



## Issue 02: Essay



# Bringing Interiority to Interior Design

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Although design is present everywhere in the material world and also defines abstract processes, there is a lack of gravity considering its powerful position and cultural significance. Design is constantly being thought of in the narrow form of disciplines such as product design, interior design, graphic design and so on. This tends to segregate design from other disciplines but also from global issues like environmental concerns. Not only is there a necessity to re-think design generally but to look critically at the world-making of specific disciplines of design.

This paper sets out to explore the 'world-making' of interior design. It does this by establishing essential links between interior design and the development of commodification, consumption and subjectivity to show how 'interior' is both material and psycho-social and to consider 'interior' as both a spatial and mental state (of mind). So contextualized, the paper is part of a larger rethinking of interior design that is the subject of my doctorate research. The thesis is questioning the shortcomings of interior design and claims that it is inappropriately prescriptive. Interior design is directed by assumptions of lack and it tends to reinforce and fuel frivolous wants and demands rather than authentic understanding of the motivations underlying consumptive behaviors. Locked into and enabling unrestrained consumerism, interior design as commonly practiced, stimulates rather than constraining consumption. It is driven by regimes of fashion, growth and commodification. It mirrors and reproduces the spectacle of media constructed ways of life and work. As such there is an inherent investment in the unsustainable and therefore there is an urgent need to rethink interior design.

This paper combines two approaches: discussion of contemporary, more progressive thinking on interiority by Christine McCarthy and others; and an historical perspective on interior design in terms of the development of taste and class privilege. The effect of bringing these two approaches together is to indicate the failure of interior design to understand or interrogate its role in designing for the inner life of people who occupy the spaces it creates or the material imperatives of the world in which it operates. In the domestic sphere, because interior design does not arrive until there is a certain level of affluence, it fails on both counts – psychologically and environmentally.

### On interiority

We are always in a place. Interior spaces are not only inhabited, they also they inhabit the people living in the spaces. The house becomes a setting for an interior life, where a person could construct an inner self. Essentially, the home identifies with the self. Places are absorbed in everyday life into our identity. They become part of one's own consciousness. As Ingraham<sup>1</sup> elaborates, the interior of the house comes to stand as a metaphor for the inner life of the human. As such, it takes over in some sense "the space of interiority that the human psyche claims for itself when it leaves the surrogate interior of the house". There are direct, but complex connections to be made between the environments in which we live or work, and the life of our inner being – both influence each other at the levels of perception of possibility and limitation of action. Three figures interplay in these relations: the exterior, the interior and interiority.

Interiority is an especially complex object of philosophical inquiry, but essential if we are to understand what interior design actually does. To begin we will give consideration to an article by interior designer Christine McCarthy,

'Toward a Definition of Interiority' which was published in *Space and Culture* in 2005.<sup>2</sup> Although one of the more insightful and useful texts on the interior and interiority from a scholar working in the field of architecture and interior design, it nonetheless remains contradictory. As we shall see, at one level it stays grounded in a phenomenal disposition toward space that one might expect from her professional interests. But at the same time McCarthy ventures into more complex theoretical engagements that raise numerous contentious issues. Notwithstanding this, what is useful about the article is that it clusters a whole range of perceptions of what interiority is thought to be at multiple levels of complexity.

For instance, McCarthy affirms the interior architecturally as 'containment, enclosure, privacy, security, shelter', as well as affectively as confinement, imprisonment, protection, but equally goes on to say 'interiority is that abstract quality that enables the recognition and definition of an interior'.<sup>3</sup> Interiority is intrinsic to the experience of being human, wherein cognition *recognizes*, and emotion reacts, to environments; it is not an agent in itself rather it is always linked to space, desire, object, reflection and lack. We recognize and engage with the world around us; all material and natural things and other human beings as objects of our experience are outside of us. But through engagements we know ourselves in a fundamentally different way. We don't look at ourselves only from the outside but significantly we experience ourselves from within, not as an object, but as a subject that is present to itself. This self-presence is the interiority of a human being. This is the place where each person dwells. This self-presence eludes objectification, yet it is often overlooked as we are used to looking at things and dealing with things in front of us. When it comes to experiencing ourselves we tend to focus on ourselves also as object and not as subject. We experience interior spaces as relationships between exteriority and interiority - the contextual and physical experience of being in a space and the perceptions and feelings inside one's mind. However, throughout McCarthy's article interiority is conflated with mind and then treated as if it were lodged in a conscious subject and agency able to negotiate limits, borders and existential conditions.

Without elaborating in detail what McCarthy presents in terms of interiority as a plural clustering of forms and characteristics, as an unanchored rhetorical figure it arrives at one moment evoked in various guises, at another it is called up with a claim to agency, and then later it's expressed as a desire for closeness (but one asks to what?), while at the same time cited as itself an 'imaging of closeness and the making of relationships'.<sup>4</sup> Yet it is also taken as a withdrawal from space into an absolute inner life of totally compressed interiority. The deployed rhetoric is replete with a confusion of conditions, space and agency with geometry fading in and out of focus. More than this, interiority is also misread as a voluntarist condition of being (with ability to control one's surroundings and as the place where the inhabitant performs as host or guest). Constantly geometry reasserts itself.

'Interiority' is not a guarantee of an exclusive inside location, for equally an inside is able to sustain exteriority. In the context of interior design, inside and outside are architectural prescriptions tied to the boundary of building, whereas interiority and exteriority weave within and without the built constraints of architecture, sometimes between them, and sometimes independent of them. In part, it rests with the ability to control one's surroundings and the place where one performatively acts (as for instance host or guest). Interiority is fluid- inner being thus can be present or absent from where one physically is.

So often in McCarthy's eclectic assemblage fuse statements wherein observation, fiction and time flow into a rhetoric wherein the poetics undoes critical insight. Consider:

Interiority is a transformative concept, dependent on social, cultural, physical and technological developments in quite specific societies. As shown it is far more than this and is grounded in our being. The mobile phone is perhaps the most recent production of interiority as technologically driven atmosphere. Beyond the paranoia of electromagnetic carcinogens, the mobile phone calls on interiority to transport its user to the memory of an interior. The bus becomes a teenage girl's bedroom, the airport the trading floor of the stock exchange, the street corner rendezvous an office boardroom meeting as the technologically transmitted rememberings of these past interior spaces (which used to house telephones) bring with them the behaviors (tones of voice and body positions) needed to perform interiority.<sup>5</sup>

More of this is at stake here, for the binary real/imagined space is/has been broken. The interior has been hyper-realized - it is now everywhere where industrialized memory (technology) is present. On this situation do we not heed Benjamin '...the individual, on the strength of his inwardness, to vie with technology leads to his downfall'.<sup>6</sup>

To adequately make sense of these remarks we need to historically reflect upon the rise of the desire for the form and content of interior space.

### Paris and the arcades

The social and environmental change brought on by the industrial revolution in Paris saw the rebuilding of one of Europe's largest cities from a medieval town to a progressive modern city with a sewer system, wide boulevards and monuments. The Paris arcades became one of the distinguishing spectacle features of the city. Conceptually, their origin can be traced back to the Eastern Bazaars.<sup>7</sup> Their very ornate architectural style showcases early iron and glass experiments. As Paris was still without sidewalks in the early part of the nineteenth-century the arcades not only provided access to the interior of a block or a shortcut between streets, they also provided shelter from rain and mud. But above all else, the arcades provided a means of organizing retail trade and displaying new luxury goods, predominantly from the textile industry, all under the one roof.<sup>8</sup> As such the arcades were the centre of luxury goods trade.<sup>9</sup>

The dominant construction materials used to create these pedestrian passages or galleries were glass and iron. The arcades were typically traffic free, open at both ends, roofed in glass and iron, linking two parallel streets with a marble floor. The main light source came from above through the glass roof structure. The arcades were lined on either side with shops and other establishments such as cafes, restaurants, theatres and storage rooms above.<sup>10</sup> The main characteristics were a symmetrical exterior looking interior façade and the shops that displayed rich textiles, colours and early industrial goods often described by Benjamin as the "dialectical fairy tale" of emergent capitalist material culture.<sup>11</sup> The glass roof created a protective barrier between the street from noise and climatic discomforts. They also created the feeling of an ideal artificial safe world. The interior images of the arcades showed a collision of styles from gothic to Persian, with Renaissance influences popping up randomly. The interior of the shops equally displayed a marriage of style; rich heavy textile curtains, cushions and full-length gold framed mirrors, fireplace and plaster ornaments.<sup>12</sup> There was a mix of an existing romantic notion and the new modern industrial style. This gave a constructed sense of fakeness about the interiors and about the working people inside them.

The arcades were in many ways domesticated public spaces.<sup>13</sup> Benjamin described them as "urban galleries; as rooms and dwelling places."<sup>14</sup> The exterior is only present by ones 'imagination'. Benjamin sums up the essence of the arcades in a quotation from the *Illustrated Guide to Paris*, a German publication of 1852:

These arcades, a recent invention of industrial luxury, are glass-roofed, marble-panelled corridors extending through whole blocks of buildings, whose owners have joined together for such enterprises. Lining both sides of the corridors, which get their light from above, are the most elegant shops, so that the arcade is a city, a world in miniature, in which customers will find everything they need.<sup>15</sup>



Image 1  
Passage des Panoramas, Paris

Paris, in his schema, was the model of the modern capitalist city and the bourgeois 'felt at home' in the arcades. The first arcade, the Passage des Panoramas opened in 1800. Twenty to thirty arcades followed between 1800 and 1830 and some are still standing today. Described as one of the most influential architectural forms of the nineteenth century by Benjamin, they give a good insight into the emergence of modern urban public behaviours. As a new kind of public space they offered different spatial and social possibilities as they became the places for interaction and economic activity that transformed perceptions and thereafter the pattern of consumption. People started buying goods not because they needed them but because they desired them and the values they represented. Locals went to the arcades to window-shop and to be seen. The arcades emerged as social attractors and gathering places of a grand scale that provided not only places of consumption but also of public spectacle that we would now call tourist attractions.

Social classes started to significantly change at the beginning of the nineteenth-century. The ranks of the working class expanded (and within it a more affluent 'labour aristocracy') as well as a larger and proto-consumerist middle class. With many rural people moving to Paris to find work, the city quickly

became overcrowded and dense. By the mid nineteenth century about forty-five percent of Parisians belonging to an emergent bourgeois shared the same narrow inner city streets with the working class.<sup>16</sup> The new middle class or the cosmopolitan bourgeois, a social class full of confidence and disposable income, who engaged in activities of distribution rather than production, found work in some of the growth sectors such as trade, finance and commerce. As trade in the city expanded and the nature of the urban market changed, competition amongst the middle class to sell goods intensified.<sup>17</sup>

At the same time the production and distribution of goods shifted from the home to factories and many members of the new middle class became small business owners. Although the shift from home to factory-produced goods created labour opportunities, the working class was still living in poor conditions and mostly excluded from the new world of consumption offered in the arcades.<sup>18</sup> As the urban landscape changed under industrial capitalism it equally accelerated the expansion of the spectacle of consumer culture. By providing exhilarating spaces and an endless offer of commodities, the arcades quickly turned the earlier shopping model of exchange and trade engaged in market squares into an aesthetic event of anticipated leisure and social activity. In many ways the Paris arcades are symbols of the first modern consumerism which became more prominent towards the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>19</sup>

With the rise of international trade and the acceleration of industrial manufacture, consumption pattern quickly changed from meeting mostly basic needs to being driven by the power of the marketplace. This new emerging consumer culture also changed how the domestic interior was created and viewed, particularly by the bourgeois class. The lavishly decorated arcades conceptualised a particular taste and consciousness of the material realities of domesticity and evoked desires that were actively developed into modern domestic realities. The arcades with their utopian presentations of wealth and excess, made an image that crept into the domestic interiors of bourgeois life. "The drawing room became a box in the world theatre".<sup>20</sup>

Living spaces became more distinguished from the work place. For the bourgeoisie dwelling was more clearly separated from work and became a projection (and creation) of social identity. As such the 'nature of interiority' also changed. Although the image of the home as a private and individual space, a refuge and a comfort from the outside, a place of mediation between public and private space still prevailed, that notion had been challenged by a number of developments. The change in consumer behaviour triggered a change in lifestyle which altered the self-image and eventually, through general acceptance, a socially accredited stereotype of the bourgeois emerged. The interiors of this social class reflected a complex aesthetic deeply embedded in material culture. In essence the objects they displayed were of character and identity typical of someone concerned with social expectations and status. The domestic spaces of people not only reveal how they lived but also open inquiry of who they were and the interiors of the time convey self-identity and social identity. Modernising the home was indivisible from keeping up with social expectations. Despite radical changes in domestic life over the past two hundred years, in a sense the bourgeois interiors are present with us even today.

Modernising the home and keeping up with social trends and expectations ensured producers a continued demand for consumer goods but equally it generated a growing desire amongst consumers to express individualism (an externalisation of interiority).<sup>21</sup> Similarly to the arcades, the interiors at the time expressed social cues through decorative objects and surfaces. Through the acquisition of objects, the domestic interior became container-like – this to house and exhibit the acquired collection of bought modern objects and things familiar. New materials from technological advanced industries were softened for the newly differentiated domestic interior by the use of exotic soft luxurious materials such as drapery and upholstery.<sup>22</sup>

### From arcades to department stores

While the arcades had prompted the rise of commodity culture as capitalism advanced, they started to become obsolete with the rise of the department stores. The enormous output of the manufacturing process of the industrial revolution had transformed the form and volume of everyday goods. The amount of goods available and their affordability created the foundational condition for modern consumerism. A sales infrastructure able to deliver huge amounts of goods to 'the public' was essential, and this is exactly what the department store, in combination with the establishment of mail order catalogues, was able to do. In the latter part of the nineteenth-century, mail-order catalogues became a dynamic form of marketing. The Sears-Roebuck and Montgomery Ward catalogues were the

first to introduce the image of an individually created life-world assembled from purchased goods and in doing so they quickly established an enormous level of consumer demand and powerful global network. This was to become a fixture of the American culture as well as part of the national psyche.<sup>23</sup>

The rapid growth of industrialization saw a huge increase in department stores in all larger cities. The retail sector with its enormous profits became the epicenters of burgeoning consumer culture, effectively transforming the landscape of commerce. The new department stores in common with the arcades were spaces of the spectacle on larger scale but increasingly were even more accessible to a growing middle class and the more affluent end of the working class.

The first department store (Le Bon Marché – which started as a small store selling dry goods) was claimed to have opened in Paris in the 1838.<sup>24</sup> By the mid 1850s to the end of the nineteenth-century the number of department stores had dramatically increased and created a major revolution in consumer culture and the shopping experience, as well as changing a good deal of the nature of the domestic interior and inner-life therein.



Image 2  
Le Bon Marché Paris 1867

The store was the first in the 1850's to sell merchandise with a low and fixed retail prices (eliminating bargaining and generating a high turnover of goods; this based on the low unit profit but high volume return model of retailing). The volume of goods sold, the speed at which they were sold and the size of the stores differentiated department stores from the ordinary specialty shops and other dry goods stores. Customers were encouraged to enter the shop and browse, and not obliged to make any purchase. Other significant changes included the introduction of the return policy – customers could exchange or return goods for other goods or get their money back. Bon Marché's success was impressive. The store sales went from a total of a half-million francs in 1852 to five

million in sales in 1860, by which time they were employing up to 4000 staff. As a result of the rapid growth, the merchandise got diversified. Bon Marché offered anything from ladies' dresses, shoes and underwear to children's toys, tools and furniture. The merchandise was displayed under the same roof but in different departments. Bon Marché's new methods of handling and presenting goods marked a real development of department stores' business. But more than this, they also marked an expansion of images, objects and spaces offered up to desire. As such, these methods equally expanded the idealisation of interior dwelling with the interiority of inner life – life in the imagined.

The United States was the first country to follow France in establishing department stores, but similar developments were happening in Ireland and the UK. In Chicago, Marshall Field and Company opened the second largest store worldwide at the time followed by Wanamaker in Philadelphia in 1877. By 1890 a new world of retailing had been created as department stores had established a market position as universal providers.

As many small towns grew into cities, as a result of expanding population growth and industrialization, many general stores eventually became department stores. Big cities grew at a rapid pace.<sup>25</sup> Just as industrialization and immigration transformed cities, new technologies reshaped their built fabric. The introduction of iron, and then steel-framed buildings allowed for a higher structure with wide open atrium – a form of construction ideal for department stores. Not only did architects make use of the new technologies to create modern constructions with heating, cooling and lighting but for the first time architects worked with store managers to study the movement and observable behaviours of people through the store. This led to new store designs and layouts that were carefully considered to maximise product exposure to customers. In the USA in its peak times, more than 10,000 people went through the department stores in a single day. This required a whole new approach to crowd control.

The department store interiors were represented as more like the décor of a palace than a shop. Marshall and Field (completed in 1907 in Chicago) was one of the biggest and most elegant of those stores. The elaborate interior was a display of excess and opulence extending over 300,000 square metres of floor space on twelve levels. The interior featured the largest Tiffany & Co dome style ceiling constructed of mosaic glass. The expansive floor areas were covered mostly in marble and carpet; the cabinets, shelves and counters were made from oak and glass with decorative detailing. Elegant staircases and elevators connected floors and the lead light windows were covered with velvet drapery while the seating was covered with quality upholstery.<sup>26</sup> The department store was a grand space, both on the inside and the outside. The structure and layout of the store was designed to lure people into the dream, entered via ornamental doorways and exiting window displays. Inside the goods were arranged and shaped by the store managers into micro-environments of desire. As such, they put mini utopias on sale. It appeared as if it was possible to buy a way into the future. This kind of induction was not of course just into the store itself but into consumer culture and its associated inner-life of dreams and desires, thus into a particular mode of interiority wherein the exterior and the interior were articulated in such a way as to imply lack, and the lure of its fulfilment via consumption.

Towards the end of the nineteenth-century firms such as John Wanamaker, Marshall Field, Jordan Mark, Lord and Taylor and R.H. Macy spread all over the United States and offered a huge diversity of goods. Those stores were of an ever-grander scale, the largest being over forty-two acres of floor space serving a quarter of a million customers per day. The interior design of the department stores was lavish and grandiose. As said, they were fitted out to appeal especially to female customers. Many were compared to women's equivalent of a men's downtown club.<sup>27</sup> Department stores moreover offered more than just the experiencing and purchasing of goods. Many stores featured impressive comfort and service spaces for customers like lounges and restrooms, reading rooms, writing rooms and restaurants with live music, all conveniently under the one roof. The creation of a 'commodity' can therefore be seen to have been grounded in real material practices.



Image 3

*Marshall Field Interior - gallery design*

One early characteristic of a department store layout was the rotunda design; followed by a gallery style construction with a great central void overlooking all floors, usually covered in a glass ceiling. Interestingly this panoptic model of the surveillance of staff and customers has a great deal in common with the development of the system first conceived by Jeremy Bentham at the end of the eighteenth-century that Michel Foucault drew attention to in the mid 1970s in his influential book *Discipline and Punish*. The hierarchical observation and monitoring of staff and customers as yet another sign of progress of modernity and society quickly adapted to becoming a surveillance society.<sup>28</sup> The introduction of surveillance in the department store facilitated corrective measures of punishment and reward to control staff. But while the design of the department store helped with surveillance, the interiors became more grandiose and exquisite at the same time. The extravagant interior aimed to establish a new culture of buying.<sup>29</sup> Merchandise was arranged by design and displayed in a way to seduce people into purchasing and the displays were reinforced with advertising tapping into consumer's created desires for particular products, environments, lifestyles and image maintenance. However, consumption was made more than just purchasing by offering a range of other services. These services reinforce the notion that consumption is a total lifestyle. Women in particular were targeted by offering beauty salons, nurseries, meeting rooms for women's groups, repair services for shoes and jewellery and similar. These almost royal treatments eventually lead to wealthy female

customers using their class prerogatives to demand unrealistic expensive and wasteful practices and eventually proved to costly. In addition the elaborated services and displays gave the impression of unaffordable high prices, which discouraged the working class to enter, although the prices were often within their economic means.

Worried about sustaining the high costs store managers tried and make the stores economically viable – in particular they adopted the 'Babbage' principle (Charles Babbage, an English economist who suggested that the whole labour process could be made more economical by only hiring the minimum of skilled labour required).<sup>30</sup> Support sections and non-selling spaces were moved to upper floors or out of the building to cheaper facilities away from the central business district. High costs were also reduced by neglecting to invest in even a basic fit-out of those areas of stores not accessible to customers. Support areas were designed for performance and efficiency rather than aesthetics. Further savings were also commonly achieved in only providing very basic staff facilities where space was often small, overcrowded and unsanitary. Thus the design concept driving the stores was lavish spectacle associated with sales areas, and minimum expenditure on all else within the building.

Socially the department stores were very hierarchical. To ensure financial success, the floors were rationalised into departmental divisions, each with its own floor managers or floorwalkers but held together with a tightly controlling finance and accounting sector and a general manager (floorwalkers were employees in a managerial role supervising sales personnel and assisting customers.).<sup>31</sup> The departmental division of stores not only helped train staff to specialise in a more narrow line of merchandise but also helped to control large volumes of customers more effectively. The floors were reorganised according to sales volume. Hence, the street floor, easiest accessible, became the bargain floor for sure selling high volume items and customers were directed into the aisles showcasing the most tempting items. This organisational layout structure is still employed today in department stores.

### A space of the feminine

When labour activity moved out of the home to shops and offices, women who normally worked alongside their husbands could afford to stay at home and shift their mode of production to child bearing, domestic duties and being a consumer.<sup>32</sup> The arcades and later the department stores allowed them to safely venture outside the home without male companionship and the increased leisure time available attracted them to places of consumption.<sup>33</sup> The new development in consumer behaviour took place at the same time as the role of women in society was changing. The male only city enclaves of business and pleasure changed when restaurants and teahouses opened to women. Public transport was made available and acceptable and offered women easy journeys into the city.<sup>34</sup>

In contradiction, the activity of shopping liberated women from the home while continually drawing them back into its locus as alienated inner life. Along with this was a growth of the entry of women into the workforce. This brought working class women into the realm of consumption via their disposable income. Likewise, it shifted the character of interiority existentially - a new relation between dream and class was forged. Department store managers leveraged this on many levels. Early signs of consumerism as a leisure activity that were already evident in the early nineteenth-century – as shown the Paris arcades – had a major influence on urban lifestyles. Women's behaviour started to change when designers and manufacturers of luxury consumer goods, fashion and cosmetics started deliberately targeting them, opening up further dimensions of interiority with internal and external expression. This is to say that whenever there is a transformation in the life-world of a subject there is equally a change in the nature of (their) interiority.

By commodifying femininity alongside the commodification of the home, women were doubly manipulated, convinced by the market of the need to purchase their femininity and to exchange wages for goods.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, as life changes in the way it is lived and experienced, so equally does the relation between the interior, images, dreams and objects that forms interiority.

The American economist and cultural theorist Thorsten Veblen introduced the term 'conspicuous consumption' in his 1899 book *The Theory of the Leisure Class* to describe behavioural characteristics of the emerging middle class in their concern to demonstrate abundance of products as a sign of wealth and status.<sup>36</sup> People wanted to acquire, possess and display goods because they had been led to believe that the merchandise would make them happy and satisfy their needs. As we have seen, the strength of such desires was rooted in nineteenth-century modernity and industrial commodity culture as it changed social values and replaced them with an insatiable desire for a world of bought things – thus these external forces constructed inner and outer conditions of existence – interiority as an interplay of imagining, desiring and dwelling. Consumerism thus became a subject position and ontology. Social competition, as Veblen explains, produced negative emotions – such as fear and envy – to drive consumption and

ensure that the economically created material world of expanding capitalism was sustained.<sup>37</sup>

After the massive social and economic changes that came after World War Two (especially the arrival of a far more affluent working class and the creation of a 'youth market') department store managers recognised a change in direction was needed.<sup>38</sup> The subsequent growth of suburbia, the period of the decline of the central business districts and the competition in discount retailing all made the past form of department stores obsolete. Department stores were largely replaced by chain stores.

### The passage from interior to interiority

The historical account of the arcade and department store is just one example of a material change agent that prompted new systems, kinds of spaces and modes of subjectivity/dwelling that modernity produces and is produced by. Other change agents can be acknowledged – the novel, film, popular music and so on. However, interior space is especially important – not least because it is where most other change agents exercise their efficacy. To this end we now need to take our analysis a little further by bringing two perspectives on interiority into dialogue with each other. The first perspective centres on the subject's relation to an interior space as a phenomenal condition of interiority brought to, and experientially influenced in and by designed interior space. The second perspective is how the nature of the interior space is constituted as an interiority open to being phenomenologically experienced. Put at its simplest there is what the subject's interiority brings to the interior space and what the interior space thereafter brings to the subject. Even more simply: there is a focus on interiority from the perspective of the subjectivity; and from the perspective of the space.

Interiority, as it is intrinsic to our inner life and action in the world, has an origin in the context of our becoming human. As such it was made present as an object of contemplation with the birth of mind as we understand it as the locus of knowledge. What this moment made clear was that our dwelling in the world was as much a dwelling in thought and language as it was in space and time (Plato's 'allegory of the cave' being an early expression of this condition). We bring things into being in language and in the world. For instance, as Mark Wigley (97-120) made clear, in his exploration of Heidegger's and Derrida's thoughts on the issue, our dwelling in the idea of home is indivisible from our life in that place we call home.<sup>39</sup> This does not mean that 'the interior to the exterior totally corresponds (they are irreducible, differentiated, co-enacted). By implication, home as an idea projects onto what becomes deemed as 'home' as lived. Thus it can be projected as anything from a cardboard box to a cave, a mansion or a yacht. In this respect idea takes precedence over matter and space.

As we have seen in relation to 'home' – interior/interiority and inside/outside exist as a doubling. Thus the presence of home (as idea) within an interior mode of dwelling arrives as the representation 'home', which is lived within, but is equally represented as life on the inside of the outside. But in turn, the presence of home is also inter-textual – it is drawn from representations of home from elsewhere, from that external to it. These representations more than influence the formation of the constructed interior, they are mobilized with the intent to transform what is present at the level of idea and the interiority of inner life and strive to act upon what is, or is not, formed externally. Effectively such representations structure the 'play' of interiority at both levels of dwelling.<sup>40</sup> Yet they are ambiguous in their effectiveness/defectiveness – no clear claim to efficacy can be made. Putting the complexity of these remarks in the frame of interior design: it is always the design of a place of being (coming out of interiority) and a being in place (taking the designed to an interiority).

Crucially, interiority and interior stand for that which is occupied, dwelt within, housed. This is why, as Wigley makes clear, architecture and philosophy fuse, why home and metaphysics interlace.<sup>41</sup> We in fact inhabit idea, mind, self and space as a seamless passage of movement from interior to interiority. With the physicality of home we, as suggested, are placed in the inside of the outside (of us).<sup>42</sup> The home, as interior, is felt to be a place of worldly withdrawal. As such and in contradiction, home gives us a sense of shelter and asylum – from the violence of our being as we violently destroy while we create our world of being-in-the-world.

However, the attachment to place is equally felt on a material level, a place where the acquisition of goods is weighed with significance. In this sense it is used to mask the unavoidable presence of the dialectic of sustainment that designates the relation between creation and destruction.<sup>43</sup> In the end, the reality completely overwhelms the illusion, for the home is a centre of that destruction we call 'consumption'.<sup>44</sup> A vast amount of economic output is

directed at the home, but this is its intermediate destination – the final ending place being mostly landfill and sewerage.

To bring the question of interiority to the home is to turn the familiar into the unfamiliar. To place interior design into this movement is to expose its complicity with a concealment in which the subject is implicated.

## The subject

The modern subject is a subject formed within an expanded domain of representation which dramatically changed the nature of inner life (interiority) and in so doing external life in (and beyond) the interior space of the home. We can take the specific, well considered, geographically significant and historically located example of this provided by returning to Walter Benjamin's Arcades project.

Benjamin pointed out that the private individual (of the late eighteenth-century) who works and keeps his working and social life divided and who 'deals with reality' needed "the domestic interior to sustain him in his illusions".<sup>45</sup> The interior becomes his universe.<sup>46</sup> As such it is the space of the 'minimal self' in which all places and time arrive.<sup>47</sup> Dream, sensory data, affect, cultural relations and embodiment like language, connects the interiority of inner life with the interiority of the inner space of the home.

We have asserted that the interior (the place of shelter, be it an interior environment or subjective withdrawal) is an asylum, a refuge. However, as we learn from Foucault (in *Discipline and Punish*) it is equally a place of forced containment – a location of the unfree (be it as a state of mind, a place of commitment or a bar on the exterior).

It is a place where things are transformed and left as traces.<sup>48</sup> The domestic place of bricolage as it leaves the traces of a life. The street-saloons of the arcades were the most 'interior directive' of the arcades (as they were 'tastefully decorated and sumptuously furnished').<sup>49</sup> As such they symbolize the interior homes that constituted a changed interiority. They illustrated an absence of the world that people desired to have in their own homes and equally created a desire for what many people had – this not just being the form of the home but equally visibility in the 'Passagenwerk, the place of the promenade (street, arcade, store) as it attracted the eye of modern life.<sup>50</sup>

So what does all this tell us about interior design? First that what is designed is never simply an interior. Although we spend the majority of our lives inside, we fail to understand habitual experiences of encountering internal space. All interior design comes from an interiority, an experience of being in tangible physical space and from the experience of inside-ness, of constraint and containment within intangible social and psychological constructs. Second that interior design is a complexity that is reduced to simplicity by a non-reflective practice; a practice that largely fails to be taken serious and has become a source of public entertainment and a vehicle of political and economic agenda. Third, for interior design to become a more responsible practice, it has to learn how to embrace the complexity that it ontologically occupies (design having a direct influence on people's being in the world and their actions). And finally, that human beings exist in another space, a psychological space with psychological dimensions of our own experiences. The main implication of what has been argued in relation to interior design practice is that it (the designed) is not simply fixed in space – a location. Rather it is a fluid intersection where interiority is formed and deformed by what it brings into that space, along with what is projected into it as the dream of elsewhere or other.

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