Impossible Totality and Domesticity: Designed interiors as monsters

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ABSTRACT
The unbecoming is inevitable and necessary. Design seeks an encompassing totality of vision that treats the world as an interior. Ancient cosmologies order place from the familiar (home) to the beyond (divine). To approach the divine exceeds human capacity and is thus monstrous. Literary morality tales warn us of the hubris of our quest for perfection; contemporary design offers similar examples: uninhabitable minimalism; pastoral landscape simulacra; the unheimlich Modern; anxious and oppressive transparency. The article presents three cases of unbecoming monsters: Nathaniel Hawthorne, John Pawson, and the claim for perfection; Narcissus, Marie Antoinette, and the reflexive gaze; Mary Shelley, Mies van der Rohe, and the Belgian Blue. Each exemplifies an overreach in design that abandons the domestic and whose resulting unheimlich provokes an uncanny reaction. The concluding section addresses the process of designing from a position opposite to the desire for totality. Designing interiors for people embraces imperfection, not as a weakness, but as an antidote for creating these monsters.

INTRODUCTION
In Greek mythology, Daedalus serves as a warning for the hubris of designers who fail to consider the consequences of their quest for design quality. Daedalus’ name, not incidentally, means ‘clever worker’; his skill was unsurpassed and his creations were exquisite, complex, and clever. And each ultimately led to tragedy. The complexity of his Cretan Labyrinth imprisoned the Minotaur and hindered efforts to slay the beast, yet was ultimately undone by a roll of thread. After designing the Labyrinth, Daedalus was himself imprisoned in a tower on Crete so he could not divulge the Labyrinth’s secret. He crafted wings to enable him and his son, Icarus, to fly to freedom. Icarus, exhilarated by the technology, strayed too close to the sun, melting the wax binding the feathers in his wings, and plunged to his death in the sea. And Daedalus’s jealousy of his nephew Perdix’s growing design ability – Perdix had invented the saw and the compass – led him to kill the boy by throwing him from the Acropolis.

Literature and myth use the fantastic and the extreme to convey cautionary tales. The grasp for perfection into the realm of the divine, beyond human capacity, ends in rupture, a failure with severe consequences. Daedalus’ stories are parables for the designer about unintended consequences, the limits of technology, and the hubris of total control. They have literature’s license to inhabit the world of the fantastic from which to divulge tales of the prototypical designer’s overreach.

But what of the real? Similar failures necessarily occur in the human realm – the real world, so to speak – but it is hard to find such equally extreme consequences. Life-threatening failures tend to be of a technical rather than an experiential nature: structural miscalculation leading to disastrous collapse, for example. Icarus’s plunge was precipitated by materials failure, yet the lesson is of Daedalus’ hubris in designing a device for flight, a capacity not ceded to the non-divine in Greek mythology. Perhaps the critical failures are those that occur in the human experience of dwelling and produce design outcomes so unbecoming as to be unsuited for their essential purpose of habitation.

Consider the titillating rumours that emerge from behind the scenes of architectural history: Edith Farnsworth famously unwilling to spend time in the retreat designed for her by Mies van der Rohe, for example, or John Pawson supposedly unable to live in the minimalist house he designed for himself. These stories serve as cautionary tales of the designers’ quest for a totalising absolute perfection whose product turns monstrous, overstepping the boundary of the human, the domestic, and the familiar to become strange, foreign, and unheimlich.

These stories may be so attractive because they bring the divine designer back to earth and serve as morality tales of hubris and overreach. Yet Edith Farnsworth did indeed live in her glass box (with or without Mies) as did John Pawson in his own minimalist residence. It is reasonable to assume that they did experience the fruits of their design labours, but perhaps something was just off enough as

Above left
Figure 1: Cubo.cc, Creepy Girl, 2008, virtual human replica. Image credit: cubo.cc

Above right
Figure 2: Detail from Jacob Pieter Gowy, The Fall of Icarus, 1650, oil on canvas. Museo del Prado. Image credit: Public domain image retrieved from http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gowy-icaro-prado.jpg
Bachelard, for clarifying thinking about architecture, the experience of Feng-Shui would unfold other arguments. We rely upon studies is: individuals in motion and conditioned by time, space and phenomenological approach to the unbecoming and domesticity. The theoretical framework for this argument lies within a critical the creation of divine monsters. This is the key argument of the never-becoming, not of failure to achieve ends, but preventing designs. Like attempting to reach light speed, the experience is literature, but in the real world is a zone inhabited by monstrous feelings, and a crossing of thoughts. Architectural theorist Eduard Fuhr argues that a phenomenological viewpoint brings us closer to architectural matters, the experience of day-to-day life thereby be-comes. Death is the unbecoming, the delta, the end, the totality.

The article first explains the interrelationship of perfection, the divine, and monsters, placing them on a continuum from the domestic to the divine. It describes unbecoming as an asymptotic boundary condition much like the 'uncanny valley' that occurs in robots: a sudden drop in comfort as robots assume human characteristic, triggering anxiety in the observer. This state of unbecoming is illustrated with cases both within and outside of design, elucidating the characteristics of 'design monsters'. In the second section, three cases of such monsters are presented: John Pawson's uninhabitable minimalist house, Marie Antoinette's Trianon, and Adolf Loos' Frank Lloyd Wright's Farnsworth House. The resulting intensity is, however, not without its costs. The visitor to the creation of the Minotaur, a monster with the head of a bull on the body of a man, and it was Athena, another goddess with human form, who transformed the doomed Perseus into a partridge. In both cases, the overlap between the realms of the human and the divine is populated by deities and monsters whose paradigm remains a divine matter. T otal Design's ambition was to create a pervasive, seamless, and complete environment that would guarantee the full benefits of modernity to everyone, everywhere. It was a vision of design perfection, bringing the project of Modernity to its successful completion. But its totality proved impossible to achieve and its fragments proved unheimlich. And yet, interestingly, the ideal of perfection lies within the definition of monster. Long before its contemporary negative connotation, the fourteenth century definition of a monster also included 'something extraordinary or unnatural an amazing event or occurrence... a marvel' whose qualities were so pronounced as to exceed human capacity. This quality of ‘more than human and or ordinary excellence' and of ‘surpassing beauty, perfection, excellence, etc.' places this particular monster of perfection in the realm of the divine.

It is helpful to note that the realm of the divine world has not always been as dualistic as in Western culture. The mapping of place and space in the cosmos of polytheistic mythologies extends from a centre (the domestic) to the beyond-the-periphery (the foreign; beyond human experience). Humans inhabit the centre/benevolent deities occupy the near ground and divinities or monstrous forces strike from the periphery. While all the non-humans can be considered monsters, a distinction is made between benevolent deities that are portrayed anthropomorphically or associated with domesticated animals and the destructive divinities who appear as fully non-human forms or undomesticated species such as serpents. The unbecoming is a final, insurmountable leave the human realm. The unbecoming is a final, insurmountable leave the human realm. The unbecoming is a final, insurmountable
the divine. Whenever humans threaten to bridge the divide, something happens to keep them in their world. That this action is not infrequently unpleasant or frightening, though not always fatal, illustrates the asymptotic nature of the quest for perfection. While deities and monsters regularly traverse the human realm, humans themselves may never become fully divine. It is the gap—unbridged by the nearest possible moments—that manifests the ‘unbecoming’ of the never-quaever-changing lines.

The mapping of the cosmos into three zones—centre, periphery, and beyond the periphery—may thus provide a useful analogy for considering overreach in design. Having established the cautionary presence of a peripheral boundary zone, the task moves to identifying the analogous phenomena in the human experience of and response to monstrous design.

Robotists striving to replicate human behaviours in machines have identified a similar phenomenon as their creations become ever more life-like. Dubbed ‘the uncanny valley,’ it describes the dip in comfort experienced when viewing robotic replicas of almost-human forms, people with overly lifelike features. Dubbed ‘the unheimliche,’ it describes the experience of and response to monstrous design.

The uncanny valley represents the asymptotic boundary zone of never-becoming through un-becoming. That the uncanny valley has also been explained by association with the unheimlich—literally, ‘the unbecoming’—is unsurprising. Sigmund Freud explained the term’s dual definitions as he elaborated the concept in psychoanalysis. Freud undertook a dialectic comparison of the unheimlich and its base heir, the unholy. The latter word concurrently represents two distinct ideas: the familiar and agreeable of the domestic (the ‘carrying’ in the Anglo-Saxon origin) and that which is concealed or hidden. The unheimlich, by contrast, is that which is beyond knowledge or conception (the ‘uncanny’), and which is sought to have remained hidden but which has come to light. Both meanings parallel the monstrous as belonging to the divine realm and as an abomination. The unheimlich acts as a signal rooted in the strange, the foreign, and the divine, which creates angst and anxiety when the boundary is neared.

Three cases of unbecoming monsters follow. Each exemplifies an overreach in design that abandons the domestic and whose simultaneous lifelessness provokes a cognitive dissonance. It is this ‘unbecoming’ quality of being not-quite-human that causes anxiety and revulsion. As technologies improved, new generations of almost-human replicas crowded the dip. Yet the uncanny valley hypothesis holds that robotists are struggling in vain to bridge the final, unsurmountable gap. An entire genre of science fiction is devoted to the topic; much of it comprises morality tales of technological hubris ending deadly.

John Pawson considers himself a Minimalist in both his design work and his own lifestyle. His design work manifests an intensified experience of such pureness, cleanliness, and sublime perfection. His own residence, the Pawson House (1995), is a complete renovation of the interior of a traditional Victorian house in West London. Indeed, the interior was almost completely removed by the renovation. In the new plan:

The entrance is situated on the ground floor, which also incorporates the living room. The living room has a view over the collective gardens in the backyard. Pawson chose to place the kitchen and dining room in the lower ground, which gives entrance to the individual garden. This garden is rather a patio that doesn’t reveal much of itself to the neighbours or the public in general. The two upper floors contain the master bedroom and the two bedrooms for the children. The stairs are designed like a one-piece object, without seams. They separate the Pawson house from the neighbour’s house over the full length of the house.

Figure 3 shows a room of complete, pure whiteness. There’s also a room that looks more like a piece of art than an object with a function. Framed by the verticality of the walls, the bench is placed in a discrete niche, almost losing its dimension and volume, while the stairs reinforce the geometric rhythm. The immaculate vision this room presents is emphasised by the play of light and shadow, offering the impression of being in an art gallery, or a mystic experience. The interiors of Mies van der Rohe’s Lake Shore Drive apartments (1949–1951) have come under similar scrutiny; “one perceives elegance, openness, and sobriety... that however turns into exposure whilst the sobriety somehow equals glamour—thus erasing any feelings of warmth or endorses that signal ‘home’ for most people.”

A totalising vision such as that of Mies’s hyper-designed interiors demands an inviolable control to maintain the formal perfection after it is inhabited. From a phenomenological view, the architectural attempt to rid design of the effects of any imperfection leaves individuals in an unsettled state, unmoored in both time and place. One is left wondering if it is possible to reconcile such a full devotion to
emptiness with the experience of dwelling; if the interior is so seamless as to cause the deepest sensation of visual silence, what space is left for the act of inhabitation? Dwelling anchors the experience of time and space by impregnating space with subjective traces and populating time with memories. For example, the concept of poverty in wabi-sabi philosophy embraces simplicity and imperfection in details, materials, and surfaces. Its intentional imperfection reflects its underlying principle of human fallibility.

Pawson’s vision of the perfect interior differs fundamentally; his ascetic formalism springs from his ethical minimalism. His quest to realise the perfect interior is at once philosophical and aesthetic, leading him to a conundrum like that of Hawthorne’s protagonist: achieving perfection annuls the thing itself.

In her apartments in the château of the Petit Trianon, Marie Antoinette had operable panels installed to block the windows. Curiously, their interior faces were mirrors. Her quest was for privacy, a centre in which she could find relief from her duties and the royal court, and her tactics had a clear spatial logic. The grounds of the Petit Trianon were themselves a retreat within the larger palace complex of Versailles. The château, one folly among several created there, held the Queen’s apartments, a further private sphere. When the panels were closed within her chamber, a final personal space was created.

The presence of the mirrors (Figure 5) make this a strangely recursive space, not only shutting out the world, but intensifying the experience of the self within. It is easy to imagine Marie Antoinette, free at last from prying eyes, gazing with relief into the mirror and able to finally see only herself.

In the Roman poet Ovid’s telling, Narcissus was an exceedingly handsome young hunter whose high self-regard caused him to dismiss his many suitors. Amongst them was Echo, a nymph who had fallen in love with him after seeing him hunting in the forest. After Narcissus spurned her advances, Echo was devastated and withered away to just the whisper that bears her name today. Nemesis, the goddess of revenge, lured Narcissus to the pool where he would fall in love with his own reflection. Unable to pull away from the vision of perfection before him and never realising he was gazing upon himself, Narcissus eventually dies at the edge of the pool.

And then, perhaps, she notices the birthmark or becomes aware of her many selves staring back at her. Jacques Lacan, drawing upon Freud’s development of the unheimlich, described this sudden moment of self-awareness as the experience of anxiety. Lacan argues that the revelatory moment heralds the subject’s recognition that he or she is not autonomous and shatters Narcissus’s impasse as the spell of self-adoration is broken. In the stories of Narcissus and Marie Antoinette, failure follows the attempt to attain a truly autonomous, and hence divine, state of existence. In fiction this state can be achieved, with Narcissus left trapped until he himself withers away. In the designed interior, however; the transgression is inexorably averted by the appearance of anxiety, the signal of the real.
In the nineteenth century, this type of interiorised private space would find its way into bourgeois culture as the gender-distinct refuges of the boudoir and the sale d’antiquités. Their intensification produced fetishistic ‘cabinets’ that showcased the bourgeois fashion of world creation, putting its subjects – trinkets, artworks, or the people themselves – on display.\textsuperscript{25} It was these complete unto-themselves worlds of excessive accumulation that sparked the Early Modern ethical and aesthetic countermovement for purity, sobriety, and \textit{Existenzminimum} dwellings.

\textbf{MARY SHELLEY, MIES VAN DER ROHE, AND THE BELGIAN BLUE}

Hubris proves the undoing of the clever worker at the heart of Mary Shelley’s 1818 novel \textit{Frankenstein; Or, the Modern Prometheus}. Seeking both social and literal immortality, Victor Frankenstein experimented with creating life through technology, first assembling and then successfully animating a human representation. His creation is at first unselfconscious of his appearance, but grows resentful at his treatment by human society, eventually fleeing to the Arctic. Frankenstein himself suffers tragedy: his (other) son is killed by his creation and he spends his life thereafter looking over his shoulder for the monster he believes is pursuing him.

In 1945, Edith Farnsworth, a Chicago doctor, commissioned Mies van der Rohe to design a house for her country property. In 1951, construction was completed on a deceptively simple glass-and-steel house floating lightly above the site’s expected flood level.\textsuperscript{27} The design expressed the ideals of the International Style and of Mies himself – transparency, structural clarity, and lightness – all reduced to their essences. The use of floor-to-ceiling glass, an unobtrusive structural system, and the excision of traditional elements such as doors, windows, superfluous furniture – and even rooms and walls – was intended to create a seamless, transcendental interpenetration of house and nature.\textsuperscript{28}

Edith Farnsworth was not to experience the peaceful encounter with nature she intended when she commissioned the country retreat. Her house had become an icon of Modern architecture even before its completion, attracting unwanted visitors. ‘A less than happy Edith Farnsworth moved into her now famous house. In the morning she would come out of the bathroom in her robe to find uninvited Japanese tourists looking in not at her but at the house. Students would rent boats and row over to her house. Devoted students and professionals would hop over the gates when they thought she wasn’t there.’\textsuperscript{29} And Mies van der Rohe, moved by the natural setting, privileging the visual connection of inside and outside but overlooking the privacy of the inhabitant, also allowed views inside. The \textit{Farnsworth House} is a tremendous manifestation of the Modern ideal of transparency, but this aspect is pushed to an extreme degree. Farnsworth’s commentary is a clear expression of the anxiety of exposure her glass box provoked: ‘The truth is that in this house with its four walls of glass I feel like a prowling animal, always on the alert. I am always restless. Even in the evening I feel like a sentinel on guard day and night.’\textsuperscript{30}

Yet the sensation of the unheimlich is not caused by exaggeration alone; it manifests itself when the intensity of individually coherent parts makes the cumulative object itself strange to human experience. Shelley exaggerates certain qualities by visually intensifying them to convey the monstrous outcome of Victor Frankenstein’s hubris. Frankenstein used technology to assume the role of life-giver reserved for the divine. His creation, in turn, was seen as monstrous by humans because its assemblage registered as not quite human. Its proportions were off-kilter, its scale exaggerated, and evidence of its construction made visible. A similar cognitive rupture occurs when regarding Belgian Blue cattle (Figure 8); livestock bred to exploit a genetic mutation that doubles the typical number of muscle fibres and also substantially reduces body fat. The Belgian Blue’s selective enhancement exaggerates features that are typically invisible, resulting in an excessive, unsettling version of a familiar domestic animal.

\Above

\textit{Figure 9: Lina Bo Bardi, Casa de Vidro, 1951, Morumbi, São Paulo, Brazil Image credit: Fernando Stankuns, Casa de Vidro, http://www.flickr.com/photos/stankuns/365815161/}
There are, of course, other ways to integrate landscape and a glass house. In 1951, the Brazilian architect Lina Bo Bardi designed her own Glass House (Casa de Vidro) for herself and her husband Pietro Maria Bardi. She treated the landscape as a constructive element as decisive as material, light, proportion, shape, detail, or temperature. The house is:

… hidden in a portion of the Atlantic Forest on one of the highest hills in the suburb of Morumbi (…) it is a sober, rational design, one might almost say it is ‘Miesanic’ (deriving from the architect of the Bauhaus, Mies van der Rohe), but already rendered Brazilian by the Nature that embraces it, more organic and more feminine. Feminine in the delicacy of its details, in the sky blue vitrotil of the flooring, in the curtains replacing walls, in the subtle curve of the roof and in the care for comfort. It is a house to welcome people. ‘It is an open house’, said Lina countless times. 31

As may be seen in Figure 9, the ‘Miesanic’ reference most likely stems from the similar use in both structures of large windows allowing an overview of the surrounding landscape. But the two houses are quite dissimilar concerning the phenomenon of inhabiting and heimlichkeit. The Glass House comes alive through an immersion with objects and the neighbouring landscape:

The years of a life lived by this house are represented by the art works, by the objects with or without artistic or commercial value scattered everywhere. The ‘junk’, as Lina would point out, should mingle with ‘high culture’. A cheap glass bottle in the form of the Jules Rimet football cup rubs shoulders with a baroque angel; a little peasant’s bench keeps company with a Chaise Longue by Le Corbusier; a child’s birthday present rests at the feet of a sculpture by Ernesto de Fiori, and so on. Objects collected throughout more than 50 years inhabit this moving space of exceptional modern architecture that in a relationship of respect shows up the beauty of the Atlantic Forest and the necessity for its preservation.

Bo Bardi’s home, so unlike the Farnsworth House, reverberates with the phenomenological experience of emotion and reason, imperfection and order; and interior and exterior space.

DESIGNING FOR IMPERFECTION

This concluding section addresses the process of designing as the outcome of an attitude opposite to the desire for totality. Designing interiors for people is the antidote to designing monsters. Designing to allow imperfection is not a weakness. Rather, it is the wise consequence of considering time, atmosphere, memories, intimacy, transformation, ambiguity, fragility, and liquidity when designing a space, especially a domestic one. While it is not the aim of this article to deepen methodologies or techniques to design allowing the inscription of imperfection of daily life, we do seek to remind designers of the non-objectification of spaces to inhabit, and to encourage them to explore parameters like materiality, texture, light, shadow, colour, detail, rhythm, sound, landscape, balconies, terraces, windows, and doors as elements that mediate the experiencing of dwelling as an experience in motion.

Interiors justified by need and desire portray lifestyle scenarios and enhance the experience of time. They are bonded with present events, occurrences, memories of the past, and promises of the future. Because the individual both represents and is represented, creates and is created, s/he actively engages in what makes time a unique and subjective sensation.

‘Home’ is the space for memories and the continuity of identity – even while accommodating changes. Everything works together to create an atmosphere that awakens feelings of emotional appropriation – even if only for a brief moment. Peter Zumthor, in his book Atmospheres,32 relates the experience of interior space as a territory of perceptions resulting from a choice of materials, volumes, and forms that unfolds a phenomenology of senses.

The desire for home is for a place of security, where identity can be unfolded and traces are left behind as signs of a personal life. Gaston Bachelard identifies ‘house’ with ‘home,’ the place of daydreaming (rêverie). The house is not only the house of the present. The house shelters all the houses where the individual lived and also all the imagined or desired houses. And after we are in the new house, when memories of other places we have lived in come back to us, we travel to the land of motionless Childhood, motionless the way all Immemorial things are. We live fixations, fixations of happiness. We comfort ourselves by reliving memories.

Above

Figure 10: Lina Bo Bardi, Casa de Vidro, 1951, Morumbi, São Paulo, Brazil. Image credit: Daniel Jacobino, sem titulo (Casa de Vidro), http://www.flickr.com/photos/tenerifetenerife/8671233192/
of protection. Something closed must retain our memories, while leaving them their original value as images. Memories of the outside world will never have the same tonality as those of home and by recalling these memories, we add to our store of dreams we are never real historians, but always near poets, and our emotion is perhaps nothing but an expression of a poetry that was lost.33

According to Bachelard, the house is meaningful because it is where the individual finds the resonance of intimate life. This intimacy can be found in a room, attic, closet, simple drawer, or in a window. The house is the interior space celebrated to stimulate those experiences while also protecting them. The house sustains the continuity of the intimate life of the individual, sheltering the past, present and future through memories and dreams. Without it, the individual would be a discontinuous being made of fragments and contingencies:

[The house] maintains him through the storms of the heavens and through those of life. It is dry and cool. It is the human being's first world. Before he is “cast into the world” (…) man is laid in the cradle of the house. And always in our daydreams, the house is a large cradle. (…) Life begins well, it begins enclosed, protected, all warm in the bosom of the house.35

Bachelard’s phenomenology matches a deep optimism with a contagious pia de vie. He associates warm emotions and memories with the house, namely the first house: the house of birth and the house of the childhood. This primordial house is the refuge for the most intimate memories, such as those associated with sensations. These memories are very personal and intransmissible, though they blur with the passage of time.

The concept of multiplicity leads to theorists like Robert Venturi, who defended complexity and contradiction in architecture. He criticised architecture realised in a puritan language, pointing out that the present lacked the fluidity and individuality of ‘the past. Imperfection is the human protection to go through life, as illustrated by Hawthorne’s closing comment on his protagonist’s fate: “Yet, had Alymer reached a profounder wisdom, he need not thus have flung away the happiness which would have woven his mortal life of the selfsame texture with the celestial. The momentary circumstance was too strong for him; he failed to look beyond the shadowy scope of time, and, living once for all in eternity, to find the perfect future in the present.”

According to Bauman, the ambiguity and uncertainty inherent in the age of liquid modernity leads to a fragmented immediacy of experience. “Efforts to keep the “other” the different, the strange and the foreign at a distance, the decision to preclude the need for communication, negotiation and mutual commitment is not only the conceivable, but the expectable response to the existential uncertainty rooted in the new fragility or fluidity of social bonds.”34 Time is similarly fragmented “(…) the collapse of long-term thinking, planning and acting, and the disappearance or weakening of social structures in which thinking, planning and acting could be inscribed for a long term to come, leads to a splicing of both political history and individual lives into a series of short-term projects and episodes […]”36 Indeed, life itself appears fragmented and social life consists of short-term projects and individual lives unfold episodically. The control and exclusion expressed in attempts towards the ‘perfect’, ‘finished’ and minimalistic home is thus indeed a logical response.

However, Bauman’s concepts of fluidity and liquefaction also provide an opening for a mode of inhabitation immersed in the flow of time. Within this ever shifting and ebbing flow, bubbles metaphorically represent the individual’s territories of inhabitation of space and time. Inhabitation fluidly integrates individual short-term projects into new flows: recomposed families, recomposed homes, and recomposed careers. Heimlichkeit, then, describes a home that shelters memories, transformations, and uncertainties by integrating the fluidity of the present with the uncertainty of the future.

Fragility and liquidity are more than features of an epoch; they are an expression of the human condition. Imperfection is the human protection to go through life, as illustrated by Hawthorne’s closing comment on his protagonist’s fate: “Yet, had Alymer reached a profounder wisdom, he need not thus have flung away the happiness which would have woven his mortal life of the selfsame texture with the celestial. The momentary circumstance was too strong for him; he failed to look beyond the shadowy scope of time, and living once for all in eternity, to find the perfect future in the present.”

Bauman’s notions of ‘fluidity’ and ‘liquefaction’ evoke Aldo van Eyck,37 a voice profoundly critical of architecture separated from people. His targets included the transformation of modernism into an international style ‘universally applied without respect to history, human nature, context, climate, culture or building tradition’38 as well as postmodernity and deconstructivism, which exhibit ‘the same unconscionable irresponsibility toward the people who inhabited architecture’.39 Van Eyck called for what he named ‘built homecoming’;40 architecture of everyday experience that embraces life as continuity with ruptures and fragmentations.

Designing for mankind must approach domestic interiors as subjective creatures that allow dwelling to be a transitive place of its own story. As Juhan Pallasmaa states, ‘the ultimate meaning of any building is beyond architecture; it directs our consciousness back to the world and towards our own sense of self and being. Significant architecture makes us experience ourselves as complete
embodied and spiritual beings.47 This defends the notion that what differentiates a non-place from a place are the traces and signs, the evidence of a person with a daily life in a space where ‘things’ take place. From a phenomenological point of view, to experience ourselves as complete embodied and spiritual things take place. From a phenomenological point of view, to signs, the evidence of a person with a daily life in a space where what differentiates a non-place from a place are the traces and

4. Architecture
5. Ibid., 1.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., 3.
8. Ibid.
12. Ibid., 32.
15. Ibid., 3.
16. Tartuffe” (unpaginated).
19. Ibid., 11.
20. Ibid., 615.
25. Ibid., 616.
26. Ibid., 615.
35. Ibid., 17.
36. Ibid., 18.
39. Ibid., 3.
40. Ibid., 11.
41. Ibid., 15.
42. Ibid., 20.
43. Ibid., 23.
44. Ibid., 28.
45. Ibid., 30.
46. Ibid., 32.
47. Ibid., 33.
48. Ibid., 35.

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4. For a representative sample of Zumthor’s views, see Peter Zumthor, |

IDEA JOURNAL 2013 Unbecoming