

Feet Firmly Planted (On Unstable Ground)

Bertolt Brecht's Mr. Keuner was a dispassionate citizen, living in an occupied state, who had no real interest in national or city identity.¹ One day, walking the streets, Mr. Keuner found himself in the path of an occupying soldier. In a codified enactment of social structure, Mr. Keuner stood aside to let the soldier pass. He was forced to step down from the pavement and into the gutter, and in his displacement was momentarily remade with nationalistic fervour. The nineteenth-century German public footpath, the Bürgersteig, translates literally as the 'citizen's step'; occupation of the footpath connoted citizenry, and the ordering of society demanded that certain individuals were more entitled to tread the Bürgersteig than others. Forced off the ground of the 'citizen's step,' Mr. Keuner recognised that he has been momentarily stripped of his franchise as a citizen, and cast into the fringes of society. Brecht's story suggests a social reading of the symbolism of ground planes, which as semiotic constructs shape the behaviours and attitudes of those who dwell on them. Where one stands literally becomes a symbol of where one stands socially, bestowing the ground with its particular resonance. In this arena, distinctions are of vital consequence; a simple shift in ground plane re-oriented Mr. Keuner's perspective and remade his personality.

In design studies, how often do we really pay attention to the ground beneath us, over the walls, structures, and objects created in interior design? In practice, the ground plane has important material and experiential qualities that contribute to the atmosphere of places, but in Ching's description of material planes "vertical forms have greater presence in our visual field than horizontal planes and are therefore more instrumental in ... providing a sense of enclosure and privacy for those within it."² Despite Ching's intimation that the ground plane is of secondary importance, there are some rich examples of discussion that point to its significance. This essay reviews some of this material in the light of Brecht's implications of social symbolism, and begins to formulate an argument for the poetic power of the ground in our understanding of spatial design. Focusing attention downward allows another line of exploration into relations between space and society, and I will argue, has consequences for our understanding of the modern project of interior design.

Earth and Memory

I use the term 'ground' to generally describe the surfaces we walk and inhabit. Though as Brecht's story suggests, the symbolic value of the ground emerges from distinction,

1. Bertolt Brecht, *Stories of Mr. Keuner*, trans. Martin Chalmers (San Francisco: City Lights, 2001), 9.

2. Francis D. K. Ching, *Architecture: Form, Space, and Order* 2nd ed. (Canada: John Wiley & Sons, 1996), 120.

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raising the need to categorise varieties of ground designed in the built environment. Brecht identifies what could be regarded as two minor categories, footpath and gutter, which although closely linked as parts of the public street, are rendered as producing dramatically different effects on the individual. To these categories of outdoor ground, others could be added: the courtyard, lawn, verandah, balcony, and doorstep, among others; each a different kind of surface with its own social implications and history in design. Interiors then take place on another category of ground, the floor, which I focus on in this essay. I suggest that the symbolic meaning of this surface is derived through its distinction from the category of ground that it directly covers over: the earth itself.

To characterise the significance attributed to earth, I look first to the poetry of early Australian colonist Barron Field. Field's poetry illustrates an early British attitude to Australian earth, specifically the sense of home it failed to produce in them. Field responded to Australia with a feeling of spiritual isolation, resulting from his perceived separation from the sites of his own cultural tradition. Australia was a 'prose-dull land,' one without British history.³ For example, he lamented that the only historical ground in Australia was Cook's landing site.⁴ Field's sense of history was determined not so much by known events, but his sense of the earth beneath him. He viewed Australian earth as 'without antiquities' such as the long-standing gothic churches, which would connect him to his history, religion, and home.⁵ Field transposed the roles of these churches onto the only signs of a British past he could see: the ships in Sydney Cove, whose masts became the gothic spires of Sydney ('the tall anch'ring masts, a three spir'd minster') and the only connection to his cultural past through passage home to British soil.⁶

For Field, a meaningful connection between the British colonists and the Australian earth could only develop with time. It was to be shaped as the dead were buried in the earth and their graves consecrated with Christian rites.⁷ Thus Field declared that the British did not claim Australia with a planted flag, but with a burial:

... and thence a little space / Lies Sutherland, their shipmate; for the sound I Of
Christian burial better did proclaim / Possession, than the flag, in England's name ...
Fix then th' Ephesian brass. 'Tis classic ground.'⁸

3. Barron Field, *First Fruits of Australian Poetry*, 2nd ed. (Sydney: Robert Howe, 1823), 15.

4. From 'On Reading the Controversy Between Lord Byron and Mr. Bowles': *ibid.*, 14.

Field also comments on the age of the Australian landscape in "The Kangaroo": 'Of this fifth part of the Earth, / Which should seem an after-birth, / Not convey'd in the Beginning': *ibid.*, 11. The ground in Australia is presented as literally newer than the old world, created after the Biblical fall of Adam, therefore tainted by sin (a position that led to the notion of antipodean inversion in other writers).

5. *ibid.*

6. *ibid.*, 14–15.

7. From 'On Visiting the Spot Where Captain Cook and Sir Joseph Banks First Landed in Botany Bay,' *ibid.*, 16.

8. *ibid.*

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In Field's poetry, earth takes on its cultural significance only as it becomes entangled with generations of ancestors and religious tradition. Over time, the physical terrain is shaped as significant places in social domain, as connections to other people. In meaningful earth, the individual is bound with groups living and deceased.

The sentiment of Field's poetry is echoed by Neil Leach:

Identity ... becomes territorialised and mapped on geographic terrain. The individual becomes one with the land in a process of identification which is itself mythic ... Thus we find constant references to natural phenomena – storms, blood, and soil – in fascist ideology ... It is precisely in the context of an identity rooted to the soil that those groups not rooted to the soil become excluded.⁹

The earth becomes symbolic of archetypal socialisation through a 'mythic' process of mass identification. Thus it becomes invested with a sense of belonging, a place where all social members dwell equally. Though as Leach identifies, it is also with the earth that status and exclusion begin to take hold, where certain groups are exiled because they are not rooted in the earth. These social divisions soon become encoded in the artificial grounds that cover the earth in the building of cities, such as the gutter and the Bürgersteig. Such demarcations of ground define smaller social groups. The ability to dwell upon certain land is a sign of privileged belonging, based on mythologised historical investments in the ground culturally constructed as – to follow Field's rendition – the dead are buried there.

The earth as historicised social product, which extends to include many of the different types of ground contained in cities, is a recurring theme in urban studies.¹⁰ Cities are places that agglomerate the past and retain its marks, to such an extent that some authors have asserted that social memory is as much a part of the land as it is of a people. Edward Casey wrote that memories 'belong as much to the place as to my brain or body.'¹¹

The emphasis on time and memory is only one part of the wider themes of the earth as a site for intense socialisation. As Kevin Lynch wrote, landscapes are the 'skeleton' on which people establish their 'socially important myths,' which bind them together as a people.¹² Such myths include the 'collective memory' theorised by Maurice Halbwachs, a student of Durkheimian sociology, which link people to the earth but also create some of

9. Neil Leach, 'Dark Side of the Domus,' *Journal of Architecture* 3:1 (1998): 33.

10. The complex relationship between history and the city, through postmodernism, modernism, and Victorian historicism are outlined in: M. Christine Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments* (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 1994), 4–6.

11. Edward Casey, 'How to Get From Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena,' in *Senses of Place*, eds. S. Feld & K.H. Basso (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1996), 25.

12. Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, Mass.: Technology Press, 1960), 4.

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the strongest bonds that form societies.¹³ In Durkheim's tradition, individuals are considered to first emerge from the identities they form in relation to society (that is, society comes first, not the individual). Halbwachs thus saw individuals – specifically their memory – as a malleable creation of social engagements that were rooted in the topography of cities.¹⁴ Certainly such issues of memory and social identity form within larger contexts, though the issue here is the symbolic investment in the literal earth that underpins these contexts.

Here arises a sociological method to interpret the perceived significance of earth, and the categories of ground that increasingly cover it. Earth adopts the symbolism of initial socialisation, it is the mythical place where human beings first formed into societies. As these societies then distinguish their inner structures, social relations become codified in variations between categories of ground. From these smaller social groups, with their own entitlements to earth, emerge individuals with the right to tread certain grounds.

The theme of memory and time in the earth is continued by geo-political historian Stephen J. Ethington, in his proposal for a spatial model of historical discourse.¹⁵ Ethington argued that history's ontology lies not in its existence in time but in space.¹⁶ This is intended to mean both that the historian is spatially and culturally located, and that historical actions leave marks on landscapes (following from Casey's position that landscapes contain memory). Actions, Ethington argues, make places inasmuch as they leave marks – like burial sites for Field. Thus the earth is conceived as a series of collapsed historical topoi to be read and mapped.¹⁷ Ethington's argument lies within a professional discourse of history writing, though it supports a driving characteristic of the earth beneath us. Earth is tied to events of the past in that it contains their physical traces, which shape popular memory and historical interpretation. Cities and societies are built in the earth and have traditions extending generations, and places of memory are an important aspect of city character. Urban design responds to this through architectural preservation or developing on social patterns of use in public spaces, which either maintain the continuity of tradition, or fabricate images of tradition.¹⁸ When dealing with the social and the traces of the past, urban design keeps the long duration in sight, fostering a sense of permanency in the earth.

It is against this image of the earth's permanent social traditions that the floor of the interior takes on its particular importance. As interior designers are aware, their work has a much shorter timespan. Storefront architecture and its foundations in the earth may

13. Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

14. Ibid., 51. The relationship to location is evidenced in Halbwachs' 'The Legendary Topography of the Gospels in the Holy Land': *ibid.*, 193–235. Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory*, 137.

15. Philip J. Ethington, 'Placing the Past: 'Groundwork' for a Spatial Theory of History,' *Rethinking History* 11:4 (2007): 465–493.

16. Read from the perspective of the literary turn in history, this is a reference specifically to the professional history-text: *ibid.*, 465–466.

17. *Ibid.*, 483–484.

18. Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory*, 309–310.

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remain, while its interior is subject to wild and regular re-imagination that might leave no trace of earlier identities. Restaurants or bars similarly last no more than a year. The architectural house may endure, but new tenants and their own accumulations of objects erase previous occupants.¹⁹ The floor is much more impressionable than the grounds of the city. The interior lies in flux, where changing definitions are tied to the malleable individuals (as Halbwachs defined them) created through socialisation on the earth.²⁰ To encode changing individuals, the atmosphere of a room, in Baudrillard's terms, must also change. Personalities are subject to change faster than societies,²¹ and thus subjective time, as 'a culturally specific reading of the dynamic environment,' runs at different speeds in the exterior and the interior.²² Such capacity for change, manifests itself, in part, through the floor.

Floor and Imagination

Some commentators have viewed earth and floor as closely related. When Christopher Alexander discussed floors, he emphasised their deep foundations within the earth, so that the artificial floor draws power from its unity with the earth below.²³ Marie Stenglin, in discussing 'bound' and 'unbound' spaces, similarly describes the floor as anchored in the earth, giving them 'roundedness' and 'stability' (influenced by the permanency of earth).²⁴ Stability, she argues, is central to the creation of a 'bound,' or comfortable, space. On this, however, I take a different position. Regardless of whether a floor is anchored in the earth in traditional houses, or hovers over it in a modernist villa, the floor is a barrier that covers and replaces earth. It is an abstracted earth, a clean slate that establishes with it a new spatial condition.

A division between earth and floor is supported in the writing of Japanese architect Arata Isozaki, who separates these two categories of ground while commenting on broader distinctions between Japanese and Western interiors:

19. An exception may be noted in the historic house museum, where interior and its contents are preserved, though here the conditions are different. The historic house museum may retain the interior as a connection to history, but it is a programmatic shift from living space to preserved artefact, serving public functions of local history and memorialisation.

20. cf. Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, trans. James Benedict (London & New York: Verso, 2005 [1968]), 13–17, 47–49. Baudrillard argued that the interior had lost its ties to traditional cultural values and relationships, instead becoming a modified image, an advertisement of the individual.

21. As Goldmann wrote in defining the relationship between sociological and philosophical enquiry: And although an individual can perhaps change his own position and broaden his own horizons, this becomes incomparably more difficult, and indeed is usually impossible, for a whole social group, for a nation or a class.' Lucien Goldmann, *Immanuel Kant* (London: Verso, 2011 [1971]), 32.

22. Ethington, 'Placing the Past,' *Rethinking History*, 471.

23. Christopher Alexander, *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 1009.

24. Marie K. Stenglin, *Packaging Curiosities: Toward a Grammar of Three-dimensional Space* (Ph.D. diss: Sydney University, 2004), 252.

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The raised wooden floor is a clean, artificially created surface isolated from the earth, a surface on which people can sit without concern. Unlike the Japanese wooden floor, the upper stories that have not been part of Western homes from early times are not a surface in a comparatively different phase. Although these upper-storey rooms are far removed from the surface of the earth, shoes are worn in them; and chairs, tables, shelves, beds and so on are essential because the floor is 'unclean.'²⁵

The raised height of the Japanese interior is viewed as creating a personal space removed from the social sphere. There are no objects of contemplation, only the inhabiting body. The floor has the capacity to create a seal that detaches the interior from the earth beneath. In Isozaki's description, this produces two effects: a 'clean' interior, and a person 'without concern.' Both qualities relate to a distinction between individual and group. The 'clean' interior is isolated from the dirt of the earth, that is, metaphorically it is untainted by social burdens (a questionable claim; although the person inhabiting this interior may be physically separated from society they are nonetheless the product of it). However, the interior floor is also 'clean' in the sense that it is empty, not requiring the coded objects that fill the discourse of western interiors. This produces an inhabitant 'without concern,' who is not in an active process of socialisation informing their behaviour. In Isozaki's description, this interior environment is so intimately personal that the room is akin to the soul. Due to the floor, the body has no need for protection through further minor barriers – whether furnishings or shoes – which Sennett argued as barriers between people, or social symbols.²⁶ In Isozaki's opinion, the modern western interior had not reached such a level of spiritual ascetic retreat. On western floors one still wears shoes, rendering even the domestic environment a semi-public sphere.

The sense of privacy on the domestic floor draws on common arguments of private interior and public exterior, prevalent in discussions of nineteenth-century domesticity where objects of material and visual culture proliferate as signs of personality.²⁷ As Benjamin commented, the nineteenth-century 'conceived the residence as a receptacle for the person.'²⁸ It was impressionable, taking on the character of the occupant. Behind closed doors and drawn curtains, domestic interiors became places to be at home with oneself, and who one was was evidenced in the furnishings, objects, garments, and curios that they displayed. The domestic interior was a codified semiotic environment. Correspondingly, the codified city streets, where the technique of buttoning a jacket might denote a gentleman, was in decline. The public citizen became a silent and shadowed observer, leaving displays of personality to 'professional' performers.²⁹ This

25. qtd. in Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye: The Design and Social Life of Cities* (New York & London: W.W. Norton, 1992), 59.

26. Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York & London: W.W. Norton, 1992 [1974]), 179

27. Penny Sparke, *The Modern Interior* (London: Reaktion, 2008), 21, 35. Charles Rice, *The Emergence of the Interior: Architecture, Modernity, Domesticity* (London: Routledge, 2007), 96–97.

28. Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland & Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), 220.

29. Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 161–174, 195–197.

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divide between interior and exterior is clearly based on the vertical plane – walls – and their restrictions of vision and access.

Although Isozaki frames his discussion with privacy, I do not intend the distinction of earth/floor to follow that of public/private. First, this would place unnecessary emphasis on the domestic sphere, instead of accommodating other interior typologies. Second, there is a shortcoming to the popular view of private codified interiors in that signs need audiences. Domestic interiors can only act as displays of personality if there is someone to display it to. As Sennett describes, such nineteenth-century interiors were not so much impressions of their occupant as places where one remained shrouded in signs of social identity, shielded even from close family.³⁰ The notion of a simple divide between individual-interior and social-exterior cannot be maintained, as even the domestic interior is a social performance (and as Isozaki implies, the western interior is only ever a semi-public space, where one wears shoes).

The significance of the floor is in this case tied to Isozaki's use of 'clean' – from which privacy can be seen as only one product. As an artificial barrier erected between people and the earth, the floor provides the capacity to erase the sense of staunch tradition, or permanence, that is read in the earth. It is thus ground that is unstable, contrary to Stenglin's suggestion. In doing so, the floor's symbolic power lies in its suggestion to imagine space anew, unburdened by the sense of long duration and social mores interpreted in the earth. If earth is characterised by themes of memory, then for the floor it is imagination and inventiveness that define its particular qualities.

The inventive capacity of the floor for design is exaggerated through its multiplication in the high-rise. Rem Koolhaas highlighted this in his discussion of early twentieth-century skyscrapers. Koolhaas' theory of 'Manhattanism' celebrated the congestion of the city grid, but built into his emphasis on congested grid points was a notion of the borderless repetition of city elements.³¹ Richard Sennett expanded on this latter point, interpreting the city grid as giving rise to emerging nineteenth-century capitalistic aspirations of acquisition.³² City grids imposed non-centralised repetitious city space horizontally across the landscape. Skyscrapers, in turn, imposed the very same non-centralised repetition vertically over the landscape.

The effect is clearest in Koolhaas' discussion of the 1909 Theorem.³³ Under this proposition, skyscrapers promoted infinite virgin land; each floor of a building was a new beginning on earth that had already been occupied and used. What skyscrapers offered is most pronounced in their early visualisation: on each steel-framed storey another country estate unfurls.³⁴ Every floor in this 'territorial multiplication' offered the capacity to start

30. Ibid., 153, 167.

31. Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1994 [1978]), 174–177, 18–21.

32. Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye*, 52–57.

33. Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 82–85.

34. Ibid.

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again. Imagination was key, as an entire system of alternate visions of space could be simultaneously realised on the same plot of earth:

On each floor, the Culture of Congestion will arrange new and exhilarating human activities in unprecedented combinations. Through Fantastic Technology it will be possible to reproduce all 'situations' – from the most natural to the most artificial – wherever and whenever desired.³⁵

Koolhaas traced the effects of the 1909 Theorem through the public life of New York buildings in the 1920s and 1930s. Every ballroom, concert hall, restaurant, etc. was designed as a new kind of spectacle. Different stylistic themes characterised each floor's interior, imagining it as distinct from the rooms below. Entering was to step into another disconnected world. What first promoted this imaginative escapism was the floor, a boundary erected between the interior and the earth below that established a new starting point. As Sennett wrote, 'up means neutral,' and neutrality is the means to start again.³⁶

Importantly, these examples are not domestic retreats, but public (albeit restricted) spaces. Thus the interior continues to be a space for social identities, which is often problematic in discussions that focus on the home interior, though they are spaces for select social groups. Status invariably enters the interior. What these spaces provide is opportunity for orienting sub-cultures within social identities. Any interior typology can be viewed as a space of sub-cultural social identity, whether these are defined by club memberships, religion, working roles, or family. In its departure from the earth, the floor allows for social modification through provision of a kind of blank terrain on which to envision new environments. The capacity to reconfigure social relations in the interior through material encodings establishes the professional interior designer's project, one based on inventive reconstruction from the ground up, rather than replication of traditional modes rooted in earth.

Through the 1909 Theorem, floor is positioned as new ground. But its manifestation is not repeated copies of the ground below, it is ground swept clean of memory and historical tradition. History is, in Martin Davies' terms, aesthetic; it is a means of perceiving a historicised landscape.³⁷ The aesthetics of history are normalising, explaining the way things are as 'correct' and propagating the status quo.³⁸ The wild variations of public rooms in Koolhaas' New York buildings do not show the reproduction of history, but hint at the imagining of new worlds. The floor is therefore a barrier placed between personalities and their societies that are rooted in the earth of the city, creating a new domain for the redefinition of groups. The floor acts as an anaesthetic.

35. Ibid., 125.

36. Sennett, *The Conscious of the Eye*, 60.

37. Martin L. Davies, *Historics: Why History Dominates Contemporary Society* (London & New York: Routledge, 2006), 10.

38. Ibid., 249–250.

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The new earth of the multi-storey building appears in another context in MVRDV's design for the Dutch pavilion of the Hannover World Expo 2000: a multi-level garden. Each floor presents a different kind of landscape, demonstrating the imaginative potential to start again on newly constructed ground. The conceit of this building is its playful disorder between layers, where the logically most 'grounded' layer – the forest – is raised to the third floor. This produces a disconnect between what might be expected to be in the earth, and what should be expected to be on the higher artificial floors, showing the complete imaginative potential offered in the floor's barrier to earth.

This inventive quality perceived in the floor, I argue, defines the professional task of interior design, underpinning it since interior design emerged as a profession in the late nineteenth-century. At that time, supporters of the aesthetic reform movement broke from the interiors of their past. Rather than furnishing unified historical styles such as the Egyptian, Mediaeval, or Louis XV, they established modern ideas of decoration that amounted to eclecticism, the unexpected, and rooms of 'no style.'³⁹ In a way, modern interiors erected barrier between themselves and long-standing social expectations of domestic material culture, which established the rhetoric of individuality within the fitting of interior spaces. Taste and imagination were the tenets of this furnishing method, and although these are often explained through individual privacy, resultant from a focus on walls, they might also be characterised as products of a capacity for erasure through a focus on floors.

Summary

This essay has provided a cursory and speculative reading of the symbolic investment in earth and floor, and from it, proposes a way of reading meaning in the floor within the social and built environment. Many more aspects of the floor are worth further consideration. There are architectural piloti, flooring materials and interior wear, floor coverings, the historical emergence of seating as a further barrier between the self and the earth, and the transitory nature of furniture in modern interiors.⁴⁰

The earth is public and mythic. It is given associations of primal socialisation, as well as bearing the seeds of social distinction. This distinction is encoded in the different types of ground that cover the earth, and reaches a logical conclusion in the floor. In discussion, earth suggests concession to history and tradition, or the domain of collective memory; in Barron Field's poetry it was represented as only providing comfort when it connects

39. cf. Anca I. Lasc, 'Le Juste Milieu: Alexandre Sandier, Theming, and Eclecticism in French Interiors in the Nineteenth-century,' *Interiors* 2:3 (2011), 280–284.

40. Piloti formed a part of Kuma's discussion of architecture as object removed from the landscape: Kengo Kuma, *Anti-object*, trans. Hiroshi Watanabe (London: AA Publications, 2010), 71. Wear has recently been reconsidered in Alison Gill & Abby Mellick Lopes, 'On Wearing: A Critical Framework for Valuing Design's Already Made,' *Design and Culture* 3:3 (2011): 307–327. The emergence of floor coverings as industrial commodities in the eighteenth-century is discussed in: Sophie Sarin, 'The Floorcloth and Other Floor Coverings in the London Domestic Interior 1700–1800,' *Journal of Design History* 18:2 (2005): 133–145. Furniture's disconnection from cultural value in the modern period is discussed in: Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*.

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individuals with past generations. The floor is a break from this that allows constant renewal; it is neutralising (Sennett) and 'clean' (Isozaki). It is the domain of novel imagination to supports the refinement of select social groups. Earth and floor run on different measures of time, and design responds accordingly. The interior floor encourages flexibility, and in its disconnection from the public memory encourages regular transformation.

In Brecht's story, Mr. Keuner was forced from the 'citizen's step' into the gutter, and the shift between grounds destabilised his world view, momentarily remaking his personality. One cannot be forced between earth and floor, because one exists in both, and this reciprocal relationship bestows upon each their particular powers. Earth underpins the floor, although the barrier is erected. The floor is our respite, our capacity to re-imagine and re-define. And interior design, as a professional activity that uniquely takes place on the floor, maintains this capacity as its central project, to build again on abstracted earth. From its modern professional inception in the eclecticism of the late nineteenth-century, interior design has worked with the imaginative potential encouraged by the neutralising slate of the floor, providing spaces for social distinction that are removed from the long duration of earth-bound tradition. The floor's perceived quality as abstracted earth encourages alteration. We live in interiors, often fixed to the same floor for years, but the floor and the interior it prompts are unstable and constantly changing, supporting the constant redefinition of the social self.