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BECOMING-INTERIOR

Toward a Nondual Philosophy of Design for Dwelling-In-The-World

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Abstract

Martin Heidegger suggests that *dwelling* is an act of inhabitation, which engenders a *becoming-interior* of the world. The site of this *dwelling* is not confined to architecture, but occurs in the space between earth and sky: the *world*. This work seeks to investigate the implications of this claim on the role of interior design. It proposes that, in order to formulate an approach to design that aims to facilitate a Heideggerian *dwelling*, the binary oppositions of inside and outside, nature and culture, self and world, must be re-examined. The connections between architectural minimalism and Eastern aesthetics that are hinted at in contemporary New Zealand lifestyle magazines such as *urbis* provide a gateway to an investigation of dwelling-design that moves beyond the conflicts of a world divided by Cartesian dualism. The space between East and West operates as the field of inquiry within which this work locates a comparative study of nondual philosophies pertaining to dwelling as an interrelation of self and world. Nondual concepts found in the writings of Elizabeth Grosz, and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, are subjected to a reading that suggests links with such Eastern philosophical concepts as *ma* (the space of the in-between), *yin* and *yang* as an analogy of correlativity and becoming-other, and *dao* and *de* (field and focus) as a conceptual model for the interrelation of the natural world and the self. Through the generation of a nondual core philosophy, the work suggests that the "nothingness" of minimalism may be reconceptualized as a *betweenness*, with the potential to act as an intermediary space between the inhabitant and nature. The nature of this mediation as the stimulation of resonance is explored in relation to the depiction of the natural world in art, and subsequently applied to the architectural threshold. Architecture is posited as an instrument of facilitation – the means by which the potential for *dwelling* may be manifested in a *becoming-interior* of the world.

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INTRODUCTION

"...buildings bring the earth as the inhabited landscape close to man." (Heidegger, quoted in Norberg-Schultz, 1976. p. 435)

"...when man is capable of dwelling the world becomes an 'inside'." (Norberg-Schultz, 1976. p. 417)

Martin Heidegger establishes the space between earth and sky as the *world*, "the house where mortals dwell" (*ibid.*). This between-space is the site for all acts of existence, of being. It is what we might call "nature," not a thing in itself (like *earth* or *sky*), but the infinite totality of all processes of *becoming* (living, growing, dying, becoming-something, becoming-nothing). It is not nature as dualistically opposed to culture, but as the *field* from which culture emerges. It is the unbounded; that which is before existence and will be there after, thus it may be construed as the continuous or universal "outside". However, if this "outside" is the universal continuum that encompasses all things, then we are led to question the definition of the "inside;" of interiority. Norberg-Schultz describes Heidegger's world as becoming an "inside" through the act of *dwelling*, challenging the understanding of "inside" and "outside" as fixed opposites delineated by a boundary. Norberg-Schultz's reading of Heidegger suggests that the primary condition of interiority is not enclosure, but the *act* of inhabitation.

This thesis seeks to re-examine the role of interior design as it pertains to the relationship between constructed and natural environments. Interior design may often be thought of as being the discipline of completing, furnishing, or decorating the inside of architecture, for the purpose of making it habitable, or as an expression of inhabitation. This conception is predicated on the basis of an assumed inside/outside opposition, of which architecture acts as the agent of division. To this end, interior design is relegated to a secondary role with respect to architecture, either as necessary supplement or unnecessary excess. Interior design's field of operation is located between architecture and the inhabitant, its primary function being to act as mediator between the two, facilitating the inhabitant's dwelling-in-architecture. However, the space of Heidegger's *dwelling* is not located, fundamentally, within architecture, but in the world. The act of *dwelling* is a dwelling-in-the-world. Furthermore, interiority is not pre-existent to this act of *dwelling*, but is created by it. Thus the grounds for an understanding of interior design as it is commonly conceived are destabilised and may need to be radically rethought. What the present thesis proposes, in place of this understanding, is that the role of interior design is to facilitate acts of dwelling-in-the-world, not only between architecture and the inhabitant, but between the cultural self and the natural world, with architecture as the intermediary.

The study is situated within a New Zealand context, although, as will be submitted further, the ground provided by this context is also unstable, operating here more as a dynamic space of collision and exchange than as a determinate set of conditions. What the context does provide is an appropriate site for an investigation of *dwelling* as an interrelation with the natural world. The ongoing search for a New Zealand architectural, and by extension, cultural identity is closely linked with issues of dwelling-in-the-landscape. As the following section will address, a sense of connection to the land or to the natural elements continues to exist as an undercurrent to the ideal lifestyle promoted by popular design and architectural media. That the natural landscape is central to notions of New Zealand identity thus becomes a focus for beginning to investigate the roles of architecture and interior design in relation to *dwelling* in New Zealand. To return to Heidegger, the role of building is to "bring the inhabited landscape close to man." Architecture becomes the means by which a connection with the (New Zealand) landscape may be heightened; whereby an interrelation may be fostered from which the potential for acts of dwelling-in-the-world emerges. Furthermore, it is through these acts of *dwelling*, which interior design purports to facilitate, that the world becomes an inside, and that, in a circular way, inhabitation is made possible.

The intention of the present work is to formulate a critical understanding of interior design as a facilitator of dwelling-in-the-world, and particularly as a mediator between the cultural self and the natural landscape, in order to shape a philosophy of design that may be implemented in interior design theory and practice. Before outlining the structure and methodologies by which the research is governed, however, it may be useful to return to the originating impetus for the study, and by this to better conceive of its relevance to the materialisation of contemporary New Zealand identity.

Life-Style

A preoccupation with the question of *dwelling* and identity is the founding concern of one particular genre of popular media: the contemporary *lifestyle magazine*. The lifestyle magazine presents suggestions of how to live, or dwell; a style of *dwelling*; dwelling in style. The issues addressed by the present thesis arose from previous research into the design ethos of *urbis*, a New Zealand lifestyle periodical. An examination of the re-presentation of the minimal interior in *urbis*, revealed patterns in the descriptive language employed in the accompanying articles.[1] This language pointed beyond aesthetics to an ethical dimension, and suggested the presence of a persistent thematic undercurrent. A number of themes became apparent: a strong emphasis on connection with the landscape and natural elements, both tangible and intangible, a minimalist ethic of simplicity drawing also from the ordered geometry of modernism, and a sense of spiritual calm, evocative of the monastic tradition of Zen Buddhism. A universal goal of inner calm and harmony with nature achieved through simplicity of lifestyle and cultivation of the mind, body, and spirit, is seemingly implied. However, paradoxically, that ideal is in direct conflict with the consumerist nature of the publication, which is fundamentally an advertising medium. Reconsidered in this light, the

[1] Andrew Lister cites the influences for his West Auckland house as being "West Coast American and European Modernism and then Japanese architecture." The house is described by Cathrin Shaer as a "simple" work of "fusion architecture" that creates an ambience of "peace and calm." (Urbis #14. pp. 25-27) In the same issue (pp. 128-134) a work by Andre Hodgskin Architects on Waiheke Island, given the title "The Far Pavilions," is praised for its connection to nature and the view. According to the architect, the building displays a "sense of impermanence, lightness and connection with the wind and the sea." "Shadows and Light" features a house by Architecture Workshop that adheres to the principles of "modernism," and in which "details have been kept to an absolute minimum" (Urbis #15, pp. 113-116). A Jessop Architects residence is described by Zoe Wilde as an "urban resort," "as much a work of modern art as it is a family residence," "distinctively modern," "tranquil," "almost spiritual, with massive voids and vast expanses," exhibiting qualities of simplicity, openness, and an "honest" use of materials. (Urbis, #16, pp. 30-37) The brief for a Sumich Architects house in Remuera, Auckland, was for a "modern, minimal look." "White walls, high windows and light shafts achieve the result, at the same time retaining fundamental openness," in which "you are not aware of the boundaries" (ibid. pp. 104-110). *(cont. over)*

themes outlined above are betrayed as superficial commercial ploys aimed to play on the desires of the target audience.

In the contemporary lifestyle magazine, terms such as "minimal", "modernist", "monastic", and "Zen-like" are juxtaposed and are used almost interchangeably, with a lack of regard to the inconsistencies of their respective cultural and historical associations. Tensions between the inherent natures of such oppositions as austerity and excess, ethics and aesthetics, and Eastern and Western traditions, are glossed over. Chapter One of this thesis examines these instances of contradiction and paradox in more depth. However, the aim is not to denounce the proliferation of paradox found therein, but to interrogate it with the expectation that these contradictions will yield new insights into the state of contemporary design. After all, the consumer market targeted by popular media is a construct of the same society within which this study, and design in general, are situated. Hence, although the media's treatment of the aforementioned terms may be superficial, it may also hint at more profound alliances between the disparate elements.

The thesis takes as its starting point the apparent alignment by the contemporary lifestyle magazine[2] of the Western tradition of minimalism, and an Eastern tradition most commonly referenced via Zen Buddhism and Japanese aesthetics. The lifestyle magazine can be seen to point to these two traditions synonymously as a potential response to the question of *dwelling* in relation to the natural world. It is unlikely in the context under discussion that the alignment of minimalism and Zen is the result of an informed critical understanding. Each tradition carries the weight of very different cultural, historical, and philosophical legacies. What is interesting to question is whether or not it is justifiable to conflate two different cultural philosophies through the identification of an apparent aesthetic empathy. It is certainly difficult

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[1] *(cont.)* A design by Steve Domoney in Melbourne is showcased as a combination of "rigorous modernism," "eastern influenced asceticism," and "pared down minimalist clarity," with "easy flow between spaces" and a "distinctly urban contemporary design aesthetic" that is "elemental, with an almost monastic minimalism." The house features "rigorous orthagonal geometry," "walls unadorned by the slightest detail" and a "permeable boundary between house and garden." Writer Andrew MacKenzie points out that "the entire space could convert with the blink of an eye into a contemporary art museum" (Urbis #17, pp. 52-60). Brent Hulena's Auckland house is "modern," "urbane," "minimalistic," an "oasis amid the endless motion of city life" (ibid. pp. 112-118). "A contemporary and minimalist home of our time" designed by Steve McCracken of Warren and Mahoney is a "tranquil, private retreat that overlooks both the cityscape and raw nature." Embodying "pure simplicity" and "cleanness of line," it is "light, open and connected to the landscape," with a "sense of uplifting" (Urbis #18, pp. 30-33).

[2] *Urbis* magazine is one example of a contemporary lifestyle magazine. Similar trends to those discussed here may be found in a number of instances. New Zealand publications include *Home and Entertaining*, and, to the extent that it showcases residential design, *Architecture New Zealand*. Also a purveyor of lifestyle trends, on an international scale, is *Wallpaper** magazine, which has in the past promoted, and continues to promote, the minimalist lifestyle: "*Wallpaper** magazine is fat on minimalism" (Peter Murray, in Toy, 1999, p. 8).

to imagine a Zen master finding tranquillity or attaining enlightenment in a freshly-painted *urbis* interior. However, the suggested affiliation of minimalism and Zen is not altogether unthinkable. Each resonates with such notions as "simplicity", "back-to-basics", "restraint", "subtlety", and "attention to detail." Both seem to oscillate between an ethical stance and an aesthetic formula, appealing not only to visual appreciation, but to a deeper moral, even spiritual, aspiration.

Perhaps, then, there is a deeper level of relatedness between the minimalist ethos and an Eastern sensibility. It is the intention of the present thesis to approach this issue from a critical standpoint, to take it more seriously. Furthermore, through investigating the interrelationship of these two phenomena, and the identification of common ground, a revised approach to the design of dwelling-spaces will be considered. In locating the research in the space between Western minimalism and Eastern aesthetics it is hypothesised that the boundaries between such dualistic oppositions as nature and culture, self and other, inside and outside, may be reconsidered in terms of dynamic interrelation. Following this, it is proposed that the role of interior design may be repositioned in relation to (the constructed "exteriority" of) architecture and (the natural "exteriority" of) the landscape, becoming a zone of mediation between the two. In order even to begin this undertaking, however, and to attempt to move beyond a merely superficial reading to a deeper critical understanding, it is proposed that a major shift in thinking will be necessary.

Re-Orientation

In Chapter One of this thesis, the contradictory soul of architectural minimalism will be identified as symptomatic of a *divided world*, a world structured by an overarching Western philosophical framework that has, since the time of Descartes, been governed by Cartesian dualism[3]. Chapter Two proposes a new philosophical framework, or *world-view*, from which to contemplate the relationship between the cultural self and the natural world and thus to reconsider the role of interior design relative to this interrelationship. The locus of this philosophical re-orientation is a shift from the conventions of Western dualism, to an alternative system of nonduality[4], found in much Eastern or Oriental philosophy. It is through this looking-to-the-east that the suggestion of a more profound interrelation between East and

[3] "Descartes instituted a dualism which three centuries of philosophical thought have attempted to overcome or reconcile" (Grosz, 1994, p. 6). A move away from dualism is a central aim of this study.
[4] The belief that the world is not comprised of mutually exclusive opposing entities, as in dualism, but is fluid and mutable. For a detailed explanation, see Chapter Two.

West, minimalism and Zen, begins to acquire momentum, substantiated by an emerging nondual tendency in the works of a number of Western theorists[5]. A move towards nondual thinking does not, however, imply a rejection of Western philosophy in favour of Eastern thought, as that would be to set up an opposition still anchored in dualistic thinking. Rather, it embraces the space between the traditions, taking the accumulated field of resemblances and differences as the raw medium for the formulation of a new conceptual framework, one which celebrates the potentiality of dynamic opposition. The philosophical method is thus comparative, or relational, as opposed to substitutive.

It is the task of the comparative philosopher to draw connections between the philosophies of different cultures in order to open up the path for intercultural dialogue. For those studying or practicing in the area of design or design theory this is a new and challenging field. In light of this, the thesis draws upon the writings of four comparative philosophers considered relevant to a consideration of the connections between classical Eastern and contemporary Western philosophies as they bear on an understanding of architectural minimalism. Robert Carter's volume *Becoming Bamboo* (1992) and David Loy's volume *Nonduality* (1988) are invaluable in formulating an understanding a nondual world-view and concept of self. David Hall and Roger Ames are the authors of a number of works which explore Chinese thought and culture in relation to Western modernity. These include the trilogy comprising *Thinking Through Confucius* (1987), *Anticipating China: Thinking through the Narratives of Chinese and Western Culture* (1995), and *Thinking from the Han: Self, Truth, and Transcendence in Chinese and Western Culture* (1998). The latter two volumes are particularly applicable. *Thinking from the Han* examines in detail Chinese conceptions of the self, which are central to an understanding of the self-world relationship. The middle volume, *Anticipating China*, outlines an account of the development of thought in both China and the West, following in particular a contrast between what Hall terms *first* and *second problematic* thinking, which can be aligned with nondualistic and dualistic thought respectively. The volume also provides an explanation of the comparative method employed, serving as a suitable introduction to comparative philosophy. In drawing on Hall and Ames the example set by Stanislaus Fung and Mark

[5] Kisho Kurakawa (1991, p. 9), referring to his own (nondual) philosophy of symbiosis, pronounced "A great conceptual revolution [to be] underway across the world." The tracing of this nondual thread throughout the recent history of philosophy in the Western world would surely be an illuminating project, but one that is too large for the scope of the present work. Instead, the works of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, and Elizabeth Grosz, in particular, will be cited as exhibiting a strong nondualist tendency. However, this tendency can also be found in varying degrees in the writings of such disparate theorists as Foucault, Merleau-Ponty, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and various theorists in the feminist and other minor traditions, such as Jennifer Bloomer and Catherine Ingraham, among others.

Jackson in their paper entitled *Dualism and Polarism: Structures of Architectural and Landscape Architectural Discourse in China and the West* (2000) is followed[6].

In his foreword to Robert Carter's comparative text *Becoming Bamboo*, Ninian Smart distinguishes between two forms of comparative or cross-cultural philosophy: descriptive and constructive. While the former involves in-depth historical analyses of the philosophical traditions of different cultures, seeking to explore overlaps and similarities, the latter involves "the creative synthesis of ideas out of two or more traditions and the development of ideas out of such synthesis" (1992, p. *x*). This constructive form of comparative philosophical work takes the cross-cultural interface as its origin, working from within two or more cultures to give shape to new ideas. As Smart and others in the field concur, the complete immersion of the comparative philosopher or researcher within these cultures is seldom attainable, and there exists the inherent danger of superimposing one cultural or philosophical framework upon another (Smart, 1992; Hall and Ames, 1995). However, Smart further proposes that the problem of forming a complete understanding of each of the cultures in question need not stand in the way of comparative work, particularly when the objective of that work is the emergence of new understandings.

The present work, which operates at the intersection of Eastern and Western ethics and aesthetics, and aims to formulate new perspectives with regards to a philosophy of design, falls under Smart's category of constructive comparative philosophy. The research does not aspire to a complete understanding of the cultures or philosophies examined, as that would constitute a vast and potentially infinite project in itself. Rather, it is situated at the cross-cultural interface, and explores the hypothesis that this between-place of dynamic interrelation provides a fertile ground for the construction of new frameworks. The research will draw from the writings of comparative philosophers working at the cultural interface between the East and West, as well examining the work of some prominent Western thinkers in relation to nonduality. The meeting of cultures is a global phenomenon; it is also a local one. As any research project concerned with cultural traditions and philosophies must be, this study is situated within a particular geographical and cultural context: that of contemporary New Zealand.

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[6] Fung and Jackson's paper is particularly useful in providing a model for the application of nondual thought to the field of architecture, and in the case of their study, landscape architecture. Like the present work, Fung and Jackson's paper sits between architectural/design theory and comparative philosophy. Furthermore, the shift made toward nonduality is undertaken in relation to an understanding of the relation of the (viewing) self to the landscape.

New Zealand, located on the Pacific Rim, provides an apt site for the examination of cultural intersections. Once considered a bicultural society, comprised of indigenous Maori and colonising Pakeha or European peoples, New Zealand is now also home to various ethnic minorities, with growing populations of Asian, Polynesian, and other immigrant peoples.[7] The migration of a large number of Asian people to New Zealand and other Western nations, particularly those on the Pacific Rim, has been accompanied by increased interest in Asian culture. This interest has resulted both in the increased consumption of Asian products, including food, fashion, and technological products, and a rising awareness of spiritual and philosophical principles[8]. As suggested above, the influence of Eastern aesthetics on contemporary design in New Zealand forms a central impetus for this study.

There are a number of cross-cultural interfaces that could be explored in relation to interior design, architectural minimalism, and the design of built works in New Zealand. However, for the purposes of this study, the East-West interface has been selected as particularly relevant to the inquiry. These categories in themselves are of course very broad, and hence require focusing in order to be of use to the research. In part, this has already been achieved in the completed works of comparative philosophers, who have ascertained connections between certain philosophers and traditions. The areas of architectural modernism, minimalism, and contemporary minimalist trends also draw from particular traditions. Thus "East" can be narrowed to the classical traditions of Eastern Asia, namely China and Japan, and further to the philosophies of Daoism[9] and Zen Buddhism in particular. The predominant philosophical framework of the "West" stems from Greek Classical theories, however, these will only be addressed in so far as they identify a system of thought to which nonduality is an alternative. More pertinent to the study are the nondualist tendencies found in the writings of Martin Heidegger, and more recently, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, and Elizabeth Grosz.

Focussing the Field

A philosophical re-orientation to a nondual way of thinking provides conceptual tools with which to formulate a new understanding of the relationship between the cultural self and the natural world. There are three fundamental levels on which this framework can be applied to

[7] A Census Snapshot published by Statistics New Zealand in March 2002 revealed a general increase in ethnic diversity. In particular, the article states that counts of people of Asian ethnicity had "more than doubled" between 1991 and 2001. (Nolan, 2002, p. 1)

[8] For example, those of feng shui, yoga, and meditative practices.

[9] Both "Taoism" and "Daoism" are accepted spellings, however, for the sake of consistency, the present work will adopt the latter version, except where the former is employed in direct quotations.

the design of spaces which facilitate the process of dwelling-in-the-world. First, the self may be recognised as a nondual being in which body and mind/spirit are interdependent. Second, culture, and by extension the cultural self, may be understood to emerge from the field of interactions and *becomings*[10] that comprise the natural world and thus be inherently interrelated to it. Third, reconsidered within a nondual framework, architecture may be conceived of as a threshold of interrelation, rather than a means of enclosure or division between a dualistically opposed inside and outside. It may thus be positioned in a dynamic third space[11] between nature and culture, acting as an intermediary that fosters an interrelation between the two. This interrelation may be experienced via sensation, and is manifested through acts of *dwelling*.

The awakening or stimulation of sensation is the subject of Chapter Three of this thesis, which addresses the implications of the nonduality of self and world for the act of *viewing the world*. The differences between dualistic perception and the nondual experience of interrelation are explored through the medium of art, specifically, the landscape painting. The landscape painting is indicative of the way in which the differentiation between viewing subject and viewed objects is conceived; that is, it offers insights into the relation between the self and the natural world. The nondual artwork serves as a model for the interrelation of self and world, experienced not merely through the visual perception of a framed view, but via sensation registered in the painting itself. The work of art acts as an intermediary in the same way that architecture may act as a facilitator of *dwelling*. Chapter Four goes on to investigate architecture's facilitation of *dwelling-in-the-world*.

Thinking of designing as an act of mediation rather than the construction of fixed spaces also challenges preconceptions of the design process. The conventional opposition of theory and practice comes under question when placed in a nondual framework. In the same way that the present work operates between East and West, nature and culture, philosophy and design, it also aims to formulate an approach to design that works between these things, an approach that is reflected in the generation of the thesis. Research methodologies based on a concept of "betweenness" have been encouraged and employed by various contemporary theorists. Jennifer Bloomer's "minor architecture" is an allegorical proposition operating

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[10] "Becoming" is a Deleuzean concept (see *A Thousand Plateaus*, 1987), however, as will be elaborated upon in Chapter Two, it is also at the root of nondual philosophy, in which the world is perpetually in motion and all things constantly becoming-other.

[11] The notion of a "third space" can be attributed to Elizabeth Grosz, in relation to her theory of the in-between (2001). As with *becoming*, the *in-between* will also be shown to play a central role in nondual thought, and to be of significance to a re-thinking of architecture and interior design.

between the sites of theory and practice: "practice as research, theory as construction" (1992). Katie Salen (1998) references Aristotle's categorisation of knowledge into *theoria, praxis,* and *poeisis*. Salen positions *poeisis* (the knowledge involved in creating or making) between theory (abstract knowledge) and practice (practical knowledge that comes from doing): "With *poeisis*, research is the creative act."

Research as creation, posited between theory and practice, is thus both thinking and acting. Gilles Deleuze's "thinking" is a process of bringing into being something that was not previously in the world, of *becoming*: "To think is to create" (in Grosz, 2001. p. 57). Michel Foucault's "thought" is "in itself an action – a perilous act" (ibid.). Elizabeth Grosz describes thinking as "a passage or point of transition from one [...] space to another" (2001. p. 125). Research, then, can be interpreted as a creative act, operating in a space between theory and practice, that initiates an emergence of new thought or a transition, a *becoming-other*. This approach is particularly relevant in the present context, as the site of research is already located somewhere between a discourse of architectural and design theory, philosophy, and a popular discourse anchored in the practical (experiential) world. The methodology employed in this project is therefore based on a notion of research as a creative act: *research as design*. The structuring principles employed sit somewhere between research and design.

Writing, or thinking, drawing, and model-making are generally recognised as comprising the design process. However, these processes are still largely aimed at the planning of constructed spaces, rather than a fluid process of *becoming* in which the goal is the facilitation of the dynamic act of *dwelling*. Drawing from research into nondual philosophy, *mapping* and *modelling*[12] will be introduced as alternative concepts. Within architectural and design convention, "modelling" usually refers to the making of architectural scale models, which present, or re-present, a full-scale design. Considered from the perspective of nonduality, *modelling* takes on a different sense. Modelling is the actualisation of a thing: its materialisation, or becoming-tangible. This actualisation is not necessarily physical. An idea may become tangible, or able to be grasped, through the giving of an example or the telling of a story. A model is thus more akin to an example, instance, or analogy, than a scale

[12] Hall and Ames (1998) consider "thinking" and "reasoning" in relation to Chinese thought in terms of "pattern" and "image." "This approach led us to substitute 'mapping' and 'modelling' for 'mirroring' as a means of characterising non-representational understandings ... In Chinese discussions of thinking, ... mapping and modelling are ways of coping directly with the inherent order of one's ambience. Such a map does not represent terrain; it *realizes* [sic] it. A model does not render an antecedently existing state of affairs to scale, but brings a state of affairs into being. Existing maps and models are utilized [sic] as models in accordance with which one may proceed, always in regard to the novel demands of one's circumstances, to map and model another ambience." (p. 147)

representation. It does not purport to tell the full story, nor provide a definitive overview. It is one of many possible models; a focussing of the (intangible) field for an instant. The field may never be grasped in its entirety, as this would require it to be bounded, limited, and therefore definable. One may only form an awareness, or develop a sensibility, through an accumulated understanding of modelled instances.

Similarly, *mapping* is not simply a two-dimensional scale representation, but the actualisation of the interrelation of things. To map is to make sense of the spaces between things; of the dynamic patternings of interrelation. Neither mapping nor modelling attempt to definitively represent things, as in nonduality things are recognised as being without fixed identity; as continually *becoming*. To design for something as intangible as the facilitation of an act of inhabition, or the mediation between self and nature, such processes that embrace intangibility must be employed. It also follows that in writing about processes of *becoming*, or spaces between, attempts to pin down or define would be futile. As introduced above, this thesis looks to approach research and writing as a creative act: as design. *Mapping* and *modelling* are herein applied to the process of designing theory, as tools for the actualisation of patterns of dynamic interrelation and instances of emergence from the field respectively.

To put this in simpler terms: the research draws upon a number of models, or examples, in order to bring into focus the field of inquiry. In the first chapter, these models are generally taken from historical literature and archival references. In Chapter Two, in which a core philosophy is proposed, the models are extracted from philosophical literature. Chapter Three of the thesis is intended to act as a bridge between the core philosophy and its implementation in design. This is a key section of the work, as it examines the nature of the relationship between the cultural self and the natural world through an analysis of the ways in which a view of the world is represented in art. These representations are in effect models of the mapping of the dynamic interrelation of self and world. An understanding of how one sees oneself in the world is central to the development of an awareness of dwelling-in-the-world, and hence to formulating an approach to the design of dwelling-spaces. Chapter Four will offer examples of dwelling-spaces which connect man and nature, and propose possibilities that the formulated approach may present for interior design.

It is through another level of mapping, this time of the interrelation of the models examined, that a dynamic pattern will be brought into focus. This thesis does not propose a linear argument in which questions are posed and resolved. Instead, it seeks to develop a new awareness or sensibility with regards to dwelling-in-the-world, through the opening of a

dialogue between models of Eastern and Western aesthetics and philosophies. It is an open-ended enquiry that will be granted only temporary closure within the context of the work as a finite entity. The present work aspires to an aim exemplified by the writings of Deleuze and Guattari: to exist as a tool-box of philosophical concepts that resist completion insofar as they are left open to activation by other parties[13]. The intention is to bring into focus a new plane of awareness, a field from which any number of foci may subsequently emerge.

[13] "...the reader is invited to lift a dynamism *out* of the book and incarnate it in a foreign medium...Deleuze and Guattari delight in stealing from other disciplines, and they are more than happy to return the favor [sic]. Deleuze own image for a concept not [sic] as a brick but as a "tool box." [The goal of his philosophy] is the invention of concepts that do not add up to a system of belief or an architecture of propositions that you either enter or you don't but instead pack a potential in the way a crowbar in a willing hand envelops an energy of prying." (Massumi, 1999, p. 8)

CHAPTER ONE

A Divided World: Paradoxes of the Contemporary Interior

The aim of this chapter is to identify the site, area, or field in which this study is located. It seeks to uncover, to bring into focus, certain conditions that form the ground from which the work emerges. The research does not presume, however, that this ground is solid, that it possesses a unified identity in terms of a linear historical development. Rather, the substratum is recognised as a shifting assemblage of emerging historical connections and interactions, its instability accepted as fundamental. The work moves between historical analysis and contemporary theory; between architectural theory and criticism, and popular practice; between aesthetic and ethical traditions of the East and of the West. It does not attempt to locate itself within any particular area, in fact it resists categorisation and enclosure, opting instead to be situated in the spaces between, where connections and conflicts are sparked, and new ideas emanate. Thus the research originates from an interstitial ground, approaching the subject of the contemporary (fashionable) interior, as propogated by the contemporary lifestyle magazine, from a place between two traditions commonly cited as influences: Western minimalism, and Eastern (particularly Japanese) aesthetics.

If this ground is a virtual one, of interrelations and movements between, then it has a counterpart that is actual. That actual ground is the context in which the study is anchored, that is, contemporary New Zealand architecture and, more specifically, interior design. That the research is anchored within a New Zealand context is not only the result of the physical location of the researcher, but is also important as the cultural and creative environment in which the study takes shape. New Zealand is, in a sense, itself a between-space; sitting at the interface between the West, via a strong European heritage and influence from American media, and the Eastern Pacific Rim countries with which it shares geographical proximity. As a young nation that is still searching for an identity, New Zealand retains a certain openness to international influences that may appear to be diluted in countries with more established histories and identities. One area in which these international influences may be seen to be manifested, is New Zealand's architecture.

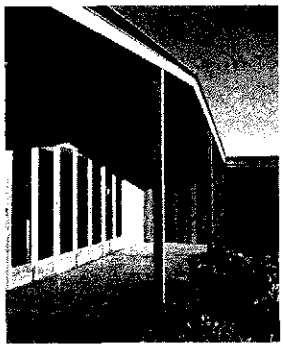


fig. 1
Second House (1950)
Northboro Rd, Belmont,
Auckland, by the Group
Construction Company.

Shaw, 2003. p. 154

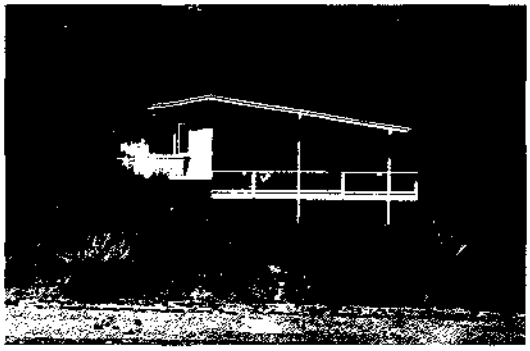
> "New Zealand architecture is not at the end of some slow and enervating drift of ideas from metropolitan centre to the antipodes. It is embedded in the give and take of architectural ideas and culture." (Clark and Walker, 2000. p. 80)

Justine Clark and Paul Walker, in their volume *Looking for the Local: Architecture and the New Zealand Modern* (2000), encourage an exploration of new modes of thinking about the exchange of ideas between New Zealand and the international architectural community. Peter Shaw, in his *History of New Zealand Architecture* reminds us that "at the beginning of the 21st century, the best of New Zealand architecture is as referential to overseas influences as it was at the beginnning of the 20th century" (2003. p. 231). These influences are many and varied, although in the search for a New Zealand vernacular that occupied the architectural set in particular in the middle of last century, there are a number of influences which can be seen to have impacted most strongly.

fig. 2

Holiday House, Queen Charlotte Sound, by Porter and Martin

Photographer: Lewis Martin. Sourced from Clark and Walker, 2000 p. 15



Architects of the 1940s, 50s, and 60s created a kind of New Zealand modernism that emerged from a creative synthesis of the local timber tradition, epitomised by the pioneer's hut, the shed, the bach, and the whare, and the outer perimeters of modernism. Rather than adopting the puritanical forms of European Modernism, architects such as the Group "attempted a fascinating synthesis of the principles of Modernism with New Zealand social, technical, and architectural resources. They looked at the domestic architecture of Japan and Scandinavia[1] ... but they took the barn and the whare rather than [Le Corbusier's] Villa Savoie as their starting point" (Shaw, 2003. p. 154). The connections between "the Group's early timber modernism and the traditional Japanese wooden house" (ibid. p. 224) and Scandinavian design aided in the establishing of an architectural tradition of honest, simple, and economical construction (Clark and Walker, 2000) that drew from the principles of the pioneer hut, as well as an integration of architecture with the landscape, both through the use of local building materials, and through an opening up of the four-walled box to the outdoors:

> "younger architects during the late 1950s and early 1960s...immediately saw the relevance of the low-cost timber houses of Denmark and Finland to New Zealand conditions; they were keen to exploit the opportunities such plans offered to break away from the traditionally fixed four-walled room by extending walls out into the garden, merging rooms imperceptibly with nature or, as architects tend to say, 'bringing the outside in', by utilising large expanses of glass." (Shaw, 2003. p. 159)

[1] The influence of a Scandinavian architectural tradition forms another potential area of investigation into the propagation of a New Zealand natural ideal. However, this line of inquiry has been necessarily excluded from the present work as it is not directly pertinent to the East/West interface being explored.

fig. 3
House at Titirangi (1956), Auckland, by Mark Brown and Fairhead.

Auckland Institute and Museum. Sourced from Shaw, 2003. p. 163

The Group was not alone in this pursuit; architects such as Paul Pascoe aimed to eliminate shadows cast by overbearing internal walls, opening up the interior to light and "bringing the garden 'into' the house" (ibid. p. 146) by means of large windows that extended down to the floor-line. Ernst Plischke also looked to dematerialise the boundary between inside and outside. In Plischke's Sutch House (1953) the "absence of any steps [between living room and terrace] leads to a feeling that the indoor and outdoor areas are scarcely differentiated" (ibid. p. 148). The prototypical New Zealand house began to be symbolised by simple timber construction and, to invoke a common cliché, "indoor-outdoor flow" achieved through the proliferation of floor-to-ceiling glazing, sliding doors, balconies or verandas, and extended eaves. Along with the fact that "the open-planned house with extensive glazed areas and shaded verandahs [sic] is naturally appropriate for the warm and humid climate of the upper part of New Zealand" (ibid. p. 222), it also provided architects with a model whereby they could make the most of the natural setting, either exploiting sea views or enhancing an integration with the bush.

However, a rediscovery of this kind of Modernism in the 1990s found itself in competition with "the widening appeal of a kind of minimalist modernism that owes little, if anything at all, to New Zealand's timber tradition and much more to the work of high modernists such as Neutra, Schindler and Mies rather than of the Group architects – whether the influence is acknowledged or not" (ibid. p. 222). It is this tension between high and low culture aesthetics, represented by the white modernist cube and a timber shed-like vernacular, that characterises much of New Zealand architecture today. The stylistic influences in opposition may also be aligned with architectural minimalism, on the one hand, and an Eastern aesthetic that resonates with the ideals of simplicity and sincerity, on the other.

fig. 4
Cover of *urbis* magazine,
Issue #20,
Winter 2003.

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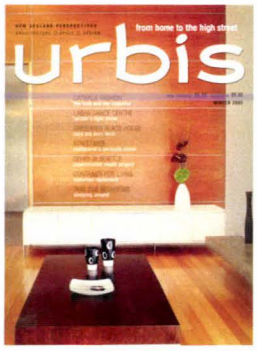


As outlined in the introduction, a main factor in the initial development of this thesis was research undertaken into a particular New Zealand publication. The periodical in question, *urbis*, is a contemporary lifestyle magazine that showcases fashions in interior design and other aspects of living in which design factors. The publication, being primarily a vehicle for consumerism, is neither critical nor theoretical, yet it provides valuable insights into the mindsets and desires of the public consumer market at which it is targeted. As mentioned above, the present research makes a point of considering the local context in which it is anchored as playing a part in the formulation of ideas. The present state of interior design in New Zealand is not only influential to the work, it is a central driving force. The *urbis* interior presents a juxtaposition of historical and cultural ideals and aesthetics that, although superficially addressed, hint at a deeper significance. The commercial world plays to the desires of the consuming public body, therefore, the pages of the magazine become surfaces for the projection of these desires. Thus the interiors presented in the pages of *urbis* become indicators of desirability, the ideal life-style, which, from the examples proffered[2], appears to be some sort of hybrid between *minimalism* and *Zen*.

Any notion of the "ideal lifestyle", in New Zealand, must also embrace a tradition of the "island paradise," a tag with which the country was originally (misleadingly) labelled in colonial times, and which has continued to form a central component of the New Zealand ethos. The "clean green" natural ideal, although now tempered by a more realistic vision, continues to permeate the New Zealand culture, and finds an outlet in the creative disciplines, whether through its celebration or critical dissemination. Regardless of the various attitudes taken on the matter, New Zealanders in general tend to retain a strong sense of connection to the land. This sense of connection to nature is highlighted in the pages of *urbis*, and seems to be melded

[2] For examples of the descriptive language employed in *urbis*, from which connections between minimalism and Zen begin to emerge, see the Introduction.

together with minimalism and Zen as qualifiers of the desirable life-style. That these elements appear to be collaged together with such ease is one of the points of interest that this work seeks to investigate. The connections between minimalism, Zen, and a natural ideal, that are suggested by the local context, may in fact have an impact that is much more far-reaching. The fact that minimalism and Zen have reached New Zealand via external influences already implies a potentially international phenomenon. Much of the content of the following chapters deals with examples, theories, and philosophies whose origins lie outside New Zealand. However, the importance of the local must not be overlooked, as it is here that the threads of inquiry originate, and to here that they return.

The following sections of this chapter profile the influences of minimalism and Eastern aesthetics on the contemporary (New Zealand) interior. The aim is to provide an historical overview, but more importantly, to begin to uncover the conditions created by the two traditions, and by their juxtaposition, that set the scene for the following formulation of a new approach to interior design. The first section is a summary of archival research on the phenomenon that is architectural minimalism. It looks to expose architectural minimalism's contradictory soul, outlining a series of paradoxes and a multitude of contradictions. The second section establishes the nature of the connection between architectural minimalism and Eastern aesthetics, as deduced from a review of literature and popular media in the form of the lifestyle magazine. Following this, the hypothesis will be introduced that the importance of this perceived connection between minimalism and an Eastern aesthetic tradition goes beyond the superficiality of style and appearance, and that it may in fact be pivotal in the proposed reconception of *dwelling*. It will be suggested that it is in the dialogue between the paradoxes of architectural minimalism, and the aesthetics and philosophies of the East that embrace paradox, that an exciting new understanding may begin to emerge. As the later chapters will further discuss, this new understanding centres around a philosophical world-view, and a renewed awareness of the interrelation of the cultural and natural worlds.

The Contradictory Soul of Architectural Minimalism

The body of literature on the subject of architectural minimalism is limited in comparison to the extensive discourse surrounding other historical styles and movements in the field of architectural theory and research. This could be attributed to various causes: the relative contemporaneity of the subject and its dissemination in current architectural discourse; a decided ambiguity of definition and history; a critical lack of manifestos, defining moments, or willing protagonists; a proliferation of contradiction and paradox; and the distortion of essential

aspects by way of formal imitation, appropriation and parody. The relevant texts are drawn from architectural journals and exhibition catalogues, anthologies of critical essays and illustrative images, and selected writings by and about architects. Texts falling under the first category are: two volumes of *Architectural Design* entitled *Aspects of Minimal Architecture* and *Aspects of Minimal Architecture II*, both edited by Maggie Toy and published in 1994 and 1999 respectively; Vittorio Savi and Josep Montaner's catalogue for the 1996 exhibition *Less is more: minimalism in architecture and the other arts*; and a more recent theoretical paper 'The Look of the Object: Minimalism in Art and Architecture, Then and Now', by John Macarthur, published in a 2002 issue of *Architectural Theory Review*. In the second category are the books *Minimalisms* by Anatxu Zabalbeascoa and Javier Marcos (2000), *Minimalist Architecture* by Franco Bertoni (2002), and *Minimal Architecture*, by Ilka and Andreas Ruby, Angeli Sachs and Philip Ursprung (2003). In the third category, two texts in particular stand out as being of importance to the context at hand: John Pawson's 1996 publication *Minimum*, and Tom Heneghan's essay on Tadao Ando entitled Architecture and Ethics, which appeared in Ando's 1996 collaboration with photographer Richard Pare *The Colours of Light*.

The purpose of this review is to establish the context and field of the proposed research in the area of architectural minimalism and to formulate the grounds for a critical contribution. It follows a similar aim to that expressed by Philip Ursprung in his discussion on minimalism and Minimal Art: "not to pin down the meaning of the term minimalism but rather to examine the area where it is applied, to illuminate it and open it up to current architectural discussion" (Ruby et al., 2003. p. 6). Through an investigation of the existing literature, prevailing attitudes and theories towards architectural minimalism will be outlined, in order to offer a critical understanding of architectural minimalism in its present state. In particular, attention will be focussed on the numerous disparities and discontinuities between the sources, with the intention of recognising the very nature of architectural minimalism as paradoxical. The proposed research takes as a departure point the contradictory soul of architectural minimalism (Savi and Montaner, 1996), aiming to interrogate its inherent paradoxes in order to inform a new reading. Through this celebration of paradox, the research looks to locate architectural minimalism in an alternative system to that of traditional Western dualism; one in which its paradoxical nature is no longer viewed as problematic, but essential.

First Paradox: Terminology

> "The term minimalist architecture is itself a paradox. On the one hand its meaning seems entirely clear, on hearing its name there springs to mind a definite image of a

> particular kind of architecture yet, on the other hand, the harder you try to grasp it, the more the subject avoids definition. Instead of a clearly outlined concept we are faced with a soft mass that resists any attempts at fixing it down because it compliantly changes shape to suit each effort at defining it. Minimalist architecture is ultimately whatever you want it to be." (Ruby, 2003. p. 16)

According to Jennifer Bloomer, "the naming of a thing is a kind of enclosure ... the delineation of an inside and an outside, a this and not that" (1992. p. 26). The boundary enclosing the thing that is minimalism is not fixed, but variable, allowing not for a single definition, but for an infinite multiplicity of interpretations. The subsequent difficulty in asserting minimalism as a proper historical style or movement may account for the relative lack of serious theoretical discussion. Of the reviewed literature, Zabalbeascoa and Marcos (2000) refer to the terminological problem as it arose in relation to the Minimal Art movement, but neglect to address the term's application to a specifically architectural context, as does the first *Aspects of Minimal Architecture* issue (Toy, 1994). The more recent volume (Toy, 1999), however, is dominated by this debate. Bertoni (2002) questions the legitimacy of the term's use as an adjective, while both Ursprung and Macarthur draw attention in particular to a differentiation between Minimal Art and architectural minimalism. A plurality of meaning is implied by an introduction of the the plural: "minimalisms" (Zabalbeascoa and Marcos, 2000; Bertoni, 2002). Of the architects reviewed, only Pawson could be said to proclaim himself a minimalist, while the general trend is that "virtually none of the protagonists in the various fields ... intends to conclude his output with the term" (Bertoni, 2002. p. 7).

Ilka and Andreas Ruby's approach (2003) to the architectural application of the term "minimalism" is perhaps the most sophisticated. They suggest that although the term produces certain associations, it resists attempts at definition. Architectural minimalism has never been properly defined; no single defining act can be determined, no manifestos exist, nor was there a single event as a media initiation in the manner of the International Style exhibition. The built architecture has always preceded the written discourse. Architectural minimalism has thereby not been restricted by theoretical prescription, allowing for an almost unprecedented freedom, and resulting in a plethora of individual interpretations. Ilka and Andreas Ruby attribute the malleability of architectural minimalism to its relation by extension to Minimal Art: architectural minimalism used Minimal Art as a "nominal reference space", allowing it to fabricate an identity by implicit reference without ever outlining its own position.

Exploiting its position as an extension of Minimal Art as a means of escaping definition, architectural minimalism thus threatens the propriety of a Western historical tradition that demands a constructed or enclosed identity (Bloomer, 1992; Grosz, 2001). In the context of architectural minimalism, the built architecture that preceeds theoretical discourse may act as exemplary models or instances which, in their totality, evoke an understanding. To return to the passage from Ilka and Andreas Ruby cited at the beginning of this section, the term "architectural minimalism" or "minimalist architecture" can be clearly understood when considered in terms of an assemblage of images, yet resists any attempts at definition through words (Ruby, 2003). This may provide an insight into the forms taken by literature on the subject, which are generally that of a collection of images portraying "minimalist architecture", accompanied by essays that invariably address the margins of architectural minimalism: what it is not, or what it is similar to (Toy, 1994, 1999; Pawson, 1996; Savi and Montaner, 1996; Zabalbeascoa and Marcos, 2000; Bertoni, 2002; Ruby et. al., 2003). The term remains a paradox, thereby rendering it rich, unbounded, and vague.

Second Paradox: History

> "Cistercian monasticism, Zen philosophy, twentieth-century abstraction, rationalism and classicism jointly play a part in the works and writings of the protagonists of minimalist architecture, creating a corpus of antecedents that is clearly not susceptible to organic synthesis." (Bertoni, 2002, p. 26)

As the architecture of minimalism preceded its discourse, so is its history revisionary, reshaping the past by attributing to it current theories and perspectives. Zabalbeascoa and Marcos (2000) and Franco Bertoni agree that architectural minimalism has created its own historical antecedents. John Pawson's book *Minimum* is exemplary of this condition. Pawson (1996) cites through text and images examples of inspirations for his minimal architectural ethic of simplicity, in effect creating a history of simplicity in reverse. Historiographic validity may appear to be strengthened by the repetition of similar sources in other texts. However, it is important to retain a critical approach to each citation. As Bertoni cautions, each instance must be recognised, not as an historical source of derivation, but as an element of extensive support for a contemporary hypothesis.

The two most commonly cited antecedents do require some level of analysis, particularly regarding their contradictory treatment by different authors. These are the aforementioned Minimal Art movement of 1960s America, and European Modernism, along with their relation

to Postmodernism. In the literature reviewed, architectural minimalism is variously positioned as an architectural extension of Minimal Art (Toy, 1994, 1999; Zabalbeascoa, 2000), as a second or neo-modernism (Macarthur, 2002; Pawson, 1996; Toy, 1994, 1999; Zabalbeascoa, 2000), or as a postmodern phenomenon which both extends and breaks from the two (Savi and Montaner, 1996; Ruby et al., 2003). Proceeding from this, it appears that there are also contradictions within individual texts, in part resulting from an initial failure to distinguish between or tendency to confuse aspects of Minimal Art, architectural minimalism, and Modernism. Philip Ursprung (in Ruby et al., 2003) discerns two clichéd errors: the confusion of Minimal Art with the reductionism of European Modernism, and the idea that there is a natural affinity between Minimal Art and architecture, both of which are found in the journal volumes edited by Maggie Toy. According to Ursprung, both Zabalbeascoa and Marcos, and Bertoni position Minimal Art as some sort of link between high Modernism and minimal architecture. In the case of the former, this criticism is valid, however in light of Bertoni's argument cited above, that the historical antecedents of architectural minimalism are disparate fragments linked retrospectively, I believe Urpsrung's judgement may be unfounded. Ilka and Andreas Ruby (2003, p. 25) cite Savi and Montaner's publication as an example of the tendency to misunderstand the aims of Minimal Art as being a continuation of the reductivist aesthetic of Modern architecture.

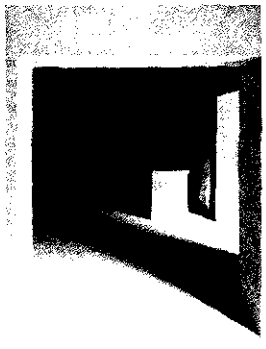


fig. 5
Haans van der Laan, stone basin, Benedictine abbey of Vaals

Minimum, Pawson, 1996, p. 176

This series of contradictions may be better understood in relation to Bertoni's theory that a history of architectural minimalism is created in reverse, in order to support a contemporary hypothesis. According to the intentions of individual architects or theorists, certain aspects of Minimal Art or European Modernism may be drawn upon. The error may lie not in the discontinuities, but in the assumption of an initial continuity. As previously identified, architectural minimalism may be seen as a model that denies enclosure or fixed definition, opening up previously excluded or marginalised minorities for examination. These minorities

may be historical, geographical, or philosophical. They may also include aspects pertaining to the theory surrounding minimalism that have been discarded in the existing discourse, including a phenomenological reading of minimalism that reinstates the body in the experience of viewing art or experiencing architecture. Minor histories to be considered in relation to architectural minimalism are the frequently cited Cistercian monastic, Zen Buddhist, Shaker, and various local vernacular, traditions. Although Minimal Art and Modern architecture would not conventionally be considered minor traditions, their fundamental opposition and the drawing out of specific, decontextualised aspects renders these fragments as marginal to the historic tradition. Bertoni refers to architectural minimalism's accumulated history as "accentuat[ing] aspects that have traditionally remained on the margins of historiographic custom or relegated to marginal tasks, if not confined to secondary classifications" (2002. p. 29). It is precisely this anti-historical nature that allows for the gathering of historically, culturally, and geographically diverse minor histories as the collective antecedents of architectural minimalism.

Third Paradox: Geography

> "The minimalist idiom is not then simply a revival of early Modern ideals; and there is a further area of significant difference between the two, beyond, but interconnected with, the rejection of functionalism for materiality and sensual pleasure, which is the powerful influence exerted on the new generation of work by the awareness of different regional architectural traditions, in contradistinction to the universalism espoused by the Modern Movement." (Melhuish, in Toy, 1994. p. 11)

Architectural minimalism crosses the boundaries of history, culture, and geography. It responds to the Modernist call for universalism with renewed attention to the local. The accumulation of minor histories as antecedents is paralleled by the adoption of the traditions of cultures that were formerly regarded as marginal to the Western tradition, most notably Eastern traditions in general and Japanese in particular. This coincided with the flourishing of minimalist architectures in diverse locations, namely Japan, the Mediterranean, Australasia, and Switzerland. Earlier in the century, the locus of Modernism in Europe had been exported to America via the International Style, where it was countered by the emergence of Minimal Art. In contrast to the centralised geography of these two movements, architectural minimalism was radically decentralised. Many of the texts reviewed refer in particular to British minimalism, represented by Pawson, and Japanese minimalism, represented by Tadao Ando, as well as commenting on certain Japanese sensibilities seen as relevant to architectural minimalism.

Japanese concepts and aesthetics are explicitly outlined in the writings of Pawson, Zabalbeascoa and Marcos, Bertoni, and the volumes edited by Maggie Toy, and Savi and Montaner, as well as being implicit in Heneghan's text on Tadao Ando (1996). Toy (1999) and Bertoni (2002) both name Tadao Ando as a key figure of architectural minimalism. Toy proclaims Ando as "the single most powerful influence" on contemporary minimal architecture; Bertoni acknowledge's Ando's adoption and reclassification as a minimalist architect, his "growing fortune ... paralleled by an increased attention to the architect's cultural hinterland, *Zen* philosophy, the profound spirit of a culture of "contemplation without objects", empty space and *ma*" (p. 40). Montemaggi (in Savi and Montaner. 1996. p.148) also discusses Ando and the Japanese *sukiya* tradition in relation to the notion of dynamic oppositions. Pawson (1996) claims a strong personal affinity with the Japanese aesthetic and moral principle of *wabi*, interpreted in his text as the quality of voluntary poverty, and *shibui*, "the studied restraint that might best be described as knowing when to stop" (p. 11). Zabalbeascoa and Marcos (2000) echo Pawson's sentiments, adding a subsequent layer of meaning that equates *wabi* with a quality of non-conventional irrationality, and *shibui* with a knowledge of limits.

fig. 6
Tadao Ando,
Koshino House, Ashiya
(1983-1984)

Jodidio, 1997 p. 68

In Toy's 1999 volume, the Japanese influence on British architects in particular is discussed by Claire Melhuish and Pip Vice. In both cases a geographical comparison is drawn between the two island nations[3], accompanied by a similarity in temperamental quality – that of reserved courtesy (Melhuish, p.11; Vice. p.15). This reserve is echoed in a Japanese aesthetic quality of subtle variation. Melhuish quotes Japanese aestheticist Jun'Ichiro Tanizaki: "the beauty of a Japanese room depends on a variation of shadows, heavy shadows against light shadows – it has nothing else" (p.11). Vice makes significant reference to the Western

[3] Geographically, New Zealand is not dissimilar to these island nations. Perhaps this exists as another level of connection to architectural minimalism and a Japanese aesthetic.

appropriation of these qualities, emphasising their translation between the cultures. This is an essential realisation that further distinguishes between cross-cultural sensibilities and Modernist universalism.

Pat Kaufman (in Toy, 1999) warns of "the inherent danger of global languages [that] is one of reductive oversimplification and an apparent commonality of meaning where no such meaning exists" (p.12). In any comparative discourse, the problems of translation must be addressed. This is so in comparative philosophy (Hall and Ames, 1995; Loy, 1988; Fung and Jackson, 2002), where an understanding of the philosophies of other cultures is often distorted by the transposition of Western ethnocentric models onto a fundamentally different system of thought. Modernism presupposed that rationalist dualism was a universal tendency to which other cultures also aspired. Architectural minimalism, as a model to which *difference* is an inherent condition, offers the potentiality of comparative discourse where no overarching system of thought is presumed.

Fourth Paradox: Temporality

> "Minimalism lends itself to spirituality but it also lends itself to shopping." (Jencks, in Toy, 1999. p. 16)

fig. 7
John Pawson,
Calvin Klein
flagship store

Pawson, 1997. p. 179

Perhaps one of Charles Jencks' strongest critiques of architectural minimalism is its proven tendency toward "boutique Cistercianism". Jencks presents a problematic of building type that occurs when what he believes is an inherently spiritual or religious architecture is applied to the design of retail space. Two questions are raised here: is minimal architecture spiritual? and what are the implications of this paradox? The first question cannot be answered here, if at all. Of the architects and authors covered in this review, Pawson and Ando in particular

imply the architect's responsibility to the cultivation of the human spirit, or spiritual condition. Bertoni (2002. p. 15) speaks of a "lay spirituality"; a more humble notion than the "religion" of Jencks, which suggests an overarching institutional philosophy. Zabalbeascoa and Marcos state that architectural minimalism "does not involve spiritual issues so much as spaces that suggest no other thought than thought itself" (2000. p. 142). This contemplation of thought seems to parallel the Zen philosophy of meditation – "contemplation without objects" (Bertoni, 2002. p. 40). In this case the spiritual nature of architectural minimalism may be seen to concern a kind of internal spirituality: "To explore the values of our inner selves and spirituality in silence, and to translate them into a matter that in turn uses what is elaborated in silence as the medium of communication, is one of the great tasks facing the architecture of simplicity" (ibid. p. 54).

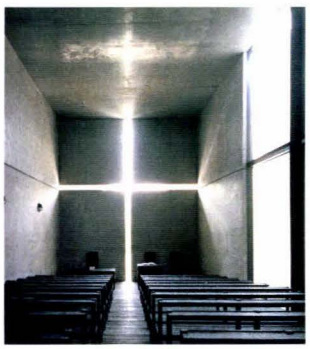


fig. 8
Tadao Ando,
Church of the Light,
Osaka
(1987-1989)

Jodidio, 1997. p. 84

The second question lends itself more easily to discussion in relation to the existing literature. In Toy's 1999 volume, Sally Mackereth expresses concern regarding the appropriation of architectural minimalism by consumer culture: "once Minimalism reaches the high street in a very diluted form it's being used in a very scary way. There's a lifestyle message here: 'you have to control your life by getting rid of your stuff; if you have no "stuff" you're clearly a person in control'. It's almost a form of architectural anorexia ... with religious aspirations" (p. 15). Mackereth follows this comment with an open enquiry: what is the space between the minimal retail space and the minimal residence of those associated with the retail world? Clare Melhuish broaches a similar subject in Toy's 1994 publication, in this case concerning the art gallery as a consumer space:

> "There is clearly an overlap between the two fields of work [designing commercial art galleries and designing residences for clients from the commercial art world], in that many gallerists saw their homes as places for the display of art almost to the same

> degree as the gallery; but there was also an extension of the ideal beyond the work of art to the person. The human body, too, became an object in space, the architecture its setting. At one level, this represents a positive rediscovery of the body as the subject of architecture: a resurrection of architecture's human purpose after the tyranny of functionalism. But at another, Pawson and Silvestrin's work is of the sort that can seem almost too perfectly composed, too perfectly crafted, and thereby to negate the very physicality and earthiness of the human body." (Melhuish, in Toy, 1994. p. 12)

In the move from spiritual space to retail space, the object of worship or contemplation shifts from the timeless, atemporal spiritual object to the ephemeral, temporal consumer object. That the nature of the act of worship remains constant gives validity to Jencks' declaration that "there is no absolute difference between fashion and spirituality or religion. We have juxtaposed them for other reasons – political, ironic and economic. Spirituality has a fashion component" (in Toy, 1999. p. 17).

Fifth Paradox: Materiality

> "When one actually sees the solidity of a mountain or the vastness of the sea, when one comes upon it suddenly, there it is in its monolithic presence. Everything, including one's own ego, has been pushed aside, except the majesty of that mountain or that sea. Such a sight absorbs you completely - it is beauty itself. If you are fortunate enough, think of a building that absorbs you with the same intensity - that building I call architecture; the others are nothing but edifices." (Silvestrin, in Toy, 1999. p. 9)

Claudio Silvestrin aims to create architecture that exists in the world in the same way as nature. A similar desire is expressed by John Macarthur: "I want an architecture which exists in the objects it produces independent of the process of that production. I want buildings which are *there* like trees or vacuum cleaners, and I think that if these objects can be material enough they will look back at me and this architecture will be art" (2002, p. 140). These are calls for a shift from the intangibility of an architecture of ethics, to a tangible architecture of aesthetics. In this sense architectural minimalism would embody a move away from the ethos of modernism, which treated the architectural object as representative of an intangible ideal, to the aims of Minimal Art: to create an art object that was non-representational; referential only to the fact of its material presence.

fig. 9
Donald Judd,
Chinati Foundation,
Texas
(detail)

Pawson, 1996. p. 110

Macarthur's challenge is in itself paradoxical, in relation to the debate that surrounded the objecthood of the Minimal Art work. The reduction to the minimum of the Minimal Art object resulted in a heightened perception of the act of viewing that object (Kaufman, in Toy, 1999; Zabalbeascoa and Marcos, 2000; Bertoni, 2002; Ursprung, 2003). The locus of the art work shifted from the art object to an event in time and space. On the one hand, this led to the denunciation of Minimal Art as theatrical and thus threatening to the institution of art (Fried, in Macarthur, 2002. p. 144). On the other hand, the product of Minimal Art became a dynamic process, as opposed to a fixed material object, launching the art work into a new realm of possibility (Kaufman, in Toy, 1999). It was precisely the blankness, or mute materiality, of the Minimal Art object, that allowed for an immaterial experience of the art work. How then does this translate into the architectural context? Viewed from the exterior, the buildings of architectural minimalism do indeed become objects. Like the Minimal Art object, they draw attention to the space around them. However, whereas the art object existed in the context of a gallery, warehouse space, or barren landscape, the muteness of the minimal architectural object proceeds from its being surrounded by noise. Inserted into a world of excessive materiality, it becomes comparatively dematerialised.

Ilka and Andreas Ruby (2003) highlight an important difference between the object of art and that of architecture: the existence, in architecture, of an interior. Whereas the Minimal Art object presented only an external surface to the viewer, the buildings of architectural minimalism also present an inhabited interior space. Internal surfaces begin to be read as mediums of display: of consumer items in retail space, of furnishings and accessories in the home, of art objects in gallery spaces. Furthermore, the lack of differentiation between the appearance of these spatial typologies promotes a shifting between the respective readings of the objects. Quotidean object becomes art object; art object becomes consumer object. Following from the aforementioned relationship in architectural minimalism between spaces of spirituality and shopping, any of these objects can potentially be read as sacred. Even the inhabiting body becomes an object in space (Melhuish, in Toy, 1994).

Through this investigation of the literary discourse surrounding architectural minimalism, it is evident that it possesses a contradictory soul. Architectural minimalism resists the enclosure of definition, and instead manifests itself in a series of paradoxes. These paradoxes are terminological, historical, geographical, temporal, and material. Architectural minimalism is both resistant to definition, and used as a term understood as if defined. It is historically related by extension to the fundamentally opposed movements of modernism and Minimal Art, and it is anti-historical in its retrospective accretion of disparate historical examples which support a contemporary hypothesis. It proceeds from geographically centred traditions to become radically decentralised, incorporating geographically diverse locations, cultures, and traditions that have previously been considered marginal to the Western tradition. It is simultaneously proclaimed as embodying timelessness, and popularised as a style in relation to the temporal world of fashion and consumerism. Architectural minimalism is at once a tendency towards objecthood, materiality and surface, and an attempt to dematerialise, to make disappear, to approach nothingness – it stands for both a pure externalised physicality, and an inner spirituality.

Architectural minimalism is hence a model to which *difference* and paradox are inherent qualities. Through its proliferation of contradictions, it calls into question the dualistic nature of these oppositions, and opens them up to potential reconsiderations. As will be proposed in the next chapter, the paradoxes of architectural minimalism, although resistant to resolution, may be better understood as dynamic oppositions within a nondualist philosophical framework. This, together with its formlessness as an undefinable entity with no overarching system of thought, make architectural minimalism a fertile ground of potentiality in which to situate a comparative study. A positive condition is created for the examination and interrelation of marginal practices and traditions. Together, New Zealand and architectural minimalism act as contextual spaces that foster a condition of openness and interrelation, a between-space in which disparate cultural and philosophical traditions may converge and play off one another in dynamic opposition. The alignment of architectural minimalism and Eastern aesthetics is one such instance, and it is in the space between these two traditions that the study will operate, and the philosophical shift will be generated. The following section will detail the extraction from the field of architectural minimalism a number of key concepts that form the basis of the philosophical re-orientation to follow. These concepts can be understood as a series of oppositions, between the spiritual and the material, subject and object, inside and outside, nature and culture, body and mind. It is by examining these oppositions that an approach to dwelling-in-the-world will begin to be formulated.

The aim of the present work is to interrogate the relations between nature and culture, with respect to opening the way for a new understanding of how one might design for dwellings that promote a stronger interrelation between the two. It takes architectural minimalism as a starting point, with the hypothesis that the conflicting notions found within architectural minimalism may be indications, not of impossibility, but of potentiality. Architectural minimalism may not be the only possible area for this line of questioning. However, it appears to be a fruitful one, for a number of reasons. Firstly, the many instances of paradox encountered within architectural minimalism bring to the forefront issues of duality and binary relations, thus offering a departure point for a philosophical re-orientation. The question to be addressed becomes, not why architectural minimalism is so full of contradiction, but why it is that these contradictions are perceived in this way, and how might one rethink them so that they present an openness, or potentiality, as opposed to a barrier to thought, or an impossibility. Secondly, architectural minimalism presents a problem of perception, or of the relationship between subject and object. This paradox stems from its bipolar historical precedents found in Minimal Art and architectural Modernism. In the third instance, architectural minimalism presents an array of conflicting ideas about the relationship between nature and culture. Drawing from these three points, this project looks to formulate an approach to design that takes as its foundation a critical reconsideration of: dualism; the subject/object distinction in theories of perception; and the nature/culture opposition in relation to *dwelling*. These reconsiderations form the grounds for Chapters Two, Three, and Four, respectively. The work aims to open a discussion of an issue that springs from the heart of the paradoxes of architectural minimalism; that is, how do we dwell in this world?

Possibly one of the areas in which architectural minimalism may be most strongly critiqued is the contradiction it presents between consumption and conservation. Architectural minimalism, as a popular style, has become an icon of consumerism and materialistic superiority. In direct contradiction, it also has a tendency toward an ethics of conservation – of a non-materialistic sensibility that attends to the environment and to the natural. Thus the relationship that architectural minimalism promotes toward the natural environment becomes complex; it is at once consumptive and conservative. As consumers, we approach nature as an endless supply of raw materials, and disregard its fragility by perpetuating the damaging excesses of production. As conservationists, we recognise the consequences of these actions, whilst turning to nature as a romanticised ideal that we wish to preserve, as a source of inspiration and well-being. Nature is thus posited, on the one hand, as resource, and on the other, as retreat. However, both of these contradictory positions contain a similar

founding conception, that of the disjunction between the natural and the cultural, nature as the excluded outside. The desire to get 'back to nature' is thus indicative of an attempt to recuperate the culturally excluded outside (Grosz, 2001).

Architectural minimalism is thus situated both within, and outside of, popular culture. It slots with ease into the popular world of appearances, fashion, and style, becoming an integral part of mainstream cultural ideals. At the same time, it represents a rejection, or denial, of popular culture; a move away from materialism and excess. It represents both a cultural and a natural ideal, symbolising the cultivation of both the elitism of high culture, and the holism of commun(icat)ion with nature. In facilitating a connection with nature, it also acts as an intermediary between nature and culture. Furthermore, architectural minimalism also creates a space that is between cultures, not assimilating different cultural traditions but promoting an interrelation, exchange, or dialogue. It is thus simultaneously the outside of culture, the outside of nature, both nature and culture, and in-between. This presents an impossible situation when situated in a dualistic philosophical framework that regards nature and culture, inside and outside, as fixed oppositions delineated by a boundary.

It is the undermining of the stability of the inside and outside opposition by architectural minimalism that sets up the conditions for a reconsideration of their duality, and in particular a rethinking of interiority and thus the role of interior design. The oppositions of nature and culture, subject and object, body and mind, are all predicated on a concept of interiority that is mutually exclusive to its own excluded outside. This affects the way in which we think about the relationship between the (cultural) self and the (natural) world, either in terms of perception or of *dwelling*. Perception and *dwelling* call into question the body/mind and nature/culture oppositions in particular, and their alignment with the oppositions of subject/object and inside/outside. Interiority is both spiritual and spatial, considered as the interior of the self (the mind/spirit) or of architecture. Architectural minimalism has been shown to harbour a conflict between the immaterial and the material. Its claim to spiritual resonance is marginalised by the objectification of the both architectural product and the inhabitant. The minimal interior is both an art object, and a space in which objects are displayed as art. This objectification is reliant on the presence of a viewing subject. However, in the display-space of the minimal interior, the viewing subject, or inhabitant, is also objectified. The issue here lies in the division between subject and object, and body and mind. The subjective mind regards the architecture and its contents as objects, while the body is rendered as another object in space. The inhabitant is at once perceiving subject and displayed object.

The present thesis proposes that this bi-polarity is symptomatic of the privileging of the mind, and in particular, of the visual in the subject/object opposition of dualism. What is suggested is that the contradictions of architectural minimalism indicate a need to move away from an understanding of the experience of architectural space as dominated by subjective visual perception, and towards a sensual experience removed from subject/object distinctions. This experience is one of interrelation, and is posited as the key to dwelling-in-the-world. The implications of this move extend to the inhabitant's experience of the natural world: a dynamic interrelation may be fostered if nature may be reconsidered, not as an excluded outside that is subsequently objectified by a viewing subject, but as field of which the self is an interconnected part. These ideas may be clarified when considered in relation to an analysis of the underlying philosophical framework, which will occur in the next chapter. Prior to that, however, the discussion returns to the East/West connection, with an illustration of a point of difference that illuminates the gap between the two from which the potential for development may emerge.

Wabi: The Eastern Aesthetic of Simplicity

There are many traditions of simplicity which architectural minimalism calls upon or evokes as historical precedents, from the Cistercian monastic, to Shaker voluntary poverty, to Japanese Zen Buddhism. But it is the latter of these, in particular, to which attention will now be drawn. The connection established between architectural minimalism and Eastern aesthetics has been introduced on a number of occasions thus far. There are three different levels on which architectural minimalism can seen to be connected to an oriental sensibility. The first, and probably most obvious, is the influence of the "Japanese aesthetic" on contemporary architectural and interior design. This can be attributed, on the one hand, to a two-way trafficking between a modernising Japan and Western modernism,[4] and on the other hand, to a growing market in popular culture for Japanese style and cuisine, stemming from Japan's emergence in the 1980's as a powerful economic presence. The second level involves not so much a connection as an incorporation: Japanese architects such as Tadao Ando have made minimalism their trademark whilst retaining a sensibility that is distinctly Japanese in origin. Ando's work will be further analysed in Chapter Four. The third connection will be the subject of the next chapter, and is one that instigates a philosophical shift from duality to nonduality.

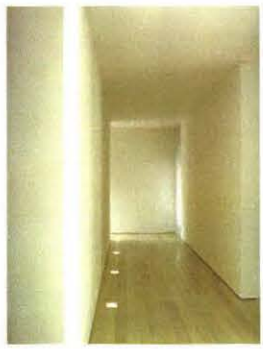
[4] The term *trafficking* as opposed to *conversation* is used because in the latter the two conversing parties must first be able to understand each other. There are also the connotations of *traffic* on an information highway and *trafficking* as a kind of mis-appropriation.

At this point, the discussion seeks to elaborate on the conditions of this connection by way of example, or illustration. This illustration takes the form of a series of observations regarding the application of a particular principle to the design of interiors in both the minimalist and Japanese traditions. The concept is Japanese in origin, and its appropriation by minimalist architects offers an opportunity to analyse the fundamental difference between the two traditions by examining the nature of the mis-translation between them.

The concept in question, that of *wabi*, lies at the core of the Japanese Sukiya architectural tradition, and is imbued with a Zen philosophical sensibility. This concept also has clear parallels with the ideals of Western architectural minimalism, and has been referenced or appropriated in the works and design philosophies of many minimalist architects. However, the general Western conception of *wabi* is coloured by a one-sided approach that privileges reduction, purity, and simplicity. It is precisely this viewpoint that lends itself to critiques about the contradictory nature of minimalism, its claims to a simplicity of lifestyle contrasted to its manifestations as an excessive, expensive, materialistic fashion. A closer look at the differing conceptions of *wabi* may offer an insight into the connections between architectural minimalism and the Japanese aesthetic. If the initial deductions seem to point towards a superficial mis-appropriation, highlighting the issues that emerge with the translation of an idea across cultures, the gap between the two understandings may also suggest an area of potentiality for further development.

fig. 10
John Pawson
Miro House (1988)

Pawson, 1996. p. 40



"The Japanese concept, *wabi*, the quality that comes from voluntary poverty, is both a moral principle and an aesthetic rule. Just as in the Buddhist teachings, it warns against an impoverishing excess. *Wabi* refers to the beauty of incomplete, variable and non-conventional things, an idealist beauty that restores good sense, measure and an extreme anti-rationalism to the idea of creation. *Wabi-sabi* means simple, without

> artifice, incomplete, non-sophisticated, the basis needed for being able to appreciate the tiniest details of everyday life. From within this silent, undistracted framework it is possible to appreciate the unsuspected aspects of nature, of place. *Wabi-sabi* is also about the delicate balance between the pleasure things give us and the pleasure we attain in freeing ourselves of them." (Zabalbeascoa and Marcos, 2000, pp. 80-82)

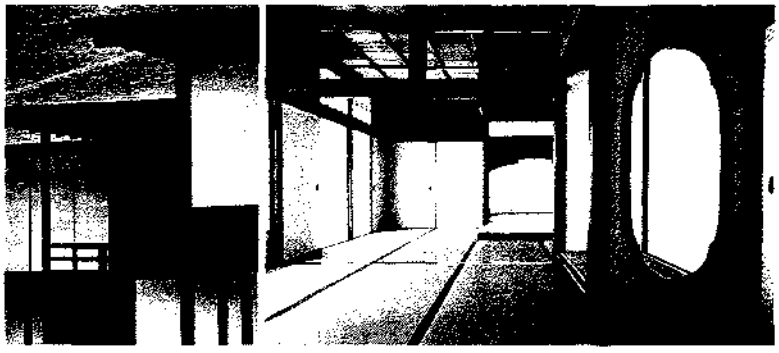
This passage from Zabalbeascoa and Marcos' book entitled "*minimalisms*" is illustrative of the appropriation of the concept of *wabi* in order to reinforce a preconceived ideal. The emphasis placed here on the moral aspects of simplicity: "warns against an impoverishing excess," "without artifice," is typical of an idealised view of a reductive lifestyle. In this respect, it also resonates clearly with the generally accepted aspirations of architectural minimalism: a humble lifestyle of voluntary poverty, an enlightened rejection of materialistic culture, a deeper understanding and connection with the essentiality of the natural world. John Pawson also aligns his work with the notion of *wabi*, placing an even more explicit emphasis on its moral fortitude:

> "Wabi is an aesthetic and moral principal, advocating a life of quietness and a withdrawal from worldliness. It values the beauty of simplicity and austerity, and looks for the serenity and transcendence that comes with it. Wabi represents the view that an excess of possessions and consumption is a burden that actually diminishes rather than enriches life. An absence of clutter provides room to think and perhaps even to understand." (Pawson, 1996, pp. 10-11)

Both Zabalbeascoa and Marcos', and Pawson's utilisation of the term *wabi* expresses more about their minimalist ideals, and their desire to align architectural minimalism with the beauty of the Japanese aesthetic as well as a sophisticatedly un-sophisticated morality, than it exhibits a true understanding of the term and the culture it embodies. This is not to say, however, that the appearance of this and other concepts borrowed from the Japanese tradition should be dismissed as misunderstood superficial appropriations. Their repeated occurence in the literature of architectural minimalism suggests that the ethical and aesthetic traditions of Japan have impacted greatly on architects in this field, and that these architects are motivated to express a feeling of empathy with them. The tendency to exercise selectivity, taking what is immediately relevant and discarding any contradictory material, is both common and not entirely avoidable, particularly when dealing with different cultural traditions. In this case, the attitude of selectivity toward *wabi* is a continuation of the Western approach to Japanese architecture epitomised by the Modernists' appraisal of the Katsura Detached Palace as a model example of Modern architecture.

fig. 11 and 12
Katsura Palace,
Kyoto, Japan
seventeenth century

(l.) Pawson, 1996, p. 100
(r.) Kurokawa, 1991, p. 26



Kisho Kurokawa writes of Bruno Taut and Walter Gropius' Japanese experience: "[they] praised Katsura and the Grand Ise Shrine as models of Modern architecture and then promptly returned home to the West" (1991, p. 27). Continuing, Kurokawa takes pains to point out that the observations made by Taut and Gropius, which were widely publicised in architectural circles, were formed from within the context of Modernism. The resulting perception of Japanese architecture as representative of an aesthetic of nothingness was an incomplete picture. Taut and Gropius chose to overlook any detail that was in opposition to their vision of an architecture of simplicity, for instance, the instances of intricate decoration and rich ornamental flourishes that coexisted with and complemented the refined restraint that otherwise characterised the spaces. They also chose to ignore the more ornamental architectural forms encountered and instead proclaimed that all good Japanese architecture was typified by an aesthetic of nothingess. The general understanding promoted by this event has now permeated views of Japanese architecture, influencing even the perceptions of the Japanese toward their own architectural aesthetic. The concept of *wabi* is easily misinterpreted as such:

> "Traditionally, *wabi* has been thought of as silence as opposed to loquacity; darkness as opposed to light; simplicity as opposed to complexity; sparseness as opposed to decoration; monochrome as opposed to colour; the grass hut, not the aristocrat's palace. Even in school texts, *wabi* is described as an aesthetic of nothingness." (Kurokawa, 1991, p. 19)

What is missing from this understanding of *wabi* , as from Modernism, according to Kurokawa, is a sense of ambiguity, multivalence, and what he terms "symbiosis." Kurokawa proceeds:

> "But isn't the true and essential Japanese aesthetic one in which silence and loquacity, darkness and light, simplicity and complexity, sparseness and decoration, monochrome

> and polychrome, the grass hut and the aristocrat's palace exists in symbiosis? In *wabi* a superbly decorative principle, a special splendour, is to be found..." (ibid.)
>
> "This is not an aesthetic of nothingness by any means. It is an aesthetic of a double code... It is an ambiguous, symbiotic aesthetic which simultaneously embraces splendour and simplicity." (ibid. p. 20)

Thus we return to the binary nature of architectural minimalism, and find it rendered in Japanese architecture, not as a problematic paradox, but as the heart of a double-coded aesthetic. The paradoxes of architectural minimalism are internalised, embraced as essential. It is this point of difference between Western and Eastern traditions that the present work looks to exploit. And it is here, in the space between East and West, that the proposed formulation of a new approach and philosophy begins.

CHAPTER TWO
A Shifting World-View

The minimal interior, exalted by the contemporary lifestyle magazine as a place of aesthetic beauty and Zen-like spiritual calm, has been shown to possess a contradictory soul. It seems to embody at once both ethics and aesthetics, austerity and excess, the material and the transcendent. It embraces artificial materials and advanced technology, yet lays claim to a wholesome back-to-basics naturalism. It is asceticism for the wealthy, modesty on display, ostentatious refinement. Yet despite the multitude of contradictions and vast potential for criticism, the spaces presented in the glossy pages of the magazines retain their power to seduce. They are blank canvases for the projection of one's ideal lifestyle, from aspirations of obsessive neatness, to those of spiritual clarity and enlightenment. The language that accompanies the images evokes a common desire, familiar probably to most entangled in the fast, chaotic, pace of contemporary Western society – tranquility, calm, sanctuary, harmony, relaxation. What seems to be emphasised as desirable is a lifestyle of simplicity, and the spiritual calm that comes from mental and physical well-being. Not surprisingly, an important aspect of this wellbeing is a renewed sense of connection to nature and the outdoors.

The paradox found in architectural minimalism that is most pertinent to the present work is related to its simultaneous tendency toward both a natural, and a cultural, ideal. The minimal interior propogated by such lifestyle magazines as *urbis* aims to stimulate desire in the viewer. The publications appeal to a desire to seek balance and connection between the body, mind, and spirit, and between the cultural self and the natural world. This becomes apparent through a reading of the images and text, although it is never made explicit. Rather, the appeal is made on a more subliminal level: not only to the intellect, but to the spirit. It may be said that the minimalist interior of the lifestyle magazine is targeted at the eliciting of *spiritual desire*. This spiritual ambition is, however, problematised by the contradictory nature of architectural minimalism when considered within a dualistic tradition. The spiritual ideal, which looks to establish a more harmonious relationship between the cultural and natural worlds, is undermined by the relationship of opposition maintained between nature and culture by dualism. This opposition is paralleled by the binary relation of the material and the spiritual, inside and outside, actual and virtual.

The presented ideal is certainly seductive, but one is led to wonder whether or not it is achieveable; can one live in these spaces? The aim of this thesis is to further investigate the potential for *dwelling* in accordance with some of these ideals, namely those of connection to the natural environment, and spiritual rejuvenation. The present work attempts to formulate an approach to interior design whereby these things may be realised, however, in order to do so, it is suggested that an important philosophical shift must be made. The basis of this shift is a questioning of the nature of binary oppositions, such as those presented by architectural minimalism, as dualistically opposed, irreconcilable extremes. A critique of dualism has been the subject of much contemporary architectural theory and philosophy, and could be said to have arisen from a dissatisfaction with the principles of modernism. The substance of this critique, which could be termed post-modernist, is an attack on the rationalist dualism that has dominated Western modes of thought since Plato and which acted as the driving force of modernism. This dualistic system is based on the mutual exclusivity of binary oppositions, privileging order over chaos, form over formlessness, rest or stasis over motion or flux. It is a system which holds as its objective *being* as opposed to a dynamic *becoming*. This notion of *becoming* is the root of an alternative to dualistic thought, running as an undercurrent through the works of such contemporary philosophers and theorists as Elizabeth Grosz, and Deleuze and Guattari who most famously adopt and apply the term in numerous derivations of *becoming-other*.

It is also here that the study re-affirms its position as between East and West, engaging in a comparative study that locates a philosophy of nonduality as underlying the classical tradition of Eastern thought, while also being the subject (explicit or implicit) of a number of contemporary Western thinkers. The central role that Eastern nondual philosophy plays, in the present work, in the formulation of a core theory of *dwelling*, gives weight to the hypothesis that the superficial connection made between architectural minimalism and Eastern aesthetics is indicative of a more profound affinity. For the present purpose, the study will focus specifically on a connection with Chinese and Japanese philosophies, in particular, Daoism and Zen Buddhism. This is not to rule out connections with other Eastern traditions, or those of any other culture for that matter. The reasons behind this decision are matters of time and space for research and writing respectively, but are also due to a contextual relevance. It is proposed that an investigation into the principles of these nondual traditions, and their alliances with a nondual tendency in contemporary Western thought, will yield new insights into the issues of *dwelling*, and prepare the way for the formulation of a new approach to dwelling-design.

Heidegger and the Problem of Dwelling

Heidegger's conception of *dwelling* takes the natural world, that which is between earth and sky, as its site. The world is the field from which all things emerge, including culture and the cultural self. It is the outside, but also that which becomes an inside through the act of *dwelling*: "when man is capable of dwelling the world becomes an 'inside'" (Norberg-Schultz, 1976. p. 417) Interiority is thus established as the result of an act of inhabitation, rather than the delineation via a boundary of an inside and an outside. This carries extensive implications for architecture. In the Western tradition, enclosure has perhaps become the principle function of architecture, reinforcing the dualistic opposition of inside and outside, included and excluded, proper and improper, same and other. Architecture thus begins with the delineation of an inside and outside: the inscription of borders and boundary lines, and the construction of walls. If, however, enclosure is not a necessary condition of interiority, might these walls and boundaries also become unnecessary? If interiority is created through an act of inhabitation, then what is in fact brought into question is the role of architecture, and the presumption that architecture is a primary condition for *dwelling*. Heidegger's alternative to this common conception is that it is the act of inhabitation that initiates *dwelling*, rather than architecture. Norberg-Schulz presents the example of the dining table, "At the table men come together, it is the *centre* which more than anything else constitutes the inside" (ibid. p. 416). This centre is not, in fact, the table, but the activity that surrounds it. The table is the site for a ritual act of

inhabitation, the gathering of people for a meal or other social activity. It is through the performance, or *doing*, of this act, rather than the existence, or *being*, of the table, that a "centre" is created.

Heidegger's *dwelling* is an act, performed by an inhabiting individual in the world, that creates from that world an "inside." It is the act of *dwelling* that gathers the world around the inhabitant, thus creating a centre. If this is the case, then what of the physical "dwelling" – the house, the building in which one presumes to dwell? Is the house, built for the purpose of dwelling, necessarily a place in which *dwelling* does in fact occur? Heidegger suggests that architecture is not automatically a dwelling-space. Public buildings, for example, are not spaces in which one lives, however they are in a wider sense an aspect of our lives, of our dwelling-in-the-world. However, the conditions for *dwelling* are not automatically provided by architecture. To begin with, Heidegger refers to the act of *dwelling* as "being in the world," and not as being, living, or dwelling, in a building. Thus architecture becomes an instrument of *dwelling* as opposed to its site. Architecture must focus the world around the inhabitant – architecture as facilitator, world as site.

This concept may be difficult to grasp without first having an understanding of the relations between the entities involved, that is, the relation of self to world, the place of architecture in the world, and the experiential relation of self and architecture. Furthermore, Heidegger's statement that the act of *dwelling* creates an "inside" from the world that is always already an "outside," throws into confusion common conceptions of interiority and exteriority. What appears to be suggested is that architecture itself does not create an interior as cut off from the outside world, but that the space becomes "interior" only when activated by the act of *dwelling*. In order to further interrogate these notions, it will be necessary to begin by rethinking these relations. This chapter puts forward one line of thought that seems to offer potential for understanding *dwelling* in this sense. That line of thought originates from questioning the nature of the relations between entities conventionally conceived of as mutually exclusive opposites, and embodies a shift from that dualistic tradition to one of nonduality.

> "In the West there is a strong tendency to construe important contrasts as disjunctive by virtue of the pervasiveness in our culture of dualistic contrasts rooted in the being/not-being problematic. This problematic has its strongest illustration in the logical contrast of 'p' and 'not-p.'" (Hall and Ames, 1998, p. 18)

From Plato, through Christian theology, to Descartes and on into modern philosophy (ibid.), dualism has shaped Western philosophical discourse and theories of perception. The result is a general conception of the world as consisting of mutually exclusive opposing pairs such as being/nonbeing, subject/object, self/other, nature/culture, inside/outside. Elizabeth Grosz defines dualism as "the belief that there are two mutually exclusive types of 'thing,' physical and mental, body and mind, that compose the universe in general and subjectivity in particular" (1994, p. *vii*). It is important to note that this dualistic perception of the world is in fact a construction, and has not always been accepted. According to Hall and Ames, the "Western preference for rest and permanence over becoming and process" was solidified by the claim by Parmenides that "Only Being is," which effectively set up "a dialectic between Being and Not-Being, and Being and Becoming" (1995, pp. 23-24). Some early Greek philosophers such as Heraclitus, who claimed that "everything flows," (ibid. p. 33) privileged process thinking over an ideal of rest and permanence, *becoming* over *being*. However, Despite such thinkers as Heraclitus, the dialectic between *being*, *not-being*, and *becoming* remained at the root of mainstream Western philosophy. In contradistinction, the Eastern tradition, in this case referring in particular to the Chinese, did not uphold any distinction between *being* and *not-being*. As this section will go on to illustrate, the concept of *becoming* is vital to an understanding of Eastern nonduality.

Stanislaus Fung and Mark Jackson discuss the impact of Chinese nonduality on the perceived relation of the human and natural worlds in their comparative paper "Dualism and Polarism: Structures of Architectural and Landscape Architectural Discourse in China and the West" (2000). Their primary concern is with the consequences of a cosmological outlook that "has not entertained the subject/object opposition" on a tradition that "emphasised the correspondence and affinity of the human world and the natural world" (p. 2). Fung and Jackson provide a useful dissemination of the nature of opposition in nondualist cosmology. They outline the distinction between dualism, and what they refer to as "polarism:"

> "Dualism is a feature of a world-view characterised by an *ex nihilo* creation in which a fundamentally indeterminate and unconditioned power determines the meaning and

order of the world. This primary dualism, in various forms, is the source of dualistic categories such as knowledge/opinion, universal/particular, nature/culture, cause/effect, which organised human experience. Knowledge has been conceived of as the discovery of the defining essence or form behind changing appearances...

Polarism or bi-polarity, on the other hand, indicates a relationship of two terms each of which can only be explained by reference to the other. Unlike dualistic oppositions, each term in polar relation requires the other 'as a necessary condition for being what they are.' But it is important to note that terms in polar relation are not 'dialectical.' Unlike dialectical relationships, polar ones are not involved in an oppositional play moving from contradiction, synthesis, to sublation." (p. 3)

Nonduality, therefore, does not do away with binary terminology, but rather redefines the relation between polar terms as dynamic and interdependent. Fung and Jackson define thinking in these terms as *correlative* thinking: involving "understanding the world in terms of correlated entities or processes of becoming" (p. 4).

There are various terms utilised to denote *causal* thinking (as is dominant in the Western tradition) and *correlative* thinking (dominant in the Eastern tradition). Hall and Ames employ the expressions "second problematic" and "first problematic thinking" respectively. However, as the intention of this work is to emphasise a shift away from dualistic (causal) thinking, the word *nonduality* or *nondual thinking* will be used. At this juncture it may be of use to highlight a potential area of confusion with the term *nonduality*. As explained above in relation to Fung and Jackson's discussion of polarism, nonduality does not negate the use of binary terminology. Nor does it suggest that "all is one" (as does monism). It is not the binaries that are in question, rather it is the nature of their relation, or their correlation. The important distinction between dualistic and nondualistic thinking is a shift of emphasis from the being/not-being dialectic, to a process of becoming.

An appropriate illustration of a nondualistic binary relation is found with the *yin/yang* pairing of Chinese thought. *Yin* and *yang* are terms used to explain the relation of binary pairs such as light and dark, male and female. They are not entities in themselves, but rather "*ad hoc* explanatory categories that report on interactions among immediate concrete things of the world" (Hall and Ames, quoted in Fung and Jackson, 2000, p. 3). The nature of the interaction described by *yin* and *yang* is dynamic; the two poles are not held in static separation, but are in a constant state of flux and interpenetration. *Yin* and *yang* are representative of a nondual becoming-other.

> "We must remember that Confucian distinctions such as "self/other" are mutually entailing and interdependent correlatives, and are not dualistic in the sense of representing some underlying ontological disparity. *Yin* is always "becoming *yang*" and *yang* is always "becoming *yin*," just as "day" is a "becoming night" and "night " is a "becoming day." For the *ji/ren* [approx. trans. "self/other"] distinction, "oneself" is always a "becoming other," and an "other" is always "becoming oneself." (Hall and Ames, 1998, p. 27)

The *yin/yang* correlation is a way of understanding binary relations that exists prior to the distinction between subject and object. Entities are understood in terms of their interrelation with other entities, rather than being defined by a fixed identity. The implications of a nondual understanding are far-reaching; with respect to the present thesis, nonduality offers a new perspective on the binaries associated with *dwelling*. These binaries relate to the interrelation of cultural self and natural world: self/world, nature/culture. The way in which this interrelation is experienced is also of import – in order to understand how an individual may commun(icat)e with nature, the way in which the self is conceived must be addressed. Dualities of perception stem from the distinction made between body and mind, which participate in the world as object and subject respectively. The dual being perceives the world as a collection of objects in space. However, in order to consummate a Heideggarian act of dwelling-in-the-world, a dynamic interrelation must be established between self and world. As either perceiving subject or corporeal object, the dual self is characterised by a distancing from the objects of the world, which exist in a spatial vacuum. Thus the dual self, by its very definition as an identity, sets up an impossibility of interrelation. On the other hand, the nondual self is recognised as an interrelated body-mind that exists only as part of the field of the natural world, delineated not as a fixed identity, but as the totality of its interrelations with the world. The following sections will elaborate on these concepts of self and nondual perception, the latter of which is further explored in Chapter Three in relation to the artwork. Subsequent to this is the development through nonduality of an approach to nondual *dwelling*, and the roles of architecture and interior design. It will be shown that the implications of nonduality on the rethinking of the inside/outside dialectic will be pivotal in the formulation of this approach.

Becoming-Individual: the Nondual Conception of Self

Western notions of identity are tied up with the delineation of boundaries; the establishing of inside and outside, proper and improper. The underlying assumption is that in order to be an individual, one must exist as a discreet, bounded entity. The self is composed of a physical

body-in-space, and an internal mind, spirit, or psyche. The world, and nature, is an outside. In contradistinction, the Eastern nondual body is essentially an ecological being, emerging from and always interconnected to the universal continuum of nature. As an interrelated part of the natural field, the self is always both in and of the world, and does not exist separately from it as either perceiving subject-mind or formal object-body. Rather, the nondual self is the interrelated body-mind. It exists prior to both naming/enclosure, and the subject/object distinction (Pilgrim, 2002). S. Brent Plate (2002) describes the goal of nondual traditions as the cultivation of the nondual self. In this cultivation, body and mind, nature and culture, are seen as interconnected.

Elizabeth Grosz centres her feminist theory of the body around the rejection of the Western tradition of body/mind duality. In her work *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (1994), Grosz draws on three alternative models or conceptions in order to re-address this duality. The first is an appropriation of the mobius strip model of Lacan, by which body and mind, inside and outside, may be seen not as

> "two distinct substances or two kinds of attributes of a single substance but somewhere in between these two alternatives. The Mobius strip has the advantage of showing the inflection of mind into body and body into mind, the ways in which, through a kind of twisting or inversion, one side becomes another. This model also provides a way of problematising and rethinking the relations between the inside and the ouside of the subject, its psychical interior and its corporeal exterior, by showing not their fundamental identity or reducability but the torsion of the one into the other, the passage, vector, or uncontrollable drift of the inside into the outside and the outside into the inside." (p. *xii*)

Grosz (1994) also references the theories of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, which set up the conditions for the distinctions between mind and body, subject and object, self and other. Merleau-Ponty asserts that these things are interconnected, and illustrates his theory with his concept of the "flesh" as that which mediates between the two: seer and seen, toucher and touched. The flesh is both that which differentiates between, and that which fosters an interrelation that does not adhere to fixed notions of identity or boundaries. The "flesh" is described as "the shimmering of a *differance*, the (im)proper belongingness of the subject to the world and the world as the condition of the subject" (p. 96). A further continuation of this line of thinking is made by Grosz in her reading of the concepts of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. Deleuze and Guattari also look to break down the structures of duality and identity: in their work, "subject and object can no longer be understood as discreet entities or binary

opposites" (p. 167). The self as mind and body is replaced by the concept of an *assemblage* or machines. Subject and object become a

> "series of flows, energies, movements, strata, segments, organs, intensities--fragments capable of being linked together or severed in potentially infinite ways other than those which congeal them into identities." (p. 167)

The self as assemblage of becomings and interrelations is close to an Eastern conception of self. In his text on nonduality and the ecological self, *Becoming Bamboo* (1992), Robert Carter portrays the nondual self as a "foregrounded expression of the background whole" (p. 102). The crux of this conception is that we exist as individuals only through our relatedness to other things, as part of the background whole, or field, but also in terms of our *difference* to the field, by which we stand out from it as foregrounded expressions. Carter refers to this concept of self as both the "relational unity of opposites" and the "identity of self-contradiction." In this conception can be seen both the concept of dynamic opposition and interrelation illustrated by the *yin/yang* pairing, and also a conceptual model through which the self can be understood as a focal point of a field. The following section of the thesis seeks to elaborate on the field/focus model as a means of reinterpreting notions of interiority and *dwelling*, in relation to architectural minimalism[1] and nature/landscape.

Field and Focus

David Hall and Roger Ames introduce the field/focus model in their treatises on classical Chinese thought. Field and focus are implemented as conceptual tools in order to approach an understanding of the *self* in Classical Confucianism and Daoism. This understanding recognises the interrelation of the *self* and the *other*, or that which is not self but exists as the environment or context of the self at any given moment. The Confucian *self* is an extension of and extends to include familial and community relationships. Thus the interrelation of the *self* to the *others* that comprise the context of one's existence is construed as a network of

[1] The term "architectural minimalism" may no longer be entirely appropriate. This was established as a starting point through an examination of architectural precedents, however, the discussion now begins to centre around an emerging or new architectural phenomenon (though closely linked to historical examples). It may not even be appropriate to continue to refer to this phenomenon as "architecture". In a nondualist analysis it is suggested that is that this is an *interior* phenomenon in which the "interior" is in fact an act of emergence from a ground or field (nature/landscape) initiated by some act performed by the "inhabiting" subject (body/mind).

relationships, or *field*, within which each individual *self* constitutes a particular *focus*. As such, the Confucian *self* differs from the Western model, which is dependent on the maintenance of identity through the disjunction of *self* and *other*.

In Daoism, the extension of *self* continues beyond this social and cultural context, to encompass the natural environment. To be more precise, the *self* is an extension of nature, and nature of the *self*. Here, the field is the totality of existence of all things, of which each individual being or thing is a focal point. Field and focus are correlative to *dao* and *de*. *Dao* is "the 'way' of things, construed as all of the processes of becoming." *Dao* as "Becoming-Itself" can be abstractly conceptualised as the dynamic interrelation of polar elements: "That Which Is" and "That Which is Not"; being and nonbeing; the nameable and the nameless (Hall and Ames, 1998. pp. 60-61). As the dynamic interrelation of all polar elements, or the totality of processes of becoming, *dao* is perhaps analogous with a conception of *nature* as the dynamic process of being-in-the-world. *Dao* is the field of becomings from which all things emerge.

The emergence of an individual thing (*de*) from the field (*dao*) is comparable to a focusing of the field at a particular location: "...*de* is best understood as a particular focus that orients an item in a field of significances such that it achieves its own intrinsic excellence;" (ibid.) "*de* denotes the emergence of particularity as a determining focus of the field that contextualizes it" (ibid. p. 39). The point of focus (*self*) and the field from which it emerges are interdependent: the particularity of the self at any given moment[2] is determined by its environment, just as the dynamic self has a part in determining the state of its environment. Therefore, if each focus reshapes the field, there exist as many different experiences of the field as there are foci, "The *de* of an element provides the perspective from which it construes all other items in its environs. In this manner each item, with respect to its *de*, names and creates a world" (ibid. p. 61).

> "When *de* is cultivated and accumulated such that the particular is integrated efficaciously into its environments, the distinction between *dao* and *de*, as field and focus, collapses and the individuating capacity of *de* is transformed into its integrating capacity. That is to say, the focus of *de* extends without discontinuity to embrace the indeterminate field of its context. *De* is both particuular and its particular field--that is, the field as construed from its perspective. It is both *focus* and *focused field*." (Hall and Ames, 1998. p. 40)

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[2] The *self* is not a fixed concept. Any individual emerging from the field of becoming is also always becoming-other. The focusing of the field at any particular *self* is as inseparable from its immediate temporal context as from the other elements which constitute its environment.

The concept of *dwelling* espoused by the present thesis can be understood in terms of this field/focus model, as a focusing of the field, the bringing to the foreground of the background whole. This becoming-interior of the world/field is interdependent with a becoming-world of the self, that is, the self must attain an awareness of its interrelation with the world by way of "tapping into" or merging with the field through nondual perception. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three. At the present point, the becoming-interior of the world will be discussed in relation to the respective roles of architecture and interior design.

Becoming-Interior: Nonduality in Architecture and Interior Design

> "Can the effects of depth, of interiority, of domesticity and privacy be generated by the billowing convolutions and contortions of an outside, a skin? What does the notion of outside, exterior, or surface do that displaces the privilege of interiority, architecturally, philosophically, and subjectively? The boundary between the inside and the outside, just as much as between self and other and subject and object, must not be regarded as a *limit to be transgressed, so much as a boundary to be traversed.* As Brian Massumi stresses in *The Politics of Everyday Fear*; boundaries are only produced in the process of passage: boundaries do not so much define the routes of passage, it is movement that defines and constitutes boundaries. These boundaries, consequently, are more porous and less fixed and rigid than is commonly understood, for there is already an infection of one side of the border by the other; there is a becoming otherwise of each of the terms thus bounded." (Grosz, 2001, p. 65)

Elizabeth Grosz implies here that there is no fixed boundary that exists between "inside" and "outside." Instead, it is in the movement between the two whereby the between-space begins to take shape. Within this between-space, each side is played off against the other, and with each movement, becomes more or less its opposite. These various acts of becoming-other are in fact what comprise and define the between-space. Grosz's take on the inside/outside binary is essential a nondualist approach, privileging becoming over being-one-or-the-other. Grosz borrows her theory of becoming and mobility from the writings of Gilles Deleuze. Deleuze also exhibits a nondualist approach, although neither theorist makes explicit mention of nonduality. However, their critique of duality is indeed explicit. Grosz describes Deleuze's work as attempting not "to abandon binarised thought or to replace it with an alternative; rather, binarised categories are played off each other... so that the possibilities of their reconnections, their realignment in different 'systems,' are established" (ibid.). Exteriority is thus not "eternally counterposed to an interiority that it contains: rather, the outside is the

transmutability of the inside... the outside is a *virtual* condition of the inside" (ibid. p. 66). The outside in fact contains all possibilities and virtualities of the inside – its past, its futurity. It is the ground of its becoming-inside. The inside is an actualisation of the background matter of its outside.

> "The outside is not a fixed limit but moving matter animated by peristaltic movements, folds and foldings that altogether make an inside: they are not something other than the outside, but precisely the inside of an outside." (Deleuze on Foucalt, in Grosz, 2001. p. 67)

Through Grosz and Deleuze, we can begin to understand Heidegger's *dwelling* in respect to the nonduality of inside and outside, as the outside-becoming-inside of the world. It is precisely this relation of the inside to the outside, as a becoming-actual of virtuality, that engenders a state of openness and creates the potentiality for change. Interior and exterior are no longer conceived as fixed entities, but as engaged in an ongoing dynamic exchange. Necessary to this exchange are both processes of becoming, and the in-between space in which they may take place.

> "*Becoming* [my italics] is the way in which each of...two series can transform: becoming is bodily thought, the ways in which thought, force, or change, invests and invents a new series, metamorphosing new bodies from the old through their encounter. Becoming is what enables a trait, a line, an orientation, an event to be released from the system, series, organism, or object that may have the effect of transforming the whole, making it no longer function singularly: it is an encounter between two bodies that releases something from each and, in the process, relases or makes real a virtuality, a series of enabling and transforming possibilities. Becoming-animal [for example] only makes sense insofar as *both* the subject and the animal are transformed in the encounter." (Grosz, 2001 p. 70)

> "The *in-between* [my italics] is what fosters and enables the other's transition from being the other of the one to its own becoming, to reconstituting another relation, in different tems. The in-between, formed by juxtapositions and experiments, formed by realignments or new arrangements, threatens to open itself up as new, to *facilitate transformations in the identities that constitute it* [my italics]. One could say that the in-between is the locus of futurity, movement, speed; it is thoroughly spatial and temporal, the very essence of space and time and their intrication. And thus inimical to the project of architecture as a whole." (ibid. p. 94)

The Deleuzian space of the in-between is the *middle*, from which connections are made according to networks of movement and force (ibid.). This space may be compared to the Eastern space, or nothingness, that exists between, and also beyond, all things, in Chinese, *yu*; in Japanese, *ma*. The between-space is both that from which all things arise (Lao Zi, in Xiaodong, 2002, p. 88), and the totality of forces and relations between things, between individuals. It is the background field, the virtual outside from which things and interiority emerge, as well as the in-between. Carter draws attention to the double-coded significance of the in-between as both the network of interrelation, and the interval or space (nothingness) between parties:

> "This sense of between is the relational sense, and in the Orient it automatically draws to the surface the network of relational duties emerging from the Confucian heritage... Yet there is a second sense of between that must be mentioned as well. What is between one person and another is *emptiness, nothingness, a space or field* in which we can meet, talk, love, hate, hurt, nurture, encourage, and otherwise engage in ethically significant activity with one another. The between is the place wherein we are able to interact with one another, and it is a field of possibility, an opportunity as much as an emptiness to fill." (Carter, 1992, pp. 101-102)

The connection between nothingness and betweenness as comprising the field of the natural and social world is enlightening in relation to a rethinking of architectural minimalism. Minimalism is most commonly interpreted as an *aesthetic of nothingness*, a reduction to the minimum. In this sense, dwelling becomes problematic, and conflicts arise as to the place of the body in the void as subject or object. Minimalism as an aesthetic of nothingness can not be said to facilitate an interrelation between self and natural world whereby it would be rendered a dwelling-space in the Heideggarian sense. However, the nondual nothingness-as-betweenness opens up a dynamic potential for the development, from and through architectural minimalism, of an approach to dwelling-in-the-world. The key to this potential is the reconsideration of architecture as a medium of interrelation, as the in-between.

Implications of Nonduality for Architecture and Interior Design

> "Deleuze's work allows us to question the very ideal of "constructing an identity": he enables us to bypass the presumption that such an identity is necessary, or desirable, for the ongoing well-being of subjects and cultures. Or rather, his work affirms that any identity is always riven with forces, with processes, connections, movements that exceed

> and transform identity and that connect individuals (human and nonhuman) to each other and to worlds, in ways unforeseen by consciousness and unconnected to identity." (Grosz, 2001, p. 95)

Identity is essentially a product of dualistic thought. In order to preserve identity, a bounded entity must be maintained through the dual processes of inclusion and exclusion, through the creation of an inside and an outside. That boundary may be a name, a definition, an outline, or a physical barrier, but primarily it is a means of enclosure. The boundary divides what is proper to the identity, from its excluded, improper, outside. Jennifer Bloomer positions herself as a theorist of the improper, a minor architect, working from within architecture to infect it with its excluded excesses – the feminine, the decorative, the abject. Minor architecture is improper precisely because it straddles the boundary, thus opening up passages between architecture and its outside. Elizabeth Grosz, on the other hand, promotes a position that locates itself within that outside. Grosz, a philosopher and a feminist, looks to confront architecture from the outside, to "unsettle or make architecture itself, if not stutter, then tremble" (ibid. p. 61).

Both of these approaches seem to indicate a move toward a nondual architecture; one that is opened up, either from within or without, to its outside. They seek to destabilise the proper identity of architecture, to create a continuity between inside and outside that causes that identity to transform, to mutate. Architecture may thus become mobile, migratory, nomadic. Nomadism is a Deleuzian concept that epitomises the privileged position that he bestows on movement, over rest and permanence. The idea of a nomadic architecture has the potential to impact not only on architectural thought, but also on the design and construction of buildings.

> "Take the idea...of building as a fixed entity or a given, stable object (which is the standard notion of building today). A Deleuzian framework may help us transform these rather static ways of understanding construction. A building is made up of other spaces within it that move and change, even if its own walls remain fixed. The idea of the mobility of building and within building is one possible idea of Deleuzian thought that might be of tremendous value in architecture. Building is not only a movement of sedimentation and stabilization but also a way of opening space and living... After it is built, structure is still not a fixed entity. It moves and changes, depending on how it is used, what is done with and to it, and how open it is to even further change. What sorts of metamorphoses does structure undergo when it's already there? What sorts of becomings can it engender?" (Grosz, 2001, p. 7)

The notion of destabilising or mobilising architecture, of releasing it from ideas of fixity, enclosure, and permanence, is one of the goals of this thesis. Architecture is to be undermined, to be reconceived, not so much as an object resulting from a design process, but as an instrument designed to facilitate a process, that of *dwelling*. This work is less about architecture than it is about the interrelation of the self and the world. It will be shown that architecture and *dwelling* are not synonymous, rather, architecture only becomes dwelling-space once it facilitates an act of *dwelling* via the interrelation of self and world. In taking this approach, the work attempts to formulate some potential avenues by which it may be possible to respond to questions raised by Grosz:

> "How to *think* architecture differently? How to think *in* architecture, or *of* architecture, without conforming to the standard assumptions, the doxa, the apparent naturalness, or rather the evolutionary fit assumed to hold between being and building? How to move beyond the pervasive presumption that subjectivity and dwelling exist in a relation of complementarity, either a relation of containment (space or dwelling contains or houses subjects) or a relation of expression (space or dwelling as the aesthetic or pragmatic expression of subjectivity)? How to see dwelling as something other than the containment or protection of subjects? In short, how to think architecture beyond complementarity and binarization, beyond subjectivity and signification?" (ibid. p. 59)

Continuing on from this challenge, Grosz warns against any presumption that these questions may be definitively answered. If the thought were possibly to be determined or answered absolutely, this would become a block to the continued questioning and rethinking of architecture. Instead, we must return to Deleuze's nomadism, releasing architectural theory from problem solving, to nomadic thought, that is continuously and fundamentally moving. In taking up this challenge, the present work aspires to open up a line of enquiry, working from a number of "outsides" in order to disrupt conventional notions of architectural identity. Along with the "outside" disciplines of philosophy, comparative philosophy, and art criticism, perhaps the most important "outside" is in fact an "inside." Probably the strongest claim made here is that *dwelling is not primarily an architectural phenomenon, but that it is in fact an interior phenomenon*.

Interior design has long been considered to be outside the architectural discipline. It is architecture's inside, but it is also what is not proper to architecture itself. It is its excess, its non-structural surplus, its decorative appendage. And indeed, interior design can be and often is all of these things. However, interior design is ultimately about *dwelling*. It acts as the

intermediary between structure and inhabitation. It deals with comfort, with function, with ambience, and with artistic expression. Yet these things are merely facets of an overarching responsibility, that is, to provide a space in which one can live, in which one may *dwell*. Heidegger tells us that interiority results not from architecture, but from *dwelling*. The interior is not the inside-space created by architecture. Rather, it is the result of an activation of space through the act of inhabitation, of dwelling-in-the-world, that transforms that world-space into an "inside." *Dwelling* is, in essence, an *interiorisation*. Architecture is the instrument that aims to facilitate this becoming-interior. The interior is, therefore, not the inside of architecture, but architecture's ultimate consummation.

Summary of concepts

To move from a dualistic conception to a nondualistic conception of the world is to let go of ideas or ideals of rest and permanence; to come to the realisation that the world is in a constant state of flux, of impermanence. It is this awareness of impermanence that underlies Buddhist and Daoist philosophy. It is also recognised in Western philosophy as mobility or nomadism (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987), as openness to change and futurity (Grosz, 2001). It is also this realisation that leads us away from thoughts of *being* and *not-being*, as existing (and not existing) as fixed, static entities. Instead one becomes aware of the process of *becoming* that permeates all things: living, growing, changing, dying; always already becoming something other than what they were before. The world and everything in it is in a constant state of becoming, of being in-between.

Between-ness is nothingness, and it is also everything. The in-between is the space between things in which they may interact, in which various becomings-other may occur. It is the space of *interrelation*. So being, it may be said that the in-between is both a void, an empty space of potentiality, but also the totality of all possible relations between things. This space is a *field*, comprised of forces and movements. It is the virtuality from which all actuality emerges. It is imperceptible, yet it is the source and repository of all perception. The field exists as a background to all life, as the virtuality of the natural world. It is the living force, or living movement (in Japanese; *kokoro mochi*) (Bowie, 1952) that flows through all things that can be considered to be alive.

It is within this very field of virtual forces that we live in the world. The field *is* the natural world, thus, our dwelling-in-the-world hinges on our awareness of the field and our interconnection with it. The field is Heidegger's "outside," and it is only through the act of

dwelling that it becomes an inhabitable "inside." This becoming-interior, or interiorisation, of the field, is the key to *dwelling*. To "make a home in the world" is not about imposing architectural space on nature; it is not about conquering nature, rather, it is about the interiorisation of nature. But what is this interiorisation and how does one go about making it happen? *Dwelling* is an act; it is also an *actualisation*. The world becomes an "inside" at such time as the virtuality of the field becomes actual. In other words, the interiorisation of the field is coincident with its becoming-perceptible. The primary condition for this event is a dynamic interrelation between the inhabiting self and the natural world.

We return to the space of the in-between. In order to foster an interrelation between self and world, there must exist an interval between the two in which a dynamic exchange may occur. This space may be provided through various methods, and take various forms. It may be a spatial interval, or a temporal interval. As will be discussed in Chapter Three, the artwork may serve as a catalyst for this interrelation, opening up a space between self and world. And as Chapter Four will further propose, this may also be the role of architecture.

CHAPTER THREE

Viewing the World: Imaging the Natural World in Art

Proceeding from a shift in philosophical perspectives, the locus of the present study now moves toward a reconsideration of how this re-oriented world-view shapes the way in which we view the world. This chapter of the thesis investigates the impact of a nondual philosophy on methods of representing a view of the world through art. The following discussion aims to examine the implications of nonduality's undermining of dualistic oppositions such as subject/object, object/environment, self/world, form/matter, figure/ground, on the artistic depiction of the natural world. Through an analysis of nondual concepts embodied in the landscape paintings of the East, as well as Western parallels, it will be suggested that art, and furthermore interior design (as the subsequent discussion will argue), may act as a facilitator of the interrelation of the self and the natural world. The nature of this facilitation is the actualisation of the virtual, the manifestation in the perceptible realm of the virtual forces and becomings that comprise the interrelation of self and world, thereby creating the potentiality for *dwelling*.

The work of art was posited in Chapter One as the hinge of a conflict inherent to architectural minimalism. Via a nominal connection with Minimal Art, architectural minimalism is seen, on the one hand, as an extension of the minimalist art object, and on the other, as a gallery-like space of display. Both circumstances lead, through the non-representational silence of the minimal object, to the focussing of attention on the subjective act of viewing. The duality of subject and object is thus magnified, and the inhabiting/viewing body caught in the middle as both viewing subject and viewed object. The emphasis placed on the subjectivity of the viewing act by the minimal art object is in direct contrast to the framed view of traditional Western art. The landscape painting as framed view privileges representation and objectivity. Whereas minimal art attempts to extract the hand of the artist as much as possible from the work and instead focuses on the experience of the object by the viewer, the framed landscape is a testimony to the genius of the artist, and the viewer is merely there to observe.

However, both the minimal object and the framed view are instrumental in establishing a distinction between subject and object. The approach to *dwelling* toward which the present work aspires begins with the reconsideration of this opposition, thus allowing for an interrelation of world as field and self as focus. In order to construct this theory of *dwelling*, the work first proposed a shift to a nondual world-view. It is now proposed that, as a means of applying this framework to *dwelling* and its material (architectonic) aspects, it is important to first understand the implications of this world-view on how we view, or interrelate, with the natural world, and to investigate the ways in which this interrelation is manifested in a formal medium. The landscape painting has been selected as a fitting vehicle for this analysis, as it literally acts as a medium between nature and the viewer, artist or audience. It is also an appropriate site for a critique of the primacy given to visual perception. The chapter aims to locate, within the genre of landscape painting, an alternative tradition of nondual perception, in which the artwork acts, not as a mute object or as a framed view, but as an intermediary between self and nature, and as the site in which this interrelation is made manifest. The alternative tradition in question again arises from a comparative space between East and West.

The genre of landscape painting thus serves as the domain for the dissemination of the relation of self and natural world in art. The European word "landscape" only came into use in the sixteenth century (Fung and Jackson, 2000, p. 12), originating from the Dutch "lantscap," and is defined as "all the visible features of an area of land; picture of an area of countryside" (Oxford English Dictionary). "To landscape" is to "improve the appearance of (a piece of land) by changing its contours, planting trees and shrubs, etc" (ibid.). It is possible to extrapolate a

definition of "landscape" as a *view* of the natural world, inextricable from the act of seeing or viewing. Landscape as view is also tied up with external appearances, the visible surfaces of objects, able to be perceived optically by a viewing subject. In fact, Augustin Berque (in Fung and Jackson, 2000, p. 12) states that "the notion of landscape appeared only...at the moment in history when man conceived of himself as detached from nature – as the subject, with nature as the object."

China, according to Berque, was the only civilisation other than Europe that had a word denoting "landscape," and an accompanying pictorial repertoire dedicated to depicting the natural world. However, "in contradistinction to the European tradition, the Chinese landscape tradition developed within a non-dualist cosmology and has not entertained 'the subject/object opposition'" (ibid.). The present chapter will begin with a discussion of nondual vision, examining the nature of perception when the subject/object opposition is absent. Following that, the manifestation of that perception in the work of art will be explored, and finally, the discussion will return to the view, this time occupied with the experience of viewing the artwork. It is through this last act of viewing that connections between the two-dimensional nature of the work and the three-dimensional experience of the work in time and space may be explored, thereby returning to the process and the act of *dwelling*.

The View: To See
From Grounded Perception to the Field of Sensation

There are three primary dualistic oppositions brought into question when considering the nature of our perception of the natural world: firstly, the opposition of the perceptive (thinking) and affective (feeling) centres, commonly distinguished as mind and heart, or mind and spirit, and relying on the body's sensory organs as receptors; secondly, the opposition of objects and their surrounding environment, of form and matter, figure and ground; and thirdly, the dualistic relation of the viewing subject and the viewed object as distinct entities. There can be found within this series of dualistic oppositions repeated instances of the inside/outside dialectic. Perception is internal; the perceived is the external world. Perceived objects have external form and inner spirit, life, or meaning. Sensory perception is thus conceived as a passage, dialogue, or communication between inside and outside.

Western theories of perception distinguish between two predominant modes of experience: the haptic and the optic (Bogue, 2003, p.137). In haptic perception, the materiality of objects, or their surfaces, may be apprehended through an assimilation of multiple "touches." As we can

only touch an object in one place at any given point in time, we require a synthesis of moments of haptic perception in order to perceive an object as a "whole." Similarly, Alois Reigl (ibid.) indicates that visual, or optic, perception consists of a synthesis of multiple planar perceptions. Any object viewed from a single point in space appears to the viewer in two dimensions, as it would if one were to take a snapshot or photograph. It is only with movement around an object, or the addition of multiple points of view, that the outline of an object may be comprehended in its entirety. Furthermore, as vision can perceive only height and width, an understanding of depth must be assimilated from haptic perception. It is only through the synthesis of the haptic and the optic that an object may be perceived as three-dimensional.

fig. 13
Caspar David Friedrich
Wanderer above the Sea of Fog, c. 1818

Koerner, 1990. p. 155

The goal of the Western art of representation, to accurately represent an objective reality, becomes problematised by the subjective nature of perception. Each assimilation of multiple instances of perception requires a subjective synthesis in the mind of the perceiving subject. This act of synthesising occurs outside the realm of the actual; the subjective act of perception lodges the virtual permanently within the perception of the actual. If this is the case, then the existence of an objective reality can no longer be assumed, and it certainly cannot be represented as such. The issue of objective representation of objects in space resulted, in Western art, in the adoption of coded systems by which spatial represention could be organised, namely, the perspectival method of representing a three dimensional scene, and the two dimensional orthographic representation embodied by the plan and elevation. The structuring of space via the perspectival system begins with two main elements: a horizon line, and a receding ground plane:

> "We stand in the world enveloped by space, says Maldiney, our feet on the earth and our eyes on the horizon, leaning from a *here* toward a *there*, summoned to unite earth and

sky. We engage the supporting ground and enveloping horizon through the most active of our senses, touch and sight, at once grasping and possessing the world through touch and extending ourselves into the world through sight." (Bogue, 2003. p. 140)

This conception can be seen to locate the realm of tangible things, or the actual, on the ground plane, and banish the virtual to the limits of visual perception – to the horizon. When translated onto the pictorial field, the horizon line becomes a symbol of the boundary between virtual and actual, actively excluding the virtual from the representation of "reality." The ground plane becomes the site for the spatial arrangement of objects, organised by means of the laws of perspective, in relation to the point of view of the perceiving subject.

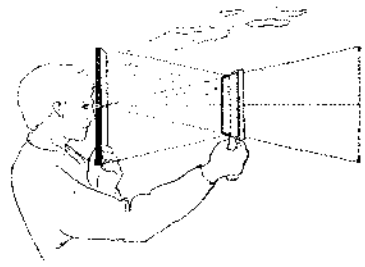


fig. 14
Reconstruction of Brunelleschi's first experience of perspectival representation.

Krauss. 1994. p. 132

Generally, the viewing subject is also rendered absent, perhaps in an attempt to retain an illusion of objectivity. What remains is the re-presentation as imitation or copy of the visible surfaces of things. Within this system, the rendering of the surface-less becomes problematic. In Brunelleschi's depiction of perspectival space, for example, clouds were included in the frame only by means of a reflective surface which covered the space to be read as "sky," and mirrored the passing of clouds in the actual sky. Space itself, then, was a void that could not be depicted other than by the organisation of objects on a ground plane which receded to a horizon.

fig. 15
Hiroshi Sugimoto
Sea of Japan
(detail of photograph)

Pawson, 1996. p. 121

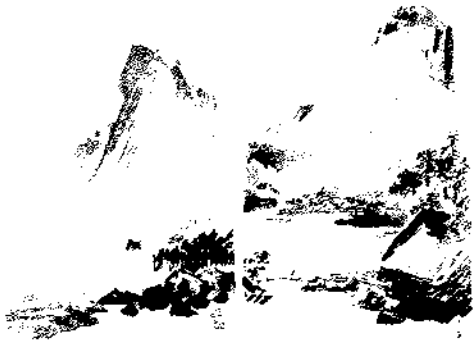
In Eastern landscape painting, the delineation of the pictorial field also begins with the reservation of the upper part of the picture for the sky, and the lower part for the earth. However, in this case, the two are not held in opposition by the horizon. Instead, the space of the *landscape* is made to occupy a place between earth and sky. The Japanese word for "landscape" is"*san-sui*," literally "mountain-water." Mountain and water are the elements which comprise the landscape, issuing from the realms of earth and sky respectively. Thus the landscape becomes a dynamic site of interrelation between earth and sky, effecting a dialogue between the two. The landscape is also the site of *dwelling*, Heidegger's *world*. In his work "On the Laws of Japanese Painting," Henry Bowie describes the law of spatial composition known as "*ten chi jin*" – "heaven, earth, man":

> "This wonderful law of Buddhism is said to pervade the universe and is of widest application to all the arts of man. *Ten chi jin* means that whatever is worthy of contemplation must contain a principal subject, its complimentary adjunct, and auxiliary details. Thus is the work rounded out to its perfection." (Bowie, 1952. p. 52)

Although this translation is somewhat lacking, the law of *ten chi jin* does correspond to a nondual conception of landscape. "Heaven" and "earth" as a correlative pair stand for the poles between which all things come into existence. "Man," as is suggested by Bowie's interpretation, is not necessarily a human being, but additional items which aid the composition, in this case acting as vehicles by which life is introduced into the painting. Put another way, the interrelation of heaven and earth creates between them a field, within which "man" is the focus that animates that field.

fig. 16 and 17
Henry P. Bowie,
Illustrations of principles
for painting landscapes

1952, pl. XVII, XVIII



According to Wang Fuzhi, the activity between heaven and earth is embodied as *scenery*, and the activity between yin and yang as *sentiment*:

> "Sentiment is the activity between *yin* and *yang*, and things are the product of heaven and earth. When this activity between *yin* and *yang* takes place in one's heart, the products of heaven and earth respond from the outside..." (in Fung and Jackson, 2000, p. 15)

If scenery, or landscape, is located *between* things, rather than on a ground plane, then it may not be able to be perceived as a collection of objects organised in space, but rather as a dynamic network or field of patterns of relation. Sentiment, being the activity between polarities, might be conceived as a mode of affective experience, or "feeling," that arises from one thing becoming its polar other.

Stanislaus Fung and Mark Jackson (2000) discuss nondual viewing as occuring between scenery and sentiment. In contradistinction to haptic/optic sensory perception, which synthesises touches/feelings and visual perceptions of material objects arranged in a spatial environment, nondual viewing is a rendering perceptible of the imperceptible relations between things. Fung and Jackson reference two conceptions of "seeing" in Chinese thought: seeing as *presencing*, and seeing as *touching*. Presencing and touching are modes of seeing which facilitate passage between scenery and sentiment. Seeing as touching effects the emergence of sentiment from scenery, "Touching the scenery gives birth to sentiment." To touch is to come into physical contact with something, it is also to connect with, to make a connection, to effect or to move (i.e. emotively). The notion of touching the landscape is similar to the idea of becoming-other – in order to understand and channel the inner spirit, or sentiment, of the landscape, the artist/viewer must *become* the landscape.

Seeing as presencing is a process of realisation, or actualisation. It involves mutual regard as opposed to a one-way viewing of a passive object by an active subject – the subject and object are interdependent, the object looks back. It is an encounter *between* viewer and landscape. In this sense, to see is to bring into focus. The viewer, in the act of looking at the landscape, focusses the field of the natural world as landscape, for the duration of the encounter. In return, the viewer is brought into contact with the natural world, becoming part of it. The landscape is brought closer to the viewer, it is focused around the viewer. Landscape is presenced as the focus of the viewer, the viewer is presenced as focus of the landscape.

Thus both seeing as touching and seeing as presencing depend on the interrelation of the self and the natural world. Self and world are not held in opposition, with the former as the viewing subject and the latter as the perceived object. Rather, the subject/object opposition is dispersed with, and, consequently, so is the conventional understanding of sensory perception. Viewing the world is not constrained to the perception of a haptic ground and optical horizon, but is the dynamic interrelation of self and world as field and focus, experienced as sensation.

The Composition: To Paint
From the Representation of Form to the Registration of Rhythm

Chinese and Japanese artists are often proclaimed to possess an innate ability to look beyond the appearances of things. "The Chinese artist is never concerned with the surface of things. He is always aware of what lies behind it, and the misty distances that fill so many traditional paintings hint at a reality that exists beyond what the eye can see" (Sullivan, 1989. p. 196). "[Japanese artists] paint what they feel rather than what they see, but they first see very distinctly. It is the artistic impression (*sha i*) which they strive to perpetuate in their work" (Bowie, 1952. p. 8). These types of characterisations are typical of a Westerner's attempt to conceive of Eastern art in terms of the dualism of inside and outside. They look to explain the non-representational nature of Eastern painting by suggesting a capturing of inner spirit supplementary to the depiction of external form. However, what they fail to recognise is the nondual conception of form as only a temporary articulation of matter: that the appearance of things is not separate from what "lies beneath the surface", but is the manifestation of that virtual aspect of being, in the realm of the actual.

In a nondual view of the world, form and matter are interrelated. Maldiney states that "form is the *rhythm* of matter [my italics], the rythmic articulation of its powers and resistances which are actualised by a technique that rhythm itself instigates" (in Bogue. 2003. p. 141). The dualistic opposition of object and surrounding environment as figure and ground, as discussed above, finds an alternative in the conception of ground as a formless field of matter, from which forms emerge as rhythmic articulations. Form is thus a temporal, as well as a physical, configuration of being: an instance of *becoming*. Maldiney refers to this rhythmic articulation as "systolic contraction" and "diastolic expansion." From the originary ground (formless chaos), the motif, form, or figure emerges as motivation, becoming distinguishable from the ground. This systolic contraction is the formation of what may be perceived as subject and object. The following diastolic expansion is the countereffectuation of form back into matter via the interrelation of figure and ground. Thus it is that from the stuff of the natural world emerge self and forms, which re-merge with the field of nature as a network of interrelations, thereby delineating that field as matter.

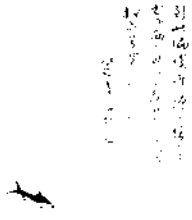


fig. 18
Pa-ta Shan-jen
Little Fish
c. seventeenth century
ink on paper

Sullivan. 1989. p. 237

In this painting of a fish, executed in ink on an album leaf, an oscillation between the figure and ground occurs. The *field* of the blank page, which is at once nothingness, yet also the space of potentiality for an infinite number of future outcomes, is identified as water through no other technique than the painting of the fish. The fish emerges from the meeting of ink, brush, and field, and through its becoming-fish, it engenders a becoming-water of the page.

In his treatise on the philosophy of Deleuze in relation to music, painting, and the arts, R. Bogue describes the process of creation in terms of the natural world, as a "continuous actualisation of the virtual" (2003. p. 183). Deleuze's *nature* is the "plane of consistency" where the forces of the *virtual* are involved in a perpetual movement that is *becoming-actual*. The virtual field is the "plane of immanence," the source of all becoming, and it is this process of

becoming-actual that is seized by the arts, and embodied as the *possible* on the "plane of composition." Applying this conceptual framework to the issue of form and matter, we may position matter as the virtual field, and form as the rhythmic emergence of matter-becoming-actual. The transference of virtual-becoming-actual, or matter-becoming-form, to the plane of composition, is the objective of the work of art: the embodiment of the virtual as the *possible*.

> "The actualisation of the virtual is a single process, but the passage of the virtual into the actual does not exhaust the virtual; the virtual remains immanent within the actual, an excess always in reserve, and that virtual immanent within the actual is manifest as sensation." (Bogue, 2003. p. 183)

Sensation is the virtual immanent within the actual, and it is what is embodied in the realm of the possible, in the work of art. Sensation may be considered the nondual alternative to the thinking/feeling dialectic. It is not concerned with perceptions or affections, which are formed via attachment to an objectified other by the thinking or feeling subject, but with the immanent virtuality of percept and affect. Percepts are not sensory perceptions of objects by subjects, but the imperceptible forces of the interrelation of things, rendered perceptible. Likewise, affects are not the feelings of a subject for an objectified other, but arise from a becoming-other, as an unattached, subject-less and object-less response.

The Eastern artist is concerned not with producing "...a realistic copy of nature but...an instantaneous and intuitive rendition seized...directly by the heart" (Munsterburg, 1965. p. 69). The successful work of art bypasses the mind and acts directly on the spirit. It does not rely on a coded language of facialisation, instead, the painting itself, as the expressive realisation of sensation in the material of the work, acts as an analogue language – communication on the primal level of sensation. The painting as analogue language achieves two fundamental effectuations: firstly, it does not represent perceived appearances or aspire to visual resemblance, but rather renders visible imperceptible forces or rhythms; secondly, it gives structure to sensation, registering uncoded affective responses to external stimuli without resorting to coded representation. The former can be aligned with the rendering of percepts, and the latter with the registration of affect.

It is thus through the rendering visible of the virtual forces and becomings between the self and the natural world that the becoming-actual of the world is embodied in the art-work as sensation. The landscape painting does not look to represent the apparent forms of nature, but to render perceptible a sensation of being-in-the-world. In order to do this, there must be

an interrelation between the viewing self, the natural world, and the medium of actualisation: the artist, the view, and the material of the painting. We have already established sensation as the nondual experience of the natural world by the self. Sensation, according to Deleuze (in Bogue, 2003. p. 168) belongs to the "aesthetic plane of composition," while the "technical plane of composition" is concerned with the material. It is via the interrelation of the aesthetic and the technical, of sensation and material, that the painting becomes expressive.

There are two ways by which painting may become expressive: sensation may be realised in the material, or the material may itself pass into sensation (ibid. p. 169). Either way, it is only through the relation between the two that the virtuality of sensation may be made perceptible. The practice of painting requires three things: substrate, tool, and medium. In Eastern landscape painting, these things are paper/silk, brush, and ink respectively. The Japanese character for painting (*hua*) consists of the characters for brush (*yu*), and field (*tian*). "The meaning of 'to paint' is thus to trace with the brush lines that give the outlines of forms just as paths mark the edges of fields and fix their shape" (Damisch, 2002. p. 206). To trace outlines, however, is here to be understood differently from the concept of framing or marking boundaries common to Western art practice. The verb "to fix" is perhaps a little misleading. The brush-stroke is compared to the making of paths, an action which originates from finding one's way around an area of ground, and which over time more clearly delineates that ground as a field. Hence the action of the brush-stroke carries as much weight as the line it produces, and furthermore, the path which that stroke takes is suggested by the form to be delineated, which is subsequently made manifest in the line.

The act of painting in Eastern art is comprised of two elements: *brush* and *ink*. Brush/ink is a correlative pair – a painting is successful only if it contains both elements, the success arising from the interrelation of the two. The brush-stroke, introduced above, is linked to the aesthetic plane of composition, to sensation. It is through the brush that the life-breath (*chi*) or living-force (*kokoro-machi*) is registered. The strength of the brush-stroke is relative to the receptivity of the artist to sensation. The technical skill of the artist to manipulate material in order to invent and produce transformations in the work is embodied by the element of *ink*. Ink aligns with the technical plane of composition, and involves the rendering of matter (*zhi*). Artistic expression is achieved through the channelling of spirit through the brush in order to effect a transformation of matter (ink) into form.

fig. 19
Henry P. Bowie,
1952 pl XVI

Daisetz Suzuki describes the activity of the artist as necessitating both a becoming-other and the keeping of the mind in unity with emptiness (*sunyata*) and suchness (*samsara*):

> "The secret is to become the plant itself...the discipline consists in studying the plant inwardly with [the artist's] mind thoroughly purified of its subjective, self-centred concerns. *This means to keep the mind in unison with the 'emptiness' or suchness,* whereby one who stands against the object ceases to be the one outside that object but transforms himself into the object itself. This is what is meant when it is said that the subject is lost in the object, and that when the painter begins his work it is not he but the object itself that is working and it is then that the brush, as well as his arm and his fingers, become obediant servants to the spirit of the object." (in Munsterberg, 1965. p. 32)

The artist thus aims to *become* the plant in order to render perceptible the imperceptible forces of the plant. The forces in question are not wholly internal or external. The life-force of a plant originates from the process of creation in the natural world which is consistent in all things; it is the compound of forces acting both from within and without. It is this life-force which creates form from matter – the rhythm of nature.

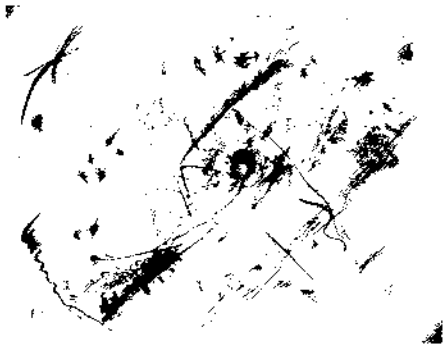
There are a number of artists in the West who also aim to make manifest in their paintings the rhythms of the world. Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee both denounced the permanence of form, and proclaimed it an unsuitable subject for the work of art. Kandinsky and Klee both maintained that the role of art was not the representation of the visible, but rather that it should aspire to register the inner spiritual rhythms of nature:

> "The absolute is not to be sought in the form... the form is always bound in time, it is relative since it is nothing more that the means necessary today in which today's revelation manifests itself, resounds. The resonance is the soul of the form which can

only come alive through the resonance, and which works from within to without. The form is the outer expression of the inner content" (Kandinsky, in Sullivan, p. 244)

fig. 20
Wassily Kandinsky,
Light Picture No. 188,
1913

Sullivan, 1989, p. 245



Painting thus aspires not to the representation of form as appearance, but to the registration of form as the rhythm of nature/matter. The life-force, or affective spirit, of things is registered through the brush, subsequent to the artist's becoming-that-thing. The virtual rhythms of form-becoming-actual are rendered perceptible in the material, be it ink or paint. The surface of the painting becomes the site whereby the actualisation of the virtual is made manifest as the possible.

The Experience: To Stroll
From Framed View to Frameless Viewing-in-Motion

The concept of form as the rhythm of matter, discussed above, involves the reconsideration of the form of objects, not as fixed shapes in space, but as rhythmic emergences from the field of matter. Considering form as rhythm implies that the spatial and temporal dimensions are inseparable. It is suggested at this point that the opposition or discontinuity of space and time is yet another invention of the dualistic tradition. Not surprisingly, the notion of the interdependence of space and time is a feature of Eastern nondual thought, one which is also found to be embodied by artistic impressions of the natural world in Chinese and Japanese art. It also finds parallels in contemporary Western thought, particularly with advances in philosophy and science:

"The change in Western art in the twentieth century, which has brought it in certain fundamental respects into harmony with that of the Orient, was not due to the influence

of Oriental art, nor was Oriental art held up as an example... It was due rather to a profound change in Western thinking about the nature of the physical world, most clearly expressed in the physical sciences. No longer do we believe in a finite world or in the permanence of matter. The physicist may describe it in terms of waves, particles or energy, according to the aspect of nature that he is investigating, and he speaks no longer of objects, but of events." (Sullivan, 1989. p. 258)

The moving away from subject/object opposition toward an alternative concept of field and event (event as rhythm, as actualisation, as focusing), is an underlying theme of the present thesis. Through the exploration of this concept, the thesis aims to formulate an approach to interior design of which a primary aspect is the conception of interiority as a compound of the natural world as field, the act of *dwelling* as focusing event, and the product/process of design as instrument of facilitation.

fig. 21
Attributed to Ying Yü-chien (thirteenth century)
Mountain Village in the Clearing Mist

Sullivan, 1989. p. 255

Nondual space differs from the dualistic conception of space as void, in opposition to form. In the Eastern tradition, space is both nonbeing, and the source of all being. It is the space before and after all things, the space of nothingness, and the space between things. In Chinese thought, being (*you*), nonbeing (*wu*), and space (*yu*) are interrelated concepts. – as Lao Zi proclaimed, "all things are produced out of nothing" (in Xiaodong, 2002. p. 88). In Japanese, these concepts can be aligned with being (*samsara*), nonbeing (*sunyata*), and nothingness (*mu*). *Sunyata*, or the void, is the process of continuous change. *Samsara* is "the chain of existence in which all things are forever coming together, dissolving and coalescing again into new transient patterns" (Sullivan, 1989. p. 258). *Mu* is the space between things, "the mysterious core of Being filled with a dynamic, creative energy of infinite scope" (ibid.). These concepts are all interrelated, and they all share a potential dynamic energy. Space is not the opposite of Being, rather it is the "universal field of transformations" (Bryson,

1988) from which and through which all things *become*. It is not space distinct from time, but a spatio-temporal dimension.

> "I like people to be able to stroll about in my canvases, as I do myself when I am painting them." (Zao Wou-Ki, in Sullivan, 1989, p. 251)

As discussed in the first section of this chapter, the perception of the world consists of an assimilation of multiple instances of perception. The viewing of things, or of the landscape, is an event or encounter in both space and time. In order to comprehend an entity in its entirety, multiple points of view are required. "Why look at a building...from only one point of view?...Only a continually shifting perspective enables us to grasp the whole" (Shen Kua, in Sullivan, 1989, p. 258). In order to comprehend the perpetually changing natural world, these points of view must be in motion. The experience of a landscape is an unfolding in space and time.

> "For the synthesis of space and time that Naum Gabo proclaimed in his *Manifesto* of 1920, and which the exponents of Kinetic Art later realised in practice, there is in the Chinese landscape handscroll a precedent nearly two thousand years old. The handscroll, which is unrolled a little at a time, presents, by means of a continually shifting perspective, a journey in space that, like music, can be experienced only in time." (Sullivan, 1989, p. 253)

The Chinese handscroll form of landscape painting unfolds the spatial landscape in time, leading the viewer on a journey by means, not of a series of still frames, but by a continually shifting point of view moving through a continuous space. The moving body is recognised as interdependent to the experience of space. Subsequently, time and space are conceived of as interdependent within a mobile continuum. Neither a pictorial view nor an object, or form, can be isolated from this mobile continuum, as both their field of existence (the universal field of transformations), and their presencing (through a moving focus), are in constant motion.

fig. 22
Zhao Mengfu
Twin Pines, Level Distance, ca. 1300
Handscroll, ink on paper

Hearn and Smith, 2001, p. 22

The experience of viewing the handscroll comprises a movement of the mind, drawn into and pulled through the unfolding narrative of the painting. Conversely, yet with the same underlying concept, the viewer may experience a painting through the movement in space and time of their own body. This is the case with the examples presented in the following discussion. Two instances will be examined in which the viewing of the artwork occurs in space and time, between the viewer and the work, and in which the viewer is moved, both literally and figuratively. The first instance returns to the minimalist art work. However, the example presented, that of the paintings of Agnes Martin, although often aligned with minimalism due to its reductivist appearance, in fact shifts away from the principles of minimalism and may be opened up to a nondualist interpretation. The second instance is a work created by the author as an exploration, through design, of the space between the artwork and the building.

The Landscape as Sensation
Agnes Martin's Paintings of the Field

In what may seem somewhat of a leap from the topic of Eastern landscape painting, the present discussion now looks to the paintings of American artist Agnes Martin. Martin's paintings – horizontal bands of white or chalky colour, interspersed with light graphite lines, on square canvas – do not bear any formal resemblance to the ink and watercolour paintings of Eastern landscape art. Although Martin has experimented with the same mediums in her works on paper, her subject matter is not mountains, waterfalls, and trees, but in her earlier work, grids floating on a coloured ground, and in her later work, horizontal bands of colour or of white on white. However, the following discussion aims to elicit a resemblance of another kind, one that concerns a view of the world, a registration of sensation, and an experience of the artwork in time and space.

At first glance, Martin's canvasses appear to adhere to the perception of minimalism as an aesthetic of nothingness. They seem to support the notion that minimalism, in art as in architecture, is about the reduction of content to a minimum limit. However, the present thesis has offered an alternative conception of "nothingness" as a nondual concept that is not a vacuum or limit, but the field of interrelation, and the dynamic space between things. Martin's work, as will be shown in this section, is illustrative of this idea of nothingness as betweenness. It provides an insight into the way in which a kind of nondual minimalism may act, not as a blank object, but as an intermediary between the (viewing or inhabiting) self and the field of the natural world. Instead of upholding the subject/object oppositional model of

perception, the work aspires to formlessness and the emergence of sensation that is without object. It can be aligned with the Zen occupation, one also proclaimed as an attribute of architectural minimalism, of "contemplation without objects."

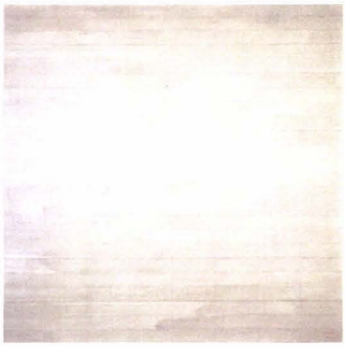


fig. 23
Agnes Martin,
Trumpet
1967

Zwirner and Worth

Formlessness and the Field

> "My paintings have neither object nor space nor line nor anything – no forms. They are light, lightness, about merging, about formlessness, breaking down form... [it] is to accept the necessity of the simple, direct going into a field of vision as you would cross an empty beach to look at the ocean." (Agnes Martin, quoted in Rifkin, 1990)

To say that Martin paints landscapes would be incorrect. This would be to suggest that Martin aspires to represent the natural world in her paintings. Agnes Martin's paintings are without subject, without object, without forms or representation. However, Martin's claim that her paintings are "not about nature" is not altogether convincing. Despite the fact that many of her earlier works bore titles explicitly natural in subject-matter, such as *White* Flower (1960), *Leaf* (1965), and *Desert* (1966), her own writings suggest an innate sensibility strongly influenced by her experience of the natural world. This experience is not reliant on sensory perception, it is not a framed, optical "view" of the world. Martin positions herself as a classicist, as one who "looks out with [her] back to the world." (in Rifkin, 1990). It is a looking-back; a backwards-looking, that looks inward in order to look out at the world. The bands of colour that comprise Martin's paintings are in fact reminiscent of features of the natural landscape, namely, plains, the ocean, the sky. They are planes receding to a horizon. Yet, although Martin begins her canvases with a single graphite line, traversing the width of the canvas, she proceeds to multiply, reflect and refract that horizon, resulting in a multiplicity of horizons that can no longer be read as representation. The bands and lines form a field of horizons and planes,

suggesting something beyond the actual, perceivable world. The canvas is no longer a framed picture of nature, but a formless field of sensation.

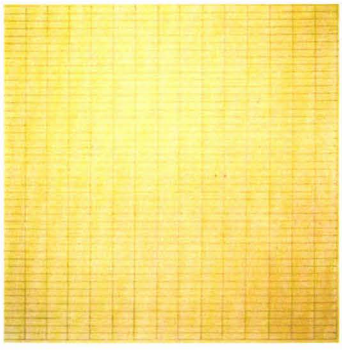


fig. 24
Agnes Martin,
Desert
1966

Artnet

Although Martin does not explicitly talk about sensation, there are a number of clues in her own writings that substantiate such a reading. The first is a concept that is perhaps the central idea around which Martin bases her work. Martin states on numerous occasions that her canvases are about "perfection," something that exists only in the mind. She forms an image of perfection in her mind and then transfers that to the canvas, registering it through the medium of paint. However, the product of the work of art can never be perfect, it exists as an afterimage, as a reminder of perfection, pointing to it, but not representative of it. Martin stresses in her notes and lectures that perfection exists only in our minds, it is "unobtainable and unattainable". Aligning herself with the classical tradition, Martin intends her work to "represent the Ideal in the mind", admitting simultaneously that "perfection, of course, cannot be represented". The role of recognising perfection in the artwork is therefore delegated to the observer. Having experienced moments of perfection, one begins to develop an awareness of it, allowing a mere suggestion in the work to trigger memories of that awareness. As memories accumulate, a sensibility is formed, and we can start to see perfection in our minds, and with our eyes. This sensibility can be conceptualised as a field of affect which exists just below the limits of perception. Suggestions of perfection such as those found in Martin's work act as signals which resonate with that field, bringing it temporarily into focus. The effect is an experience of the ineffable as fleeting sensation.

fig. 25
Agnes Martin,
Untitled #1
1998

Pace Prints

Like nothingness, perfection is an abstract concept perceived, in a Western tradition, as an unobtainable limit. However, just as nothingness has been rethought as a nondual interrelation or betweenness, so too may perfection be aligned with a nondual concept. In line with the present thesis, it is proposed that this "perfection" is in fact the virtual field of nature, as it exists prior to any subject/object differentiation. This virtual field cannot be experienced as such, as within it the self ceases to exist as a differentiated subject, merging completely with the field. Consequently, it cannot be represented. What is suggested, however, is that an awareness of perfection, of the field, exists within each viewer, as each is a self that has emerged from, and remains connected to, the field. This awareness can be triggered by intermediaries, such as art, or, as this thesis proposes, architecture. These vehicles both register and transmit the virtuality of the field as sensation, in the instance of Martin's work, the awareness of perfection. In Buddhism can be found an appropriate analogy for this condition:

> "The arts are crucial due to their *transformative* potential, moving the participant from one point to another. As such, they function as a tool, or "vehicle," for cultivation [of the nondual body-mind]. But the arts are not simply "representations" of the sacred, [the sacred being another conception of the formless, the field, or perhaps perfection] they also make the sacred present, as [Richard Pilgrim] states, 'whereby sacrality is manifested in the experiential power of the moment.' The arts are both the finger pointing to the moon, and an embodiment of the moon itself." (Plate, 2002. p. 131)

fig. 26
Agnes Martin,
Untitled #22
1988

Artnet

The Nondual Experience of Sensation

Within the painting, the sensation arising from Martin's backward-looking view of nature, her more-than-visual encounter, is registered. What is captured is, as Martin describes, "the feeling of moving across a plain... the direct going into a field of vision as you would cross the beach to look at the ocean." The sense of movement evoked is not merely the physical motion of the body, but the sensation of bodily movement and a virtual movement of merging with the field, anticipated by, and remembered by, the mind. Thus the body and mind are conjoined in the experience of sensation. It is through the accumulation of body/mind memories of sensation, that a sensibility, a plane of consistency, is attained. And it is this sensibility that is stirred in viewers as they experience the Martin painting, the interrelation of viewer and artwork resonating with the viewer's inner sensibility, or awareness, of perfection. The viewing of the canvas stirs memories of moments where that sensation, arising from the momentary resonance of one's inner spirit with the natural world, has been experienced. Forming this plane of consistency is the closest one can ever get to "perfection" itself.

Kasha Linville (1971) describes the experience of viewing a Martin canvas. This experience is at once temporal and spatial, encompassing a series of three viewing distances as one moves towards and steps back from the work. Close up, the painting is experienced as material surface. As one moves back, that materiality dissolves into *atmosphere*: "a non-radiating, impermeable mist [which] feels like, rather than looks like, atmosphere." Stepping backwards again, the painting closes down, becoming an opaque wall. Rosalind Krauss (1994, 2000) introduces the signifier *cloud* as a means of describing this atmospheric threshold. *Clouds*, like fields or the sea, are a landscape phenomenon which can be observed from any vantage point, free from the boundary limits which usually delineate physical forms. They are form-less. The *cloud* as a "plateau of non-form" corresponds to the atmospheric experience of the

amorphous field of affect, of the subliminal sea of accumulated memories resonated by Martin's moments of perfection.

The experience of sensation, of the awareness in one's mind of perfection or the field, is thus interconnected with the physical movement of the body through time and space. As the body moves, so is the mind moved, in a sensation of crossing a plane or moving into the field. It is this nondual body-mind experience of interrelation with the field that the present work promotes as a richer alternative to a visually-dominant mode of subject/object perception. What emerges from the experience of Martin's work is a resonance between the self as body-mind and the field of the natural world.

fig. 27
Agnes Martin,
Untitled #3
1998

Pace Prints

Resonance and Interrelation

The resonant experience of Martin's "perfection" may be thought of as the result of the interactivity between *yin* and *yang* that takes place both within the self and within the world. To experience Martin's work is to experience a resonance of an inner awareness of perfection with its natural equivalent, the harmony of things which are the product of the relation between heaven and earth. To return to Wang Fuzhi's description (in Fung and Jackson, 2000. p. 15) of scenery (the natural field as the interrelation of heaven and earth) and sentiment (the interrelation of *yin* and *yang* within the self): "When this activity between *yin* and *yang* takes place in one's heart, the products of heaven and earth respond from the outside." The resonance between the interactivity of self and world is adequately elucidated by Shigenori Nagatomo and Pamela Winfield in their text on "Cultivating Micro-Macrocosmic Correlativity" (in Plate, ed., 2002. pp. 145-152). Nagatomo and Winfield use the terms *microcosm* and *macrocosm* to denote the individual "lived body-mind" and the natural "world body-mind" respectively, within which the energies (*qi*) of *yin* and *yang* flow. Although it is easy to assign the two cosmos to interior and exterior, their correlation begins with their interconnection:

> "Zen Buddhism...maintains an interconnected web of being where the usual lines distinguishing external macrocosm and internal microcosm can be blurred. Given this worldview, it is easy to see the importance of being a participant in – not just an observer of – the environment." (ibid. p. 146)

It is through participation in the environment that one's microcosm "resonates and reconnects" with the macrocosm of the natural world. This resonance is described as a "dynamic energy exchange." Without participation, as in the movement of the viewer towards or away from Martin's paintings, "the micro-macrocosmic correlativity can not experientially be brought to a meaningful attunement and interresonance" (ibid. p. 149).

The Artwork as Intermediary

The paintings of Agnes Martin yield insights into the potentiality of the artwork to facilitate a resonant interrelation between self and world. The criteria for this facilitation can hereby be expressed as non-representational reference to or embodiment of the field, the creation of a space, ambience, or atmosphere that triggers an awareness of the field, and the experience of the field as sensation via the movement in time and space of the body-mind. The alignment of Martin's work with minimalism is not a coincidence. Her paintings suggest the potentiality within minimalism for a nondual approach. The homogeneous materiality of minimalist architecture may begin to reference a field-like quality, the lack of objects to contemplate may encourage a contemplation or awareness of the ambient qualities of the natural field, and the potential exists for this architecture to engage the body-mind in acts of inhabitation, *dwelling*, or participation in the environment. In order for this to eventuate, however, the oppositions of subject and object, inside and outside, mind and body, must be overcome. Perhaps, if this is possible, architecture may also become an instrument or vehicle for the facilitation of dwelling-in-the-world, and bring about a becoming-interior.

Threshold: Suburban Horizons
Between Art and Architecture, Interior and Exterior

The final model presented in this chapter is a work created in the research process. The work was an experiment that set out with the aim of bridging the gap between a reading of Agnes Martin's paintings and the architectonic reality of built dwellings. It employs the visual language of Martin's fields of horizontal bands and lines, translating them into an architectural materiality. In doing so, however, the intent was not simply to mimic Martin's work, but to test

and extend the theory extracted from the reading, and to locate a resonance between the theory of the artwork and the theory of *dwelling*. The resulting work was a kind of hybrid, or mutation, that emerged from the space between the art of Agnes Martin and the architecture of the New Zealand suburban house. Although the work does not directly address an interrelation with the natural world, it does call into play certain notions that are central to the present work. Through experimentation with the potentiality of architectural surfaces, like the surfaces of Martin's paintings, to reference a field, the work resists both an artistic tendency toward objective representation or subjective expression, and a reading of architectural surfaces and materials as either functional objects or expressive mediums. Operating at a threshold between inside and outside, the work toys with an interrelation between the surfaces of interior lining and exterior cladding, deliberately confounding the relation between interior and exterior. Finally, the work is incomplete without activation by a third party, the viewer. The role of the viewer, however, is not as static observer, but as moving body-mind. It is only through the simultaneity of bodily movement through space and cognitive perception that the viewer experiences the work's mutability. The viewer is implicated as participant, engaging with the work in time and space.

The way in which the work is presented here is a departure from the structure and style of the rest of the thesis. The work evolved as a materialisation of a line of thinking, a translation from thought to built/painted experiment. It therefore seems appropriate to re-present the work as a journey through a collection of notational thoughts-in-process and images. It finds its way back into the thesis as a reincarnation of its original intention, that is, as a bridge between the art-work and the built-work.

Suburban Horizons: Indoor-Outdoor Flow

Work created for an installation/exhibition/event, *word presents House [layered]*.

"Architects Estefania Galinanes-Garcia & Jon L Thompson proffer a platform for 25 architects and artists to engage with 'the domestic' through a series of site-specific physical interventions" (from advertising flyer).

3-5 September 2004

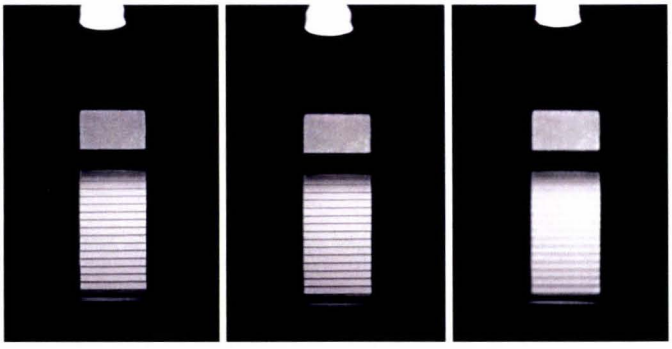
151 Darlington Road, Mirimar, Wellington, New Zealand.

fig. 28 and 29
Elevation and Plan of
151 Darlington Road,
Mirimar, Wellington,
New Zealand
– site of installation work

[SITE] 151 darlington road, mirimar | new zealand suburban domestic | 1950's family home | weatherboard | surrounded by variations of the same house | separated from neighbours by a narrow space between house and property boundary, fence, driveway | bedroom #3 | that this was a male child's bedroom is hinted at only by the maritime theme curtains, juxtaposed against the floral print wallpaper in creams and warm browns, and the jungle-pattern carpet that runs through most of the house | the room is otherwise bare except for a built-in wardrobe, single light fixture, and an electrical socket |

fig. 30
window/wall threshold
depth of field

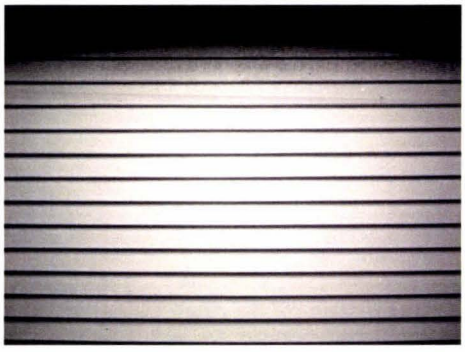
photography: author



[THRESHOLD] but what draws my attention is the south-facing wall, in which a single window is set | my gaze is drawn through the empty room | past the noise of colliding patterns | outward, to the view |

fig. 31
weatherboards

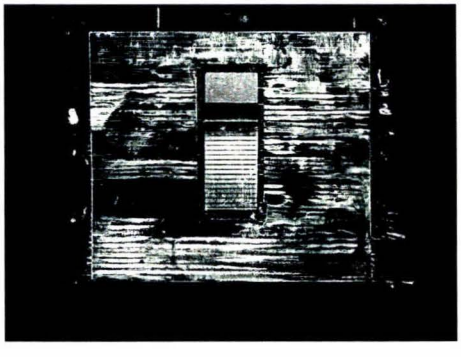
photography: author



[HORIZONS] alternating bands of white and thin lines of shadow fill the frame | the weatherboards of the neighbouring house occupy foreground, midground, and background | replacing the iconic coastal view of planes extending to a horizon with a similarly iconic suburban view | a multiplicity of horizons | the silent blankness of the building material gives way to a field of infinite depth | becoming landscape, becoming more than landscape | the endless repetition of horizontal lines allows for an extension beyond the limits of the natural landscape | the horizon-as-limit transcending itself in its multiplicity |

fig. 32
field of lines
concept sketch

drawing: author



[JOURNEY] but this is my journey | in my mind, I experience a circularity | approaching the house and its weatherboard exterior | entering the house | reaching the room-as-threshold | from

which I am once again confronted with the exterior (of its neighbour-clone) as framed view | the exterior is folded into the interior | a twisted variation on the theme of "indoor-outdoor flow" | but how to make this journey more explicit? | to capture the essence of the dialogue between interior and exterior, and locate it at the threshold itself |

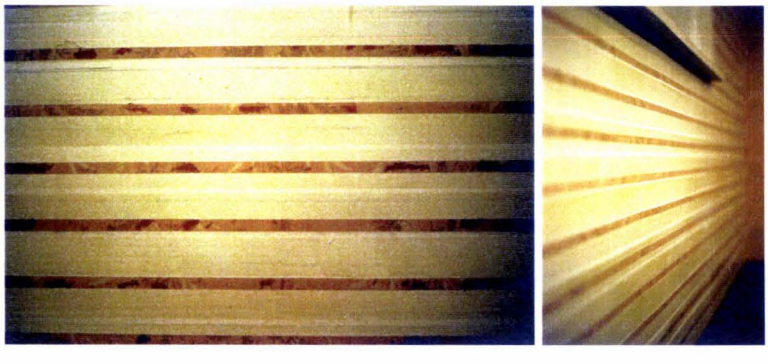
fig. 33
work: view one

photography: author

[IN-COMPLETION] the method of my intervention is simple | to echo the white bands of the weatherboards on the internal wall surface | however, a view is never experienced from a single vantage point | the viewer is moved | drawn towards or impelled to step back from the view | at different points in space, the view expands or contracts relative to the frame |

fig. 34
work: detail of wall

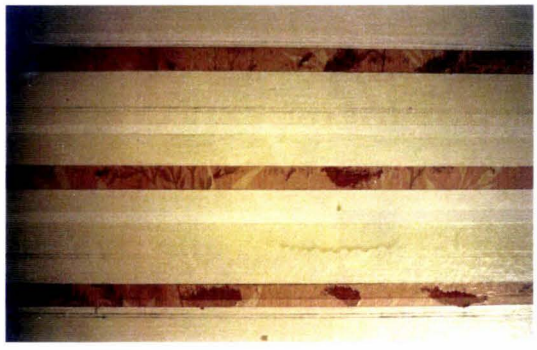
photography: author



I therefore take three points in the space of the room from which to extend the lines of the weatherboards onto the wall surface | the bands corresponding to the most distant vantage point are executed in matt white ceiling paint | the mid-point bands in polyurethane gloss | and the shadow-lines of the close-up view in double graphite lines |

fig. 35
work: close up detail

photography: author



the result is a layered field of lines | an exaggerated multiplicity of horizons | embraced in a dynamic dialogue with the framed exterior wall | the wall-as-boundary is dematerialised, dissolved in a cloud of horizons |

fig. 36
work: view two

photography: author

but the work resists completion | it is left open to activation by the viewers | who are compelled to move through the empty room | mapping individual trajectories | creating potentially infinite permutations | of spatial experience |

Conclusion

Imaging the Natural World as Dwelling-Space

Dwelling in the minimalist interior was shown in Chapter One to be problematised by conflicts resulting from the dualistic opposition of subject and object. In Chapter Two a nondual worldview was proposed as an alternative to the tradition of dualism, with the hypothesis that in taking a nondual approach, a philosophy of dwelling-design may be formulated that is more in tune with Heidegger's concept of *dwelling*, and is thus better placed to answer minimalism's call to both a natural and spiritual desire. The conflicts presented by a dualistic minimalism posed a block to the desired interrelation of self and natural world through architecture. Instead the relation of self and world, self and architecture, architecture and nature, all remained tethered to the subject/object opposition. These problems were all closely connected with issues of viewing: the self as both viewing subject and viewed object, architecture as both viewing-space and viewed object, nature as viewed object. The predominance of a visual mode of perception, of course, is also linked to representation, framing, and viewing, in art. It was thus appropriate to investigate the implications of a philosophy of nonduality first on an understanding of perception, through the representation or manifestation of the view in art. The genre of landscape art offered an opportunity to carry out this analysis of nondual perception in relation to the viewing of, or interrelation with, the natural world.

What has emerged from this investigation is a framework for the understanding of nondual perception, and the facilitation of self-world interrelation through an instrument of intermediation. In relation to the present chapter, this instrument, or vehicle, was the artwork. However, architectural minimalism has already been shown to blur the line between art and

architecture, and the last work discussed in this chapter is a further example of the potential application of a theory developed in relation to art, to architecture. Furthermore, the analysis in this chapter of the nondual experience of the artwork has shown it to be both mental and physical. In other words, the artwork-as-intermediary fosters an interrelation between self and world that engages the body-mind of the nondual self. Nondual perception is thus tied up with nondual action, which leads us to the relevance of this discussion to *dwelling* – the artwork-as-intermediary offers a model for the facilitation by architecture-as-intermediary of *acts of inhabitation*.

CHAPTER FOUR
Dwelling in the World

In the previous chapter, the discussion centred around the impact of a *nondual world view* on the manifestation of a *view of the world* in art. The non-representational landscape painting was understood to act as a medium through which the imperceptible forces (percepts) and becomings-other (affects) of the natural world are rendered perceptible. The goal is not the framing of a pictorial view, but the registration of sensation arising from the act of viewing. Viewing here is not associated singularly with "looking," but with the dynamic interrelation of viewer (self) and world. The art-work thus becomes an intermediary between the virtuality of sensation, and the tangible realm of the actual. The work of art embodies an actualisation of the virtual, it does not aspire to re-present the actual, but to engender the possible.

Merleau-Ponty (in Bogue, 2003) positions the body, or the "flesh," as the intermediary between inner and outer worlds, and suggests that the "intercorporeity" resulting from the intertwining of body-flesh and world-flesh is that which is rendered perceptible in art. Although based on a similar concept of interrelation, Merleau-Ponty's theory nevertheless retains a dualistic

opposition of "inner" and "outer" worlds, held apart by the formal matter of the body – the flesh. In contradistinction, the Eastern landscape painter aims to "let go" of the formal world, to forget the self or ego as a bounded identity. Deleuze and Guattari offer an alternative conception of the artwork as intermediary, enabling a structuring of sensation which allows the matter of both self and world to dissolve:

> "The being of sensation is not the flesh, but the compound of non-human forces of the cosmos, of non-human becomings of man, and the ambiguous house that exchanges and adjusts them, makes them swirl around like winds. The flesh is only the photographic developing solution that disappears in that which it develops: the compound of sensation... Art in this regard is a functioning part of our inhabiting of the world, one of the ways whereby we build a territorial home for ourselves, structure and orient our bodies, frame and delimit space, but also a means whereby we communicate with the outside, the artwork serving as a filtering membrane that permits an interchange and circulation of forces across its surface." (in Bogue, 2003, p. 167)

"House" is used here as a metaphor for the artwork. The house is both the structure by which a dwelling-space is delimited, and the threshold of interrelation between inhabitant and world. The house is the space of Heidegger's *dwelling*, the act of inhabitation by which the world becomes an interior. It is the site of Maldiney's systolic/diastolic rhythm. The house initiates a systolic contraction by which the imperceptible field of nature takes shape as tangible form, and allows a diastolic expansion whereby subject/object differentiation dissolves and the self re-merges into the field. It is the medium by which the virtual field is focused as the possible, and experienced as sensation.

The present chapter investigates the actual house as intermediary between self and world, and looks to explore the roles of architecture and interior design as facilitators of this interrelation. It aims to develop a conception of interiority as a compound of natural world as field, the act of *dwelling* as focusing event, and the product/process of design as instrument of facilitation. Ultimately, the goal is to promote a rethinking of interior design, instigated by the dissolution of interior and exterior as oppositional categories. If the site of interior design is not designated as "the inside of architecture," then what does it become? The following discussion will propose that the main objective of interior design is to create a state of potentiality for the act of dwelling-in-the-world.

According to Heidegger, the role of architecture is to focus the world around the inhabiting self. Architecture brings the infinite virtuality of the natural world to within our grasp; we may begin to comprehend, and thus correspond with it. The function of architecture is not to contain, but to bring into focus. The space focused by architecture is therefore that same space in which architecture is located, and not an enclosed "inside" space distinct from its excluded "outside." Consequently, there is no definitive "interior" made distinct from the "exterior" by means of an architecture which acts as a device of enclosure, of inclusion and exclusion. Rather, interiority comes into being through the act of inhabitation, Heidegger's *dwelling*. There is no "interior," but rather a *becoming-interior.*

If there is no such thing as "the interior," then practice of interior design becomes problematised. *Becoming-interior* is a process of interrelation between inhabitant and world, which, through the act of *dwelling*, focuses the world around the inhabitant, thus creating a state of interiority. Interior design must therefore design for becoming-interior, for *dwelling*, for focusing-the-world. It must bring the potentiality for *dwelling* to architecture, in order for architecture to become "a dwelling." The role of interior design is thus to facilitate the act of *dwelling*. However, this act cannot be determined by the design, as *dwelling* is an experience unique to the inhabitant, and particular to each act of inhabitation. There are as many possible experiences of interiority as there are possible acts of inhabitation, the outcome is never fixed.

Becoming-interior is an open-ended process, it is never complete. It never results in a fixed "interior," but rather attains only temporary completion through the act of *dwelling*, which is open to infinite variations and permutations. It is *openness*, rather than enclosure, that is a condition of interiority. If the aim of design was to resolve completely the functional programme of a space, taking into account the infinite possibilities for use, the designer would be faced with an impossible task. Instead, the aim of interior design should be to create a space of potentiality, a space open to the possibilities of *dwelling*. It should aspire to focus the (natural) world around the inhabitant, to make sensible the interrelation of self and world, to create a resonance between them, to stimulate sensation.

How can interior design create a resonance between self and world? To return to the example, previously discussed, of the paintings of Agnes Martin, the artwork can be positioned in a similar role to interior design. It is Deleuze and Guattari's "house." Martin's

paintings register a resonance arising from the interrelation of the artist and her environment, through the actualisation of sensation rather than mimetic representation, which subsequently stimulates a resonant response in the viewer, who experiences the sensation of their interrelation to not only the artwork, but the natural world from which the initial resonance emerged. The trigger here is the viewer's awareness of a "third space," of an unknown between, of something emerging from their interrelation with the work that extends beyond both entities, yet is not present independently within either work or viewer. This awareness taps into the virtual content of the artwork, that which is more than what is materially existent. It is the experience of the atmospheric content of the work, of a feeling that cannot be put into words, that has no subject, nor object – the experience of sensation.

The following sections of this chapter explore the resonant qualities of architecture and interiors which facilitate the interrelation of self and world. The examples cited can be aligned with the minimalist tradition, beginning with the Modernist architect often proclaimed to be the "forefather of minimalist architecture," Mies van der Rohe, proceeding to an investigation of the work of contemporary Japanese architect Tadao Ando, and finishing with a discussion of contemporary New Zealand architecture. As the thesis is based around a concept of *dwelling*, the works referenced are predominantly dwelling-spaces, either primary residences or holiday retreats. All share a feeling of escape or sanctuary from society, and an enhanced sense of interrelation with nature.

Prior to introducing the works to be discussed, it may be useful to outline the criteria by which the particular examples have been selected, and against which they shall be critiqued. The method of shaping an understanding via an accumulation of models, as borrowed from an Eastern way of thought, was broached in the introduction to this thesis. The works to be analysed were selected as models that evoke a feeling of interconnection with the natural world, that is in line with the approach promoted by the present work. However, the intent behind the selection is not to present an exhaustive overview of a particular style or ideal, that culminates in the formulation of a definitive classification. Rather, the works all exhibit tendencies toward a nondualistic approach to designing for *dwelling*, whether this appears to have been a conscious intention of the architect, or a subsequent reading of the built work from the viewpoint of the philosophical framework formulated through this thesis. Not all works are interpreted as being entirely successful in facilitating nondual *dwelling*, and these shortfalls will also be discussed. The historical and cultural contexts of the works, be they traditional or contemporary, Eastern, Western, or in-between, will also be taken into consideration.

This chapter also seeks to address the middle-ground between East and West, and accordingly the models reflect aspects pertaining to both cultures. It will be suggested, through the analyses, that certain of these aspects point to areas in which a dialogue between the cultures may be established. It is this dialogue that promotes the hypothesis introduced at the start of the thesis: that there may exist a connection between Eastern aesthetics and Western (particularly minimalist) architecture, that goes beyond the superficial juxtaposition prevalent in lifestyle magazines such as *urbis*. The crux of this connection is the facilitation of nondual *dwelling*, and the interrelation of the (cultural) self and the (natural) world. From the spaces between the models may emerge a new field of potentiality for the continuation and further development of a nondual approach to dwelling-design. Furthermore, it is hoped that an investigation of the space between the two traditions will offer new insights into each, in particular, enhancing an understanding of the philosophical ground of Eastern aesthetics, and highlighting areas in which the forms and ideas of Eastern aesthetics may positively impact upon a developing Western architecture. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of two potential concepts, extrapolated from the study, that may provide a framework, and begin to suggest a form, for a translation of the philosophical approach, into design.

Beyond the Wall and the Window
From an Architecture of Enclosure to an Architecture of Openness

fig. 37
Raupo whare (c. 1860), Rahotu Redoubt, Taranaki

Parihaka Album, Alexander Turnbull Library. Sourced from Shaw, 2003. p. 15

"On arrival in New Zealand, the earliest European settlers were entirely without familiar building materials, so they emulated the style and construction methods of Maori dwellings and adapted them according to European ideas of hygiene and comfort." (Shaw, 2003. p. 14)

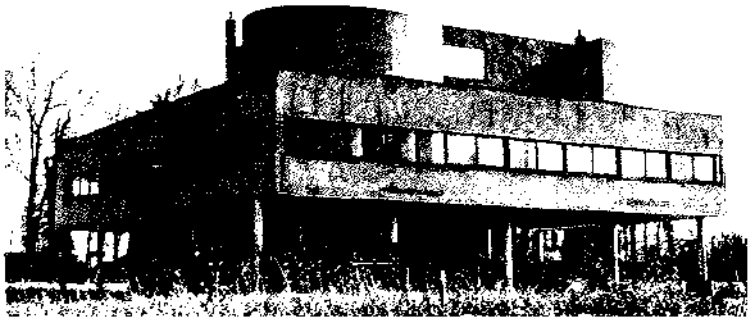
The traditional raupo *whare* was a windowless dwelling, rectangular in plan, and constructed from a wooden frame over which were layered tied bundles of dried raupo reeds. It was this simple structure that was adopted by many of the early settlers, often as temporary residences until building materials more suited to European-style dwellings could be found. The raupo hut, however, did prove to be easily adaptable to the requirements of the immigrants (ibid.). Photographs from the time show the incorporation of Western building conventions, particularly the insertion of imported doors and glazed windows. With the insertion of the door and window, the wall, whether of stone, timber, or raupo construction, regained its status as architecture and its role as the delineator of inner and outer space. The duality of Western architecture is epitomised by the conception of the wall as a device of enclosure, providing shelter, security, and privacy from the excluded outside. It is the wall that upholds the polarisation of inside and outside, public and private, the cultural space of architecture and the space of the world. The window subsequently acts as a means of re-framing the excluded outside as that which architecture, and therefore culture, has overcome.

The window as a framing device may be adopted as an indicator of the way in which Western society traditionally perceives the relationship between nature (the world, the outside) and culture (social and architectural constructions, the inside). The picture window may be compared to the picturesque landscape painting, in which objects are arranged in space within the confines of the frame and perspectival system. As discussed in the previous chapter, this dualistic method of depicting space in a way that privileges visual perception, is replaced, in a nondualistic approach, with a registration of sensation that relies upon an awareness of the interconnection of all things. It follows that, in order to formulate a nondual approach to dwelling-design, the nature of the interior/exterior interface must be interrogated, and the window, as a framing device that further polarises inside and outside, replaced by a device that facilitates interrelation and experience via sensation. It is through a reconsideration of the wall/window construction as dualistic archetype that the potential may emerge for a shift from architecture as the erection of a boundary between inside and outside, to *dwelling* as an intermediary threshold-space of interrelation.

Urbis magazine draws repeatedly upon the iconic New Zealand sense of connection with nature and the landscape in the language used to describe the built works published within it. The way in which a connection to the natural elements is evoked draws from influences aligned with the traditions of architectural minimalism and Eastern aesthetics. The impact of Modernist architecture is also referenced, although in a confusing manner. The terms "modernist" and "minimalist" are often used interchangeably, glossing over the difference

between the two. Modernism and minimalism are representative of differing approaches to both the architectural object, and its inhabitation. This difference finds a continuation in the relationship established between architectural space and the outside space of the world. The following sections expand on the nature of this relationship as effectuated by the various traditions, beginning with Western modernism and architectural minimalism, and considering secondly traditional Japanese architecture, and its contemporary evolution in the work of Tadao Ando. Both architectural minimalism, and the work of Ando, embrace the modernist ethos as a departure point. However, both are also imbued with another, seemingly antithetical ethos, that serves to open them up to the possibilities of nonduality.

fig. 38
Le Corbusier
Villa Savoie



Open Architecture
Dwelling in the View

Le Corbusier's *dom-ino* housing design hinted at a dynamic potentiality for the liberation of architecture from the static conception of the wall-as-barrier. The system, based on a series of horizontal planes supported by columns, or *pilotis*, provided a structural framework that did not rely on the wall as a load-bearing entity. The wall was thus able to be reconsidered as a mobile spatial delineator, treated more as a screen or partition than as a fixed element. Although Le Corbusier exploited this new freedom in the interiors of his buildings, employing moveable screens and experimenting with both rectilinear and curved forms, his approach with regards to the external walls of his residential designs remained more conventional. Varying window apertures were considered, as evidenced in the panoramic strip windows of Villa Savoie, which began to suggest a more thoughtful engagement with the surrounding landscape and its relation to the architecture. Nonetheless, the designs do not venture beyond the fundamental conventions of Western architecture. The wall remains a wall,

dividing the interior from the exterior, and the window opening remains a framed view. Mies van der Rohe, on the other hand, took the horizontal planar forms of the *dom-ino* concept a step further. Mies' pavilion structures celebrate the liberation of the wall from structural duties, to the point where the wall itself is apparently discarded.

fig. 39
Mies van der Rohe.
Farnsworth House.
Plano, Illinois.
1945-50

Sourced from Hilberseimer.
1956. p. 76

Architecture of Horizontality: Farnsworth House

In any discussion of an architectural language whose primary feature is openness to the landscape, the importance of Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth house can not be overlooked. Designed and built between 1946 and 1951 for Edith Farnsworth, the structure is comprised of a series of horizontal planes, which appear to float above the natural plain that lies alongside the banks of Fox River, Plano, Illinois. The house is a prime example of Mies' design philosophy, whereby the removal of structural elements and load-bearing walls from the interior to an external skeleton, renders the internal space completely open. The creation of a "universal space" allows for the implementation of the free plan, in which the only fixed element is a central core, containing all utilities.

In reality, the "free" plan did not eventuate in a place of freedom for the client, and was the subject of much controversy, along with the exhorbitantly over-budget cost and regular maintenance problems. Mies insisted on fitting out the interior with furnishings chosen and placed according to his exacting tastes, leaving little freedom of choice to the client. Edith Farnsworth also complained of feeling over-exposed to both the elements and curious architectural tourists in the house, of which each face is glazed from floor to ceiling, with no walls and thus no privacy. However, these issues of practicality are not immediately evident when viewing the many published images of the work. The photographs present the house as it was conceived, as a pure expression of an architecture which rests lightly in the landscape,

becoming a part of it, while acting as a viewing-platform from which to appreciate its beauty. It is this conception of Farnsworth house, the idealist intention of the design promoted by publicised re-presentations, that forms the basis for the following analysis. The intent here is not to ignore the reality, but to attempt to understand the seductive qualities of this architectural language. For it is these qualities which have since become a source of inspiration for many architects, and have subsequently been factored into the development of a design ethos which pervades much contemporary architecture drawing upon modernist and minimalist precedents. The following discussion will also fold in the writer's reading of the building, an understanding which has been accumulated via various texts and images, and influenced by the philosophical vantage point of architectural and natural interrelatedness.

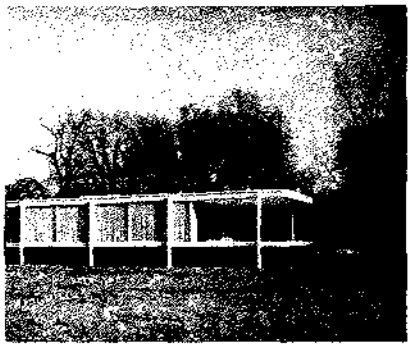


fig. 40
Mies van der Rohe,
Farnsworth House,
Plano, Illinois,
1945-50

Sourced from Hilberseimer,
1956, p. 79

Dwelling in the Field

> "From within and seen in 360 degrees through the transparent walls, nature, especially the changes of light and the seasons, becomes a pervasive and integral part of the experience of any and all time spent there. The Farnsworth House is a classical design with romantic implications, a work of art that architecturally mediates between man and nature." (Schulz, 1985, p. 256)

Farnsworth House's inhabitant is certainly placed in a position from which contemplation of the surrounding environment is inevitable. Yet the question has yet to be answered, can one *dwell* in this place? Heidegger's *dwelling* also embodies a notion of shelter and security. In order to inhabit, or dwell in, the world, one must first feel comfortable. Mies's aspiration to total transparency and openness perhaps begins to lean towards a prioritising of the visual. The passage to the outdoors is via the view, yet whilst the glass wall allows complete visual

freedom, it also physically distances the viewer. The glass wall does not in fact dematerialise the boundary, its presence is keenly felt. It becomes an instrument of display, objectifying both the natural environment as "scene," and the inhabitant as "player." Edith Farnsworth found herself unable to dwell in the house, she felt exposed.

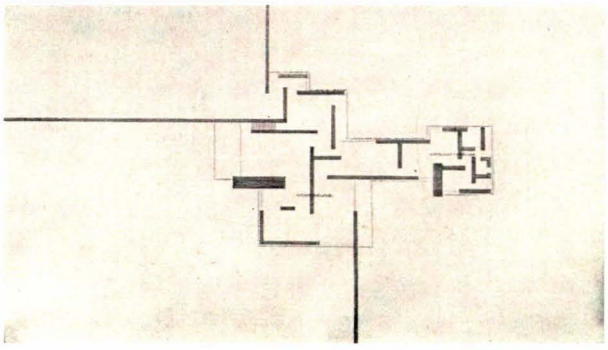


fig. 41
Mies van der Rohe, Plan of Brick Country House, 1923. Note the use of free-standing walls extending into the landscape.

Sourced from Johnson, 1953 p. 32

Exposure of this kind is confrontational, it does not foster or facilitate a state of mutual communication. It polarises, rather than bringing into focus an awareness of interdependence. Perhaps in this respect Mies's Brick Country House would have been a more appropriate example of a dwelling that facilitates a relationship between man and nature. The point of difference is a certain ambiguity, a between-space created by the not-quite-enclosed, not-quite-completely-open, not-quite-inside, not-quite-outside qualities of the design. Farnsworth House is certainly a refined masterpiece of open building, but is it open *dwelling*? As Frank Schulz states: "Certainly the house is more nearly a temple than a dwelling" (1985. p. 256).

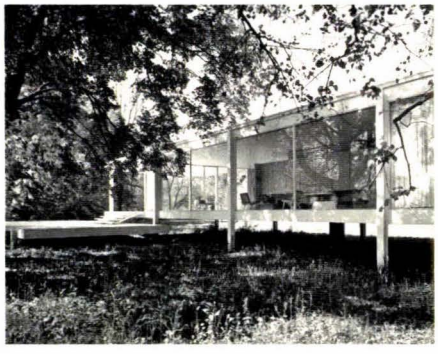


fig. 42
Mies van der Rohe, Farnsworth House, Plano, Illinois, 1945-50

Sourced from Carter, 1999. p. 82

In order to understand where it is that Farnsworth House falls short of creating a nondual dwelling-space, attention must be directed back to the nature of the interface between inside and outside. The nondual *dwelling* aspires to create a threshold wherein the space of architecture and the natural world interpenetrate. The architecture of duality, on the other hand, originates with the erection of a barrier, determining a polarisation of inside and outside. In this work, Mies attempts to eliminate that barrier by rendering it transparent through employing glass as a *medium*. This suggests two things, firstly, that Mies' understanding of continuous space privileges the visual; secondly, that the wall does not disappear, but in fact is merely reduced to a frame, becoming in effect one large window. Thus, Farnsworth House is not an instrument that renders perceptible the virtual forces of the natural world, enabling them to be experienced as sensation. It is instead a viewing device within which all sensory perception of the surrounding environment, bar the visual, is stifled. Most importantly, as the only connection established between the inhabitant and the natural world is visual, the building does not facilitate a dynamic interrelation between the two. Perhaps it is this unbalanced sensory experience that led the original occupant to experience, not sensations of connection and wellbeing, but feelings of uneasiness and discomfort.

Farnsworth House serves as an example of an architecture whose intentions may tend toward nondual *dwelling* and interrelation with the natural world, but one that fails in that respect as a result of an inability to overcome a fundamentally dualistic inclination. The work reverts to the dialectic of inside and outside, rather than the nondual model of field and focus. Nonetheless, it is possible to read into the work a nondual intent, and it is this particular reading that is significant in its impact on architectural minimalism. It is important to note that the romanticised version of Farnsworth House, not coincidentally, is that which has inspired many architects and designers. The significance of the visually-dominated experience in heightening a sense of isolation from the outside is lost due to the way in which the majority of people experience the building for themselves: through its representation in a visual medium. Consequently, viewers are free to project their own, idealised, perceptions, onto the work. The images are evocative, and perhaps stir sensations that one would not experience in the building itself. The images become surfaces for projections of idealised dwelling. It is still possible to create from the work a precedent for an architecture of openness, of dwelling-in-the-view.

The objectification of nature as view, as illustrated by Farnsworth House, indicates a reinforcement of the subject/object opposition. It is this opposition that nonduality breaks down. Architectural minimalism complicates the relation of subject and object, and thereby opens up the dialectic to a nondual reconsideration. In proposing this opening up that architectural minimalism engenders, it is not suggested that the dualistic tendencies of Western architecture are transcended. They remain, albeit on less steady ground, undermined by the infiltration of contradiction and ambiguity. The paradoxical nature of architectural minimalism was the subject of the first chapter of this thesis. However, in line with the present discussion, a reading of architectural minimalism's treatment of the subject/object opposition will be revisited.

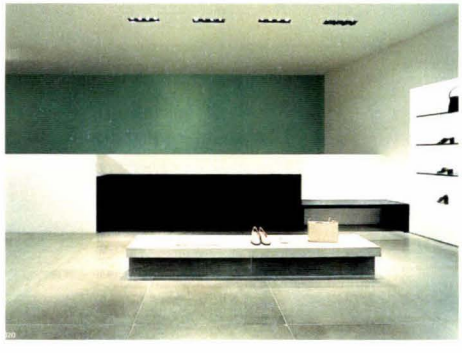


fig. 43
John Pawson,
retail interior

Moryadas and Morris, 2002

The culture of simplicity embraced by architectural minimalism, along with its ethics of reduction to the minimum, results in a double code. On the one hand, the "less is more" ideal refers to a nonmaterialist morality that turns the ascetic lifetstyle into a status symbol. Here, the denial of excess in the form of decoration and possessions is a token gesture of voluntary poverty, as the reality suggests that these empty spaces are not only expensive and elitist, but also become gallery-like devices of display, in which carefully composed possessions and occupants are objectified. In this way, the reduction of architectural ornament creates a space in which all objects are rendered ornamental. The minimalist space becomes a place in which to contemplate objects without distractions, lending the objects a disproportional status. It is this aspect that makes architectural minimalism such an appropriate form for high-culture retail design. On the other hand, however, the contemplative state induced by minimal architecture allows for a focusing of attention on non-physical phenomena. Subtle variations

of colour or texture, light or shadow, become perceptible. In contrast to a climate of display, in which the subject/object opposition is advanced and visual perception privileged, architectural minimalism also creates the potential for an atmosphere of sensation, of "contemplation without objects" (Bertoni, 2002. p. 40).

"Without objects" may be interpreted as an implication of nothingness. This is a common misperception of architectural minimalism. What the present thesis proposes is that "without objects" refers instead to a contemplation that does not entertain the subject/object opposition: a nondual contemplation. Nonduality, as explicated in Chapter Two, may be recognised as doing the following: rejecting the notion of a fixed and finite identity that defines objects or subjects; recognising these nondual entities as being also comprised of the totality of their extended interrelation with the world around them, and other things; maintaining a conception of entities as foci within a field that extends to include the whole of the natural world. In other words, the nondual contemplation of space can be interpreted as being without object, arising from a recognition of interrelation, and harnessing an awareness of the field. Architectural minimalism begins to foster the conditions for this kind of contemplation, reducing distractions through minimising overt formal gestures, decoration, and objects, and thereby drawing attention to formless phenomena such as light, shadow, and movement. It also responds to "the need to create a mental, spatial and almost atemporal void which allows a break, a pause for reflection, a highly effective standstill to allow a different view of reality" (Bertoni, 2002. p. 20). Again, this gap is not only nothingness, but the space of *ma*, an interval between two things that enables a dynamic exchange to occur.

In developing, through and beyond architectural minimalism, an approach to dwelling-design that facilitates the interrelation of self and world, the nature of the space between architecture and the natural world must be explored. The following section addresses the use of intermediary space and ambiguity in Japanese architecture to create a space of dynamic interrelation.

Ma as Threshold
Intermediary Space and Interrelation in Japanese Architecture

Traditional Japanese dwelling-design offers valuable insight into the possibilities of creating a nondual architecture. It provides an exemplary model, fundamentally, because it is anchored in a cultural and philosophical tradition of nonduality. In saying this, however, this work does

not propose that the Japanese building style should be adopted as a global standard. All cultures and geographical locations present their own requirements for an appropriate architectural style, or multitude of styles. With particular reference to New Zealand, which is not altogether dissimilar in climate and geography to Japan, there remain local considerations regard terrain, availability of materials, and weather conditions. Japanese aesthetics do however resonate to some degree within New Zealand culture, as evidenced by publications such as *urbis*. The present work suggests that the appropriation of the style of another culture as a whole package is both lacking in relevance to the local culture, and bound to lose its potency through cross-cultural (mis)translation. Instead, a between-space must be located wherein a dialogue can be established and a dynamic interplay effectuated. In light of this, the work now aims to uncover the qualities within Japanese architecture that render it a successful model of nondual *dwelling*, in the hope that from an understanding of these qualities may emerge a strategy for developing a nondual approach to dwelling-design in New Zealand.

fig. 44 (left)
Interior of traditional Japanese residence at Minkaen
from Minkaen brochure

fig. 45 (right)
Lattice doors of traditional house in Kyoto
Kurokawa, 1991. p. 105

The design of traditional Japanese dwellings embraces a nondual conception of the world: impermanence, interconnection, and dynamic contrast facilitated by space (*ma*) between things. There are two main types of dwellings that may be considered: that which is located within a garden or natural setting, and that which is located in an urban environment, fronting onto a street. The iconic form taken by the former is of a single-story pavilion-like structure raised off the ground and set under a heavy roof that is supported by poles. The Western conception of walls is not present here, substituted by sliding *shoji* screens that form a permeable and shifting boundary with the outside. Around the perimeter of the structure runs an *engawa*, or verandah, created by the extension of floor and eaves. In the latter, generally a deep, narrow building of multiple storeys, the threshold between street and interior space is negotiated by wooden lattice screens. Both dwelling-types establish a continuity of space in

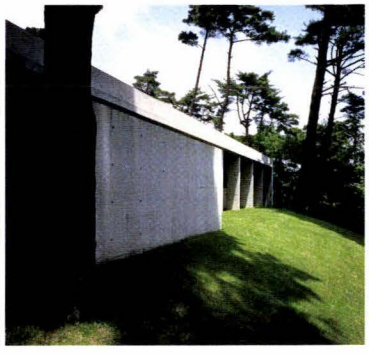
which natural and architectural, or public and private, spaces interpenetrate. The use of screens to suggest a boundary or threshold between inside and outside differs fundamentally from the Western wall/window barrier. While the window frames a view and privileges visual perception whilst reinforcing a physical distancing from the excluded outside, the screen acts more as a permeable membrane or filter. Visual passage through the screen does not reveal a view, rather, it registers changes in light and shadow, and conveys movement. The screens also admit air and sound, heightening the experience of interconnection as sensation, not merely visual perception.

A contemporary model whereby these principles of nonduality are cultivated can be found in the work of Japanese architect Tadao Ando. Ando's buildings are contemporary expressions of a cultural philosophy that may be traditional, yet remains relevant. Furthermore, Ando's work suggests potential for developing a contemporary approach to dwelling-design that embraces nonduality yet also references a Western architectural tradition. Ando positions himself between Modernism and traditional Japanese Sukiya architecture, extending through while breaking away from both. A dialogue is established between the geometric forms of Modernism, and the nondual sensitivity of the Japanese tradition. His buildings testify to the interrelation of the cultural and natural worlds, seeking to "reconnect man with man and man with nature, with architecture as the intermediary" (Heneghan, 1996. p. 13). Ando assigns to his buildings this role of intermediary between man and nature. Ando's architecture is at once a device for the appropriation of nature and a medium for its transformation. It becomes a site for "the naturalization of architecture and the architecturalization of nature" (ibid. p. 23) – nature *becoming* architecture, architecture *becoming* nature. Ando seeks to create a "space of dynamic variance," a space of confrontation and sustained tension, in which polar extremes are amplified through their collision. Ando describes this space as one that:

> "...de-emphasises the physical boundary between residence and surrounding nature and establishes instead a spiritual threshold. While screening man's dwelling from nature, it attempts to draw nature inside. There is no clear demarcation between outside and inside, but rather their mutual permeation." (1991. p. 76)

fig. 46
Tadao Ando,
Koshino House

Jodidio, 1997. p. 66,67



Architectural Openings

The Becoming-Perceptible of Nature in Architecture

Ando's work exhibits a different approach again to the rethinking of the wall-window barrier. Instead of replacing it with a more permeable substitute, such as the *shoji* screens of traditional Japanese architecture, the wall in Ando's buildings is, if anything, solidified. However, it does not act as a device of enclosure or division between inside and outside, but, in a paradoxical manner, shuts out the world in order to let it in. To elaborate, the wall itself becomes the interval, *ma*, between architectural and natural space that allows for a dynamic interrelation between the two. It takes on the role of the between-space, being both that which separates, and the site of exchange. In separating architectural and natural space, Ando inserts a cooling-off period, a moment of pause or reflection, whereby one may re-focus on the essence of each. The solid wall acts as a filter, removing distractions and allowing both nature and architecture to be present elementally: as light, air, and constant movement; as wall, roof, and floor elements creating spaces for inhabitation. It is also the surface of the wall upon which the exchange between nature and architecture is played out. Light admitted through openings falls across the surfaces of the interior, activating the architecture. On the wall, the virtual forces, movements, and qualities of the natural world are rendered perceptible. Simultaneously, the architecture becomes comprehensible as an interrelated part of the field of the natural world. Nature becoming architecture, architecture becoming nature.

The following discussion of Ando's architecture is illustrated with an account of the author's own visit to Ando's Vitra Seminar House (designed 1989-1992, built 1992-1993) at the Vitra Design complex, Weil am Rhein, Germany. Although not a dwelling-space in the sense of a residence, this structure embodies Ando's design philosophy with respect to dwelling in a more universal sense of the word, the creation of a space for inhabitation that facilitates an interrelation of the cultural self and the natural world, Heidegger's world-becoming-an-inside.

The *Vitra* building is representative of the architect's application of the philosophical concepts of *ma* as an intermediary space or threshold, and architecture as a space wherein man and nature may commune. Ando's work deals directly with the interconnection of man and nature as the primary condition for acts of inhabitation and social interaction. This emphasis on inhabitation and *dwelling* is exemplary of the design approach advanced by the present thesis, and is instructive in formulating a method by which the design process produces a dwelling-space rather than an architectural object. Ando's approach can thus be contrasted to the object-based architecture of Mies' Farnsworth House, which frames nature as a subject by giving priority to the visual mode of perception. In comparison, the experience of Ando's architectural spaces tends toward sensation, or contemplation without objects.

fig. 47
Tadao Ando,
Vitra Seminar House

photography: author

journey:PATH

The experience of the building begins with the journey towards it. The physical way that one approaches is essential to how one will spiritually approach and appreciate the spaces to follow. In order to become conscious of this, a simple concrete path draws a indirect yet linear journey through the grass, first toward the hills, then toward the building, then alongside it, and finally approaching a wall which is both part of the architecture and acts as an element that temporarily distances one from it. Never does the path lead directly toward an entrance. Instead, it sets up views of the environment in which the building sits, and of the building in its environment.

The path is narrow, allowing for only a single traveller at a time to walk it. The intention is to encourage concentration, a meditation on what lies ahead. The journey is elongated, being indirect in both space and time, and in this time one becomes aware of one's own self, and one's journey. It is a time to clear the mind, and to prepare oneself, mentally and spiritually. It is a time to let go of what has come before, to increase awareness of one's connection to the surroundings, and to draw upon that connection in order to focus on the purpose of the journey.

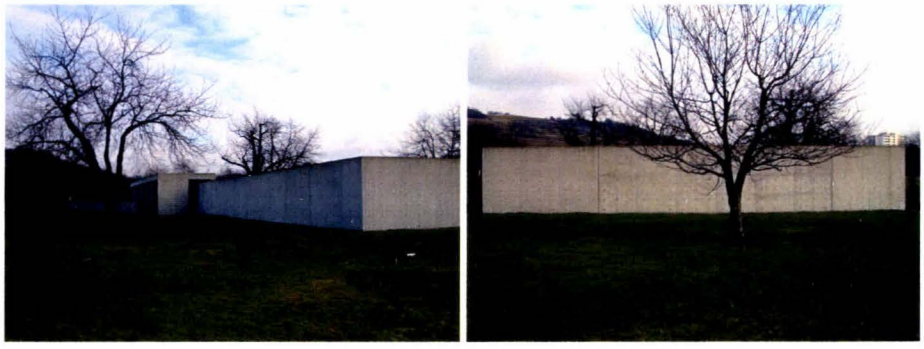


fig. 48
Tadao Ando,
Vitra Seminar House

photography: author

In seeking to create a nondual dwelling-space, Ando's architecture first and foremost addresses the inhabitant as a nondual being. The Japanese word *shintai* denotes this nondual being around which Ando's architecture is formed:

> "Man is not a dualistic being in whom spirit and flesh are essentially distinct, but a living, corporeal being active in the world ... The world that appears to man's senses and the state of man's body [are] interdependent ... The body articulates the world. At the same time, the body is articulated by the world." (Ando, in Heneghan, 1996. p. 16)

In contrast to the typical Western conception, in the *shintai* no distinction is made between mind, body, and spirit. To design for the body is therefore to design, essentially, for the spirit. The contradiction found in Western architectural minimalism between the spiritual and material content of the works is thus absorbed as an essential nonduality in Ando's work – the spiritual becomes material and the material becomes spiritual. Ando "insists that architecture must be more than an autonomous art form, and must concern itself primarily with the enrichment of the human spirit." (ibid. p. 14) In order to enrich the spirit, the architecture must be aimed at facilitating nondual acts of *dwelling* that foster an awareness of the

interdependence of matter and spirit, actual and virtual. For Ando, this awareness hinges on the conception of the human and natural worlds as interrelated:

> "The Japanese tradition embraces a different sensibility about nature than that found in the West. Human life is not intended to oppose nature and endeavor to control it, but rather to draw nature into an intimate association in order to find union with it. One can go so far as to say that, in Japan, all forms of spiritual exercise are traditionally carried out within the context of the human interrelationship with nature." (Ando, 1991. p. 460)

fig. 49
Tadao Ando,
Vitra Seminar House

photography: author

journey:WALL

The path leads the traveller alongside a concrete wall, the architecture reduced to its most basic element. The path then turns sharply, inviting one behind the wall and leading alongside it, bringing the materiality of the building into contact for the first time. Again, the path does not lead directly to the entrance, but towards the wall itself. There is a sense of self-reflection in the architecture, which encourages a meditation upon its own materiality. The wall extends a gesture of welcoming, embracing and folding one into the building.

The wall, in Ando's works, acts as an intermediary between man and nature, both inserting a space (*ma*) or distance between the two, and becoming the instrument of their interrelation. The wall folds together man, architecture, and nature, drawing the visitor into the building whilst enveloping the natural world within the architecture. It is in this way that Ando's architecture first sets up a dialogue between architecture, as cultural expression, and nature. This dialogue begins with a collision, through which both sides of the binary are amplified, while the boundary between them is simultaneously dismantled. A space of potential is created in between, a space of "dynamic variance" and becoming-other, wherein the "naturalization of architecture and the architecturalization of nature" (Heneghan, 1996. p. 23)

may occur. The materiality of the architecture remains open to the virtual forces of the natural world, admitting natural elements through gaps and openings. In doing so, he allows the virtuality of nature to appear as essence, something which he claims contemporary society has lost the ability to perceive (Ando, 1991). In a world full of sensory distractions, it is difficult to experience, and thereby to connect with, nature, as a field of sensation.

> "Contemporary architecture, thus, has a role to play in providing people with architectural places that make them feel the presence of nature... When water, wind, light, rain, and other elements of nature are abstracted within architecture, the architecture becomes a place where people and nature confront each other under a sustained sense of tension. I believe it is this feeling of tension that will awaken the spiritual sensibilities latent in contemporary humanity." (Ando, 1991. p. 460)

The abstraction of natural elements within architecture coincides with the transmission of resonance through architecture's materiality. In order to resonate within the body/spirit of the inhabitant, the inhabitant must first be able to connect with the architecture. Considerations of scale and materiality that evoke bodily sensations are vital to the functioning of the architecture as intermediary between the inhabitant and nature.

fig. 50
Tadao Ando,
Vitra Seminar House

photography: author

[MATERIALITY and SCALE]

The building material is one often considered impersonal: concrete. Yet although it presents a blank, neutral face, the concrete of the wall also invites a personal connection. Being in close proximity to the body, it presents itself as a tactile surface. Ash has been included in the concrete mix, resulting in a finish that is surprisingly smooth to the touch. There is an instant physical connection between body and architectural material through the human touch. One touches the wall as one would touch another body, with a stroke, a caress.

The mass of the wall is also rendered more intimate through the adoption of a bodily scale. Joins in the concrete reveal slabs of a size closely connected to the body. The measurements employed are that of the *tatami* mat, the traditional Japanese sleeping mat whose size is dictated by the sleeping body. Shifted from its usual horizontal orientation to the verticality of the wall, the associations with sleeping are removed, but the forms retain a sense of restfulness and familiarity.

The wall's mass is further broken down to a scale that allows personal connection by the markings which remain from its construction. Regular indentations in the concrete offer clues to the wall's means of creation. This is not a natural object, but nor is it entirely artificial. The markings are traces of work undertaken by human hands, testimony to the shaping of the architecture for the body, by the body.

The sense of scale and materiality employed by Ando in his architecture evokes a feeling of tactile connection with the body of the inhabitant. In creating a resonance with the body through scale and materiality, the architecture awakens in the body an openness to sensation, thereby establishing a space of mediation and dynamic exchange between man and nature. The consideration of a bodily materiality stands as a point of difference between Ando's work and Mies' Farnsworth house. The glass boundary of the Farnsworth house does not draw the body into a tactile engagement with the architecture, on the contrary, it heightens the sense of physical separation from the outside. The premise for *dwelling* cannot be established on visual connection alone. The body must first be open to the field of sensation in order to facilitate interrelation with the world, and thus to dwell.

fig. 51
Tadao Ando,
Vitra Seminar House

photography: author

journey:ENTRANCE

The entrance to the building is understated, a narrow opening in the architecture. On approaching it, one is again reminded that the building does not exist autonomously, but

> is fundamentally connected to its surrounding environment. The path leads toward the entrance, flanked on one side by the architecture, and on the other by a gently inclining grass slope. Moving towards the entrance, one passes between the concrete wall and a closely planted tree, whose branches extend over the path and the wall, forming an embrace between the architectural and the natural. Proceeding to the opening, the building finally closes over above, an indication of entry. One moves out of the light, into the shadows of the architecture.

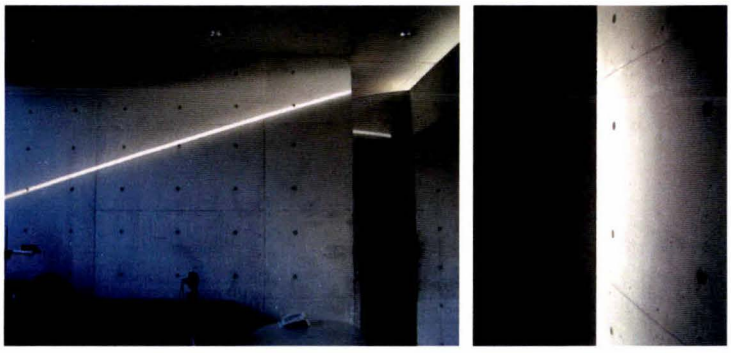
The entrance, as threshold between inside and outside, nature and architecture, is indicative of the architect's treatment of the nature/culture relationship. The notion of threshold holds particular importance with respect to Ando's architecture. The architecture itself is conceived of as a threshold between matter and spirit, and between the cultural and natural worlds:

> "...Ando points out a significant distinction between Eastern and Western attitudes to nature: Japanese culture emphasizes a spiritual *threshold* between the building and nature, as opposed to a physical *boundary* in Western culture." (Nesbitt, 1996. p. 457)

As previously discussed, the wall/window boundary or barrier of Western architecture serves to uphold the duality of inside and outside. Architecture is presented as an autonomous cultural object that prevails over nature through the erection of a facade. By way of the facade, architecture looks out over a conquered nature, on which is not bestowed the ability to look back. The act of entering is presided over by the facade, which confronts the visitor and sets up the opposition between inside and out. In Ando's buildings, on the other hand, the act of entry is drawn out, becoming continuous. The visitor is folded into the architecture in a ritual of passage that sees the body propelled along a path between architecture and nature, yet that is neither one nor the other. Even once inside the building, the transition from "outside" to "inside" is never complete, as the spaces interpenetrate. The grand entrance of Western architecture that marks the border-line between inside and out is replaced, in Ando's work, by a gradual transition that draws attention, not to the architecture, but to the movement of the body, the act of passage.

fig. 52
Tadao Ando,
Vitra Seminar House

photography: author



[LIGHT and SHADOW] Being inside the building is simultaneous with being in shadow. The roof element in this case aids in the delineation of interiority. The result of creating this interior shadow-space is that light may be reintroduced as an architectural material. Natural light can now be manipulated through the placement of horizontal and vertical planes, and of gaps and openings where these planes do not meet, sealing the space, but pass one another, folding light into the spaces. This is not a closed architecture, but an architecture of openness, where natural elements become a part of the architecture, and architecture is left open to nature.

The incorporation of light into the architecture brings with it an element of change, of temporality. As the light changes, so do the spaces. The same space may at one time be imbued with diffused softness, and at another time be dissected by a slice of light across its surfaces. Thus, time, ever-present in nature, is revealed also in the architecture. The building changes with the movement of the sun, of clouds, and the cycle of the seasons. To be inside the building is not to be cut off from the natural world, but to be reminded that one is essentially connected to it. Architecture becomes the catalyst for an increased awareness of the environment in which it is situated.

The play of light and shadow in Ando's architecture, as in traditional Japanese architecture, parallels the interplay of the architectural and the natural. Unlike Western architecture, the primary condition of interiority is not enclosure, but shadow:

> "In making for ourselves a place to live, we first spread a parasol to throw a shadow on the earth, and in the pale light of the shadow we put together a house...And so it has come to be that the beauty of a Japanese room depends on a variation of shadows, heavy shadows against light shadows-- it has nothing else." (Tanizaki, pp. 17-18)

This lends to the architecture a certain ephemeral quality. Shadow is dependent on the natural movement and variance of light, establishing from the start the interdependence of natural and architectural space; shadows vary in definition, being at one moment sharp, and at another diffusing to the point of disappearing. The boundary between inside and out is therefore never strictly defined, but is changeable and ambiguous. The admittance of light into the interior of a building through openings in the architecture becomes a powerful gesture, initiating an exchange between architecture and nature through the activation of an interplay of light and shadow. Light is treated as a material to be manipulated by the architectonic elements of the structure. In turn, it brings to the architecture the movements and forces of nature.

> "Such things as light and wind only have meaning when they are introduced inside a house in a form cut off from the outside world. The isolated fragments of light and air suggest the entire natural world. The forms I have created have altered and acquired meaning through elementary nature (light and air) that give indications of the passage of time and the changing of the seasons..." (Ando, in Jodidio, 1997. p. 7)

Natural elements are thus considered to be an essential part of the architecture, they are treated as architectural materials. As "devices for appropriating nature," (Heneghan, 1996. p. 15) Ando's buildings create a space in which architecture and nature may commune and are recognised as interdependent. The intangible elements of nature are incorporated into the architecture as its virtual content; that which induces change and variance, and evokes sensation.

fig. 53
Tadao Ando,
Vitra Seminar House

photography: author

journey:COURTYARD As one enters the courtyard, the first impression is of emptiness. The same concrete walls as those of the interior and the path of entry now enclose empty space. Beneath

one's feet are concrete pavers, covering the entire expanse of the courtyard. However, yet again, the ground plane and the walls do not meet, but are held apart by another gap, this time filled with pebbles. All is stone and concrete, until one's gaze inevitably drifts upward, and the space ceases to feel empty. The space above is filled by the sky. The changing light, the movement of the clouds, and the branches of the treetops which again serve as a reminder of the environment in which the building sits. The architecture of the courtyard is completed by nature, yet it does not frame nature, as frames tend to distance one from their content. Instead of distancing nature, the architecture actually seems to draw it closer, making it a part of the space whilst reminding us that the space is also part of nature.

It is in the courtyard that Ando's architectural ethos perhaps finds its simplest expression. The courtyard is a threshold between inside and outside, culture and nature. It is both, and yet neither one nor the other. It is an ambiguous between-space, a spatial and temporal interval (*ma*) between natural and architectural space in which a dynamic exchange is engendered. In describing the courtyard of his Row House in Suniyoshi, Ando explains:

> "The house is divided into three sections, the middle section being a courtyard open to the sky. This courtyard is an exterior that fills the interior... A simple geometric form, the concrete box is static; yet as nature participates within it, and as it is activated by human life, its abstract existence achieves vibrancy in its meeting with concreteness... Geometric abstraction collides with human concreteness, and then the apparent contradiction dissolves around their incongruity. The architecture created at that moment is filled with a space that provokes and inspires." (Ando, p. 459)

In the courtyard, the presence of nature, of the field of the natural world, is focussed and concentrated. It becomes almost tangible; able to be experienced as sensation. A space of potentiality is created that facilitates *dwelling*, the interrelation of man and world, and the becoming-interior of nature.

fig. 54
Tadao Ando,
Vitra Seminar House

photography: author

[REFLECTION]

After moving through the courtyard, one will at some point turn back toward the building from which this space was entered. What is now revealed is a striking moment of self-reflection. The glazed wall one now faces becomes a mirror, literally reflecting the courtyard space. Yet in this reflection, it is not only the architecture that is captured. The sky and treetops are also mirrored, embraced as part of the architecture, becoming a part of its surface. And upon this surface comprised of both architecture and nature, one's own reflection is also encountered. In one image, the spirit of the place is revealed as a series of connections between the three reflected elements: the built architecture, the natural environment, and the inhabiting bodies.

Ando's architecture, exemplified by the courtyard, the wall as intermediary device, and architectural openings, is a realisation of nondual *dwelling*. Its ultimate success lies in the fostering of an awareness of the field, whereby the mind can grasp, or focus on, the field as the totality of forces and relations. In addressing the nondual being as an interrelation of mind, body, and spirit, the work embodies nondual *dwelling* as an interrelation of man, as focus and cultural self, nature as natural field, and architecture as intermediary.

fig. 55
Tadao Ando,
Vitra Seminar House

photography: author

journey:EXIT

Upon re-entering the building, one takes from the courtyard this strengthened awareness. The purpose of this architecture is not to enclose, to shut out the natural world. It is an architecture of openings and of openness, both folding natural elements into the architecture, and unfolding the architecture into its surrounding environment. Every space in the building is a testimony to this openness; the play of light and shadow is also that of the natural and the architectural. As one exits the building, moving from the shadow to the light, retracing the path along the wall and out into the open, one again has time for contemplation. One prepares to return to daily life with a renewed focus and a heightened sense of interconnection with the world.

Thresholds
Architectural Devices of Extension and Contraction of the Field

From the preceding investigations into the applications of a nondual philosophy in Eastern and Western architecture, some central concepts have begun to emerge. The fundamental move encompassed by a shift from duality to nonduality is the departure from the wall/window barrier towards a threshold between the natural and architectural worlds. This is consistent with the breaking down of the inside/outside and nature/culture dialectics. This threshold can be seen to be characterised by ambiguity, by the insertion of an interval or space (*ma*), and by the animation of a dynamic collision or dialogue. Nondual architecture is an architecture of openness, in which the space of the cultural and natural worlds is continuous. The term *openness*, however, need to be qualified. Just as space (*ma*) does not simply imply nothingness, *openness* does not imply an absolute homogeneity of space. Rather, openness, as a nondual concept, retains the implication of its opposite, enclosure, and the condition of opposition between natural and cultural space. It is instead the nature of the opposition that is reconsidered as a dynamic interrelation rather than as mutual exclusivity. Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth house highlighted an instance wherein the underlying dualistic system of thought led to an unmediated openness that resulted in an experience of confrontational exposure for the inhabitant. In attempting to dissolve the boundary between inside and out by making it transparent and thus opening the structure completely to nature, Mies mistakenly equated visual continuity with openness. Rather than fostering interrelation, the spatial polarisation of inside and out was instead heightened.

However, the horizontal planar forms of Mies' pavilions, with their feeling of extension into the landscape, suggest a potential form for an architecture of openness that is corroborated by the pavilion forms of traditional Japanese architecture. Both share a continuation of the floor and roof planes beyond the limits of the outer walls (or in the case of Farnsworth house in the absence of walls). The point of difference between the two lies in the functioning of the extended space as a threshold or intermediary space. The Japanese *engawa* veranda suggests a formal manifestation of intermediary space between nature and architecture. Ando's work, on the other hand, suggests an alternative instrument of intermediation in his courtyard-type dwellings, the wall. Like the extended horizontal planes of the veranda, the vertical plane of the wall both inserts a spatio-temporal distance between nature and culture, whilst also facilitating and acting as the site of their interrelation. The veranda and the court may thus be derived as two alternative models to a dualistic architecture of the wall/window barrier. Both can be seen to act as devices that foster an interrelation of man and the field of the natural world, working by means of extension and concentration respectively. The following sections conclude this chapter with brief elaborations of both conceptual models and their potential implementation in dwelling-design.

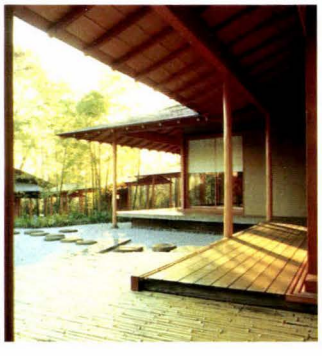


fig. 56
Kisho Kurokawa, Kyoju-so villa and Ritsumei-an tea ceremony house, Hachioji, Tokyo, 1979

Kurokawa, 1991. p. 98

Architecture of Extension: The Veranda House

The veranda is a between-space. It is neither fully "interior" nor fully "exterior." It allows for the contemplation of the outside world from a sheltered vantage point, for an experience of the outdoors and the elements without being fully exposed. As a between-space, the veranda is a site of movement, of transformation, of interrelation. It is a space that one moves through, a place of passage, or it is a place where one sits and allows the mind to do the wandering. It is a space of ambiguity, where inside becomes outside, outside becomes inside, viewer becomes viewed. It is a place of meeting, of crossing paths and passing conversations, of

entertainment and storytelling, of forming new relationships and enjoying old ones. On the veranda one can simply sit *and be either alone, or* with others, without the need for language, but with a wordless awareness of one's interconnection with those around, and with the surrounding environment.

Is the veranda created for the singular purpose of viewing? Certainly it provides an appropriate platform for such an activity. However, the experience of the veranda space goes beyond the visual. Here one experiences the elementary fluctuations of the natural environment – the changing light, the breeze, the shifts in air pressure or humidity. The experience is of the ambient atmospheric states. If it is still, one does not note that it *looks* still, one *feels* that it is still. Stillness is experenced as *sensation*. It is within the space of the veranda that the intangible forces of the natural world become almost tangible, gathering in a focussed intensity. The instrument of this focussing, this becoming-perceptible-as-sensation, is not the architecture of the the veranda, but its inhabitant. For it is within the body that the imperceptible forces find resonance; the architecture merely facilitate the interrelation by providing the ambiguous between-space of potentiality.

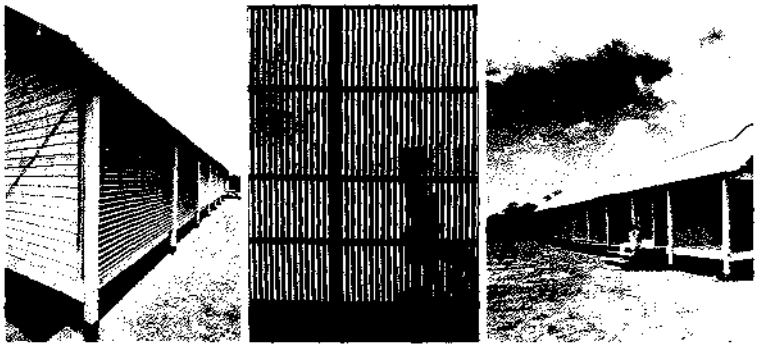


fig. 57,58,59
Glenn Murcutt,
(l,r) Marie Short House, 1974-1975
(middle) Marika-Alderton House, 1991-1994

Beck and Cooper, 2002
p. 47, 50, 138

Traditionally, the veranda was attached to the outer perimeter of an existing house, as an appendage or accessory. In fact, verandas were at one time recognised as an accessory of wealth. The interior of the house was typically a series of enclosed rooms, each defined by their particular function. This compartmentalisation of living is in great contrast to the relative freedom of the veranda. The veranda often served a variety of functional uses, depending on the requirements and activities of the inhabitants. The corners of the veranda were on occasion screened off to form sleep-outs. The flexibility of the veranda-space to accommodate all forms of dwelling renders it a far more interesting dwelling-space than the rigid spatial organisation of the internal rooms. It is this very concept that Australian architect

Glenn Murcutt employs as a starting-point for his house designs. The rigidly delineated interior is dispensed with altogether, and the space of the veranda becomes that of the dwelling.

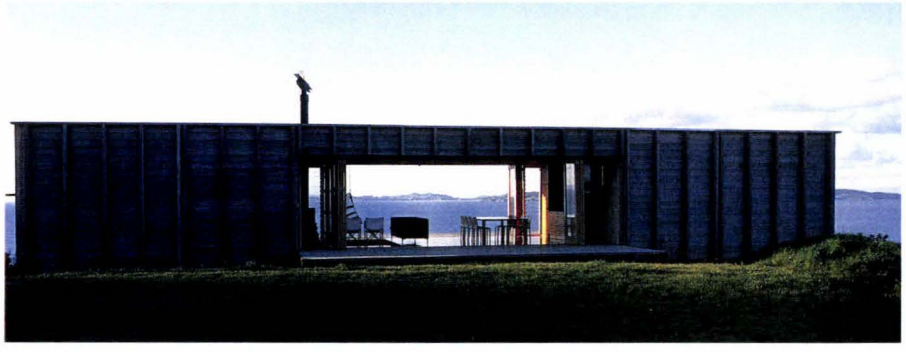
fig. 60
A.P. Godber
'The Whare in the Bush'

Alexander Turnbull Library, sourced from McCarthy, *The Bach*

The veranda-house model holds relevance for a New Zealand context. Verandas have been present throughout New Zealand's architectural history, from the front porches of the traditional Maori *whare*, to the auxiliary external corridors and front verandas added to colonial villas, to the iconic deck extending from the home, bach, or holiday retreat. The veranda is imbued with cultural and social connotations, and is a place for social interaction or of communing with nature. Many contemporary housing designs, particularly those for secondary residences or holiday homes, embrace the veranda as an intermediary space that promotes the clichéd ideal of "indoor-outdoor" flow. Adding to this continuity of space between inside and outside is the enhanced permeability of the boundary between the interior and the veranda. In some cases, floor-to-ceiling glazing and sliding glass doors are developed a step further with the design of glazed walls that pull back completely to allow an uninhibited flow of space, in effect, turning the entire floor into a veranda-space. In this sense the walls can be compared to the moveable screens of traditional Japanese dwellings.

fig. 61
Ken Crosson
Coromandel bach

NZ Home and Entertaining, August/September 2003 p. 79 photography: Patrick Reynolds



Architect Ken Crosson's bach in the Coromandel is a striking example of a veranda-type house that displays tendencies toward a philosophy of open architecture and nondual *dwelling* in a New Zealand context. Set on a hillside above the seaside on the Coromandel Peninsula, the uninhabited bach sits in the landscape as an unobtrusive box of weathered timber. Activated by inhabitation, however, the house literally opens up: the elongated sides of the box fold out into the landscape to become extended decking areas. Folding doors on either side of the central living space fold away to produce a completely open space. "When the house is in use the decks are lowered into position to form a generous pavilion with just the merest suggestion of enclosure" (Home and Entertaining, Aug./Sept. 2003. p. 81).

fig. 62
Ken Crosson
Coromandel bach

NZ Home and Entertaining, August/September 2003 p. 85 photography: Patrick Reynolds

With similarities to the closed-in corner sleepouts of traditional verandas, the openness of the central veranda-like space is mediated by enclosed spaces at either end, housing sleeping, bathroom, and storage facilities. The design resists the invasion of technologies that encourage insular behaviour, such as television, computer, and appliances of convenience. Instead, it "encourages its occupants to live at a slower pace and connect with the elements"

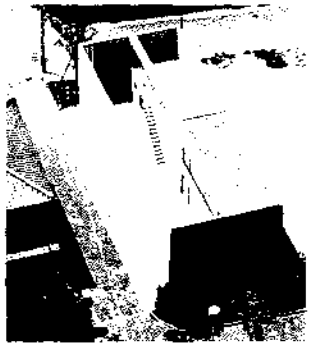
(ibid. p. 84) and to attend to daily rituals and social activites with renewed focus. Ultimately, this design may be said to facilitate acts of *dwelling*, and to foster an interrelation with the natural world.

Architecture of Concentration: The Court House

The success of the veranda-type house in facilitating nondual *dwelling* is dependent on its location in a conducive natural setting, a luxury that is not always available. The court house, by comparison, offers a model for nondual *dwelling* that may extract from any setting the essential elements of the natural world, and make them manifest in the architecture. For this reason, the court house may provide a more appropriate form for urban *dwelling*. The potential also exists for various combinations of the two concepts in response to the requirements of site and inhabitants.

fig. 63
Tadao Ando
Nakayama House,
Suzaka, Nara, 1983-1985

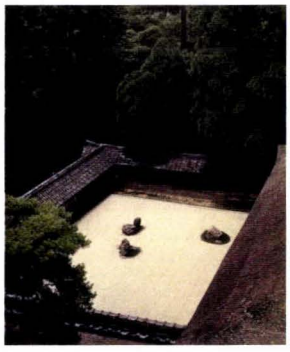
Pawson, 1996, p. 181



The Court House begins with a wall. The wall defines an outer limit, differentiating between included and excluded space. However, its aim is *not* enclosure. It does not look to set up a dualistic opposition between outside and inside. Rather, the court is also a space of ambiguity, both inside *and* out, and the wall functions less as a barrier than as a filter. What the Court House filters out is not the outside world, but the *distractions* present within that world that impede upon the contemplation of its essence. In a state of distraction, one loses the ability to focus one's attention, and thereby to rekindle an awareness of connection with the world. The Court House exists perhaps as the urban equivalent to the Veranda House in the landscape. It allows for a facilitation of the interrelation of man and world even within a chaotic environment. It does not reject its immediate environment, but offers a moment's respite, a place in which to find one's focus, and thus better approach the chaos of daily life.

fig. 64
Japanese Zen Garden
Ryoanji Temple, near
Kyoto, originally created
1499

Pawson, 1996. p. 98



Rather than enclosing space, the Court House opens up space, creating a clearing in the midst of the urban jungle. The court is not an empty space, but nor is it full. It is simply open – to the air, to the light, to the movements of the natural world. Unlike a garden, which attempts to recreate nature in an artificial, tidied and organised manner, the court serves to remind one of those natural elements that are always already present. In this way, it is perhaps more akin to a Japanese Zen Garden than to a traditional Western garden. Like the Zen Garden, the aim is to create a resonance, to tap into an awareness of the interconnection of things. Instead of re-presenting nature, both court and Zen Garden aspire to evoke a sensation of being-in-nature, and thus to initiate a becoming-nature.

Conclusion
Towards a Nondual Architecture of Openness

This chapter has examined a number of examples with respect to the formulation of a nondual approach to *dwelling*. The breaking down of the dualistic oppositions of inside/outside, subject/object, nature/culture must be substantiated by a design ethos that replaces an architecture of enclosure with one of openness, a barrier with a threshold, polarisation with interrelation. Architecture must create an intermediary space between the natural and cultural worlds in which man and nature may commune. It must foster a sense of connection with the body and spirit of the inhabitant in order to create a space of sensation, and it must subsequently make available to experience by sensation the intangible elements of the natural world. It is in this way that architecture may aspire to create a resonance between man and nature, and thus initiate a becoming-interior of the world through *dwelling*.

CONCLUSION

This text opened, in the introduction, with Heidegger's concept of *dwelling*. To reiterate, Heidegger's *dwelling* is a process emerging from an interrelation between self and world, which initiates an interiorisation of that world through the act of inhabitation. *Dwelling* is intrinsically linked to interiority, but not in a dualistic sense of an inside as discreet from its excluded outside. Rather, the condition of interiority particular to *dwelling* is that of a *becoming-interior*: an interiorisation. It is from this conception of *dwelling as becoming-interior* that a proposed re-thinking of the roles of interior design and architecture transpires, with the intent of formulating an approach to design for *dwelling-in-the-world*. The work proceeds from a philosophical shift from duality to nonduality, with the hypothesis that a nondual framework provides philosophical grounds for a Heideggarian understanding of *dwelling*. This understanding involves a reconsideration of the relations between self and world, nature and culture, inside and outside.

Out of this newly (re)formed world-view, which is not culturally contained, but operates at the intersection between Eastern and Western philosophy, arises a nondual approach to viewing the world as a dynamic interrelation that is not limited to a subject/object reliant mode of perception. In understanding this interrelation as a *resonance* between the cosmos of the lived body-mind and the world body-mind, the space is created for an intermediary that may act as a vehicle for that resonance. The artwork is one possible manifestation of this intermediary, however it must be qualified by the nature of its experiential power, that is, it must initiate a transformation through the engagement of the viewer, not merely as spectator, but as participant. In order for this to occur, the work must embody a certain incompleteness, or openess to completion by the experiential act. Through this condition of *openness*, an interrelation may be facilitated between self and world that moves from nondual perception to nondual action: the *act of dwelling* that is not an act performed by the self upon or in the world, but an inter-action in which self and world are mutually participant.

Thus a nondual approach to design for dwelling-in-the-world, for a becoming-interior, employs architecture as an intermediary between self and world that facilitates an act of *dwelling* arising from *dynamic interrelation*. The nature of architecture's intermediation is as both material surface through which the intangible qualities of the natural field may become tangible and the inhabitant is engaged in an experience of sensation, and as a temporal and spatial interval between self and world that creates a space of potentiality for their interrelation. Architecture is situated as an in-between that is both that which is neither one nor the other, and the infinite totality of possible relations between the two. It is *the field as nothingness*, and the *field as betweenness*. It is in this concept that a response may be found to the suggestion made at the start of this thesis that there may exist a more profound link between architectural minimalism and Eastern aesthetics than that of a superficial stylistic empathy, and that it is in the space between these two traditions that the conditions for a nondual approach to *dwelling* may emerge.

From Architectural Minimalism to an Architecture of Openness: Summary of Conclusions

The present study was sparked by a phenomenon uncovered in the contemporary lifestyle magazine. This phenomenon was the celebration of a minimalist style of architecture and interior design as a desirable model. Although presented in a visual medium of popular culture that is aligned with the world of appearances and fashions, the underlying message of the lifestyle magazine is both one of style, and one of living: of *dwelling*. Thus the popularity of a particular style may also be seen to have deeper implications, subliminally conveying a

message of social consciousness, ethics, and spiritual desire. The minimalist lifestyle is advertised seductively as not only good-looking living spaces, but an idealised way of life, playing on a social and inidividual desire for space and tranquillity. Tied up with this ideal are two fundamental associations that have formed the pivotal core of the present work. The first is conflation of a lifestyle of harmony and simplicity, claimed to be afforded by architectural minimalism, with a sense of connection or commun(icat)ion with the natural environment. The second is an alignment of the minimalist ethos with an Eastern, particularly Japanese, sensibility. Through the reading of architectural minimalism in the lifestyle magazine, the conditions were established for a critical investigation of the desire for a lifestyle, or dwelling-style, centred around an interconnection between nature and culture, and East and West.

The ethical, or spiritual, dimension of this minimalist dwelling-style suggests a latent belief in the power of architecture to engender a cultivation of the mind, body, and spirit. This is also the goal of Buddhism, in which the cultivation of the body-mind is intertwined with the cultivation of an interrelation with the natural world. In order for this to occur, however, it is necessary to overcome the conflicts of duality that set up distinctions between body and mind, nature and culture. One such approach attempts to reduce dualisms to a single term, assimilating one side of an opposition by the other. Architectural minimalism can generally be understood in this sense as a proponent of reduction to the minimum. It attempts to eradicate the conflicts between the contradictory materialistic and spiritual aspirations of contemporary society by denying the material and the excessive and adhering to an ethos of simplicity. However, as shown in Chapter One, this approach fails to overcome the conflict, instead absorbing it as paradox. Architectural minimalism tends in two directions at the same time: both the "desired" or "proper" direction of reduction, simplicity, and non-materialism, and an "improper" direction, characterised by its manifestation in reality as excessive, expensive, and materialistic. This example is one of the many instances of paradox outlined in Chapter One. The "aesthetic of nothingness" is thus riddled with conflicts: the problematics of dualistic dwelling. Of greatest relevance to the development of a new approach to dwelling were the conflicts affecting the relationship between the self and the world, and the way in which we perceive our being-in-the-world: that of nature and culture, subject and object.

However, as the thesis has proposed, architectural minimalism, in drawing attention to the problematics of duality, also opens up the way for their reconsideration. As an undefinable field that resists the enclosure of definition, it allows for the admission of minor practices and traditions. The result of this is that alternatives to the dualism of the Western tradition are already present within architectural minimalism. The present work has dealt with one such

alternative presented by the alignment with minimalism of a Japanese aesthetic, that is, the Eastern philosophy of nonduality, analysed in Chapter Two. The rethinking of dwelling-design in relation to nonduality has generated a radically altered conception of the "aesthetic of nothingness" and the role of architecture and interior design in the cultivation of the spirit. Nothingness as a limit is replaced by an understanding of nothingness as the field of the in-between. It is here that architecture is opened up to a re-thinking in terms of a Heideggerian *dwelling*. Architecture is posited as an intermediary that fosters an interrelation between self and world, by which the outside-world becomes an interior. A continuity is established that confounds dualistic conceptions of inside and outside as a fixed binary opposition. The nondual world is the field of mutability, of outsides-becoming-insides; nature-becoming-culture.

This transformation is initiated by a resonance between the nondual self and the nondual world, triggered by the facilitation of nondual perception by the intermediary vehicle (the artwork, as discussed in Chapter Three, or architecture, as discussed in Chapter Four). When the transformative potential of the vehicle is capable of facilitating this resonance, nondual perception may lead to nondual action: an act, such as that of inhabitation, in which self and world are mutual participants. It is through this act that the world may become an "inside."

A Nondual Approach to Dwelling-in-the-World

The (literal) dwelling is the centre of our (figurative) act of dwelling – our being-in-the-world. It is the locus, although the field of *dwelling* extends from it to encapsulate the entirety of our lived environment, including public as well as private spaces. Be that as it may, the present study has attempted to begin to deal with the centre, the house/dwelling, yet with the hope that the design philosophy established herein may also extend outward, permeating throughout all areas of the designed environment. It must be noted, however, that this work attends to a concept of dwelling-design that concentrates on the interrelation of *self and world*. For this reason, it does not attempt, or presume, to address all of the programmatic considerations[1] that coincide with the design of a building for living in. It does not attend to

[1] In regard to the lack of programmatic considerations, it is interesting to note that many of the built works provided as examples or illustrations throughout this work were designed to fulfil the functional requirements of a secondary residence – a holiday home; a place of leisure and recreation, or of sanctuary and retreat. These spaces are often the results of a certain freedom afforded to the architect/designer by less stringent functional requirements, fewer spatial restrictions, and more often than not, a natural setting that immediately offers itself to an architecture of openness to the elements and views of the landscape.

the specifics of planning and detailing, rather, it aspires to generate a design philosophy that would underlie these concerns. It is not prescriptive or conclusive regarding what, nor even how, to design. Instead, it looks to present an argument for how one might approach design, and to open up a field of potentiality whereby this approach may be implemented, developed further, or even mutated, in various ways.

This aim is in line with the thinking of both Elizabeth Grosz and Deleuze and Guattari. Grosz presents in her writings

> "a series of disparate...thoughts, theories, perspectives... [The] text does not have a single point or moral but is about the creating of shifting frameworks and models of understanding, about the opening up of thought to what is new, different, and hitherto unthought." (Grosz, 1994, p. *xiv*)

In order to attribute to thought this condition of openness and mutability from which new ideas may emerge, Grosz resists the closure of thought that is brought about by the packaging of ideas into conclusive "answers." Instead, her work aim to produce an account that may serve the purposes of a wider cause, in her case, feminism. Grosz does not presume to prescribe the nature of these purposes, nor does she claim to have any control over the emergence of the hitherto unthought by the appropriation of her work by a third party. In this respect Grosz shares the aim of Deleuze and Guattari to provide, in place of a linear argument or set of conclusions, a toolbox of ideas that may be appropriated, or mis-appropriated in an infinite variety of mutations and permutations.

The present work has aimed to formulate an approach to design for dwelling-in-the-world that argues the adoption of a nondual philosophical framework in order to facilitate a Heideggerian *dwelling*. This approach can perhaps be understood as analogous to the function of the pathway leading to Tadao Ando's Vitra Seminar House. Ando's path shapes the way in which one is to *approach* the building. It does not lead directly toward it, but takes the traveller on a journey in which the building is presented progressively through a series of vistas, drawing attention to the environment from which it emerges. The path encourages a meditative state through which the approaching visitor may reconnect with their surroundings, letting go of what has come before in order to clear the mind and concentrate on what lies ahead. In a similar way, the present work has paved the way for an approach that stems from a meditation on the interrelation of the self and the natural environment. It encourages a letting-go of dualistic structures of opposition, and proposes a way forward that is not directly stated, but

suggested through the unfolding of modelled instances and mapped trajectories. Like Ando's concrete path through the field, the approach presented by the work does not restrict movements of divergence from a linear trajectory, nor does it dictate a heirarchical order in which the moment of arrival is most important. The reader, like the path's traveller, is free to pause and meditate upon any of the models/views, and take from the experience the instances that resonate most strongly. The work hopes to have provided an introduction to a nondual way of thinking about *dwelling*, and to have suggested its relevance to contemporary design theory and practice both in New Zealand and, potentially, globally.

Approaching Dwelling in New Zealand

Although the work has referenced the New Zealand context directly on only a number of occasions, this context can be seen both as an underlying condition, and as the field into which the work now enters as a set of ideas and models for a nondual approach to dwelling-design. As (*site*) condition, New Zealand was the location of the originating impetus for the study: the presentation of a natural and cultural ideal, between minimalism and Zen, as embodying the desirable lifestyle of contemporary New Zealand. As (*field*) condition for the formulation of a philosophy of nondual *dwelling*, New Zealand has provided a non-prescriptive space of potentiality for an encounter between Eastern and Western thought, acting as a spatial and temporary interval (*ma*) for their dynamic interrelation and the emergence of new ideas. Finally, as (*ground*) condition, New Zealand now becomes the site for a potential grounding of the formulated philosophy or approach in a localised practice: that of New Zealand interior design (and architecture).

The nature of this grounding extends beyond the present thesis, being open to interpretation through the act of its implementation. Like open architecture, the nondual approach to design for dwelling-in-the-world formulated in the present work resists completion: it is a vehicle that aspires to facilitate a *becoming*, between the desire for an architecture that fosters a cultivation of mind, body, and spirit, and its manifestation in the world. In creating an "approach," it is hoped that its potential implementation embodies both philosophy and design as interconnected. Perhaps there is room in New Zealand for a medium, as a nondual counterpart to the lifestyle magazine, that addresses *dwelling* simultaneously as both a spiritual and material project. Or perhaps this is in fact the role of the interiorer designer.

Interior design, by its very naming as such, has in the past been relegated to a secondary role with respect to architecture. In shifting to a nondual system of thought, however, it becomes possible to challenge this conception. The present work has aimed to put aside a conventional understanding of the respective roles of architecture and interior design, and in the absence of these prescriptive categorisations, to begin instead with the essential problem of *dwelling*. That is, rather than initiating an inquiry into an architectural or interior response to *dwelling*, it is suggested that the primary concern should be with the act of *dwelling* itself. This act, in which the world becomes an interior, brought into focus by the inhabitant, is identified as the central impetus for any dwelling-design. The architectural work as completed object or product thus ceases to exist as the objective of an architecture of which interior design is merely a supplementary excess. The built work in itself is never a finished whole. It achieves moments of completion only when activated by acts of *dwelling* – only then does it become a *dwelling*. Interior design conventionally takes on the role of intermediary between architecture and the inhabitant(s). If, however, it is not architecture but *dwelling* that is the desired product of the design process, then it follows that the role of interior design must also shift.

Architecture is no longer a fixed entity, rather, it assumes an openness, creating the potential for infinite variations of momentary completion. Interior design becomes a facilitator of *dwelling*, not between inhabitant and architecture, but between inhabitant and world. *Dwelling* itself is an interiorisation of the world – the world becomes an interior. Designing for this interiorisation is the ultimate aim. It is an aim that is not primarily architectural, nor is it interior in the conventional sense. The meaning of 'interior design' has shifted. Heidegger's interior is not an 'inside' in the sense that an inside is the volume or contents of a thing, whose surfaces form a boundary between the interior and the exterior. Heidegger in fact implies that there is no real distinction between the external world, and the world as 'inside,' created by the act of dwelling. The only difference between the two is that the world-as-inside is perceptible, tangible, able to be experienced as sensation. Therefore 'interior' no longer means 'the inside of architecture,' but instead, it is the world itself, focused around the inhabitant through the act of dwelling. It is not possible to 'design an interior,' rather, one designs in order to facilitate the act of dwelling – the becoming-interior of the world.

A nondual approach to design for dwelling-in-the-world may thus suggest a new role for interior design as a means of creating a space of potential for a becoming-interior, activated by the facilitation, through architecture or another intermediary, of a resonant interrelation of inhabiting self and natural world. The site for interior design therefore becomes that of the in-

between, or *ma*. "'Designing' in Japanese originally meant *ma-dori*, or the grasping, creating, activating of *ma*." (Bognar, in Verghese, 2003, p. 168) In a contemporary world where space is a luxury, the clutter of possessions and overload of information and visual stimulation prolific, and the conflicts inherent to dualistic thought prevalent, the impact of a design ethos of the in-between, of space, may be significant. Nondual design might perhaps respond to a spiritual desire to tap into something larger than ourselves, not through the denial of excess or the reduction to a minimum limit of an "aesthetic of nothingness," but by providing a breathing-space, a space of connection to the natural world, and ultimately, a space of potentiality.

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