestalt theory was incorporated by figures like Rudolf
is represented by the square plane (what once was the top of the pyramid and the back most wall of the stage’s backdrop), the upper pair of diagonal lines represent his arms, and his legs are constituted by the lower pair of diagonal lines. The two exterior vertical lines that connect the arms to the legs are the crutches by which the headless robot maneuvers itself through space. The last line, the bottom line, represents the ground upon which the robot moves. This final stability shifts from the three-dimensional to the two-dimensional. Another change in this configuration occurs within the point of view of the perceiver. The position of embodied perception has now been located directly in front of the approaching robot. This variational development Ihde submits, is “fully phenomenological.” That is because he has investigated the object to determine its variant realities. The stabilities have transmuted the embodied perception of the perceiver in ways that are not initially obvious, but constitute reality nonetheless. The stage/pyramid/robot configuration, along with the Necker Cube and a final third configuration, represent Ihde’s practical model for determining phenomenological meaning from embodied experience. The Necker Cube contains two more stabilities than the first configuration, and such an extended example attempts to relate the multistable dimensions inherent and possible in any object-subject experienced.

Figure 2. Don Ihde, Necker Cube

Arnheim and Paul Frankl, both formalists. Further reading on gestalt theory and its effects on architecture, one should read Arnheim’s *The Dynamics of Architectural Form* (1977) and *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye* (1954), as well as, Paul Frankl’s *Principles of Architectural History: The Four Phases of Architectural Style, 1420-1900* (1914). The reason for pointing this out is because Ihde contends that within the first two stabilities there are present three-dimensional reversals, or what gestalt psychologists call ‘gestalt switches’.
Ihde’s practical model for phenomenology, while limited to abstract configurations, does offer us a method by which we can begin to approach the built world phenomenologically. In this model we are able to approach an architectural form with limited understanding and experience, but over time, analytically develop an embodied experience based on perceptions that have greater breadth and dimension. As part of the process of phenomenologically coming to terms with reality—as hidden, revealed, and uncovered—we first have to admit the usefulness of formalism and its methods of analysis. By constantly perceiving the building as a simple, totalizing form, we can begin to understand its presence [and by extension our presence]. This type of perception is familiar to classical phenomenology’s reliance on the primacy of consciousness and intentionality. Conscious and intentional perception, however, only guide the experience through simple layers of convention. The house, architect, Robert Venturi designed for his mother is an example by which this position can be clarified. For many subjects, the first meaningful perception of the house is defined by the coming together of two simples shapes: a triangle and a rectangle, all of which are perforated by smaller rectangles of varying sizes (windows and doors). It takes a pre-intellectual acknowledgement of the house’s simple forms to make an association between the physical house and a child’s drawing of the house. The simple forms are the originary modes of convention [gestaltists would agree on this count]; only through intentional analysis do the windows and doors become conventional as well.

Figure 3. Robert Venturi, *Vanna Venturi House*, Chestnut Hill (1964)
This phenomenological approach, which begins with formalist methods of perception and knowing, constitute an underdeveloped experience of the architectural object. Ihde would posit that mere appearance limits the revelation of the object’s dynamic reality. Without moving further into analysis, reality strains to give presence beyond a singular point of view. However, the Modern Movement was defined by the creation of forms that were seemingly simple and platonic from exterior appearance, but architectural convention, along with the actual physical experience of the space, proved the elaboration of each space’s multiplying stabilities of complexity. This, with simplicity of materiality [think late Modernism’s New Brutalism], helps us project our historiography from Mies to Payne, because what becomes evident is an elaboration of form through the destabilization and expansion of convention to an interest in representation. The key feature of this type of shift is cultural; transmuting experience-based perception from the conventional to the representational requires a level of ‘disorientation’, requires a determination of what is real and what is semiotic—requires us to reach for water and intuit what it means to get milk instead. We are required to come to an understanding that conventionality labors under abstractions, abstractions that are limited to a minority population that can understand them in their concrete nature. The understanding of convention as abstraction shifts reality into a fiction loaded with an infinitude of possible perceptions, most of which reside outside of the object’s real reality, but in fact constitute reality in a representationally abstract sense. The difference between an abstract convention and an abstract representation is accessibility. Accessibility will facilitate the cultural significance of an architectural object through its established and formalized meanings. This dynamic process is important for our historiography, because through disciplinary crisis, convention is often revisited or reconfigured. When the discipline is booming and experimentation is on the rise, this dynamic process is given
over to cultural critique, which is given over to accessibility of forms by the public, and the challenge of convention by the discipline. And in its repetition, the discipline of architecture illustrates its non-linear nature.

— Mies’ Will to Conventionality, or His Will to Freedom —

The Barcelona Pavilion, which was designed as part of the 1929 International Exposition in Spain, had a brief six-month lifespan in its original site. Even before it was dismantled, it was deemed a success. Different from all of the other exhibition spaces, the Barcelona Pavilion was vacant of all trade materials; it was designed to be an exhibit in its own right. The only objects placed within the space were furniture pieces designed by Mies, and *Alba*, a statue sculpted by Georg Kolbe. To achieve such autonomy in design for the rebounding Weimer Republic of Germany, Mies focused on creating a continuity of space, a space that was fluid, separated only transparently by six panels of varying materiality, and bracketed by two C-shaped enclosures at the north and south ends. Movement within these bracketing forms was meant to diffuse the difference between interior and exterior. The travertine Cartesian-grid that makes up the plinth upon which the building is raised, removes the occupant from the fabric of the exposition. At the same time, the eight gridded, cruciform (in plan view) columns help to orient the occupant within a space that seems to refuse static comprehension. In fusing the formal gestures with the exposition atmosphere, Mies was able to apprehend the site and charge it with a dynamic simplicity and minimalism that elicited—but didn’t require—an occupancy of conscious awareness.

![Figure 4. Mies van der Rohe, Barcelona Pavilion, plan, Barcelona (1929)](image)
Even before a group of Spanish architects reconstructed the pavilion between the years 1983 and 1986, the building had lived on as a seminal work of the Modernist Movement. It was through drawings and photographs that the building survived; the same things that provided its successful reconstruction. Having been “raised to the level of masterpiece—mostly by critics who had never seen it,” says Robin Evans, the building was meant to exist because its architect had insisted on its clarity through rigorous attention to modes of architectural conventional.  

Mies’ “lifelong concern [for establishing] the logic of structure and its expression” could only be captured through an intentional sensitivity to the conventions of architectural production, both technically and aesthetically. Mies was drawn into correspondence with convention because of his will to seek rational means to structural ends. To elucidate his vision of Mies’ rationality in structure, Evans states:

“The structure of a sentence is not the same sort of thing as the structure of a building. I have been treating the Barcelona Pavilion structure as a means of holding its own weight off the ground. This kind of structure is about gravitation, mass, and the transmissions of loads through solids; it is concerned with concrete, physical things, even though our understanding of it is achieved by means of abstractions such as vectors and numbers. The other kind of structure is also present. We refer to the pavilion’s gridded structure or its orthogonal structure, yet these structures have nothing to do with material or weight. They refer to organizing formats which may be imposed upon, or discovered in, material objects, but which remain conceptual, like the structure of a sentence.”

The ‘conceptual’ ‘abstractions’ that Evans discusses reveals the critical moment at which two distinct structural systems come together: one is a structural system of material and weight, and the other is a structural system of logic and organization. One is concrete, and arbitrates the

86 Ibid., 239.
forces of gravity, and the other is abstract, and mediates the possibility of movement through forms. Both are based on convention—the distribution of space through material separation, but one resists the weight of the roof’s downward push, while the other clings to the roof, hoping it doesn’t float away. One offers literal transparency, the other phenomenal. The two systems account for the fluctuation of embodied experience, the explosion and implosion of space simultaneously, throwing the distinction between interior and exterior into real and conceptual oblivion.

The challenge for Mies, which marks his mastery, was clarifying these two distinct structures. Through rigorous attention to detail he was able to simulate a space of paradoxical fluidity and indeterminacy. The goal was neither of these affects, because the goal was to posit a space of conscious distancing from the exhibition and the present world. Paradox and indeterminacy were mere gestures toward a desaturation of the exhibition space in general. It wasn’t a call to some universal understanding of what the Modern Movement could do [especially when put into the hands of a ‘master’] and how it might produce spaces of sympathetic rapport. Nor was it exactly fulfilled by empathetic underpinnings, concepts we are reminded of from Wölfflin and turn of the century formalism. However, it did offer a platform for the performance of all of these concepts; within the forms and the performance resided a complex system of stabilizing realities and potential future realities. Each potential was exhibited in every actor and every spectator; a lively coordination of the knowable and the unknowable, of the sympathetic and the empathetic, the embodied and disembodied. The performances were

88 The second pairing, the sympathetic and the empathetic, appear less polar than the other two pairs, and that is for good reason. When we compare the Pavilion to Mies’ later, postwar (WWII) work, we come to understand a vision more aware to the communion between humans. Take the
activated by the forms and materials, as well as, by other actors within the network of experience and perception.

The approach to this theater of blurred boundaries and symmetries is not straight on. Because of the sloping site, one enters the stage from a stairwell to the north. The stairwell is juxtaposed to the edge of the site, near the path that led to the “Spanish Village.” This stairwell removes the subject from the exhibition ground, by elevating the subject to a travertine plinth, a space indifferent to the environment below. As the subject moves up the stairwell, he/she notices a rather large hole in the travertine plinth. The southern most ‘bracket’, in response to this void in the ground, provides a surface of enclosure and containment. A violent apprehension overwhelms the subject because they are offered the experience of a disjunctive

Neue Nationalgalerie (1968) in Berlin for example. Here, Mies was constructing a cultural institution, which was meant to house art, the cultural product of every civilization and epoch. The difficult task was doing just that. The question begged: How to house art in a city, a place, where culture was revoked, and then utterly annihiliated? The ground had been ripped from underneath the Jewish citizenry, and the entire German nation. The Nazis had literally forced a tabula rasa ground upon which nothing but ruin and decay could thrive. Hence, the initial intent of the architect to force the art into the underground gallery space (called crypt). And hence, the recurrent stairwell (as seen and used at the Pavilion) that removes the museumgoer from the fabric of the city (in this case Berlin, the capital of the Nazi regime), forcing the museumgoer through a voided space, an empty field, and down into the crypt, eventually exiting the museumgoer out into a sculpture garden where they are back on street level. The reality is that this sculpture garden is completely contained from the street level, and the museumgoer must self-reflexively recount his/her steps to exit the building. Here at the Neue Nationalgalerie the materiality is overwhelmingly steel. Everything is painted black, stripping the materiality of its significance and beauty. Everything is muted. The space becomes binary. The museumgoer either empathizes with the tragedy that befell the human condition, truly taking part in its presence and meaning, or the museumgoer exists apathetically toward the human condition and its violent realities.
space, a space in which, for only a split second, does it appear that this pavilion is an act of incarceration. Only seconds earlier was the subject apprehending an appearance of an elevated, but rather low lying building with a perceivably large entry porch. Only seconds earlier was the subject trying to determine the forms that he/she was encountering; at that moment the rather general, planar form seemed comprehensible, and easily understood—almost accessible. The endeavor, at the time of its initial 1929 construction, was to see what was contained within the exhibition space. Nowadays, the anticipation is for the assumed experience of a masterpiece, and what that could possibly mean for our developing memory bank.

But once the subject (depending on height) reaches the fourth and middle stair, they see the void is filled with water. This pool moves because the wind moves. The subject moves because the pool moves. Acting as a centripetal anchor, the pool grasps the subject and pulls him/her up the stair and onto the plinth. As the subject moves toward the pool, the glass wall to the right—a continuation of the marble wall that makes up the northern bracket’s eastern portion—reflects the subject’s body and the neighboring environment. This is a destabilizing moment. It is the point at which the subject is aware of the environment he/she just left, and the point at which the subject comes to terms with this new alien site. The glass wall, segmented by chrome-plated mullions, measures the speed and movement of the subject as he/she is propelled forward, and into the center of a disorienting space. The subject slows down to determine his/her presence, and the global meaning of the space. The subject apperceptively reaches for a space enclosed on four sides, continuously, with a perforated entry, but instead, gets a space seemingly disjointed by individual panels of varying materiality. The subject needs to be quick, or else the
force of the pool and the nearest isolated wall of marble will catapult him/her farther into this space of disorientation.

At this point, the space has gained a certain control on the subject. In a centripetal movement inward, the subject begins to lose his/her agency. A red onyx wall, in parallel to the marble wall that just pulled the subject farther into the center, is shifted backward into the space. These two parallel walls articulate a level of enclosure, but a glass wall that centrally divides these two opaque walls is exactly a mirror of the glass entry wall that calculated the subject’s movement into the space. Now, it would appear that there are two opposing enclosures occurring in the north-south direction, but neither of them is capped off at the north end. Where an enclosing wall could have been, there is penetration of light that opens the space. And in this moment, the roof’s weight, ignored up until now because of its conventionality, begins to lighten and detach itself from the marble and onyx walls. The anchor that maintains the roof’s relationship to the earth is a glass panel that runs perpendicular to all of the walls experienced thus far. The thin, indexical chrome mullions hold the roof in place, harboring its freedom. This glass wall, also keeps the light from fully defining the space as open to the natural world; behind it, to the north, is another pool, which similar to the entry pool, is contained by the form of the north bracket.
The static subject has lost his/her presence, because the space has taken all conscious control away from him/her. In an act of willful resistance the subject carries his feet forward, in careful syncopation. Slowly, orientation is regained as the colonies of mullions and the eight gridded cruciform chromed columns begin to establish an intuitive index to the human scale. Having been reminded of the associational measurement upon entry, the subject begins to give him/herself presence again; the senses unite in a strange moment of synaesthetic buildup. The subject seems to float. And in an abrupt introduction, the vertical figure—Kolbe’s Alba—and the subject make perceptual contact, and the synaesthetic buildup explodes in an instance of understanding. The form, which upon approach, seemed so mutably common, was fractured and articulated by its individual parts, but totalized itself when the subject, through conscious intension, recalibrated his/her presence. Global meaning was established, and the performance of form and subjectivity gave way to produce meaning, making an immutably transparent place in the world.

The abstract components of Mies’ structuration facilitate for any subject a new measure of temporality, and by extension, embodied experience. Mies, the architect, the author of forms and spaces, disestablished reality, so as to reconstruct it through the conscious intuition of the subject. Formally and ontologically testing the projections of Modernist conventionality of what parts are supposed to go where and how they coordinate in concert, Mies gave his strength as a master draftsman and a purveyor of strict adherence to detail over to the will of the human condition. As Evans observes of the Pavilion, “The elements are assembled, but not held
together.”

This point is absolutely true, and reveals an even greater truth about the nature of the architect and the spaces he/she creates. Mies understood and honored conventionality, but he couldn’t relent the importance of the human subject and its conscious endeavors to determine presence.

— Hejduk, and the Ghosts of Things Fallen —

The House of the Suicide and the House of the Mother of the Suicide (HS&HSM) are the only two materialized examples from a series of twenty-six fantasy designs produced by John Hejduk between the years of 1980 and 1982. Most of his work was never realized, because they functioned in a multiform way—as sculpture, sketch, drawing, model, text, memory, dream, etc.

Hidden behind these manifold representations and identifiers, his work rarely established occupancy in a conventional way. HS&HSM in particular, articulate their presence as two individuated phenomena bound by a similar biology, as their title posits. Typically, and I say typically because their installation has happened on numerous occasions, the two figures are set thirteen to fifteen feet apart. Their dimensions, which add to their strange presence as un-occupiable sculpture, measure nine feet by nine feet by twenty-four feet; perceivably, the chance of embodied experience is limited to one or two bodies, but as part of the design, only one figure, the House of the Mother of the Suicide, has an opening through which one body may enter. The

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89 Evans, 242.
House of the Mother of the Suicide is the darker of the two figures, with metal spikes that angle upward to a singular point some distance in the sky. The House of the Suicide is the lighter of the two, with metal spikes splaying upward and outward. Together they represent the poetic memory of the coming together of two similar forms, forms that represent the architectural memory of the conventional and primitive.

The two figures were inspired by the poem, *The Funeral of Jan Palach*, written by David Shapiro, a longtime friend and colleague of Hejduk. The poem marks the 1969 suicide of a Prague University student, Jan Palach, who set himself ablaze in Wenceslas Square, Prague, in defiant response to the Soviet occupation of his native Czechoslovakia. In his suicide, Palach became a figure whose act occupied the minds of those that were witness to the event and were effected by it, as well as those that understood what it meant to occupy a body and reconcile the fact of having a body in a world where pain and suffering exist. In his suicide, Palach became a partner in a dance of experience, struggling to reconcile the memories of the past with the reality of the present, and the not so distant future. For Hejduk, the memory that activated his

90 Jeffrey Kipnis discusses the relationship between conventional and primitive architectural memories in his “Late Twentieth Century Design Theory” (1990), found in *Architecture’s Desire, Reading the Late Avant-Garde*, written by K. Michael Hays (The MIT Press, 2009). In “Late Twentieth Century Design Theory,” Kipnis argues for three masterpieces of late twentieth century design. He attributes each theory its own theorist: Rossi (Architectural Memory Theorem), Hejduk (Architectural Poetry Theorem), and Eisenman (Architectural Calculus Theorem). Kipnis states that Hejduk’s theorem is an inequality. It follows as such: “The minimum poetic architectural configuration is greater than and irreducible to architectural memory.” This relates to the HS&HSM because each figure is representative of a poetic ‘configuration’, which is derivative of, but greater than and irreducible to a simpler, conventional configuration, a primitive. The influence of poetry on Hejduk comes from the works of Austrian poet, Rainer Rilke. In conversation with David Shapiro, Hejduk admits the influence and importance of Rilke. Similarly, in several of Norberg-Schulz’s text he cites Rilke as well.
inspiration the most was the relationship between a son and a mother.\textsuperscript{91} In this relationship, as realized in the HS&HSM, the mother and son are set in a tragic dance. The proximal distance between the two forms is purposive, and sets the ground for a phenomenological introspection of the relationship between bodies, and in this case, similar bodies.

Hejduk articulates the meaning of this type of proximal distance in his essay “Evening in Llano” by analyzing the space between a painting and its observer. In this essay he concludes that the space between the painting and its observer is “geometrized air” and exists “outside of the observer.”\textsuperscript{92} Such a “contained visual volume” of air slowly reconciles the content of the painting to the conscious intuition of the observer.\textsuperscript{93} The pigment, in coordination with the

\textsuperscript{91} This relationship is speculative. In some text, now forgotten, but hidden somewhere in the stacks of the UCLA library, an author states the influence Hejduk’s wife had on him. At the same time, in the concluding lines of his essay “Evening in Llano,” he writes: “What I have attempted to illustrate is the possible space of architecture. I wish to emphasize that there is the breath of the male and breath of the female, and that we have yet to breathe in fully the breath of the woman and her thought in architecture. When women’s air impregnates our objects, we will be astonished and angels will cease to weep.” (128) And later on in Architecture and Urbanism issue 244 there is published a poem by Hejduk entitled “The Sleep of Adam” that illustrates this feminine influence. The poem is brief:

“While Eve awaited
inside of Adam
she was his
structure
her volume
filled him
his skin hung
on Eve’s form
when God
released her
from Adam
Death rushed in
preventing collapse.”


\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 127.
observer’s eye and the space between, activates a “dematerialized thought (a thought without substance)” in the form of “revelation.” Hejduk clarifies the final process in viewing and understanding, that is, reconciling, by stating:

“The observer’s thought has moved from his body and crossed the space between his eyes and the canvas. This act has sucked up the space separating the subject and the object, so to speak. The dematerialized thought left the body of the observer and made the physical space disappear by its flight outwards, a flight of no substance collapsing in its wake.”

Such is the effect gained by the singular opening at the base of the House of the Mother of the Suicide. Through this opening, an opening the House of the Suicide does not have, a singular observer may enter the interior space. The space, which elevates the observer onto a small platform, allows a focused view through a single aperture. This focused view peers across the dense void of “geometrized air” over to the House of the Suicide. This view calculates the haunted memory the mother has of her lost son. The revelation is irrevocable and irreducible. And to a certain extent, illreal. The distance between the two figures, between a mother and her fallen son, is activated by the observer and the revelation of coordinated understanding. This perceptual act can be measured by the percepts of empathy. In reconciliation, the two figures and the observer occupy each other’s bodies. In reconciliation, the observer understands what it means to reach the limits of bodily and mental exhaustion (human capacity); understands what it means to be Jan Palach; understands what it means to be the mother of Jan Palach; understands what it means to be and what it means to be a memory. The metal enclosures that harbor these forms of reconciliation are conventional, and they are made with conventional precision. The spikes are eerily smooth and seamless—the haunts of bodily reality, and the irrevocable.

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95 Ibid.
Despite the HS&HSM and the other few-built example’s attention to detail in accordance with conventionality, most of Hejduk’s work was never realized. This is true because Hejduk lived in a world of representation. His ability to exist between theory and practice, between intellect and convention, could only be arbitrated by exploding conventionality for something illreal. By living under convention, conscious intention would be overwhelmed by memories of old. Hejduk was an avant-gardist because he wasn’t satisfied with the status quo of conventionality—so he decided to exist outside of it, just like the space between two objects, the space between theory and practice. And by existing within this ‘dematerialized’ space he could activate the variegated efforts of the observer and the figure with whom he/she danced.

We might come to understand the work of Hejduk as a critically important phenomenological project torn between theory and practice. Or what K. Michael Hays ponders as “a theoretical practice whose focus is an architecture neither theoretical nor practical in any conventional sense of the terms[.]”

Wherein the work of Mies, as posited in the Barcelona Pavilion, offers a collision between theory and practice, through conventionality’s exposure to

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the conscious intuition of the subject, Hejduk’s projects, HS&HSM, bring forth the activation of
the uncommon ground between theory and practice, an alien space that contains the possibility of
a variegated, fragile, and “unknowable [interior], the ostensible locale where essences reside.”

The ineffable beauty of Hejduk’s interiors were, however, to be protected; they were not meant
to be bound up or isolated, but rather respected for their willingness to be empathized with, to be
suitably shared through embodied experience. This type of containment, however, restricted his
work to the realm of the representational. Rarely were his projects realized in material form. The
initial, formal appearance of Hejduk’s HS&HSM is disconcerting, and almost monumentalizing.
Yet, the contained forms are introverted and isolated, and the weight of each form activates the
surrounding environment. Criticism of the HS&HSM projects, articulate or not, run the risk of
essentializing the two forms to appearances. And typically, these critiques suggest a certain
sculptural ontology for the forms, because one cannot necessarily occupy the interiors. Or, as
Eisenman, in conversation with Hejduk, suggested of Hejduk’s 1983 Berlin Masque project (and
what we could conclude for his HS&HSM project as well), “[Your Berlin figures] are not
architecture because you can’t get into them.”

Hejduk’s reply: “YOU can’t get into them.”

Which reveals a key point in Hejduk’s lifelong project that sought to distance his work from the
realms of theory and practice, from the realms of intellectualization and abstraction. For him, the
interiors were mimetic instances of our bodily interiors, both material and metaphysical. In his
own words:

“For all intents and purposes, our inside is to us weightless, as weightless as a thought
which has no substance. The illusionary, internal voided space is like the internal space of
our brain, with the observation that we live in our heads, in constant communication with

97 Mertins, Detlef. “The Shells of Architectural Thought.” In Hejduk’s Chronotope. (New York:
98 Ibid.
99 Ibid.
the sensations given off by our hearts. In our excitement of creation, the mind and heart begin to fill, we feel the filling internally, the feeling of pure sense. We are filled within and we are thrilled. We are filled with thought that escapes from us. We have been filled with breath.”

We have been filled with the ontology of something other, and in coordination it determines our presence, our embodied experience that is all things real and all things illreal.

— SANAA: Between Two Spheres, or the Idea of Shared/Dispersed Ontologies —

The Toledo Glass Pavilion was designed by the architectural firm SANAA and opened in 2006. The Pavilion is part of the campus for the Toledo Museum of Art, and sits adjacent to the pre-existing Beaux-Arts building that has been home to the Toledo Museum of Art since its establishment as a cultural institution. The purpose of the Pavilion is to house and showcase the art of glass making, blowing and sculpting; as well, glass blowing classes are offered to the public throughout the year in its spaces. The Pavilion takes its name from a glass industry that had a long history in Toledo, but has since departed and relocated to other parts of the world, like China and Germany. The strange thing about the Pavilion is its presence within the urban fabric of Toledo—a once booming port city with a variety of industries that relied on Toledo’s proximal location and access to the East Coast, the Midwest, and the South via the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Toledo is now constituted as part of a series of slowly depopulating cities amid the American Rust Belt. The result of a slowly decaying city can be superimposed on a slowly decaying cultural sphere. It is true that when one looks at the statistics of the Toledo Museum of Art, one becomes aware that the Toledo Museum of Art’s rate of attendance per capita for museums is the highest in the country, but this cannot discount the statistic that the

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visiting population is one-and-a-half times the city of Toledo’s population.\textsuperscript{101} Statistics like these articulate the effects that architectural objects have on the public, whether waning or not. The challenge is to locate these effects, and determine their phenomenological importance, so that we might better understand the presence of a subject and his/her embodied experience within a space that is for all intents and purposes invisible; it is about bringing forth the event-moments that determine meaning from experience, and thus making what is invisible, visible.

The Pavilion itself is flat, situated in a park-like setting, and organized in plan by a series of cartoon bubbles on the verge of consummation. This interrelationship, however, is withheld, because each glass bubble is separated by an indeterminate in-between. This in-between is defined as an intermediary gap, which is created by installing a “contradictory” double spatial logic of convex and concave glass walls, all of which run next to each other but never intersect.\textsuperscript{102} The architects present two types of formal ontology: the first is constituted by transparent figures that visually become voids occupied by art and bodies, and the second, is constituted by voided alley ways (the in-between spaces) that cannot be occupied by anything or anyone, save for the heat filtered through to keep

\begin{figure}
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\includegraphics[width=0.45\textwidth]{figure11.png}
\caption{SANAA, \textit{Glass Pavilion}, plan, Toledo (2006)}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.45\textwidth]{figure12.png}
\caption{SANAA, \textit{Glass Pavilion}, double spatial logic, Toledo (2006)}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{102} Blau, Eva. “Curating Architecture with Architecture.” In \textit{Log} 20 (Fall 2010), 19.
condensation from forming in the cold months of winter. Movement through the building is facilitated by a winding space that formally separates the programmatic elements of the gallery spaces from the workshop spaces. However, all of the walls are made of glass, so the separation of programmatic elements is highly ambiguous, visually. The separation between interior and exterior, between the pristine interior surfaces of an exhibition space and the natural exterior space of the park, is diffused by the panoramic effect produced by having an all glass building. The only features that undermine the panoramic view, besides the material qualities of diffraction given by the manufacture of large panels of curved glass, are the roof and the line of small stones that separate the base of the glass panels with the surrounding grass. The line of stone runs the base perimeter of the building, acting as a drainage system for keeping water away from the building. At the same time, this line also offers the building up as another glass art object for viewing, and it does so by creating a formal line of distinction between the exterior and the interior. In a very abrupt and minimal way, the Pavilion, on approach, is perceived as an object in its own right, rather than the ambiguous complex space of curved and transparent walls.

The Pavilion, as object, works in concert with the objects being exhibited and the museumgoers occupying the exhibition space. The purpose is to establish a public that is made of conscious individuals; these conscious individuals, whether intentionally or not, have come to occupy one of the significant cultural institutions in the Midwest. Their diverse presence
formalizes a disjunctive public, a dislocated ontology. However, the nature of this fractured public is not determined by human conscious intention alone. The shifting nature of what it means to be an object is one of the most significant phenomenological issues of the new millennium; by expanding the field that is the Pavilion to include objects beyond the human body, does the public that determines and is determined become multiform and dynamic. We have departed ways with the Eisenmanian position of destabilization, because the status of the public is constituted by a reality of multistability. Each and every stability is a measure of reality, a variation on the same object-reality. Acts of perceiving are no longer fraught with the affects of disorientation and inauthenticity, but are now charged with agency and understanding. This understanding isn’t totalized. It is, however, empathetic to the universal idea of a multiform public that is activated by a predetermined constituency of objects, including humans, glass art objects, trees, etc.

Every ontology contained within the event-space of the Pavilion is insulated by the soft boundaries created by the field of curving glass panels. The visual effects are both real and illreal. Each object has more than one visual reality. If visually filtered through the glass, the object becomes distorted by the natural diffracting qualities of glass and light. As Stan Allen writes, SANAA incorporates transparent materials into “an idea of geometry as one order among many, an order that is convenient and practical, but carries with it no metaphysical baggage. And because the geometry in her [Sejima] projects aspires to no universal idealism, it is not
oppressive or constraining.” The result is specific to a model of operations that orchestrate a public of open-endedness, encouraging the moment of event between the infinite varieties of objects.

This ontological explosion brings an agency to all constituent members of the public. The panorama reveals all perceivable things as fluid objects; the indeterminate form of all things is substantiated by the phenomenal transparency of the building. Everything exists strewn below the Pavilion’s floating roof, on the verge of reinstating reality, over and over—ultimately admitting the falsifiability of reality at the same time. The space is performative, imbued with the effects of things literal and things phenomenal. Eva Blau elucidates the reality of an ever-changing open-endedness by stating:

“Like Michel Foucault’s mirror—a place at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through a virtual space that opens up behind the space—Sejima’s pavilions with their multiple reflections and projections, spatial inversions and extensions, generate a heterotopia—a doubling of the world in which they operate. They create a place that is the same but different—a condition of hybridity that defies representation—but one that is open to experience and interpretation by a critical user[agent].”

Critical agency becomes the *sin qua non* of a phenomenology ameliorative to our current condition. By creating spaces of fluctuation and indeterminacy, spaces that challenge the role of existence through perception and consciousness, SANAA was able to allow the public the opportunity to reconfigure itself. The process of reconfiguration is possible through critical awareness, but also, and more importantly, through simple awareness—an awareness to see what is basic and right in front of you, and to know more clearly the possibility of reality and all of its

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104 Blau, 28.
minute details. And as architectural critic Nicolai Ouroussoff wrote on his departure from the Pavilion:

“It is not architecture with a Big Message. It is about empathy for the human condition. Once you drift outside again, the tree branches seem to sway more gently, the light feels softer, the world more tender. Most important, you are more attuned to the distances between people.”

Critical awareness starts with human intention. The goal is to be conscious—to empathize with the world, and at the same time be reconciled with it.

— Payne’s Persona, or the Outward Appearance of Sentient Things —

Somewhere in northern Utah sits a house in process. The house is embedded within a sloping field of raspberry bushes, and it is from this context that the house takes its name:

![Figure 15. Jason Payne, Raspberry Fields, SW facade of existing building Utah (begun 2010)](image)

Raspberry Fields. Construction on the house began in 2010—a renovation to an existing schoolhouse and storage building. The house is in process because the final image of the house, as designed by the architect, Jason Payne, is representative of the building-artifact before the renovation. By this I mean to say that before the design was commissioned the former schoolhouse/storage facility was in a state of strange and unforeseen appearance, an appearance Payne is trying to simulate in the renovation. The southwest side of the building had been exposed to harsh conditions of weathering; dramatic freezing and thawing effects brought on by frigid winters and harsh summers. All the while, the northeast side of the

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building was left in a state similar to what it would have been after it was originally constructed. The important thing to note about these two different facades is that they were constructed exactly the same, and with the same materials. The difference, again, was the effect of weathering, which mutilated the thin horizontal strips of siding, forcing a rippling and twisting effect that marred the southwest side. These effects were fundamentally influential for Payne’s design decisions.

The design of the house converts the rectangular parallelepiped form of the existing building by grabbing hold of the southeast facade, pinching it, and twisting it, so that the parallel form begins to contort around an unseen point of anchorage. The angle of this contortion heads south, and thus applies more surface tension to the already exposed southwest facade. This decisive move in the design is phenomenologically motivated. Instead of countering the effects of weathering with a more resistant material, Payne chooses to use a material similar to the original siding strips, albeit slightly longer strips than the original building. And instead of orienting the strips in the horizontal, he rotates them ninety degrees, so that they are oriented vertically. The key design decision is to only attach the upper end of the strips to the supporting facade structure, leaving the lower end unattached and free, similar to the application of shingles on a roof. Thus, his intention is to force a more dynamic relationship between the weathering patterns and the strips of siding. To articulate this affective relationship, Payne stains the strips a rich purple on the upper, exposed sides, while staining the

![Figure 16. Jason Payne, Raspberry Fields, plan, Utah (begun 2010)](image-url)
undersides a variety of vibrant pinks, yellows, and oranges. Over time the effects of freeze and thaw will force the hinged shingles to curl, rendering the house two-faced. The final composition is a house with two identities; personas that participate in separate formal ontologies. The effects of curling over time activate the southwest facade, while the northeast facade remains forever the same. The northeast facade is an index of the primitive architectural form, the skeleton of the house’s original and basic form. The southwest facade, however, is a veil, a furry skin that conceals the house and all of its houseness. The house is determined by two opposing characters, which in turn are determined by the effects of weather, which in turn are determined by the architect’s design decisions.

Jason Payne claims that he likes to “live on the edge of experimentation” and exaggerate built form because it falls short of the complex forms found in nature. Yet, his exaggeration is not determined by a loose hand at the computer, but by rigorous investigation into the relationships between objects and their constituent parts. His pursuit is based on revealing the character of an object “through composition.” Effective and thoughtful composition works to elaborate the variant perspectives and realities designed into an object, whether purposeful or accidental. Mimetically, compositional configuration has designed into it a certain level of natural and uncontrollable existence. What this means is that every object is imbued with an

infinite variety of realities; these realities shift the understanding of the object perceived, questioning the object and its presence in the world. These natural complexities and variants are what propel Payne and others like him to pursue “the need to develop specific vocabularies with which to articulate their…increasingly pressing [efforts].” \textsuperscript{108} To achieve these articulations, Payne presses the edge that differentiates the scientific, called digital, world with the natural world. He is interested in the \textit{materiality} of both worlds, and how their mediated existences can formulate new relationships between objects. His endeavor, while interdisciplinary, is founded on demystifying architectural conventions through experimentation of free-form technique. The intention that we’re discussing is based on agency and authenticity; experimentation can achieve both if rigorously pursued. Architectural theorist, Todd Gannon illustrates the significance of such intentions and their inherent resistance by stating that they offer “a means to reassert the individual subjectivity of the architect in the face of totalizing systems and idealized concepts [called composition].” \textsuperscript{109}

Almost several months after construction began on the Raspberry Fields house critics began to question the design intentions of the architect. They wondered how long it would take the shingles to achieve their desired ‘look’. Would the architect’s audience have to wait several years for the shingles to go through several cycles of freeze and thaw to finally begin to curl and show their underbellies? Would the audience have the stamina for such a wait? Would the critics declare it out of fashion before the stain dried, knowing the outcome exists only in the digital world of representation?

\textsuperscript{108} Gannon, 94.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
Payne is a reserved architect, but his influence is expanding. He doesn’t have many built works to his name. Most of his work, in a similar fashion to Hejduk, resides not in material form, but in ‘digital’ form. So when the opportunity arose for him to test his digital projections and challenge the anxiously awaiting critics, he took it, in the form of an exhibition hosted by his alma mater, SCI-Arc, in southern California. The exhibition, “Rawhide: the New Shingle Style,” allowed him to test the materiality of the shingles for Raspberry Fields, but it also allowed him to test the affects of the hybrid form, both furry and bald, on an audience found wanting. To test these two criteria Payne decided to pre-curl the shingles, and then attach them to a full-scale section model of the roof. He pre-curl the shingles by exposing them to steam, and then hand bent them around a curved form. After the shingles had cooled he meticulously attached them to the model. And even though the iterative design process forced the expedition of the object into its digitally rendered formed, it also illustrated the intentional subjectivity of the architect and his/her hand at all stages of the process, even if one of those stages is projectively futuristic. Gannon reiterates Payne’s intention and the significance of such intentionality by stating:

“The obvious imprint of the designer’s hand introduces destabilizing ambiguity into any understanding of the building’s surface, and over time the rich play between compositional artifice and natural weathering will only become more complex…Raspberry Fields promiscuously mingles authorial intention with stochastic effects, expanding contemporary ambitions without ceding the valuable conceptual ground gained through experimentation with process-based design techniques.”

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Figure 18. Jason Payne, Raspberry Fields, sectional roof model from “Rawhide: the New Shingle Style” exhibition, Utah (begun 2010)

110 Gannon, 89.
We can agree with Gannon’s position generally, because it challenges the contemporary architect and his/her process, but at the same time, it reduces the architectural object produced to the abstraction of conceptualism. Phenomenologically, these abstractions overwhelm the produced object with a haze of ‘ambiguity’. For the most part, concepts exist in the mind, and are hard to articulate without guidance from the creator. So, to depart from Gannon’s claim means we have to understand Raspberry Fields as being dominated by percepts, rather than concepts. Percepts exist in the mind, but only because they have entered the mind through conscious intentionality on the part of the perceiver. The importance of percepts is apparent in Payne’s radical fostering of object relationships. He understands, like many contemporary philosophers interested in the ontological orientedness of objects, that his creations have lives of their own.\footnote{The philosophical movement known as ‘Object-Oriented Ontology’ is derivative of another movement, speculative realism (originally coined by the French philosopher Quentin Meillassoux under the moniker ‘speculative materialism’). In all cases, ‘OOO’ philosophy deals with the being of objects, and how they exist beyond a model of correlationalism in a state of ontological centrality. Graham Harman is the leading voice for the movement, and like him, OOO philosophers are interested in understanding, philosophically, the nature and relationship between things at all scales, and how those relationships might relate to our understanding of things and how those things might relate to other things, and to us. The endeavor, which hasn’t necessarily been fleshed out yet, is to seek a more concise understanding of the split between the constructions of human behavior and the aggregate bits that define our environments. Several texts to source regarding the investigation of these philosophical movements are: Meillassoux’s \textit{After Finitude: An Essay On The Necessity Of Contingency} (2008); and several books by Graham Harman: \textit{The Quadruple Object} (2011), \textit{Towards Speculative Realism: Essays and Lectures} (2010), \textit{Guerilla Metaphysics: Phenomenology and the Carpentry of Things} (2005), \textit{Prince of Networks: Bruno Latour and Metaphysics} (2009), and \textit{Quentin Meillassoux: Philosophy in the Making} (2011).} He admits this when he imposes his hand on a process that was supposed to be left up to natural orderings. It is correct to say that Payne champions the impact of the designer and his/her subjectivity, but his investment in a process that was modeled after natural orderings reveals his animus for architecture—those inner workings that simultaneously constitute objects and...
conscious intention, in a Heideggerian three-fold way. And in this anima, Payne upholds the free-flow poetics of a pure architectural phenomenology, a phenomenology that extends the logico-mathematics of reason into an exceedingly manifold state of beautiful irrationality. By imbuing experience with reason and reason’s haunts, Payne is able to project reality into the architectural object, composed of infinite variations and stabilities.

Strangely, however, Payne has exhibited a theoretical interest in the power of conceptualism, in ideas powerful enough to exist on the edge of reason’s madness. He must exist on this edge, a zone in which, Jeffrey Kipnis claims, Eisenman resides, because “the grip of reason on architecture cannot be broken, but only exhausted.”\(^{112}\) This zone admits the strictures of conventionality, but seeks to impose a secondary will upon accepted convention. This will is inherently interdisciplinary—think of Eisenman’s consumption of linguistics into architectural theory—and it undermines the natural orderings of the architectural object. By conceptualizing the architectural object through ‘borrowed’ reason, the architectural object’s reality is revoked and replaced. When the architectural object can no longer sustain the effects of conceptualization, representation becomes the dominant theme for determining ‘reality’. Behind representation exists a plethora of unstable realities. Architectural objects and their realities are hidden behind the veil of the concept, and are given purpose only by the perception of their looks, their appearances. One has to wonder what conceptualism has done to the interiors of architectural objects and their perceivers. One has to wonder if all of this talk of hair and fur is actually limiting the interior meaning and reality of the form, human and non-human. One has to wonder if it is all about looks, about suppressing architecture’s anima, then shouldn’t we fear

falling back on classical phenomenology’s reliance on appearance and limited conscious apprehension. But at the same time, one must petition, that the most phenomenologically relevant position to take is one that is imbued with the fruitful collision of architecture’s persona and anima.
Conclusion

The insidious thing about a critique of architectural phenomenology is not that it derides the exchange of intellection for experience, but that such a critique might possibly be measured unconsciously. Indeed, criticism of phenomenology in architecture is determined by repetitive and soft rhetoric, claiming to argue for or against concepts of humanism, existentialism, essentialism, poetics, feeling, affect, sensation, kinaesthetics, transcendence, to name a few. And more often than not, the concept of experience becomes so loaded with possible theoretical foundations that it explodes into nihilistic meaninglessness. An overwhelming deluge of theoretical underpinnings doesn’t necessitate the need for bracketing, but rather begs for a more adept approach to understanding the process of filtering what is useful and not useful for determining meaning. The tricky thing about intuited meaning from experience, historically, is how one comes to terms with his/her own identity, and how that identity is hypostatized in this thing we call the world. Human evolution, from the time of classical phenomenology, has shown that identity has shifted from a modern idea of consciousness (knowing that one exists in the world, but has yet to determine one’s purpose) to a postmodern idea of self-consciousness (believing that one’s existence determines the world, and that that existence is based on the purpose of preserving the self through alienation). What forces such shifts in identity is agency. Agency can briefly be defined as that ontology of identity that has both purpose and will; existence is clarified—I think therefore I am—and given purpose, because ‘my’ conscious intuition wills it.

What seems most important about a contemporary critique of architectural phenomenology is its historiographic ascension from the modernist practice of dissecting the
world “into two utterly opposed realms” and its usage of postmodernist practices of identifying the meaning of signs. Which, in all reality, are necessarily the same things. For when we extract meaning from the appearance of an object—something that exists as different from ‘us’, we are similarly extracting meaning from the object as sign. Appearances and signs are both generically derived, and they are imbued with broad meanings (i.e. an apple is red, hard, shiny, etc.). Where those meanings lead is the purpose of a phenomenology for architecture. Yet, the fruitful challenge for a contemporary critique of an architectural phenomenology might be similar to that of Latour’s claim of modernity’s phantom; we have never been modern. By claiming “we have never been modern because we have never really made a purifying split between humans and world,” Latour brings forth a very useful rejection of modernist binarization. The notion that humans exist separately from the world in which they live is a false reality. Yes, humans tend to lord themselves over the world, but there are certain things that exist in the world that humans cannot control, or even understand. This lack of control and understanding, however, is not determinative of the need for alienation. Our experiences should not suffer the grand cliché of fearing what is different from ‘us’.

All the same, these metaphysical speculations are what belabored the notion of a phenomenology in the first place, and what forced a borrowing from something more practical and pragmatic like formalism. Formalism fundamentally exalted itself from its theoretical underpinnings into a mode of practice. Phenomenology in architecture, aside from visual arguments in texts (Norberg-Schulz’s photo[historio]graphies) and graphic design application (WWII camouflaging and Charles Moore’s supergraphics), never really found a practical ground

upon which to effectively use and expand its theoretical foundations. In all reality, architectural phenomenology is still caught between a Heideggerian phenomenology of ontology and a Merleau-Pontian phenomenology of existentialism. And though these two figures were and are highly influential for the development and discourse of phenomenology, it might take another generation or two to understand their theoretical speculations on a more complex and applicable level. What this means is that architectural phenomenology must challenge its own inception of these originary and evolutionary theories, and determine their usefulness in a discipline that is fundamentally grounded in the practice of making and defining place.

At the same time, there has been a slow evolution in the acclimation of phenomenological principles in the work of contemporary practicing architects. There are a certain few architects that have latched on to a certain few contemporary theorists, and the work these architects have produced is common to the posited ‘soft’ understanding of phenomenology’s influence.\(^{114}\) Because of the soft nature of their understanding, the criticism

\^[114] The contemporary constituency of an architectural phenomenology might predictably and unconsciously include figures like Steven Holl, Peter Zumthor, Juhani Pallasmaa, and Alberto Perez-Gomez, to name a few. Criticism of these figures and their works is often labeled as humanist, that the preservation of the human as some fragile and spiritual thing is the sole purpose of a phenomenology. And though we might say that their interest lies in the affects of all events within the spaces they build or write about, they often belabor a theorization that is still torn between Heideggerian phenomenology and Merleau-Pontian phenomenology. Take for example Norberg-Schulz’s most recent book, written in 2000, *Architecture: Presence, Language and Place*. In the second chapter of the book, ironically titled “Comprehension,” Norberg-Schulz attempts to battle through German (Heidegger) and French (Merleau-Ponty) theories of phenomenology, theories that had been present during his early career, but had perhaps been apprehended over-ambitiously. This type of latency begins to reveal the overdetermined nature of phenomenology’s retarded development through the discipline of architecture. We are seeing the same level of latency in contemporary discourse that claims its roots in phenomenology. But we have to ask: what type of phenomenology is necessarily being championed, and is it being articulated in a productive, legible, and authentic way? That’s not to say that the work of these contemporary figures isn’t critical and rigorous, but rather it appears their work exists so as to
that results is inevitably ‘unconscious’. But it doesn’t have to be this way. For when we look at phenomenology, particularly its presence in the field of architecture, we come to understand its underdevelopment is due in part to its lack practical application.

Ihde, in his book, *Postphenomenology and Technoscience*, constructs a historiography of phenomenology in general, a historiography that helps to determine his speculative concept of ‘postphenomenology’, something similar to what I hoped to have accomplished in this thesis. His major contention with classical phenomenology is not its logico-mathematical origins, as it was with Norberg-Schulz and the multitude of other critics, but rather with the missed opportunity it had in accessing methods of pragmatism. For Ihde, phenomenology was inherently an endeavor of practice. Idhe suggests “that the deconstruction of early modern epistemology made in pragmatism could have enriched the beginnings of phenomenology by avoiding problems of subjectivism and idealism with which early phenomenology was cast.” He also concludes that phenomenology, in its rigorous style of analysis of experience, could have offered pragmatism a model in which to experiment.

This type of viewpoint is what architecture needs, and through an architectural phenomenology of practical and dispersed agency, in which the architectural anima and the persona are fused with the anima and persona of all things existential, will their be an awareness in the world that is no longer unconscious. It’s not that being unconscious is bad, it’s just that being unconscious inhibits our responses to new experiences; raised to the level of the automatic, essentialize concepts for the preservation of the human, by co-opting consciousness through soft terminology.

our unconscious state of being recycles moments, memories, and understandings into slowly decaying abstract ‘existential metaphors’. These metaphors are a part of our default setting of moving through the world with little attention to anything. Living in unconscious abstraction forces our conscious activities into subversion. In a way, this form of unconscious existence [behavior] determines one’s ability to move through the day unthinking, being un-phased by the monotony of everything, in particular architecture. The auto-pilot interface therein established can harden and shield the awareness of existing in a corporate cubicle, surrounded by the “60-cycle-per-second [hum]” of incandescent lighting; can contain the claustrophobic anxiety of being compacted into a coffee shop where everyone else imagines their stealing away; can soften you to the diverse and serendipitous, yet very real and depressing, arrangement of figures occupying the loud and annoying space of a public transit bus. If one cannot articulate the difference and meaning of other humans, then what could possibly make them understand or care about the spaces built for them and the objects therein contained; and visa versa, how could an architect, contemplating the architectural object, be it in drawing, model, or digital forms, substantiate that relationship into material form for occupation? Typically, we assume the humanity of an architect, and that such a reality validates him/her as the right person to design occupiable spaces. Is this not their responsibility? But as the conscious person loses sight of other humans, by extension losing sight of the objects that surround them and make up their worlds, so too does the architect, embedded in the object of design, lose sight of the human.

117 Kipnis, “…and then something magical,” 24.
That’s to assume that our ‘digimodern’ contemporary cultural milieu hasn’t overwhelmed our consciousness with illreal digital worlds and interfaces.¹¹⁸

This too is a challenge, to keep everything in the fore, and to not lose sight of what’s really going on around us. This type of awareness is critical for an architectural discourse combating the minute differences between phenomena in the world and concepts. Both are forms of parallel deterministic causality, which are not homologous, but operate in such a way that they seek the same effective ends. These ends are based on the subject and the object, respectively, as agents that purvey meaning. The intuitive power of the agent determines meaning by either the position of the subject or object. With regards to the subject, the conscious ego relegates reality from experience, masking reality through the dislocation of meaning. The object, on the other hand, pushes its significant and variant realities upon other objects, inserting its presence as more substantive and effective for determining the world’s priorities, and by extension truth. That’s a bit of a stretch, but in its pragmatic phenomenological form, hypostatizing presence after postmodernism is necessary for achieving purpose from existence. More often than not, the world’s priorities are not defined by a singular entity’s determinism (whether subject or object); what is important, culturally, socially, and politically, is acknowledging and admitting the constituent presence of all things worldly, all things around us. The important thing is keeping

¹¹⁸ The term ‘digimodernism’ is borrowed from philosopher Alan Kirby’s most recent book, *Digimodernism: How New Technologies Dismantle the Postmodern and Reconfigure Our Culture*, a term that claims the death of postmodernism and reconstitutes the productive role of modernism in cultural discourse. Kirby states that while some aspects of postmodernism still linger, accepted as useful norms, the digital platform of our post-millennial cultural milieu cannot be subsumed by the illusionary ambition of overdetermination and multiform identifications. For the sake of progress, modernism has merely advanced itself to a state that is embedded in and reliant on digital platforms.
this type of awareness always in front of us, revealing over and over, the presence of other phenomena and their will for embodied experience and presence.

Similarly, in Ihde’s pragmatic postphenomenology concepts slip away and agencies between phenomena becomes equalized. Concepts exist in the mind, and cannot always be substantiated in the material world. That’s not to dismiss conceptualism, because the mental activities that result are beneficial for epistemological formulations. What we are here trying to posit is a more pragmatic approach to a phenomenology for architecture, and to perform this substantiation means admitting the reliance we have on living virtual realities through the digital. This inevitable agreement acknowledges the influence of post-modern tendencies, or what philosopher, Alan Kirby, states as “the post-structuralist overdetermination of meaning and the postmodern tropes of quotation, allusion, irony, and nostalgia.”\textsuperscript{119} And while Kirby, in his book \textit{Digimodernism: How New Technologies Dismantle the Postmodern and Reconfigure Our Culture} (2009), champions a reconstitution of modernist ideals of polarizing the world, \textit{we} must admit that such polarizations constitute a continued fracturation of the world and a fear of things different from ‘us’. What he does admit, however, and this is useful, is the presence of “highly complex, multiple identities.”\textsuperscript{120} We need to reel these complex identities in, and evaluate their presence within all aspects of the real world, the digital included. It’s redundant and obvious to say that the digital is everywhere and at all times, thus we must harness these realities as constitutive of the \textit{variant stabilities} of our contemporary reality. We must imbue them with meaning, purpose, and willfulness in similar ways we do for humans, even though economics

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 2.
and politics might argue that these injections are not equalized among all humans, but what we are here positioning is an equalization on the most fundamental level of what it means to be a thing. When we understand what vibrant marble and polychromatic curved cedar can do to our senses, what transparent illusions can do to our perception and reception of things, we come to understand that it is not just human agency that accomplishes presence, meaning, and reality, but the agency of all of these things combined.

The spread of agency throughout all things, be they Peter Eisenman, a bran muffin, or a water buffalo, provides the world with a protractible level of definition to its reality. To be anything less would be unconscious; to be anything less would be unphenomenological.

Phenomenology in architecture, provided its latent theorization and praxis, offers the discipline a most useful lens by which to recalibrate the world. It draws into focus all things considered, and all things latent. And more importantly, it posits a useful framework during periods of crisis and illegibility, because it challenges not only the status of the body, and all of its experiences, but also the status of everything else in the world, and all of the experiences therein established, as well.

Where this talk of thingness might lead us, as it has those ‘object-oriented’ philosophers, is introspection into the will of objects. The will is constituted in all things considered,

\[ \mu_0 \rightleftharpoons \mu_s \]

The interesting thing, when we compare discourses on objects, is that Jeffrey Kipnis’s theory of Objectology predated the work of object-oriented theories. In the transcript from a conversation recorded in the Pratt Journal of Architecture, Volume 2 (1988), Kipnis discusses the importance of an objectology. He states the importance of the will between objects through the following formula \( \mu_0 \rightleftharpoons \mu_s \), which reads: “the quantity of the will of the object is in dynamic equilibrium with the quantity of the will of the subject.” What we can intuit from this
whether visible or invisible. That is to say, all things have a conscious awareness, whether they are a dandelion, a toothpick, or a bowl of rice pudding. Strangely, in the discourse of architecture, a discourse saturated in object-thingness, these types of introspection have been going on for past few centuries, and perhaps longer. Architectural theorist, Sylvia Lavin, points out that during the 18th century, and as far back as the Renaissance, architecture has made several cyclical shifts from convention to representation, shifts that have tested the limits of the mind and its will to experience and understand the world. By moving the discourse into representation, similar to what Boullée and Piranesi did, architecture could exist “away from the built object” and its conventions.  

As Lavin states, this type of shifting produces “absence,” absence that “permitted architects without buildings to initiate an affective architectural order.” These types of ‘affective’ order exist beyond the evaluation of convention, because it is convention with which it has chosen to depart. This departure is purposive, and it validates our earlier claim concerning the shifting nature between convention (practice) and representation (theory). However, this thesis is calling for a marriage between the two. The engagement of which has lasted since the birth of modernism. To achieve the nuptial ending requires an admittance of all things, and their equal level of agency in the world.

formula is a dispersal of shared agency between objects and subjects, thus, helping to clarify the formal basis for understanding objects and subjects as having equal presence in the world.

123 Ibid.
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