

The Public Sphere in Light of Architectural Practice Providing for invulnerability and equality.

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Abstract

This paper addresses how the public sphere as communicative realm may be component to supporting invulnerability and equality in architectural practice. How does architecture support displaced and migrant people and those who they would newly integrate with in harmony? The contribution is to propose the public sphere as ground for architectural value such that architecturally prepared environments gain meaning by giving the public sphere measure. Without material measure, the public sphere may seem 'invisible'. But architect's inherent attention toward issues beyond daily life and the 'natural attitude' points to giving measure to dwelling in conscious awareness as architecture. Habermas' bourgeois public sphere is taken as a 'special' public sphere that allows us to reveal an absolutely inclusive public sphere. We will define and describe this essential public sphere's elements, based on Habermas' *Das Öffentlichkeit*, including public and private space, and the "intimate sphere" of the individuals of whom these are made up, so that it may become a parameter of professional architectural practice. In giving measure to the public sphere, architectural practice must be inclusive of identity and aspiration and elements of spiritual practices, which implies that the profession may prioritize architectural value as practice responsible for wellbeing. This proposes practice that gives (built) measure to the full nature of humanity through publics influencing the public sphere that in turn influences as

architecture allowing us to address the vulnerability felt in non-architectural environments. The salient result is loci of architecture grounded in absolute inclusivity that supports invulnerability and equality.

1. Preface. Invulnerability and equality.

'Home' is typical of what architecture supports. Home has many forms. We have chosen to address the conditions of vulnerability and inequality that take away our homes due to disturbances in the climate economy and society, which concerns all of us. Whatever vulnerability or injustice, disaster, exclusion and danger forces or inspires a move, landing at a new place that supports invulnerability and equality is critical, while it is essential along the way. Why would we be migrating? Was it a disaster? Was it unmet needs? Was it hope for a better future? 'Home' is possible when these happen.

Change is a part of the evolutionary aspect of life. It is human nature that more and less physical transitions mark change. Transition as movement is one of these. Home is a place of transitions through life and its stages as we all transit the issues and problems that come up and will never stop in any life. Our intended environments must support that transitions are positive. For change that demands migration, including forced and crisis situations, 'home' would remain stable and open to inclusion. How does architecture as practice and as outcomes of practice serve humanity is a unity

and in unity with the world in cases of vulnerability and exclusion? If architects are to respond more successfully to the growing intensity of humanitarian and environmental crises, we must become much clearer on where architecture's capacity lies.¹

Why is our environment unsafe? Untamed gluttony and greed plays a big role in destruction wrought by environments that cannot support wellbeing. But our urgent global need is caused by everyone participating in the extraction of too much energy and resources from the planet's life, including from humanity, and colonizing the world as technology.² The established trend of thinking of architecture as production and technological solutions drives a sense that architects intervene as direct problem solvers. Architecture has not traditionally been, nor is it essentially, an allopathic type of intervention. The profession supports such practice, but, with a technological proxy that conceals architectural value, making technological intervention seem primary. Improvement is limited to mitigation as long as it is based in the technological hegemony that understands only the reserves of extracted energy based on 'systems' anathema to nature's ways.

How may architects support conditions of invulnerability and equality as justice that is not possible when taking society and environment narrowly as problems with technological solutions? This paper addresses how the public sphere as communicative realm is component to supporting invulnerability and equality of people in transition — which is anyone in principle — in architectural practice. Architectural practice provides inherently inclusive value. How can the public sphere anchor serving to harbour the displaced and supporting migrant people and those who they would newly integrate in architecture more effectively. The contribution here is to propose how the public sphere grounds inclusive architectural value.

Without measure, the public sphere may seem 'invisible'. Architects' inherent attention over the horizon, orientating to issues beyond daily life and the 'natural attitude',³ expresses attention to something subtler. Great architecture of long past times and of cultures other than one's own are venerated as

architecture. This attests to an essential realm of unity that encompasses all of us, and our influencing capacities extending 'out of sight', beyond the horizon of one's life and awareness. Architects' reputation of seeming impractical is due in the positive responsibility to the (invisible) public sphere, borne of human consciousness. While the public sphere is effective in all vernacular architecture, as differentiated ground in architectural practice it may support transcending the limitations of the technicist proxy and eliminate exclusion and prejudicial devaluation embedded in the work. Forming architecture of communities as if climatic disturbances such as hurricanes, and human failings such as hate and lack of compassion, do exist is possible by supporting unity.

2. Referencing Habermas' public sphere to architecture.

As with many 19th and 20th century greats, Jürgen Habermas renewed an existing realm. In his introduction to the 1991 publication of *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Thomas McCarthy notes that the public sphere as proposed by Habermas has been assessed and developed by feminist social theorists, political theorists, literary critics and theorists, comparative-historical and political sociologists, communications and media researchers and legal theorists, while Habermas' work in terms of the public sphere remains paradigmatic.⁴

Habermas' approach is primarily in terms of the flow of community power in a 'communicative domain'.⁵ Criticism has sought relentlessly to define a more inclusive public sphere than Habermas bourgeois public sphere appears to be. This is often ideational and virtual and not necessarily spatial, implicating life's lived social activities as essential influence beyond material measurable, social space and communication.⁶ In light of architecture, because of its nature of providing context for life rather than answers to problems, a single whole a priori absolute public sphere is implicated. Unlike Husserl's essential phenomenology,⁷ Habermas' 'special' public sphere, based in European society, can lead us to revealing the absolutely inclusive public sphere, just as Einstein's initial theory of

Special Relativity leads to the General Theory.⁸ Such a communicative realm responds to differentiate individuals, allowing spirituality in dwelling and the purpose of life, daring more than social, political and economic terms would, to open architecture to nature, which includes the role of mind and identity dwelling consciously.

3. Deriving a definition of the public sphere in light of architectural practice.

We will define terms for the public sphere's elements to allow architects in practice to grasp the public sphere, based on Habermas' *Das Öffentlichkeit*, including public and private space and the "intimate sphere"⁹ of the individuals of whom it is made up. Habermas' proposed a communicative realm¹⁰ with 'guaranteed access to all citizens', which has duly been put in question.¹¹ The bourgeois public sphere as made apparent by Habermas is constructed in historical continuity as other to authority of the "ruling estate", subject to law (i.e. reason), and undercutting preceding authority.¹² The architectural profession as we know it arose as this change toward the society that bore the bourgeois public sphere evolved. The profession of architectural practice has evolved as a cultural 'public authority', according with measurables of objective science and the technological construction and financial industries et al. as part of this 'authority', according to its founding within European authorities (publics' ruling estates). However, influence of technology that destined the formation of the bourgeois public as public sphere can not address practice fully, leaving it as other to the profession's authority as such. Architectural practice is concealed 'other' within the profession with its authoritative technist proxy¹³ and is not subject to, nor specific to social or political realms that inhabit it. It is always already original to consciousness, rooted in the public sphere of conscious aware dwelling.

This public sphere is evolved in critical social and political form with four interrelated realms of meaning according to Gipsrud et al.¹⁴ 1) The public sphere as aspiration of human conscious dwelling is the first of these. 2) It combines the elements of public and private concerns and, 3) publics to 4) serve public discourse and its 'opinions'. There is no contradiction with

spatial, political and social public spaces; these remain 'true'. The public sphere is dwelling's inclusive superordinate realm. The unified nature of humanity and all life is well known in spirituality. Humanity is essentially a single unity, which is meaningful to the aspiration we all feel. The question toward utility to architectural practice is how we might approach its recognition as a unified realm of human dwelling intimately connecting everyone.¹⁵

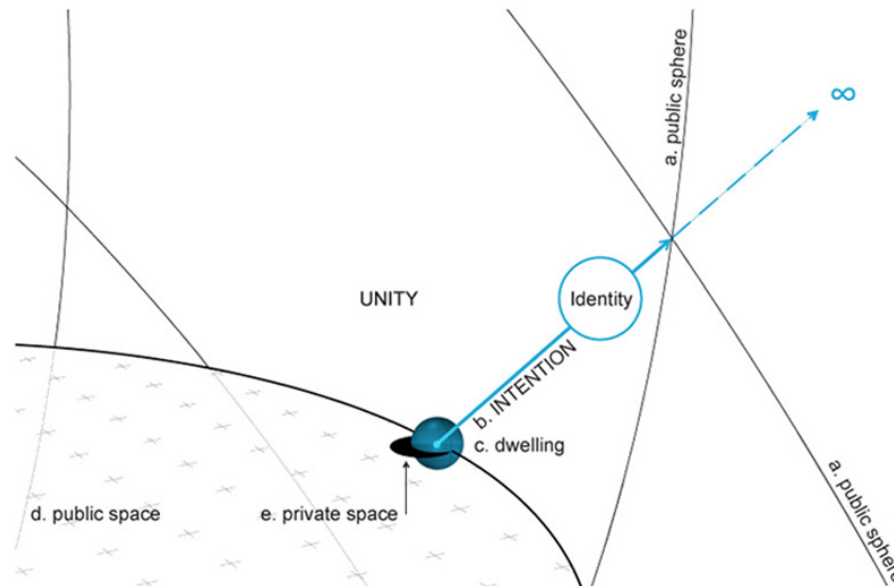
The terms of the public sphere in architectural practice are defined as,

Absolute Inclusivity. The public sphere is an absolutely inclusive "communicative realm" of humanity; a realm not fully bound to time-space where 'mind' of humanity is always met. In what way would a superordinate 'whole of humanity' public sphere exist? How is it to be contextualized to practice of providing architectural value?

Intimate Sphere and Spirituality. The destruction of the bourgeois public sphere through the 20th century modern, by the "social sphere" and 'the state', as frenemies penetrating each other,¹⁶ lead in 1960s to the "domain of leisure" as 'not-work'. This image of leisure is a form of public and private space opening to the inward identity of the individual,¹⁷ whose intimate space is a realm of architectural 'freedom'. The intimate sphere is a point of reference for the subjectivity that is shaped as public space.¹⁸ This intimate sphere within private space(s) at which wellbeing is experienced is central to architecture and to spirituality.¹⁹

4. The public sphere and providing architectural value.

The following outlines an approach to giving measure to the public sphere in architectural practice. Figure 1 locates elements in a three dimensional representation, with the sphere as public sphere that is 'more-dimensional'. The 'radius' of the public sphere is 'intention', which is driven by 'aspiration'. Public space is 'less-dimensional' within the public sphere as it is attained within material measure and technology. Figure 1 depicts only one 'identity' (person) as a single private space, but there are billions of human identities with myriad private spaces in a multilayered complex of public space.²⁰ Multiple private spaces flow and overlap in collaboration with others, i.e. family



- a. The **public sphere** is defined by everyone dwelling. It has parameters of identity and unity that accord with our character and inner condition. The public sphere is not constructs, materiality or interval; it is not space(s).
- b. **Intention** is an expanding force of the public sphere. **Aspiration** is questioning in terms of the identity, by which intention develops capacity of the public sphere, to which all contribute. This defines its extent.
- c. Conscious life fulfills its aspiration in **dwelling**. The diagram shows a single one of the billions of humans dwelling now. The complexity is great, much like the life we see everywhere, from creatures to the proteins within our bodies.
- d. **Private space** is space of a relationship of Identity to world at its dwelling locus. It may be 'zero' but it is always present. Public sphere is anchored at private space located at each identity. Private space defines public space.
- e. **Public space** is located within the public sphere and can never be greater or exterior to it. Its existence is in terms of the public sphere. Its form is publics and destined by private spaces emanating at each identity's intimate sphere.

Figure 1. Describing the Public Sphere. This diagram is a view above a platform located within a sphere. By Author.

and friendships, caucuses, project teams, loves, spies, board room associations; a terrain that is as varied as any of time, land, sea and mountains. The public sphere is capacity of dwelling, composite of all >7½ billion of us.

Public space within the public sphere. Publics evolve within the public sphere. Public space is intimate ('inner') aspects of aspiration and intention of individuals within publics that is given form as intentional environments.

Intention and aspiration. Spiritual practices the world over speak of individuals' condition, intentionality and their awareness of it. Aspiration for evolution of consciousness is known as spirituality. See Figure 2. Accordingly, attaining wellbeing is aspirational and defined by everyone for themselves. This inward 'condition' is reflected outwardly in the form of the environment that we provide for

living and in turn influences inwardly again.²¹ Architects are then responsible for what they aspire in changing environments. Architecture is environment formed by aspirational capacity giving measure to the public sphere. The responsibility of architects becomes clearer.

Identity and private space: The intimate sphere. Each of us dwells 'intimately' in private space within public spaces. Private space may be minimized to 'zero', but it is always in effect. Private space registers measure of human identity at each private-intimate interface with world at loci. The intimate sphere, the origin of all architecture, is at the heart of private space.

Dwelling. Whatever is dwelling's purpose is individual responsibility. We evolve or lose capacity according to our aspiration and intentions in dwelling. This is a mystery

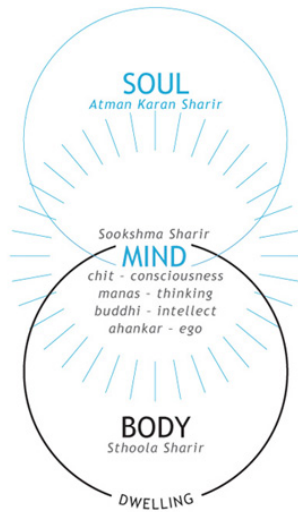


Figure 2. Elements of the Dweller. By Author.

Mind is mutable and it is evolutionary. Spirituality is mind serving to transcend its condition. If the environment serves this it supports spiritual wellbeing. Mind is the element at that architecture presences. Practice orientated toward aspiration is about realizing capacity to arrange loci with architectural value. The Vedantic/yogic approach defines components of mind as manas, buddhi, ahankar and chit to give us means of developing an approach to that evolution. A simple prayer may help to understand:

May we all develop correct thinking,
right understanding,
and an honest approach to life.
Everyone is attaining rightness in action and
perfection in character.

The 1st, 2nd and 3rd lines represent manas, buddhi and ahankara respectively. Chit is reflected in the last line. It benefits the others as their canvas.

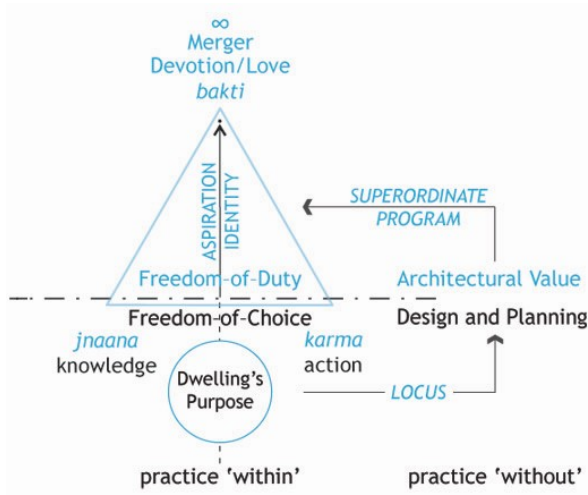


Figure 3. Relationship of inward evolution (spirituality) and architecture. By Author.

The triangle describes the relationship of knowledge, action and devotion. Its base represents a static material existence. The vertical is a function known as devotion in its more evolved form. It is related to striving, aspiration and love, and to the driving force of will within, often known as 'ego'. We are often concerned with our claim to 'freedom-of-choice'. We do not benefit from freedom if we do not commit to anything and we give freedom up if we do. Having chosen, we commit to freedom-of-duty. Duty is on the side of the immeasurable that can not be scientifically defined and rises to infinitely in terms of consciousness and its aspiration. It is what we make of opportunity in our life.

Architectural value is formed according to such choosing as opportunity in an environment. It is to make aspiration present. This is the 'superordinate program' of architecture.

accessible through intuition and feeling. Spiritual practices support the growth of capacity of intuition and feeling and its integration in dwelling life.²² Architects locate this aspiration as measure given the public sphere at loci in the environment. See Figure 3.

5. Three examples in practice.

Rudolf Steiner provides an insightful valuation of architecture.²³ The Greek temple is the god's house in an agrarian public space. The Greek

god is 'presenced' as form given to that energy, making the landscape with architecture to allow the god to dwell with the people.²⁴ See Figure 4. In Christendom, the presencing of the god is within the church. Gigantic city-urban orientated Roman temples can be seen as their stability and safety. They have not got architecture and suffer as much as they from exclusion and devaluation, (although they will likely deny it). The disjunction is that the architectural profession, assigned to the superordinate programme of providing

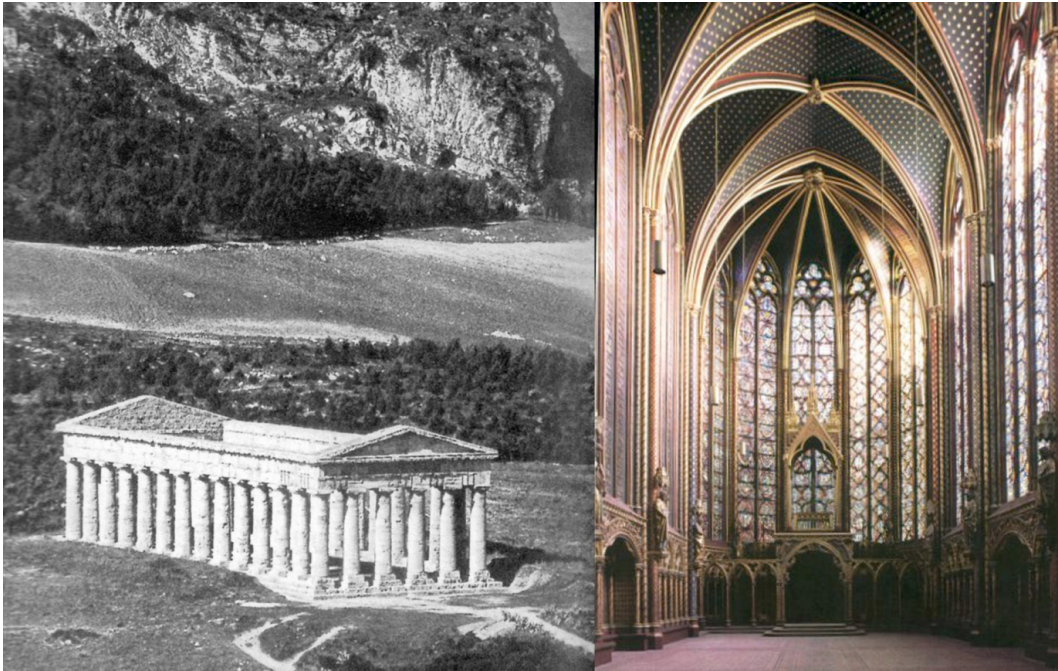


Figure 4. Examples suggested by Rudolph Steiner. The temple at Segesta of the late 5th C BCE in Sicily and Durham Cathedral's interior. Sources . Steiner 2003 and www.openbuildings.com/buildings/durham-cathedral-profile-6366#!buildings-media/2 respectively.

precursors to the Christian inward orientated space of congregation, much as the Roman basilica was within the system of city and empire with the gaze turned inward, away from the landscape. Gothic churches' fenestration is above eye level and it conceals the sky with special images and colours in support the public within. The architecture is measure given to the public sphere as its congregation (i.e. public) serving (aspiration) for nearness to god in both cases.²⁵

In our secular, materialist and technological epoché, Louis Kahn's Salk Institute gives form in terms of Machine Ages technological colonization and of thinking accordingly. See Figure 5. The plaza is a platform by which we face the horizon from above mud rising tectonically out of the Pacific Ocean.²⁶ The mud is ephemeral locus, vulnerable, structurally gossamer and temporary. We inhabit the plaza's sides at viewpoints of power representing science's great discoveries. The architecture celebrates power, as grand tribute to ourselves, the creature risen out of the ooze, hardly any longer touching the earth, while tentatively embracing consciousness as spectator. Kahn presences our dilemma and its

disjunction. This architecture is measure given the public sphere, and its aspiration.

6. Architecture's superordinate program, and invulnerability and stability.

Climate and social crises are inevitable result of extracting too much of the planet's energy as theft,²⁷ colonizing the earth's life as resources and systems. Earth's life weakens and breaks down, cascading into vast changes to maintain its growth and evolution.²⁸ Forced migration and mass migration and the marginalization of peoples and publics is a read-out of human transition forced by our destruction of nature, including human nature. If safety, stability and efficiency are held in isolation from conscious awareness, as Machine Ages technology does, consciousness is reduced. This is often used to justify blaming those who are new or other to a public and its environment. Those who are still/already at home in environments with no architectural value suffer in those stunted environments — we are very used to that pain. They suffer with feeling vulnerability to new arrivals, the refugee and the migrant. They express fear even as they claim the value of



5. Louis I. Kahn. The Salk Institute, La Jolla, California. By Author.

architectural value, conceals this as technological solutions. A supportive environment is as necessary to people suffering loss as it is to re-settle or to support the public that they join in a new home and community. Architecture and its professional technicist proxy conceal aspiration, the public sphere is contradicted and crisis is in the architecture of architecture's absence.²⁹

The shift to terms of growth and evolution is essentially to move the side of nature. Architectural practice is beyond technological process, progress and solutions of the profession's technicist proxy, mis-taken as architecture. Turning to the all inclusive public sphere must reveal architectural value, the responsibility of architecture and the vast poverty of human life and its environments today.

7. Conclusion. Valuable architectural practice and the public sphere.

'One task for architects is to render visible environments in which societal properties infect the formally inclusive essential public sphere for equal and invulnerable discursive interaction within us all.' —based on text by Nancy Fraser, modified by author, *Gipsrud 2011:135*³⁰

Jurgen Habermas's influence allows us to look at the public sphere's role in practice in creating architectural value. While his 'public sphere' is originally seen as spaces arising out

of private realms, this paper makes the more definitive claim, based on our view from architectural practice, that the public sphere is the essence of dwelling and that the intimate 'sphere' is its generator at heart as well as the locus where architects in practice interface with need-based responsibility. Valuable architectural practice is knowledgeable of the essential public sphere, giving it measure and form as architecture as conscious differentiated element of practice. Such architects will bring the magic that they do more consistently and more profoundly. When we engage the public sphere, resonance with the public sphere's harmony may quell the pain of nature's hurricanes and quakes and the destruction of war, economic chaos and financial ruin. Displacement and mass migration will be less if our home is architecture.

Endnotes

1. This paper has intents to respond to such approaches as Bernstein 2018, redefining 'success' in reference to the definition, production and social and value to community of architectural value that is brought.
2. Our world is currently as much as possible 'known' as measure of technological means discovered and proven in scientific experiment. Heidegger's terms (translated to English by Lovitt) are that 'world' (i.e. nature and people) "is challenged forth and enframed as standing reserve". Heidegger 1977.
3. Definition of the natural attitude. Husserl: ¶ 22.
4. Habermas 1991:xiv.
5. Habermas utilizes this term in his conclusion. As he explains the transformation of the bourgeois public sphere and as he unfolds it, he expresses that the communicative aspect is the primary aspect. Habermas 1991:1. The development of the bourgeois public

- sphere is described as the transformation of communication. Habermas 1991: 16, 20–26.
6. Nancy Fraser "undermines" the bourgeois public sphere and "enjoins corresponding tasks" in the endeavour of defining a more inclusive public sphere in her conclusion to her essay *Rethinking the Public Sphere*. Gripsrud 2010: 145.
 7. Husserl developed a general or absolute idea about phenomenology, rather than specific to a case. A phenomenological investigation would, however, always appear in terms of its subject
 8. Albert Einstein's Special Relativity is in terms of constant velocity. The General Theory includes acceleration, i.e. gravity, which allows the development of an absolute model of the universe.
 9. This is a term that Habermas uses for a 'deeper privacy' related more directly to individuals within the spaces of the 'private sphere'. "The public's understanding of the public use of reason was guided by such private experiences as grew out the audience-orientated (*publikumsbezogen*) subjectivity of the conjugal family's intimate domain (*Intimsphäre*). " Habermas 1991:28.
 10. Gripsrud 2010:185.
 11. Nancy Fraser's *Rethinking the Public Sphere*. Gripsrud 2010 is very clear on this point.
 12. "[Bourgeois private person's] power claims against the public authority were thus not directed against the concentrated powers of command that ought to be 'divided'; instead, they undercut the principle on which existing rule was based." Ibid:28.
 13. This is based on the concepts in *The Questioning Concerning Technology*, Heidegger 1977 an that architecture can not itself be technology. This is developed fully in my dissertation, *The Goal in Architecture*, Karassowitsch 2016 and subsequent papers.
 14. Gipsrud 2010:xiv
 15. In the introductory paragraphs of his 1964 paper, Habermas states that his public sphere came about in the bourgeois society in the 18th century with the underlying implication that it is found as that social 'making' writes, yet, he writes as if the public sphere is always already in existence, like a 'fact' of nature would be. (This is a jumping off point for this research.). Gripsrud 2010: 114. Fraser brings to the fore that Habermas is referencing a widely inclusive public sphere that is in practice not there as such spaces and across society. Gripsrud 2010: 131. "... the public sphere distinguishes itself through a communication structure that is related to a third feature of communicative action: it refers neither to the functions nor to the contents of everyday communication but to the social space generated in communicative action. Gripsrud 2010: 185.
 16. The bourgeois public sphere as a social space is destroyed by transformation and has been superseded. Habermas did not definitively say what it has become, only that it is transforming, however, he did name new publics and the relationships to private space and public actors. Habermas 1991. See also "16 The Tendency toward a Mutual Infiltration of Public and Private Spheres" Habermas 1991:141
 17. "The representation of the interests of the privatized domain of a market economy was interpreted with the aid of ideas grown in the soil of the intimate sphere of the conjugal family. The latter and not the public sphere itself (as the Greek model would have it) was humanity's genuine site." Ibid 1962:51-52.
 18. "Leisure behavior supplies the key to the floodlit privacy of the new sphere, to the externalization of what is declared to be the inner life." Habermas 1991: 158.
 19. Intimacy is developed further in this research as a realm within our mind or the 'inner dwelling'. This is the realm of spirituality. We are referring to rajayoga, following for example Vivekananda, Krishnamurthi or the practice of Sahaj Marg. All of these reference Patañjali's *Yogasūtra*. The elements of intention and aspiration are component. Habermas finds that in written communication "... by communicating with each other in the world of letters, [individuals and communities] confirmed each other's subjectivity as it emerged from their spheres of intimacy." Habermas 1991:54. The sphere of intimacy appears beyond private space toward valuation inward of intentionality and aspiration of the person dwelling.
 20. "The bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public; ..." Habermas 1991:27. Private people come together to form a public sphere that destines a form of public space. 'Private' is the emanation of the intimate sphere by which it exists. This realm has 'layers', like folds, episodes, intensities, vibrations and many others. Private space is creation of 'private people'. Habermas can be understood as moving across his representation of 'space' in a 'not-dimensional' realm.
 21. Inspiration for this is Krishnamurthi's discussions with Dr. David Bohm on the mind taking on the apparent linear structure of time 'inwardly, and the creation of harmful patterns of 'increment' taken up in the mind. These impressions we hold inwardly are again reflected outwardly, but these are no longer the natural attributes that were originally 'thought'. Krishnamurthi 1983:11. Karassowitsch 2016.
 22. 'Spiritual practices' references especially those of the Indian sub-continent, such as saṣṭitantra, sāmkhya, *Yogasūtra*, Sahaj Marg Rajayoga (Heartfulness), as well as western influences such as Theosophy, Anthroposophy and Christian based practice such as exemplified in *The Cloud of Unknowing*. See fn 14.
 23. Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) was a leader in spirituality or 'spiritual science', founder of Anthroposophy.
 24. Steiner 2003:40-44.
 25. Ibid. p.45-46.
 26. The tectonic plate movement at the southern California ocean shore is rising (out of the ocean) and moving east.
 27. Jeff Bezos utilizes the wealth of Amazon for his project to create a space program to move humanity off-planet. "Bezos worries that in the comin generations the planet's growing energy demands will outstrip its limited supply. "We have to go to space to save Earth," he says." Facilitating that is the purpose of Amazon and Blue Origin. Blue Origin is inspired by the book *The High Frontier*. Foer 2019.
 28. Barkham 2018. Carrington 2017. Ripple 2019.
 29. The *Mānasāra*, the Vedas based equivalent to Vitruvius's *de architectura libri decem*, repeatedly warns that serious issues including death will arise if architecture is improperly prepared. We might not agree with what is prescribed in detail because the terms are outdated. Considering that these admonitions for architects are conceived as a vital health determining agency of society, it seems that the invisibility of harm due to lack of architecture is similar to today's environmental and climate change that show only limited quick and direct harm.
"79. On who does what is not prescribed becomes recipient of scanty results." *Mānasāra* 1935:9 in 'II. Qualifications of Architects and the System of Measurement'
"90. Anything beginning from the selection (of the site) up to the end (of the preparation of the soil), done through ignorance, would lead to the destruction of all prospects " *Mānasāra* 1935:21 in 'V. Examination of Soil'

"266–269. This (primary) object of architecture should be carefully kept in view in connection with buildings of gods and men. Root as it is of (all) good and evil none of its parts should be rendered defective. I through ignorance (of the architects) any of its parts be rendered defective the master himself becomes (absolutely) ruined. Therefore, the wise architects should on no account do more or less (lit. accept or reject) what is laid down." *Mānasāra* 1935:55–56 in 'VII. Ground–Plans'

30. Nancy Fraser's statement is modified to aim at architecture, while keeping the relationships and types of the objects the same. "One task for critical theory is to render visible the ways in which societal inequality infects formally inclusive existing public spheres and taints discursive interaction within them." *Gipsrud* 2011:135.

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