spacing OUT
the architecture
of an inner
spacing _OUT the architecture of an inner

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Architecture
[Interior Design]

Arcelia E. Mac Gregor

B. Arch.

School of Architecture and Design
Design and Social Context Portfolio

RMIT University
August 2006
Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the support of Rebecca Roke for her editorial assistance, as constructing this document in a second language required hard work and strenuous thinking.

For those long conversations, I would like to thank Elisa and Rodrigo whose friendship made the whole process less daunting.

Particularly, I acknowledge the support of Suzie Attiwill and Brenda Marshall (Senior and Second Supervisors) for their patience and belief.

Finally, and most important, I would like to thank my father to whom none of these spaces would have happened without, and to whom I dedicate this work.
Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; and, any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged.

Arcelia E. Mac Gregor

August 2006
index
_formlessness
_playing as an actual activity of
_thinking and therapy
_psychotherapy as a thinking process
_transitional objects
_solitude
_memories and symbols
_sense of loss
_reparation + restoring the self
_mastering absence or lack from the
_outer standpoint
_introjection
_the projective technique
_alone in the presence of the other +
_reliance on the other + possibility
_of loss of identification
video p _ 01030
forward reflecting process
chaos + order + discovery
anxiety + reparation + symbol
images + projection

1:50 models p _ 01031
materiality + the holding
environment + reparation

mapping _ tracing continuity
change + continuity
discontinuity and placeness
continuity + time

conversations
continuity and discontinuity
in space and time + reparation

body of work |
memorias

writing + the holding environment
+ continuity

writing + bodily experience

introjection + reparation

apperception + memory

mapping memory the tangible

familiarity + continuity

the unfamiliar + discontinuity

materiality as the non-holding environment + distortion in time

anxiety + bodily experience

connclusions  |

bibliography  |
Finally, we see ourselves creating our own interval of both mundane and spiritual passages in space, striving toward a medial feeling that is devoid of the unfamiliar...announced into that intermediateness which senses the moment of merging within; where congruence and, perhaps, completeness is encountered. Neither words can be spoken nor interpretations placed as both desire and memory are reluctant to engage with touch. It is our own stage, where we marvel in space and time; a show of suspended boundaries that contains one’s fragmented pieces. A self-intimate experience, yet one that is unknown and on the cusp of becoming familiar, by carrying out forms shaped and patterned internally to the outside.
At architecture school we usually are taught to design from briefs, from given specifications or from a program. Though it is a useful way of learning, this process can be said to have limitations in relation to what I consider to be essential to the design practice: self analysis in design processes. This particular lack, I am certain, creates a void in architectural education as I consider conception of space to be the result of an analytical and self critical approach.

It is not surprising, then, that I continue noticing practitioners who apparently put aside this analytical approach. Most often, these practitioners’ conception seems to be reduced to the sparse task of placing things and people into a certain square meterage. As such, the design process becomes nothing more than a consideration of a set of formal – and not always, functional - aspects that lack the embodiment of analytical insight. I consider that these aspects reflect of the lack of intimacy, which is produced in ‘the other’ - a lack of engagement that dismisses ‘the other’ in spatial experience.
This opinion is based on my consideration of design as a means of communicating with the outside, as in the end, it is this outside that we design for. It is from this point that my desire to externalize a deep concern, and sometimes anger, towards this lack of engagement begins. Perhaps, it is also my passionate desire to become close to architecture through better understanding a part of its complex nature of genesis and, most importantly, the practice of it.

Here, I set forward the main questions of this research: How to embody the psychoanalytical notion of potential space into the design process, and how can it possibly contribute to the design practice? I believe this theory, posed by British psychoanalyst Donald Woods Winnicott, stands in a fascinating position within the architectural/design context for it offers a distinctive approach towards the understanding of creative experience. Hence, the possibility of elaborating an analytical approach towards the design process.

The great majority of architects who have written or expressed thoughts about their work do not seem to offer a self-analytical criticism in relation to their design process. In fact, they usually solely defer to the normal and/or functional aspects of their process. This creates a distance which, perhaps, forbids any possibility for ‘the other’ (as the user) to engage spatially. This leads us to interpret their practice in terms of what is being offered: the formal and functional aspects.

In this research, I intend to put forward how an intimate understanding of how our design process
may be externalized with the use of a psychoanalytical tool, and the possibility for this to establish an engagement between the inside and the outside; between the other and the self.

Hence, I propose that the analysis of one's own design process/es may open the possibility to understand not only the aim of spatial conception, but also the point from where it began. This acknowledgement opens the possibility for engaging with our own work and consequently with 'the outsider.'

This research is manifest largely through extemporizing on potential space theory, a way of allowing inner structures to transpose toward an outer reality, encouraging the chance to experience the notion of potential space as both designers and the outsider.

Simultaneously, I set forward methods of constructing in a practical, external manner the design process/es embedded with potential space theory as a way of creating a dialogue between inside and outside. A way of ‘mastering’ the inner world from an outer-standpoint. By ‘mastering’, I mean the actual reorganization of inner structures by which one might attempt to integrate oneself towards an exterior. Hence, a dyad between outside and inside is created in order to enable engagement as designers with our own design processes in an intimate manner and to be able to then offer it to others. Possibly, the architect/designer would then realize that he/she designs to recover place: inside and outside. To offer it: to themselves and others. A
journey between (rather than from/to) inwardness and outwardness is therefore the recovery of place that I would argue becomes the main reason behind the way we design.

Objects that we see in fantasy are a product of our inner reality that we pursue through sketches, models, writing, or any other methods used to approach the design process. Through these, we intend to externalize the object that is expressed in our own language, with our individually perceived meaning, in order to possess it. It becomes a symbol of self-identity - it becomes an object in which we invest our own traits and emotions. To place such an object in an external reality expresses an unavoidable desire to manifest displacement which, at the same time, represents the possibility for being ‘restored’. Yet, it is not a projective identification where we place our traits into ‘the other as a form of denial or self-defence mechanism. Rather, this transposition is of something that does not even exist yet, but is inherent within us: the void produced by loss that D. W. Winnicott discusses at length. To efface this paradoxical void, to place it outside of us, externally would be the most tangible expression of its proof of existence; of being of feeling identified. Could this reasonably explain why some of us feel so passionate about design? That we create in order to restore the void; to have what we believe we do not? I would argue that we create in order to replace the void through design. And though we constantly endeavor to efface it, all we accomplish are mere attempts of annihilating that void. They are delirious fantasies of murder, as our own history is grounded in iterations of these failed attempts. Thus, a paradox is implied when we attempt to bring the void into context: the void exists internally and at the same time, as the word itself implies, the void is ‘nothing’.
The void gives us a sense of existence and simultaneously effaces the self, for it is through this void that we have a sense of absence - or an emphasized presence of the absent - the desired object.

It is for this reason that I find the English school of psychoanalysis of much significance to this research. For its value - in contrast to another approach, e.g. the American or the Continental Schools - relies on the therapeutic aim of the resolution of internal trauma by attempting to conceptualize the dynamic interaction between internal and external elements. That is, the integration of the idea that the self only exists in relation to other objects might open the possibility to restore the way we relate ‘creatively’ to the world: to ourselves and others. And I do not refer to the word ‘creatively’ in the sense that we usually do: that of the celebrated and renowned creation...but to the way we perceive life in a more, perhaps, stimulating way. Learning, therefore, to accept internal traits (whether traumatic or not) as part of our own creative processes.

Hence, I suggest the design process becomes a container of ‘self’ that we attempt to pour ourselves into (or should I say outside?) in a reiterative manner so as to ‘repair’ ourselves. Through this incessant struggle we search for the possibility - or at least we fantasise about it - of finding a ‘place outside of us’ in which we recognize ourselves as individuals despite the momentary illusion that this is. It is that ceaseless search for an elusive something that lingers in the repetitive attempts of a self-reinvention through an external place in space and time. However, this space is not our inner one, which is an invariable reminder of the self as incomplete and ‘full of void.’
To further explore the possibilities of the void space, I have approached my own design processes through the tool of Winnicott’s potential space theory to engage with my own self-analyses and experiences. These insights of self I have attempted to explore through critiquing my externalization of inner structures. Through this work I aim to address the main research questions: How to introduce the psychoanalytical notion of potential space into the design process and how can it possibly contribute to design practice.

This research does not aim to conclude in any specific project or constructed outcome that would determine the body of work and its exploration. The evaluation of this thesis should be based on my interpretation of an analytical process - potential space theory - and its relationship to the design process through a series of projects. I suggest that in identifying the importance of self-analysis and its externalized expression in the design practice we might explore new possibilities of engaging with the outside and the other through spatial identities.

Therefore, determining self-spatial recognition as an important drive behind both an inner and outer transposition of our own traits allows us to establish an intimate connection with our designs. In recognising our own traits, we allow for a greater connection with external manifestations of it. Hence, this research concerns methods through which internal structures become externalized - where a dual interplay is evident. This expresses ideals of Winnicott’s potential space theory where self-analysis through spatial experiences (the design process) is informed and externalized. (See diagram 01)
This research aims to investigate and expose the possibilities of this approach which may create consciousness among practitioners of the importance of becoming intimate with one's design process/es and one’s inner space and how this may impact on the outsider. However, it does not attempt to set forth a unique procedure for approaching design process/es. Rather, it relies on the use of potential space theory as a tool to engage with self-analysis and experiences of insight so as to expand on our own methods for exploring design practice. In any exploration, ‘restrictions’ are commonly perceived as potential limitations. However, restrictions potentially offer a frame of reference by establishing a context in which orientation and guidelines become apparent and offer a landmark to search toward.
The notion of potential space is therefore proposed as a restriction in this investigation, a tool that helps position the research itself.

From my suggestion that design processes can only progress through personal analysis and self-experience, I consider psychoanalytical tools appropriate to approach this with. Psychoanalysis itself is a process of introspection, it is ‘analysis’ itself between the analysand - the one undergoing analysis - and the analyst. Among other purposes, psychoanalysis aims to achieve an integrally self-introspective way of thinking in which the analysand eventually no longer requires the analyst in order to introspectively examine his/her mental experiences. I consider the process of psychotherapy an analytical method that engraves in the analysand a questioning and rational system with which they may interact with their own psyche.

The main approach for this research however, resides in the understanding of the psychoanalytical theory of the potential space as a questioning system through which the self may interact with the psyche. I suggest that design itself could be approached and understood as the result of an analytical process - a process where inner experiences are examined in order to master one's inner world so as to integrate and reorganize it through the design process and externalize it.

The creative process is manifest throughout life in experiences of self that can only arise from being, and the insights that accompany this. The design process itself envelops a childlike game of discovery that contains perception and re-interpretation from what already exists and is imposed.
Simultaneously, these discoveries are ‘self’-based and bear their reproduction, through rational criteria.

This document takes into account personal experiences, a series of conversations, and the interpretation of texts written by others that have inspired and informed the research and that corroborate the work itself. This is communicated in the opening section that expands on the meaning of ‘potential space’ according to Winnicott. The text discusses the concept itself and the role it may play in relation to the design process that I consider to be important.

Following this section are my research strategies which are presented as practice - based bodies of work accompanied by descriptions that explain the chronology of the series of projects and the common thread - the notion of potential space - in each. Pursuing this, I have indicated how the interplay of this thread engages with psychoanalytical and design notions. This method of presenting various experiments intends to give a coherent sense of the linear sequence I followed, and how, eventually, these sequences informed each other. I have included in these strategies a video that introduces the major and sequential experiments, and which corresponds to a clear navigation of my investigation.

Part of the intention of this research, whether ambitious or not, is to engage the reader with the topic in such a way as to provoke inner revelations. I will leave the illustration of this to the work itself.
'What are we doing when we are listening to a Beethoven symphony or making a pilgrimage to a picture gallery or reading... It is not only: what are we doing? The question also needs to be posed: where are we (if anywhere at all)?...Where are we when we are doing what in fact we do a great deal of our time, namely, enjoying ourselves? '“

D.W. Winnicott
In order to position the previous quote I find precise Davis and Wallbridge words: ‘For Winnicott the answer to these questions is based on the idea that we are neither inside in the world of fantasy nor outside in the world of reality but in the paradoxical third place that partakes of both of these places at once. So while the boundary between the ‘me’ and the ‘not-me’ is of fundamental importance in the attainment of integration, health and indeed sanity, the potential space, ‘the place where we live’, transcends this boundary.’

This quote advocates the following section of the thesis which is to expand on potential space theory. Parallel to this, I have highlighted a series of key points, and indicated as [K], that are extracted from the theory itself and that attempt to delineate the crucial aspects which I consider are related to the design process. These key points will be back referenced throughout the text that guides the research strategies attempting to make a clear connection between the potential space theory and the various projects I have worked on.

Along with this, is an attempt to expose an overview of some preliminary steps that position the research. The aim is to establish a connection between both psychoanalytical and design concepts.

To further illustrate the connection between psychoanalysis and creativity I will evoke Winnicott’s notion of the creative impulse: ‘The creative impulse is something that can be looked at as a thing in itself, something that of course is necessary if an artist is to produce a work of art, but also something that is present when anyone - baby, child, adolescent, adult, old man or woman - looks in a healthy way at anything or does anything deliberately...it is present as much in the moment - by - moment living of a backward child who is enjoying breathing as it is in the inspiration of an
architect who is thinking in terms of material that can actually be used so that his creative impulse may take form and shape, and the world may witness.  

The notion of potential space originated as an inherent part of D. W. Winnicott’s, original paper on ‘Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena’ of 1951. He is considered an object relation theorist - a field in which theory is focused on the path of transitions between self and other[s]. It is argued that this transiting path helps form our first subjectivity and sense of self, and others, in terms of inner connection, separation and the space and time in between these two, signifying the construction between the self and its past.

In Playing and Reality⁴ Winnicott extends his theory presented in ‘Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena’, to encompass the potential space not only as a source of creativity but as a place where play and creativity are linked in the world between subjectivity and objectivity. I consider this notion to be very interesting, particularly for its application in architectural and design contexts since it is this place that facilitates investigations of the interaction between inner and outer worlds. Hence, I set forth, it is the intermediateness between these two where the design process can be potentially explored and, perhaps, externalized.

For Winnicott, creativity was at the threshold of a life worth living and his studies on the topic concern the approach of the individual toward an external reality. He defines ‘potential space’ as the space between an ‘inner world’ – the mental reproduction of an unconscious fantasy, a personal replica of the world and objects around us – and the ‘outer world’ – the actual world, objects and people around us. It is the space in between the inner and outer worlds that he calls potential space. Winnicott advocates that it is at this point intimate relationships and creativity manifest; the inner and outer world varies according to the (primarily emotional) state of the individual who is observing it.
Winnicott emphasises this: ‘The potential space varies greatly from individual to individual, and its foundation is the baby’s trust in the mother experienced over a long enough period at the critical stage of the separation of the not me - an extension of the child from the [m]other – from the me – the child with a sense of self, when the establishment of an autonomous self is at the initial stage.’\(^5\)

According to his theory ‘potential space’ is the area in space and time where ‘creativity’ arises, where the child discovers the need to create a world of his or her own by ‘playing’ in order to find his/her own identity; his/her own self. ‘It is in playing that the child or the adult is able to be creative and use the whole personality’.\(^6\) Which is to say that, for the adult, play is replaced by the activity that represents this area at a certain time, where the segregation of interior boundaries sparks the creative impulse, or vice-versa. The creative impulse sets off the ability to feel disengaged with those inner emotional confinements for a moment in space and time allowing creativity to transform this state of formlessness\(^7\) to the actual thoughts being shaped. **From this formlessness, I infer that this material is a representation of one’s self-intimate traits and/or emotions which we are eager to make external in order to take shape in the physical world [K1]** and to take place outside of us through their externalization.

Further developing his theory in relation to ‘play’ Winnicott writes: ‘The important part of this concept is that whereas inner psychic reality has a kind of location in the mind or in the belly or in the head or somewhere within the bounds of the individual’s personality, and whereas what is called external reality is located outside those bounds, playing and cultural experience can be given a location if one uses the concept of the potential space between the mother and the baby’.\(^8\) Hence, **playing could not only be confined to the actual bodily experience where creativity, as part of making, features physical activity – and perhaps becomes more evident - but also to the actual activity of thinking**
and developing inner processes of ideas, thoughts and emotions between the self and the outer reality. [K2] Consequently, we can consider playing and cultural experiences as processes where creativity is immersed to not only contribute to the evolving process of actual ‘making’ but also to the evolving process of thinking. In a sense, this is what psychotherapy – or more precisely, the analyst – is attempting to recreate in the patient by assembling that thinking process into the self in order to encounter a potential space. [K3] However, psychotherapy will only work for those individuals in which a capacity for creativity is in a state of alertness, this will open the possibility of experiencing potential space.\(^9\) Meaning by alertness the capacity of being perceptive towards both and interior and exterior reality.

And it is the interaction between analysand and analyst, in the space of psychotherapy, where the displacement of affective attitudes from one person to another where the potential space happens. That intermediate space between both inner and outer realities. Winnicott called this allocation ‘transference.’

Play starts in the moment of separation from the [m]other where the ‘playground’ – the area where a child exposes him/herself before his/her toys – becomes the ‘potential space’. It is in this playground where the encounter with creativity becomes evident, and I propose in adulthood, an analogy of this place is where the individual re-creates his ‘toys’ or playing tools for artistic creativity. [K4] Winnicott talks about the capacity of the child to be alone in the presence of the mother as a way of opening up chances for creativity. It is in this space, where the child encounters himself in boredom or solitude, that creativity and imagination occur. [K5]

The potential space is conditioned by the use of an object, called the ‘transitional object’. The object
is a ‘*symbol*’ of the union of the baby and the mother – or a part of the mother. This symbol can be located: it is a place in space and time where and when the mother is in transition from being (in the baby’s mind) merged in with the infant and alternatively being experienced as an object to be perceived rather than conceived of.\(^\text{10}\) Hence, according to Winnicott, ‘it can be said that it is a matter of agreement...that we will never ask the question ‘Did you conceive of or was it presented to you from without? The important point is that no decision on this point is expected. The question is not to be formulated’.\(^\text{11}\) That is, the success of the transitional object must be regarded by subjective experience as neither internal (fantasy or mental concept) nor external (in that the object is not recognized as a foreign entity but something familiar which belongs to the subject; a meaning set out subjectively). Hence, it is fundamental not to challenge the ontological status of the transitional object as either internal or external.

Winnicott referred to himself as a Kleinian; Melanie Klein was an Austrian psychoanalyst who built on the work of Sigmund Freud and is also considered an object relation theorist. She developed the technique of play therapy to discover children’s unconscious motivations, a technique that greatly contributed to Winnicott’s. However, this technique was a substitute for Freud’s free association\(^\text{12}\) method that young children are incapable of undertaking and that, in my opinion, neither are some adults. As a result, I suggest that a **lack or inability of verbal activity, or verbalization, thoughts and inner compositions can be externalized through creative work.** [K6] According to Klein, our memories tell us that in childhood an illusion of a state of union exists between the child and the outer world. With time, a sense of consciousness develops in the individual, and with it an unavoidable ‘sense of loss’. **We can no longer relive the past, other than in memory, which is itself triggered by an association with some thing which ‘symbolizes’ what is lost.** It is here that the transitional object, as elaborated on by Winnicott, becomes meaningful. [K7]
Klein used the term ‘reparation’ to indicate the ability of a child’s endeavours to heal the parental image that it feels itself to have had fractured by aggressive attack/s. **This connects reparation to creativity at a more general level, thereby providing a new perspective on the comprehension of aesthetics, particularly in the creative process, offering an ability to ‘repair’ one’s sense of loss through creativity.** [K8]

Klein’s ‘reparation’ concept includes a variety of processes by which the ego feels it undoes harm done in fantasy, restores, preserves and revives objects. The importance of this tendency, bound up as it is with feelings of guilt,\(^\text{14}\) owes its major contribution to sublimations – creative and artistic manifestation tendencies – and in this way to mental health. In other words, the ability to be creative, or to feel that life’s worth living. Through creative work we find some sort of an attempt by the individual to efface or rebuild memory, if it can possibly be achieved. As a result, artistic – reparative – activity cannot be perceived as regressive – a reverting to a more ‘primitive’ and neurotic pattern of behaviour. Indeed, the urge to restore, repair and recreate the world anew is inseparable from an individual's evolving realistic relationship to the external world, [K9] We can claim that a sense of individuality lies at the basis of sequential ‘unique’ creativity.

From both Winnicott’s and Klein’s notions, I infer that we merge with our sense of loss by mending or filling absence or lack through the creative process. This, I consider to be an embodiment of the ‘how’ to master absence or lack from an objective standpoint. [K10] Paradoxically, the process of separation becomes a process of merging at the moment when separation deals with the feeling of lack in the creative individual. This is not from what he/she intends to represent in his/her creative work, since it is not about the presence of the creative work but a matter of the inner process, which is absent to the eye. Its substance is found in emotions, in acceptance, and in void recognition. However, this void will not cease to exist...**it is more a question of merging with it while engaging**
with the outside through the body of work and/or the thinking process. This process allows reparation and, thus, overcomes the sense of loss, by ‘restoring’ oneself. [K11] Taking to the outside the inner void, the left space within us, and ‘merging’ with it through the creative process.

From this point, I advocate the experience of discovering potential space in adulthood through psychotherapy and/or creative work. Psychotherapy in adulthood is a process where separateness may happen with the help of therapy. The potential space can be experienced when the patient, with the help of, and trust in the analyst, is able to create a ‘successful introjected object’. This ‘introject’ is the internalization of the symbol of an object. In this case, the successful introjected object would be what the therapist represents to the patient in terms of trust. The patient creates a new internal world of symbols upon which he/she can rely on his/her own feelings. [K12] He/she finds relief and confidence in someone, therefore in him/her self. Without therapy, a search motivated by the unfulfilled satisfaction of a sense of self, for potential space, can be searched through ‘cultural experience’. That is, the search through creative activity.

Winnicott treats this cultural experience as beneficial and constructive, occurring in a restorative space and mending or filling an absence or lack. ‘The place where cultural experience is located is in the potential space between the individual and the environment – originally the object...Cultural experience begins with creative living...’15

This cultural field of experience is retained throughout life and widens into artistic creativity and appreciation, of imaginative living, of creative scientific work, in relation to the original loss of affectionate feeling, of dreaming, etc. As our cultural interests develop, the ‘original’ transitional object gradually becomes detached from the individual. In my interpretation, this original object becomes neither subjectively detached nor disappears as such; instead, it is imposed by the subject onto
another context. **Thus the transitional object does not cease to exist, it is just transferred throughout one's lifetime.** [K13] It is meaningful to remember Winnicott’s opinion of this: ‘It is good to remember always that **playing is itself a therapy**’. [K14] This quote reiterates that play starts in the playground as the area where the individual uses his/her toys to re-create his/her own reality. **The projective play technique becomes evident, as it is here where repressed feelings, attitudes, personal structure etc. emerge in an unstructured situation – play.** [K15]

Winnicott’s concern for **an individual’s ability to build enough reliability on other’s in order to be creative** [K16] bridges this cultural experience with ‘the capacity to form images and to use these constructively by recombining new patterns that – unlike dreams or fantasies – is dependent on the individual’s ability to trust’. [K17] Thus, making a link with a sense of ‘reality’. That is, he talks about the capacity to be alone, setting out the difference between inner space (as the ‘capacity’ to be alone) and physical space (as the state of being alone). In other words, someone who is unable to be alone, or is afraid of being alone, lacks the inner space which enables him/her to tolerate life. This capacity is traced back in early stages of childhood when the infant, in the crucial presence of another, is capable of experiencing life without reacting to an external direction; without orientation; without any external factor. Just then, in this adversary circumstance, the infant will be able to have a ‘self id experience’ which makes him/her feel real. And it is this feeling in a re-iterative manner as a starting point for a life that has reality. Hence, expanding on this: ‘The potential space... between individual and society or the world, depends on the experience which leads to trust. It can be looked upon as sacred to the individual in that it is here that the individual experiences creative living.’ [K18]

Nevertheless, this last paragraph represents to me a paradoxical Winnicottian thought. Isn't it true that aside from confidence in dis/trusting people we are still able to engage in cultural experience?
I consider that disregarding the capacity of being un/able to trust, we are still and will continue to be in a constant search, unconscious or not, for that zone of intermedianess – the potential space considered by Winnicott to be the threshold of a life worth living. So, could it be said that the potential space connects back to an inner sense of reality? Could it be said, then, that a sense of reality (whichever that is for each individual) is more likely to be connected to creativity?

In my own view, potential space is a mental state that allows separation between our inner and outer worlds. The mental state in between these two worlds, or realities, enables a ‘transit’ from non-realized self-insight to the recognition of the ‘self’ as separate from the external world. For this transition to happen there must be an ‘existing object’ – a transitional object. Winnicott’s statement: ‘Did you conceive of it or was it presented from without?’ suggests that neither inner nor outer are important for conception. Rather, the emphasis resides in the occurrence within that space of encounter where the experience of setting out meaning in an object becomes subjectively meaningful. This is where creativity occurs: through the re-creation of the object set forth by the individual. [K17]

However, rather than being the space of separation, I define potential space as a point of ‘merging’. Paradoxically, it is the space where ‘individuality’ exists, but always as a result of being merged, as a starting point, with the ‘other’ where no individuality per se can be defined. This space of definite distinction is encumbered with both inside and outside meanings. Thus it can be said that the potential space is the overlapping space between two realities, such that the mental space it occupies is neither subjective nor objective but represents both states. It is the space of communication between our inner fantasy and the external reality that redefines an individual’s sense of his/her own reality.

In summary, if potential space ‘happens only in relation to a feeling of confidence’, with the ‘other’, it cannot be inferred that it is solely a separation process as there is, inevitably, a process of closeness
and merging. Winnicott suggests the subject’s ego structure may be mended through the mother’s localized spoiling, which re-establishes the individual’s capacity to allow a symbol of union to form from the separation that may be beneficial. He writes: ‘this is the place that I have set out to examine the separation that is not a separation but a form of union.’

What is this relationship between symbol and separation? And why is it important for it to be intimately related to the design process through the notion of potential space?

Self-analysis is proposed as a prime component in my design process. However, this self-analysis does not behave in a linear way since it is not about the self in an isolated manner but the self in relation to people, spaces and experiences; to a past which informs the present and vice versa. Self-analysis cannot happen if the self is not interrelated with the ‘other’ – the external world – as it is this external world that gives us a sense of ‘self’. Here, I make reference to the concept of ‘introjection’ – previously discussed as the introjected object. This is the process by which aspects of the external world are incorporated into the self and the constructed internal representation subsequently takes over the psychological functions of those external objects. Introjection itself is ingrained in our internal construction of the external world and/or objects. To take the meaning of these objects from within, towards an outside, allows for potential space to happen, remembering that potential space is that which lies between inner and outer worlds. Thus the shifting of our own internal representation towards an outer world manifests through play.

An analogy of this occurrence can be seen in the design process. Design involves the externalizing of our internal happenings, both our conscious and subconscious traits. Potential space theory becomes, then, an approach for explaining this and also highlighting possibilities.

It exposes a way of working with design as this theory becomes an interpretation of the design process
itself: an externalization of inner compositions, which come to be the introjected object/s. That is, the introjected come to be the different symbols and their constructed internal representation by which we are influenced along the design process. Subsequently, analysis opens up the possibility for introspection; introspection, opens up possibilities for creativity, and creativity allows potential space to happen.

I suggest the process of design and potential space can only happen in relation to others as it is only alongside ‘otherness’ that a sense of self might bear out internal fantasies to be told while mending internal complexities.

These extracted key points from Winnicott’s theory suggest that an introspective analysis engaging with personal experience would contribute to the field of design. This may offer the possibility of self-questioning, of recalling, of being able to link past, present and future. Potentially, this would allow an engagement with the self, and possibly ‘the other’, through design practice.

It could be said, then, that these key points are set forward as drives – motivational states of behavior that correspond to ‘primitive’ or instinctual desires. That is, to set out some of the motivations that might lead us to approach design might open the possibility of exploring the design process itself. To understand the theory, through these key points, sets out the possibility of understanding the operation of the creative drives as part of the design process - a method of engaging with the outside.

The next leading section attempts to show how this proposed analysis, based on key points, acts in relation to the various projects I have engaged with along the research. It is important to mention why the dual usage of the word ‘project’ becomes significant within the context of the research. For it is this term which sits in both psychological and design contexts.
Notes


3 Winnicott, Donald *Playing and Reality*, pp. 92-93.

4 In this book (1971) D.W. Winnicott writes about creativity and its origins in relation to the self and the ‘other’. It also tackles with the fundamental issue, which relates to the capacity of being creative, of the individual self and its relationship with the outside world.

5 Winnicott, Donald *Playing and Reality*, p. 110.

6 Ibid., pp. 72-73.

7 Winnicott talks about formlessness which is, in dreams, what the material
is like before it is patterned and ‘shaped into the outside.’

8 Winnicott, Donald *Playing and Reality*, p. 71.


10 Winnicott, Donald *Playing and Reality*, p. 130.

11 Ibid., p. 17.

12 This notion stands for any constrained association made between ideas, thoughts, words, etc, first posed by Sigmund Freud as a technique for the psychoanalytical session in order to understand the patient’s unconscious.

13 Mitchell, Juliet *The Selected Melanie Klein* (1986), New York: Free Press, 1987, pp. 95-111. According to Melanie Klein ‘symbolization’ is the basis of all those skills by which we relate to the world around us. A psychological understanding of the process of symbolization is integral to our understanding of the process of creativity and representation.

14 Klein would call this the depressive position which is based on the damage done by the child with unconscious fantasies of destructive tendencies towards the internalized mother.

15 Winnicott, Donald *Playing and Reality*, p. 135.

16 Ibid., p. 67.

17 In *Playing and Reality* p. 137 Winnicott quotes from Fred Plaut, a Jungian analyst, whose paper ‘Reflections About Not Being Able to Imagine’ was written in 1966.

18 Winnicott, Donald *Playing and Reality*, p. 139.

19 Ibid., p. 135.

20 Ibid., p. 132.
‘Only when man has defined what is inside and what is outside, can we really say that he dwells. Through this attachment, man’s experiences and memories are located, and the inside of space becomes an expression of the ‘inside’ of personality.’

C. Norberg-Schulz
The previous quote by Christian Norberg-Schulz attempts to identify the main strand of my research: the intermediate area between inside and outside as a space in which the individual is creative. In his book *Existence, Space and Architecture* I believe Norberg Schulz discusses ideas analogous to D.W. Winnicott’s potential space theory, in the sense that he refers to identity as being closely connected to the experience of place, specially during the years in which personality is shaped. He writes about being ‘inside’ as the primary intention behind the ‘place concept’. I relate this to a knowledge of insight and self-recognition that influences the places we create. In my interpretation, the place where we create from informs the design process. This, I consider, bridges Winnicott’s idea of potential space for it is through the recognition and/or identification of both inner and outer worlds as separate entities that will make us more creatively aware. Thus, the definition or awareness of both inner and outer realities will open up a space for creative experience. Thus as an introductory statement, I believe this quote ties together architectural/design concepts with the notion of potential space. For these concepts are found in the recognition of the self in relation to an outside. This, I believe, represents an analogy of the possible way that design process moves forward.

However, these realities, external and internal, are incongruent with each other. It is the discrepancy between each that stimulates the possibility for creativity, by sequentially withdrawing into oneself (by introspection) to then make a place in the outer world. In this case, I could not agree more with Winnicott’s idea: ‘Creativity is then the doing that arises out of being’. It is within creativity that the search for structuring an internal world is exposed and will allow for potential space activity. Hence, it is through this self-structuring, that I attempt to externally construct the design process.

In order to come closer to the understanding of the body of work I find it central to establish the difference
between analysis in psychotherapeutic terms and analysis within this research context. Hence to elaborate on this idea I would like to evoke Winnicott: ‘The principle is that it is the patient and only the patient who has the answers….By contrast with this comes the interpretative work that the analyst must do, which distinguishes analysis from self-analysis’. That is to say, the psychotherapeutic dyad considers the analyst/analysand interaction striving towards the aim of revealing a construction of the ‘self’ - in the patient - in order to transcend the dichotomy between both internal and external realities by means of the analyst’s interpretations.

In contrast, the absence of the analyst becomes critical, and also constructive, within the context of this research. For what I claim to be central to this differentiation is that the absence of an analyst opens up new possibilities for exploration. Since there exists the possibility of subjective disclosure, in relation to one’s own design processes, at the moment of embracing the potential space theory as a dichotomy between both internal and external realities. That is, there is no need of an interpretative work from another counterpart - an analyst. Rather, it is only the subjective interpretation which will allow an exploration towards our own creative process(es).

Based on this distinction, what follows is a critique of a number of projects, which they may be more clearly called research strategies, produced as part of the Masters. Through them I will discuss how I believe internal structures may inform the design practice, with the notion of potential space as the common thread in each.

To give a sense of the lineage of the process, and its analytical approach, they are presented in chronological order: Transitional Spaces, Reflecting Mirrors, Playing Ground, Video, Model Making, Mapping, Conversations and Memorias.

**Transitional spaces** - I began with research into transitional objects – a term borrowed from Winnicott’s paper on ‘Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena’. As I have already mentioned, transitional objects deal with emotional attachment in relation to objects onto which we have imposed meanings. These meanings are imposed subjectively – consciously or not – and symbolize a transition in which the subject attempts to transfer inner psychic traits and/or emotions into an external reality in order to overcome both behavioural and emotional patterns. Throughout this phase of human developmental, which is known as the ‘transitional space’, we find
the ‘transitional object.’

This understanding led to the following analysis: the subjective experience of a psychological bridge between inner and outer not only relates to our imposed significance of certain objects but also to our understanding of spatial experiences. That is, spatial experience also carries subjectively imposed significance. I believe spatial experience is based on the psychological bridge that we make between our own inner reality towards an external world. Isn’t it logical that what we design results from this transition?

From this initial formulation of the investigation, a research question was posed: How could one bring the notion of potential space into the built environment?

Research on Winnicott’s theory revealed a discussion about ‘transitional spaces’, which is a condensation of Winnicott’s ideas on potential space. It is necessary to clearly distinguish the usage I attribute to the term: ‘transitional space’ in order to clarify where my interest in the relation between the notion of potential space and design practice originated from.

I first used the term ‘transitional space’ as a possible approach for the masters investigation. However, as opposed to the definition elaborated on previously, the usage I gave to the word was based on my own definition: a transitional space as being on the verge of transiting from idea to matter, from an inner reality to an outer one. That is, physical spaces that have neither the formal nor practical aspects that are usually necessary in order to satisfy a specific function. They are typically spaces that are ‘wasted’; spaces with no use. Thus, the term ‘transitional spaces’ shifted into ‘wasted spaces.’

An approach to mental and spatial concepts was becoming apparent through this concept of wasted spaces and I realised that an interpretation of built spaces by other designers would be divorced from these emerging concerns and my own practice since the psychoanalytical notion of potential space deals with a more intimate and personal level of analysis. This led me to take an intimate approach to the research through an externalisation my own thoughts and experiences. As such, the research would be informed by my personal knowledge. This
strategy clearly sits in relation to potential space theory: I would attempt to explore the possibilities of that
time through my design practice and in the process avoid designing so-called ‘wasted spaces’. This realization
led to a central aspect of the research: the understanding of the dialectics of inside and outside, between the
subject and the outside, as a way to engage with design practice.

As a result of the interplay between inner and outer realities in the developmental phase, potential space occurs.
One way of exploring such a projective device is through the association of ideas, words, or thoughts in an
unconstrained manner that is often called ‘free association’. As the word itself implies, projective mechanisms
deal with the ascription of one’s inner traits into other guises. However, this projective technique differs from
projective play in the sense that the latter externalises the individual’s repressed traits through an object, or
playing tool, in an unstructured situation. In free association what becomes meaningful is the signified object,
where inner traits are imposed onto objects as a projective system rather than using the object itself as a
transitional one.

Let’s see how this formulation helped develop the next strategy.

**Reflecting mirrors** This strategy was proposed in order to explore signifying objects and its possible relation
to the built environment.

In Winnicott’s lexicon the ‘mirror role’ of the family has an enormous psychological impact on the development
of the individual. That is, the image which is the result of a reflection, upon the ‘other’, will be one through which
the individual develops a sense of self. Potential space assumes an important place in the mirror role feature
for it occurs in the separation of states of being ‘looked at’ or ‘being seen’, that Winnicott describes as being,
‘at the basis of a creative looking’. What the individual perceives at this moment of ‘approvement’, or not, will
most likely influence a behavioural pattern for his/her creative development.

Didier Anzieu discusses these ideas in his writing on the work of Francis Bacon: *Francis Bacon reproduces -
involuntarily - the structure of the magical slate. It places a glass on his pictures in order that the visitor, when*
contemplating them, watches himself/herself in them and recognizes, superimposed, the real image of his/her own face reflected by the glass and the picture, on the linen cloth, of his inner suffering bound to the emptiness of the recognition and to the anguish of erasing himself.¹⁰

In this project, mirrors were chosen as an object on which my own traits were to be projected. However, rather than producing a specific outcome upon which I could set forth an analysis it was the analysis of the object itself that brought into play its significance and what this could possibly offer. To me, mirrors are a representation of trapping, repetition and regression as a result of the constant confrontation of the inner self in reflections and images that do not allow transition from one state to another. This description attempts to denote how inner structures may be revealed by a projective technique, even though the project itself did not reveal any specific relationship towards the built environment.

Here I find accurate to quote Winnicott: ‘If the mother face is unresponsive, then a mirror is a thing to be looked at but not to be looked into.’¹¹ Through his words I attempt to illustrate the significance of the given ‘look’ at the object rather than the reflective one of the self though the object. Then, it could be said that a two-way process, in which the self could be enriched, is atrophied. Hence, to look without being able to see the self strains both the capacity of being creative and the allowance of events to happen.

The exploration process showed how easily we become attached to an object through subjective meaning. That is, rather than perceiving an object solely for its use value, we tend to impose our own hierarchy of significance on it, regardless of its use. This is a good example of how the transitional object works.

The approach of the reflecting mirrors strategy was not based on a specific technique, such as drawing, model making, etc. However, at this stage the key points of potential space theory began to interact with the strategies, thus enhancing the main idea of the research. This thread was to encompass a process of thinking, which relates to Winnicott’s idea of playing that he suggests is not only confined to actual bodily experience but also to the activities of thinking and developing inner processes - ideas, thoughts and emotions between the self and outer
reality.

Consecutively, I looked into concepts related to playing which could help introduce the notion of potential space as a way of arousing creativity and examining its possible relation to the built environment.

**Playing ground** For Winnicott, ‘playing’ is a creative activity. The approach of this project relates to the actual physical setting of psychotherapy where ‘playing’ is used as ‘therapy’, as mentioned before. The aim was to propose an exploration of design practice through a physical setting that could enhance creative activity. It was imagined that playing may allow for detachment from the outer world and thus be a way of encouraging an inner world and thus a space for individuality and creativity.

From this point, other questions were opened: How does an adult play? How can we create a space where an adult can feel detached from the ‘other’, from the outside world, and thus arouse creativity? What kind of playing ground and elements are necessary for this to occur? Most importantly, how may we create a potential space for others when this very condition varies from individual to individual and it is an intensely personal experience? How can research into this be evaluated externally when potential space is unique and can only be experienced personally?

Making experimental models and digital animations was seen to be an approach for this exploration, allowing for a better understanding of the interaction between the built environment and the primary human condition of creativity. However, before beginning the experimentation I realized that my interest lay in the process (which I think stems from analysis) not necessarily in the built outcome. I must say then, that I believe analysis is the result of the superimposition of two zones of play provided by both the analysand and the analyst playing together. In the context of this research, however, I propose that analysis might be the result of this superimposition of two zones of play: that of the designer and of a critical questioning of potential space theory through which the designer may play.

After this interpretation I found it easy to respond to the questions posed above. Potential space cannot be
created for others – it is and can only be experienced at a personal level. Thus, to approach the notion of potential space after examining it more closely, I decided to begin from the inside, with my personal experiences. How, then, to engage these insights with the design process rather than the built environment, for I believe that there must be a previous understanding and engagement with one’s own design process/es in order to approach the built environment. Subsequently, the main research question was reformulated: How can one bring the psychoanalytical notion of potential space into the design process and how can it possibly contribute to design practice?

In the following projects, analysis stems from this revised research question. I attempted to bring into play the key points I extracted from Winnicott’s potential space theory in order to set out the relationship between his theory and the design process.

The knowledge of what we are specifically going to work with conceptually and physically at certain stages of the design process I do not consider important. For I believe central to the design process is the significance, with what we are working, that takes place along the development of the same process. This idea becomes central for analysis of the following question: Do we actually ever know the reason why we choose particular concept(s) or strategies to work with within the design process or is it a matter of discovery? For instance, sometimes we choose a concept to develop without being fully aware of the intended reason. It is only through questioning and analysis that we become intimate with our discovered lines of enquiry and become acquainted with the reasons for our selections. This intimacy opens possibilities of exploration of the process itself in a deeper and perhaps more informing manner. Winnicott talks about ‘apperception’, which is the final phase of perception that is presented by recognition, identification and/or acknowledgement of what has been perceived. What is of significance then, is the apperceptive knowledge that might be developed through the design process. This opens the possibility of signifying aspects that we are working with. But why would it be important to signify the aspects with which we are working along the design process? Let’s see then, in the projects that follow, how this is positioned in relation to the extracted key points from Winnicott’s theory.
[K1] From this formlessness, I infer that this material is a representation of one’s self-intimate traits and/or emotions which we are eager to make external in order to take shape in the physical world.

[K2] ...playing could not only be confined to the actual bodily experience where creativity, as part of making, features physical activity – and perhaps becomes more evident, but also to the actual activity of thinking and developing inner processes of ideas, thoughts and emotions.
between the self and the outer reality.

[K3] In a sense, this is what psychotherapy – or more precisely, the analyst – is attempting to recreate in the patient by assembling that thinking process into the self in order to encounter a potential space.

[K7] We can no longer relive the past, other than in memory, which is itself triggered by an association with some thing which ‘symbolizes’ what is lost. It is here that the transitional object, as elaborated on by Winnicott, becomes meaningful.

[K8] This connects reparation to creativity at a more general level, thereby providing a new perspective on the comprehension of aesthetics, particularly in the creative process, offering an ability to ‘repair’ one’s sense of loss through creativity.

[K12] This ‘introject’ is the internalization of the symbol of an object. In this case, the successful introjected object would be what the therapist represents to the patient in terms of trust. The patient creates a new internal world of symbols upon which he/she can rely on his/her own feelings.

[K15] The projective play technique becomes evident, as it is here where repressed feelings, attitudes, personal structure etc. emerge in an unstructured situation – play.
Luis Barragán once said: ‘*Don’t ask me about this building or that one, don’t look at what I do. See what I saw.*’

Barragán’s quote introduces this research strategy, which involves learning how to see. This ‘seeing’ occurs in order to be able to recall, remember and connect with one’s own experience. This research strategy uses video footage that coordinates a series of images from my childhood in an attempt to evoke connections between them in such a way as to entail my history of spaces. I was attempting to set forth an analytical approach towards my personal history of spaces in relation to the main thread of the research.

Learning how to see implies grasping not only visual information but also information beneath the non-visual. This implicates a self-introspective method of looking at things – the externalization of an inner reality. It is through this introspection that we might be able to re-create images with self awareness and self history. In other words, it offers a system by which one may become aware of one’s background. This background binds our own states of mind, emotions, memories, etcetera, by assembling and making sense of the thinking process in the self. [K3]

Gunnar Birkerts writes about daydreaming as a way of creating and imagining through which imagination and creative acts might come into play. Part of the design process consists of being able to visualize and set forward images that allow feelings and memories to be recalled as if images were ‘taking root in us’. In *The Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard writes: ‘Psychoanalysts can never explain the wholly unexpected nature of the new image, any more than they can explain the attraction it holds for a mind that is foreign to the process of its creation. The poet does not confer the past of his image upon me, and yet his image immediately takes root in me.’ Here, I make reference to what Birkerts calls the ‘art of visualization’. For it is not about what is presented before us as such, but what we can see of it in our mind’s eye. The interaction between the visual and the mental allow imaginary spatial connections to happen in a representation of a formlessness that stems from one’s self-
-intimate traits and/or emotions that are eager to be externalized into an outer reality. [K1]

I propose this analytical approach with the intention of extending the visual sense as a ‘forward reflecting process’ in which the aspect of ‘forwardness’, as a way of being able to create relationships in time, is central to the understanding of continuity. That is, this sense of continuity has a great psychological significance because it allows us to place the subject mentally in a continuous activity that develops inner processes of ideas, thoughts and emotions primary to our creativity. It also allows for communication between the self and one’s outer reality, allowing completion of processes. [K2] This allows for the connection of time – past, present, future. That is, the ability of the individual to connect past events or experiences with present ones and therefore to imagine the effect of the present upon the future.17 This analogy could possibly happen in the design process where, through the ability of reflecting upon one’s past work, connections may be made with present and possible future effects. This suggests a beneficial sequence of reparation - the process of restoration of one’s sense of loss through the creative process building a sense of continuity. [K8]

In order to expand on one’s spatial history, I suggest that the designer must analyse, be retrospective, explore origins and learn how to see; to learn how to read the visible in such a way as to engage with personal experience. Thus the tendency of associating thoughts, emotions and ideas with images, relates to a visually-orientated way of thinking. Visualizing, then, becomes a way of externalization by means of an introspective approach: a thinking process.

What follows is an analytical description of the video that I produced. I attempted to set forth a series of extracted images to illustrate the main thread of the research.

Mexico City is the place where I grew up and where I have spent most of my life. The video footage is a series of compiled vignettes from the City through which I intended to explore childhood experiences and memories that were visually and spatially significant and have influenced my spatial understanding.

I chose the theme of the Mexican Muralist Movement (MMM) as a way to identify with a general overview of
Mexico’s socio-cultural and historical background. The MMM’s main principle was based on the manifestation of problematic social culture and historical subjects through painting on walls of public institutions. Simultaneously, the work of the MMM offers a way of reflecting on my own perception of Mexico’s ambiguous structure that is mirrored in how the city itself is laid out. It is a labyrinth of chaotic dirty streets, lanes invaded by public transport, and food and clothing stands in between sidewalks. Essentially, it is a place where rules are barely followed. Amongst the mayhem, however, there are also formidable examples of architecture that I think exemplify order and discernment, and that respond to a spatial acquaintance with the city. Mexico City’s history is reflected in the architecture which emerges from a rooted culture that not only responds to modernist influences, but eagerly responds to aesthetics. Chaos and order are immersed together, yet there are undiscovered hiding spaces: architecture, pyramids buried by the Spanish, urban memorials for dead painters, subways hiding luxurious scenarios, and palaces drenched in colourful richness. Effectively, a whole world of feelings and ideologies are carried in its walls and ceilings – a treasury of corners and alleyways.

In this video a projective mechanism becomes the result of introspection. [K12] That is, first, some aspects from the external world must be absorbed into and incorporated within the self, the internal representation then is seen to take over the psychological functions of an external reality. It is here that the projective mechanism becomes apparent:

The video content led to the extraction of three key words: chaos, order and discovery. They have come to be a signified representation of what has being conceived as a result of symbols. [K7] Let me explain how this idea is being developed.

There is no such thing as visual chaos per se as chaos is interpreted subjectively as a result of the relation with those facts of attachment that are introduced in the self through the observing eye. This is an example of how a projective mechanism works. [K15] The extraction of chaos in this video came about throughout the observation of images of a city. One where you walk amongst broken public telephones and loose cables, like spider webs, hanging from the lamp posts. A confusing horizon among green plastic tents, as if one was on top of the other.
There is no order and the dry and entrapped smell makes it even more obvious. The streets are drenched in diesel spots and its odour emanates from the dark and cracked asphalt. The smell of polluted air amongst countless amount of cars and peceros. But no inhabitant seems to notice. Some buildings cry out loud amidst hundreds of signboards jutting from their roof tops. Some just stand there, with no voice and no sound. And it does not stop, the noise is a distinctive feature of the city and an enormous chaotic feeling occupies the senses allowing anxiety to take place. Underneath these frenzied happenings a subway lane appears to enclose solemnity. A mural painting runs along the wall in front of the railways. People appear to be in slow motion and, as if resting from insanity, they wait silently...calm. Just close to the station and foreign to the surroundings Tamayo’s memorial looms from the corner. The portico shadows invite for a walk and the enhanced rough feeling of concrete runs along the long row of columns which, eagerly, invite in the sun. He dances and the shadows appear to be pure recollections of rhythm making this place different from the rest. Now the smell changes, there is a breeze which blows right across the avenue where Ciudad Universitaria is. Where the President University Building is laid out in the plaza, among those big square concrete slabs that seem to match each corner of the Tower. Siqueiros murals participate in the architectural event in such a compelling announcement...an intimidating sense of unity where the landscape speaks for all entrenched corners. This same feeling runs down the Central Library which cuddled facades, by O’Gorman’s murals, divulge nothing more than order.

In a creative activity a symbol is created by the individual to signify a feeling. In this video, discovery is brought up by the feeling of the dichotomy of chaos and order. Words therefore, have come to be used as symbols that could help to restore the self through the creative process – the ‘making good’ of an object in an external reality. Or, the reparation of the self – through symbolization. That is, making evident a superimposed significance of what is ‘conceived of’ in external reality. In this video, the conceived come to be the key words extracted through an analytical observation. A symbol by which a sense of restoration could be found between both external and inner reality. Thus, this reflection belongs to the process of reparation [K8]; reparation through symbolization [K7] where we can no longer relive the past other than through a memory that is triggered by an association with something symbolising loss. This project relates to a projective technique – the process in which the
individual ascribes one’s own traits or emotions to ‘the other’. At the same time, projection works as a defence mechanism to set oneself aside from the anxiety of an underlying subconscious conflict. The content of images seems to me to be an illustration of anxieties associated with creative capacity – almost as if it is a container, or symbol containing one’s fragmented pieces.

In her book *On Not Being Able to Paint*, the British psychoanalyst, Marion Milner, explores her own drawings and paintings in an attempt to pictorially describe both her inner feelings and those that attract her eye in the external world. She writes: ‘I want to suggest that it is the terms in which we think, on the deeper non-verbal levels of the psyche, about this specifically human capacity for making symbols that in part determines the way the capacity works in us.’18 Symbolization, then, becomes a system of order by which the significance of objects orders our sense of inner chaos. It is almost as if it were a natural way of externalizing our inner traits to ‘order’ the self, to repair it.

**Video _conclusions_**

It could be said then that in this project the role of images is to extend both visual and inner senses towards an outside in order to be able to process what is being seen. Where the forward reflecting process becomes one of detachment and separation where there is no clear division between inner and outer self, but the result of both as a result of a projective mechanism. This suggestion might set forth a method for approaching imagery as one in which projective mechanisms might offer the possibility of expansion on self awareness in relation to the design process.

The following images are extracted from the video in order to give a sense of the material I worked with and describe. The series of annotations beside each image are part of the analysis that helped with the description itself. Some of these annotations are written in spanish for my own reference. In this case the process of introjection is related to language in the sense that signified objects and/or situations - as part of incorporated aspects from the external world within the self - become apparent or externalized through words. Words then become symbols that help in the transcription of internal reality towards an outside.
All sorts of sketches, paintings, graffiti, political slogans, the smell of the place, compete quite strongly. Not to mention the speaker.

LA AYNO
LO QUE NO HAY
PERSISTE Y
NO HACE SENES
LA INCOMODIDAD
DE LO INORDINAR.

THE SPACES IN WHICH YOU NEVER BELONGED. THE MARKET, THE PEOPLE STANDING, THE UNCOMFORTABLE PLACE.

EL TRABAJO DE DOS
ESPACIOS TAN DISTINtos...
LA MISMA CIUDAD, LA
MISMA RUEA.

INTRODUCTION...THE INDEXED

THE UNDERGROUND AS
THE UNDERWORLD... ALMOST
AS AN IDEAL CITY. NO
TOXICITY, NO GRAFFITI, NO
PRINTING'S NOT SCRATCHED
VISIBLE... WHERE EVEN
ART IS TO BE ALLOWED
SOMEHOW EVEN PERSECUTED

THE DESIRE... THE PROJECTION
TIME ENVIROMENT... THAT WE CAN
NOT HAVE... SO WE CREATE BY
IMAGINING... THE FUTURE IS
WHERE WE CAME FROM.

Emotion related to image... emotional side of... well, although I just hate to be left behind... that side.

EL MUNDO
IMAGINARIO PERFECTO.
CUANDO EL CIELO SE PUEDE VER ASÍ...

LO QUE NOS INVITÓ A EXPLICAROS EN BUSCA DE UN MARCO Lenguaje NUMERO POZO Lenguaje NÚMERO POZO Lenguaje NÚMERO POZO Lenguaje NÚMERO POZO Lenguaje NÚMERO POZO Lenguaje NÚMERO POZO Lenguaje NÚMERO POZO Lenguaje

[...] COLOCAR FUERA EL DISEÑO [...]

Para "tener" lo que creemos nos hace falta... Para que sea posible... Fue que esa era la palanca... un vacío en el que no podíamos continuar... y que no podíamos... Y así, por ejemplo... En el Bicentenario... Matapalo... 

CREATIVO - EL PROCESO DE CREACIÓN - EL PUDOR Y HERRAMIENTA ACADEMICOS; PANTANOS DE UN CERNAMIENTO... 

ES POR ESTO QUE EL PROCESO DE DISEÑO ES UNA ESTRUCTURA DE NUESTROS MISMOS, EN DONDE INTENTAMOS VISIBILIZAR LO QUE NO HABÍA MUY MANIFESTO PERDÓNÉS VERDATINGÍS Y RE-ITERADO EN CONCRETO LOS LUGARES EN QUE NOS ENCUENTRE LA ESencia... DEL PROCESO CRITICO EN SI, Y QUE LA TRASLUZ EN ESOS LUGARES QUE DEBERIAMOS... O INDELICITAMENTE, NO CONSEGUIRÍAMOS VOY A LA REPLICACIÓN DE LOHITO... Y, POR LO MISMO, A LA REHABILITACIÓN DE NUESTROS...
LA IDEA DE QUE IMÁGENES SÍNO OFREN NUESTRA PROPIA VISION DE ESA MÁQUINA... ESTO VA HACER A UN

ASOCIATIVE VISUAL TRANSER COMO LAS IMÁGENES QUE OFRECEMOS ESTAN DELINUENDAS CON FUNDIDAS, 

LACK OF CONTINUITY DUE TO CHANGE OF EMOTIONAL IMPACT... LACK OF VARY INVESTMENT, DISAPPOINTMENT 

LO QUE ES OTRA IMAGEN SI NO OFREN NUESTRA PROPIA VISION DE ESE MÁQUINA... ESTO VA HACER A UN 

LOS DIFERENTES ESPACIOS EMOCIONALES DESDE ANAYABA CUBELLAS...
a hodgepodge of flawed lies... reality

¡Podemos el mejor escenario?

¿Qué percibimos el mejor escenario?

El objeto de escenario o el perfeccionismo (el perfeccionismo) imagen conforma a proyecciones o espejos...

¿Qué proponemos como algo negativo o positivo temprano?

Proyección: el proceso en el que se aprenden cosas propias y otras externas.

A defense of mechanism to protect oneself from anxiety and that some underlying conflicts has been repressed.

Entonces... si las proyecciones son un reflejo de tenso, emociones, etc. ¿una implicación de negación (tanto las mismas emociones y somos... no significa que eso es que no provoca sea negativa objetiva, más bien, es una condición negativa que necesita (subjetivamente) el lector de que al negarse inmediatamente se convierte en algo que es característico... o puede ser...

¿Qué no sea recuerdo mismo si no sería la imposibilidad de bien y, si nos lo tuviera consciencia de ella, no una proyección no necesariamente tiene una conexión negativa pero si siente incómodo o de un mecanismo de defensa en donde varias emociones como el autoafirmación a negada...
[K4] where the individual re-creates his ‘toys’ for creativity.

[K5] It is in this space, where the child encounters himself in boredom or solitude, that creativity and imagination occur.

[K6] lack of verbal activity, or verbalization, thoughts and inner compositions can be externalized through creative work.

[K8] This connects reparation to creativity at a more general level, providing a new perspective on the comprehension of aesthetics, particularly in the creative process, offering an ability to ‘repair’ one’s sense of loss through creativity.

[K10] the ‘how’ to master absence or lack from an objective standpoint.

[K13] Thus the transitional object does not cease to exist, it is just transferred throughout one’s lifetime.

[K15] The projective play technique becomes evident, as it is here where repressed feelings, attitudes, personal structure etc. emerge in an unstructured situation – play.

[K17] suggests that neither inner nor outer are important for conception. Rather, the emphasis resides in the occurrence within that space of encounter where the experience of setting out meaning in an object becomes subjectively meaningful. This is where creativity occurs: through the recreation of the object set forth by the individual.
The aim of this project was to use model making to work through the three key words: chaos, order and discovery. Throughout my practice as an architect, model making has been a key method for exploration and I devised this project simply to draw on a design system familiar to me. The importance of familiarity as part of this research strategy and the various analysis that arouse throughout the exploration of this method are discussed below.

For this project I proposed making 1:50 scale models of spaces imagined for human engagement. Each was based on a 60x60cm modular design in order to create multiple boxes that corresponded to human ergonomics. I selected materials such as foam-core board and paper that are clean and easy to work with and I also chose a small scale to work at because, for me, it requires greater precision with cutting and gluing tools. What became apparent at this early stage of the project was the ability for the re-creation of toys or playing tools by the individual [K4] in order to be creative and thus set his/her own playground. [K5]

It is important to mention that Winnicott proposes playing as an area that is not the inner psychic reality. He believes it is outside the individual, but is not the external world,¹⁹ such that even though the activity is set out in a physical setting, the individual is still able to create a world of his/her own without it necessarily being an inner reality. That is, the activity implies the signification of a creative experience, taking up space and time, in an external context. However, and perhaps paradoxically, this context does not imply an external reality but an exteriority experienced subjectively as a response of inner traits.
This relates to the idea of mastering absence or ‘lack’ from an objective point of view and thus being able to externalize inner traits through the physical manipulation of objects. [K10] Winnicott also sets forth the idea of playing as an activity that involves the body exactly because of this manipulation of objects. Similarly, model making involves bodily experience, which could be argued to relate to the presence – or absence – of anxiety while playing. This may or may not destroy the creative activity of playing.

Materiality is a theme central to this point. A familiarity with materials, or knowing how we mentally and physically react to particular materials by being aware of their characteristics, allows for a sense of security. This sense relates back to time: the amount of time the individual spends ‘making’, or playing, due to what Winnicott would identify as a ‘holding environment’. That is, a holding physical setting where the individual can be contained and experience a sense of security. In this project, my sense of security was created not only through the familiar process of model making, but also by the use of foam-core board and paper and the small, familiar scale.

What follows is a description of the model making process that provoked concepts of chaos, order and discovery. I attempt to briefly describe aspects of this process that I consider to be important, as well as discussing how projective play took place. [K15]

To be isolated in corners and spaces where neither physical nor visual touch with anyone else is found may impart a sense of discovery within a space. This is something of a testimony to the power of solitude where we may find ourselves ‘saved’ from a chaotic inner reality, where perhaps an order of ideas and feelings can make sense. Isolation fosters an environment in complete exclusion from the outside world; a place for solitude.

This inward-turning encounter can be read as a way of evading chaos and anxiety. Architecturally, this may manifest in walls that prevent visual contact with ‘the other’ or walls embracing cubes in which people could hide. Or, perhaps, stairs that lead to isolated underground boxes, looming walls, or aisles leading to minuscule entrances of light. These types of boxes are apparently closed but have entries to be discovered.
At this point it became apparent as a projective technique which, simultaneously, relates to a sense of reparation. That is, an attempt existed to bring order out of chaos. The translation of order and chaos into materiality links back to the mastering of an absence, or lack, from an outer standpoint. [K10] The attempt to make a transposition of inner feelings into an external reality - in this case making. Hence a process of reparation occurs through a creative activity by means of the externalization of meanings. [K8] That is, the emphasis does not reside in the illustration of concepts (as I will attempt to show further in images) but in their over imposed signification.[K17] This relates to my idea mentioned previously that central to the process of design is the recovery of a place outside of us. It then, becomes important at this point to mention how the object (the models) become a comforter by which the individual might attempt a sense of security...a comforter which to some extent attempts to be a substitute for an internal feeling of chaos. That is, the object, then, becomes a defense against anxiety.[K13] The anxiety which might be provoked from a certain stage in the design process. Hence making becomes a reparative method along the process itself in which the object becomes a comforter.

**models _conclusions**

It could be said then that the activity of playing is central to the design process as it potentially opens the possibility to create a holding environment, which is perhaps crucial for the development of the process itself. This results from a projective mechanism through which we ascribe an inner psychic reality and which, at the same time, involves materiality as a crucial means of relating inner and outer worlds regarding self analysis towards the design process.

At this stage of the research, I did not have a point of reference to move toward which suggested discontinuity in the reseacrh process. Then, could distortion in time be advantageous to/in the design process? And how could this possibly respond to the notion of potential space?

The following are a series of pictures and 3D models of seven different models that I worked on upon which I constructed the previous analysis.
Corners and spaces where neither physical nor visual touch with anyone else could be found. An environment of complete exclusion from the outside world, a place for solitude with the idea of creating spaces of isolation to avoid chaos.
Intersected walls entrapping closed boxes with hidden entries as ensconcing corners. Geometry as part of a game between light and shadow in order to produce an effect of isolation and discovery.
Rectangular and assembled boxes intersecting walls as crossed elements interconnecting spaces, yet divided. Attempting to ascribe a feeling of solitude and quietness within spatiality.
Playing with different heights allowed spatial isolation. Stairs were proposed as connecting elements with boxes. These spaces - which supposed users would experience - were proposed with the attempt of not only avoiding physically contact but also visual, provoking exclusion.
Submerging stairs into underground spaces. Looming walls and aisles, guided by light entrance, were proposed in order to illustrate a secluded, yet ordered, environment. Models became a signified object on which the investment of own traits brought a mere attempt of creating a holding environment through the transposition of feelings towards an outside: the provisional environment that ‘making’ sets forth as a way of reparation effacing, perhaps, the feeling of anxiety.
Two boxes intersected were proposed as two enclosed spaces. Dependent on each other the first box allows the entrance to the second which is an open, yet enclosed space. Attempting to create a dialogue between two excluded spaces, still communicated with each other. Following the idea of isolation aiming to bring order through equal modules.
One box to hide in. A long wall that creates an alleyway which gives a sense of solitude. Silence. Three walls enclosing a space in which someone could be isolated, where light could possibly recover all senses. Geometrical shapes with different heights attempting to create a game in which spatiality allows imagination and creativity.
[K10] The ‘how’ to master absence or lack from an objective standpoint.

[K11] ...it is more a question of merging with it - the void - while engaging with the outside through the body of work and/or the thinking process. This process allows reparation and, thus, overcomes the sense of loss, by ‘restoring’ oneself.
Mapping was an intermediate stage between my model making and my project titled Conversations. Through mapping I attempted to set forth a visual record of all my previous projects. Central to mapping was the sense of distortion in time that came about after model making. Winnicott describes distortion in time, or discontinuity, as an experience of annihilation. He sees it as a sense of placelessness, lack, and loss that threatens to set aside the individual and destroy any possibility of encountering potential space. A sense which can affect the ability of the individual to connect the past with the present and therefore imagine effects of the present upon the future.  

Parallel to mapping I began to have a series of conversations which developed parallel lines of thought. In Design in Minds Bryan Lawson mentions how this approach seems to be a common characteristic of cognition in the design process; how several lines of thought are developed more or less in parallel. This could possibly return a sense of continuity to the design process, if indeed, it was ever lost. At the same time, this approach connects to the mastering of absence or lack from an outer standpoint, for it is the distance created from a visual understanding that might allow the connection of past with present and therefore, future. This consecutively connects a sense of mastering such absences through a process of reparation by which the individual may restore a sense of loss through creative activity.

Mapping _conclusions_

Mapping suggests that discontinuity is of fundamental importance as an aspect with which we, as designers, come across very often. It does not need to represent an immobilized moment in the design process, rather, it might be a generator of creative activity in such a way as to arouse the instinctual need of the individual to find a place outside of his/her self.

The following illustration attempts to give an overview of the visual mapping which underlies this analysis.
[K2] ...playing could not only be confined to the actual bodily experience where creativity, as part of making, features physical activity – and perhaps becomes more evident, but also to the actual activity of thinking and developing inner processes of ideas, thoughts and emotions between the self and the outer reality.

[K3] In a sense, this is what psychotherapy – or more precisely, the analyst – is attempting to recreate in the patient by assembling that thinking process into the self in order to encounter a potential space.

[K7] We can no longer relive the past, other than in memory, which is itself triggered by an association with some thing which ‘symbolizes’ what is lost. It is here that the transitional object, as elaborated on by Winnicott, becomes meaningful.

[K9] the urge to restore, repair and recreate the world anew is inseparable from an individual’s evolving realistic relationship to the external world,

[K15] The projective play technique becomes evident, as it is here where repressed feelings, attitudes, personal structure etc. emerge in an unstructured situation – play.
Winnicott talks about an individual’s capacity to surprise him/herself as the only way of being helped by psychotherapy. He presents the example of psychotherapy as being useful for the person that talks rather than listens, as talking opens up the possibility of introspection. Here, I introduce the importance of speaking as method of introspection. This relates back to playing not only as an physical activity but also to the activity of thinking and developing inner processes between the self and outer reality: to the actual space of two counterparts – that of the analyst and the analysand – where transference occurs.

[K2] Speaking, then, becomes a way of assembling a thinking process [K3] which allows connections to happen between the self and the outer reality.

These conversations took place as a way of exploring the notion of potential space. They were conducted weekly in English, in the same space and at the same time for 30 minutes, hence the idea of continuity of space and time. However, central to this exploration, is the difficulty of language. English is not my mother tongue and...
words in the translation from the Spanish to English could not match the speed of my ideas, meaning that links to many other ideas were lost and unable to be recaptured. This situation relates to the design process in the sense that ideas could come into play at different speeds through different working methods. It is here that the individual might be affected by a feeling of anxiety. However, this links to Winnicott’s belief in the beneficial sequence of reparation [K9] which builds up a sense of continuity in the individual. The sense of reparation is brought up by ‘the other’ — in this case, the other person in the conversations — who provides a holding environment for verbal expression in a therapeutic setting. This potentially allows for a productive dyad to happen: the spoken word allowing for creative activity.

Transcribing my conversations allowed for a reflection upon the spoken word. This created a dialogue between listening and writing and allowed for a sense of continuity to happen through constantly thinking about my inner processes, which brought into play the interaction of symbols and images. That is, a sense of consciousness was developed and with it an association of meanings that symbolise what I felt to be lost.[K7]

**Conversations _ conclusions**

In these conversations the verbal dimension had a primordial effect on the non-verbal — images conjured by the spoken word took place in an introspective manner. An inward-turning response was created when transcribing became a mode of thinking and highlighted possibilities for connection between past and present. Hence for future this project might tentatively offer an approach to be self aware that talking, (which commonly happens throughout the design process, specially if it involves team work) could open possibilities of exploring the process itself. Allowing meanings to arouse through the interaction of the otherness.

A transcript of these conversations about the notion of potential space follows. In a sense, it is not necessary to read the full conversations as transcribed, as it was the process described above that was central to the analysis itself. Hence it is possible to read the highlighted phrases - where the secondary process of analysis took place.
OTHER Is the potential space something completely mental?

SELF I have been thinking about this for more than one year now and still I am not sure if the potential space is completely a mental process. If I was sure that it it is, indeed, a mental process I wonder if it would be a waste of time trying to bring it into something practical.

OTHER So you are saying that you have been thinking about it for more than one year now you must have started with the idea of the potential space coming from Winnicott...did you know that beforehand?

SELF No, I read about the transitional space but I did not know about the Winnicottian notion of ‘potential space’ but it derives from the transitional space theory which relates to the transitional object. Winnicott based his theory of the potential space on Freudian Transitional Phenomena Theory and he worked with infants through the act of playing.

OTHER What would be the transitional object for Freud?

SELF What I am interested in is how can I just relate this theory to the actual constructed space regardless of being a mental experience. One day you mentioned you do not believe in mental space.

OTHER Well the idea of space. What is space? Because people will often talk about space as something existing and whereas for me I see space as something produced through relations, so I talk about the spatial rather than space. So, there is a sort of big philosophical difference because often western philosophy from the Greeks have spoken of this idea of space being like a container: You exist in space whereas someone like Elizabeth Grosz will talk about how you do not have an object that exists in space but rather by putting it somewhere it produces spatial relations. So space is a product...a product by of something placed somewhere in relation to something else.

SELF So, what would you think about desert, where there is nothing, where can you find these relations then?

OTHER Well, you do not have completely nothing because you have sand, oxygen, bacteria. But what I was reacting to is this very strong idea about having a mental space up here - pointing at head - that there is an interior to us that exists so my interior mental space exists in ‘here’, somewhere, I do not know where but we talk about it being up ‘here’, why? Because we associate it with the brain, but my mental space could be anywhere in my body, it is all meat in ‘here’.

SELF So, you are talking about an actual ‘area.’

OTHER Yes, an open volume or space. So mentally how I think is that it is not that containable either within me, just
‘here’...like when I go somewhere or to the desert, then that mental space is produced as much about where I am so it is partly me and partly where I am. If all of the sudden I am in somewhere in a condition that is like fifty five degrees I would not be able to think so my mental space or brain would not work. I think there are lots of things that I think would affect. So, for me it is that idea of how this notion of interior is often thought to be just inside, that everyone has their own interior but the way I think about people self and how they’re composed and so on it is much more in terms of relations between things.

SELF But not necessarily human beings, right? it could be just an object as well. Let’s suppose there is a mental space somewhere in our bodies. Do you think there would be some relations that the ‘space’ would be doing with your body?

OTHER I do not know enough about it but I think that rather than thinking about mental space it is about thinking, ‘thinking space’. And then there is the unconscious as well, so there all these different kinds of things that in terms of saying that there is a mental space is what actually shapes that mental space and what happens within it so for me, if I am thinking there is a process of thinking up here but a thought is actually also saying something and then how it comes out and gets materialized and how you listen to it and give your opinion on it...so it is more like a making process that happens, for instance, through a conversation. So the thought is an action, it is not just like it is up ‘here’ and all of the sudden it just comes out and say it and it is still up ‘here’, it is a process. And, from my point of view, it is the same with the unconscious it is not like it just stops in ‘here’ to be or about being ‘here’ to be discovered but there is a process of engagement and discussion in order to become something. So, if you talk about the unconscious even though can not know anything about the unconscious because it is unconscious but it is only just the process of making conscious where you perhaps make links to something that was there. So, it becomes a mental space, a mental space is produced rather than a mental space already existing.

But if we come back to the potential space and realizing what you just said before about how it all started off with the transitional phenomena and Freud, being Winnicott something recent for you. Because I think that this relation between transitional and potential is interesting because it is, just what I was saying before, about something coming outside - if you want to think about mental space. And there is this movement through the outside and then it transforms in that movement into something that can be actually understood and experienced and it could become as an artifact. Then it is all about transition and potential, isn’t it?

SELF Well, in a way the artifact, like anything that we materially produce, comes from the potential space, comes from a mental space. So, I wonder if the design process is just a mental process...?

OTHER How could it be just mental though? Because for me it is what design is about. It is not just like being as ideas and then just my mind becomes some sort of tool that can translate exactly what it is up here because as soon as I intend to translate it you cannot express it exactly the way you are thinking about it because the action of doing something changes. It is like when you write something it is like going duck shooting, there are like ten ducks in the air flying pass and when you shoot them, as ducks representing ideas, you can only get maybe three, you can not get them all down.
SELF I understand your point of view. And taking that example into writing, it is seldom accurate. That is, you never write the ideas in the order that you are ‘thinking’ them, as the way you understand them in your head.

OTHER But how do you see that relating to psychoanalysis? And I ask this because you talk in your research about the ‘psychoanalytical notion’ of potential space. What can you say about that mental and ‘mid sort’ of thing?

SELF At this stage I would like to put aside the word ‘psychoanalytical’, since I am using it for the reason that the theory comes from psychoanalytical literature. However, it is not just about the fact that the term ‘potential space’ comes from this kind of literature. I think it is very important to consider the fact that psychoanalysis is based on self discovery through constant analysis...and in a way that is what part of the design process is: a constant analysis, a constant re-invention and re-thinking of ideas which lead to an outcome that can still be re-invented and re-thought again and again, reiteratively.

OTHER So, what is it that puts the idea of potential space in your mind?

SELF I think anything could bring the idea of potential space into your mind. Meaning by ‘anything’ emotions...I do not think the potential space can be brought to your mind. You can not think the ‘potential space’ because it is something that you experience not something that you can think of. Like Winnicott mentioned: ‘The potential space can not be analyzed.’

OTHER So, can you describe when you go through a design process? Your own design process.

SELF I guess that when you are going through a design process you do not have to feel specifically in a certain way, like happy or sad...but the ideas that you come up with are always triggered by something emotional. So by saying this I reiterate that anything that we are thinking of, or even the potential space that we experience, comes from pure emotions. And once again it is something completely inner and something that you can not see as the ‘outsider’, you only experience it as the designer, it is some sort of personal history. Regardless of any outside interpretation. I think I am speaking as a non practitioner, for the design process is most likely to be triggered by not just solely emotions. There are always more limitations than that. You have to be clear on what part of the design process your research is based on.

OTHER Do you have that experience when you design?

SELF Yes, and it is funny because many times when I design some ideas come from something I can not deal with and I feel that I have to put it outside in order to feel that I am solving it, in the design itself. It becomes very personal but that is the way I perceive design: part emotion and part reason.

OTHER Does that happen every time you design? And I am mentioning this because if you worked for a design firm that would not work, would it?
SELF That is a big issue because the times that I have worked in firms I have really struggled because I have never taken it personally. What I mean is, I have never got involved in the projects in a personal way. It is like when you are working for someone you can tell in their design, in the final product. In a way, you are just doomed to do something you are being told to do and not something that you ask yourself to do. This is when you forget about the word ‘intimacy.’

OTHER Yes, I understand. I have worked in offices as well.

SELF And what is the outcome like? Would you consider it to be good when you are hardly related, in a personal way, to what you are doing?

OTHER It is interesting to think about that because I would describe it different. For me the problem does not seem to be the emotional involvement but more having a concept. A concept, having the sense of the overall and how things fit together. The reasons why you make choices about whether it is blue or red. So everything can work in different levels in terms of how other people will then encounter them. So, in my own experiences with large scale design firms when I have been told to just put together a sample board and choose whatever you like as long as it looks good, is something I hate. I had never thought of it as something with an emotional involvement and I am not saying whether it is right or wrong, you know. I would not have described it like that or even use the word intimacy. And I am thinking about what is design? And I think design always seems to demand of me when I am doing it, because you are in a way involved but it is also separate too.

SELF Do you mean as something to look from the outside?

OTHER Well, you just get a different brief. Design brings in this other brief which might come from all sorts of places but I will intend to do a distinction and, probably, not a very good one because I am not an artist and I am not interested - and this is where it becomes obvious that it is not a good one because I do not think this is a definition of an artist any longer. But when I was thinking ‘No, I do not want to work in the area of arts’ it was because it was not about having self-expression.

SELF Not having or having?

OTHER Not wanting to work in that area because whatever I made was about an expression of me. Which is how I think a lot of artists work like, so when you look at the work of art what you are meant to be looking at is their self expression in some kind of way so that is why I was more interested in design because design seemed to be still involved in making things and aesthetics - and all sorts of other things - but you have to work in response to something and, for me, that seemed to work more creatively because I worked within limitations and constraints.

SELF Which I think is crucial for design - and that is the real world. However, I still consider the personal involvement should happen in order to let creativity and design process occur. I am not talking about self expression like in sculpture, for example, because for me it is more obvious to be a work where you are more in contact with your self, with your body and its actions.
I am not inferring that this does not happen with the design process. With architecture and design you have to be aware and intimately related to the spaces that you are thinking of and these spaces, at the same time, are related to the spaces where you have lived or the way you have experienced the act of living. Even the way you would not like to live - because once again, this relates back to the way you have lived. So when, at these firms, I am asked to do something I find myself completely unaware of the main concept that would lead me to a better understanding of the problematic, that any project presents. If there is no intimacy I just do not find any strong concept that you can follow in order to attach yourself to the search of a solution. And maybe you have not thought about it before because you have not thought about the actual intimacy within yourself. Or maybe you have, but then we would be talking about unconscious and, like you said, we cannot talk about unconscious because it is what it is. I just do not think that you can separate this relation with intimacy and the more involved you are the stronger the outcome. I do not infer that it would be aesthetic or not, it is irrelevant, but it could be an outcome where you could, perhaps, perceive a deep sense of thought or perhaps, and most important, engage the user with it.

OTHER I agree with you. I think all of that is really important and maybe it is important as well to think then of this word intimacy and what you are saying about it because when you are talking about spaces then you are probably talking about interior architecture not just necessarily inside buildings but it is about producing spaces in an intimate way in relationship to an understanding in how they might be. So, when you talk about the designing of spaces you are saying that you are drawing on the spaces that you have lived in and/or how you have experienced them. So, are you thinking about, when you design spaces, how they might be inhabited by someone else?

SELF Yes, but I guess that is the eternal perplexity of architecture and design. Do we really design for people or do we design for ourselves? Either way, we should be aware of both and I personally think that the ideal is to design for both because you cannot separate the ‘self’ from the design process and you should not separate the other side either. Otherwise the design would not have a purpose at all. I mean, architecture is the inhabitable object...without people it becomes useless. You were mentioning interior spaces, but what about a window? A window is an element which reflects itself on the outside...yet, it can be a completely intimate one. Even though we talk about intimacy from the outside people might say the opposite: “That is not intimate, that is something totally exposed”.

OTHER What sort of things are intimate in this example?

SELF I guess it is not about the element itself but about the way these elements are put together. It is not just about a window or a corridor, for instance, it is about the relationships that are created through and between these elements. And now it comes to my mind the desert. You could easily say that the desert is something entirely un-intimate, open, where you find yourself exposed. But I wonder why I sense the desert as something completely intimate as well...might be because you are there just by yourself encountering your own mind, your own mental space.

OTHER But maybe the thing for you is to be thinking about that, that is true but it is not like having to describe intimacy alone but it is like what is it connected to? So if it is about design practice then, there are limits. The desert can be intimate
as well so you are not dealing with intimate spaces so much as a process of designing which is intimate by itself...

**SELF** Well, going back to what you said, this intimacy is about relationships. What is it connected to? I do not know if it is intimate by itself.

**OTHER** Now, I wonder how does it link back to the potential space and transitional phenomena. Maybe it is about getting rid of the word space for a bit! And think about what is transitional and what is potential. Because you have spoken about the intimacy in terms of a relation that you have to design, the design process. It is something where you are drawing on spaces that you have known in the past and how you feel emotionally and that, to me, is when the intimacy appears and that you have got an intimacy in your design process with yourself. Like you said before, the outcome might not be great but still it is important to have that relationship and I guess you could even be saying that the outcome is better as well.

**SELF** Stronger, solid...better, yes.

**OTHER** So, is there a criticism that you have of design practice generally?

**SELF** Yes, I do. A lot indeed. Now it comes to my mind the wasted spaces. Remember that primary stage of the research? these so called wasted spaces - which I use to refer to by calling - are a result of what I precisely criticize. The lack of intimacy, the lack of a concept is the result of these ‘wasted’ areas. And I will not go deep into the topic though I am still concerned about it in the sense that I, as an architect, do not aim to conceive these sort of spaces. I consider, in regards to this matter, it is a shame because as practitioners who are trying to gain some experience in the field, we end up, somehow, trapped in the same problem. For working for someone else means, sometimes, to practice under someone else’s design principles. Now for some reason comes to my mind ‘Loos’ and the interpretations that have been made in books about some architect’s work. So it is clear to me that the way you are reflects on whatever it is you design. The issue would be how to prove that? How to expose it out to people without being exposed to purely interpretations? How to give them sufficient tools to see how the outside is the inside of personality. So I ended up in the same place: HOW? I guess maybe the question is: Is it a matter of proving or is it a matter of ‘exposing’ so people can understand?

---

**SECOND 280605_duration: 38.10**

**SELF** I have been discussing with a friend that used to dance about the mental space and the potential space and in our conversation the topic of spaces for dancers came up. And she was mentioning her own experience in space as a dancer. Space could be anything as long as they dance and create it by dancing. So this might be a different concept from what we were talking about which was how space becomes because of its relationship to other things. The dancing and the
experience of dancing produces it. So I asked her ‘If you do not dance there is no space at all?’ What I think is that it does not mean there is no space but the lack of meaning of the space itself without dancing what becomes important. I consider it to be not only a mental space, but also a space where the presence of the dancer produces the space itself. So how much is it about a mental setting rather than a physical one?

OTHER How would you say it is a mental space? Because I would have thought that it is a body space?

SELF I guess it is because of the dancer’s presence. Yet, it is that inner involvement you are ‘experiencing’, while you dance, that I call mental space.

OTHER I have heard from dancers talking about that kind of experience and it is a bodily experience and how it makes you feel and how it affects you. So that could be mental because in a way it informs how you feel and how you think. It is more thinking about that there is an inside in ‘here’ - pointing at head - that it is a mental space. That was the thing that I was getting at, that for me it was that sort of split between mind and body, specially in western philosophy: that you inhabit in ‘here’, in some mental space and then your body is just some kind of something that takes you around. Perhaps this is not important and what we should focus on is about this issue of ‘mental’ and how other words might be useful to define or even to think about it because, obviously, the idea of psychoanalysis is dealing with thinking and emotions. Perhaps it is just the relation between mental and space. Or perhaps it is just this word ‘space’ that you have to think about a little bit more. And when you were talking about the dancers I was also thinking a bit in relationship to the potential space. Because even though that is not the same idea that you think of the potential space body is full of the potential to produce space, isn’t it?

SELF But what kind of potential are you talking about? Related to emotions?

OTHER Well, all sorts of potential I guess. Because if we are talking about emotions that is just for them and if you see a dancer performing that might affect you and not in the same emotional-mental way and it may also mean that you are affected physically through a whole crowd and then that will affect you physically as to how you can move spatially through. Why do you think you are talking about dancers?

SELF I guess the topic of the mental space came up when I was wondering out loud how to bring the potential space into practice and my friend thought about dancers as an example. And there could be so many ways of thinking of the potential space so I was telling her that if you are not dancing and you place any object there, is that no longer a space? And her answer was that space becomes meaningless without dancing...so from this I assume that space maybe becomes from the produced and over imposed meanings from individual to individual. So I wonder if space becomes just because of its meaning? Because space could ‘be’ just by placing something in it, I wonder...perhaps not even placing anything.

OTHER But you cannot have anything, that is the thing...the idea of nothing, of just having pure space does not exist.
Otherwise it would get too philosophical and perhaps the only way of understanding space is through relationships between things. For instance, the fact that in the desert there is nothing does not mean there is not actually really nothing but still there is a horizon line. It is more how you think about space itself.

SELF It is hard, indeed, to conceive space without anything. Just space in the ‘nothing’ like if it was floating.

OTHER Yes, I guess there is always something that makes it apparent. There is always one thing at least.

SELF So, coming back to the mental space, and/or the potential space, it would be possible through the brain, through the bones, through the body.

OTHER Possibly...and the other idea that you were talking about was ‘intimate.’ How would you relate this concept and the mental? because mental could be anything.

SELF I do not know if it could be anything. But I certainly believe that the mental always derives from the intimate, from the emotional. It is connected.

OTHER I also think that there is a very strong relationship between physical things, like your body, and your mental feelings. Like people experiencing other’s people dead that affects their mentality, they do not so clearly or they actually get different kinds of madnesses and the other way around too. When you go to the gym and exercise, the various different chemicals like endorphins make you feel better, happier. So I think it is not just emotions...that sort of split into emotions and physical is really complex. When people are not happy then it becomes apparent physically, sometimes.

SELF Yes, there is always the psychosomatic side that we must take into account.

OTHER So I am not sure how important that is for this notion of potential space in your work. Why do you feel you have to work out that idea of mental space?

SELF I think if I work it out I would be able to find a connection or a bridge that could lead me to the answer of that ‘HOW’...so I ask myself, maybe if you understand what the mental space is, in many contexts, you might find that bridge.

OTHER The question by itself is already difficult for anyone to answer. This idea of bringing mental space into something ... can you talk a bit about mental space as being potential space? because I still do not get that.

SELF Potential space is something that you experience to separate yourself from an outer reality. It becomes a mental space just by the fact of this experience of separation...it is not physical, it is an emotional detachment. Something that no one can experience except yourself through a mental process, that is a mental space.
OTHER Would you use that with the dancers as an example?

SELF You could, I think that any artist or creative action involves the potential space. You are experiencing creativity through an emotional act and, in a way I see that as an act of separateness and therefore a mental space. And if we talk about a mental space without making reference to the potential space the mental space would be part of a creative process where you are reviewing, somehow, the ideas that would trigger a certain outcome.

OTHER Could you say that just thinking is a mental space?

SELF I think it is and involves the process of becoming conscious of.

OTHER Is it conscious?

SELF I suppose that there is a difference here...I find the mental space a more conscious process while the potential space...

OTHER So why do you focus on the conscious when you are interested in the psychoanalytic and the potential space by Winnicott when that is all about to do with the unconscious.

SELF The potential space is about that, unconscious and...of course, it is a process which cannot be analyzed. It is a process that you experience. From here a pattern of behavior becomes evident.

OTHER I think it is worth to think more about...because if it is about own experience. Then, what makes you experience it and what makes it become conscious?

SELF I do not think it becomes conscious. I believe when you are a child and you are trying to separate from the mother figure, being in the presence of the mother, without the fear of being abandoned - Winnicott mentions this as the ‘GOOD ENOUGH MOTHER.’ Here a potential space could be experienced as a non-failing process, where the infant finds enough trust on the m-other to feel self confident about him/herself. And I believe there is a pattern which develops from this point. A behavioral pattern that dictates the way we - as adults - act throughout lifetime.

OTHER Where do you find the potential space in this example? Is it where the child feels that he has got the potential to do...what?

SELF I do not think it is about feeling the potential to do something it is about the feeling of being re-assured by the ‘other’ that creates that pattern which, at the same time, allows not to fail to experience the ‘potential space’ as a child.

OTHER So, is it called potential space because there is this space for potential then, that allows people to grow and develop?
SELF I do not know why Winnicott called it the ‘potential’ but it does allow you to have that potentiality of growing and developing even in adulthood.

OTHER So what about design?

SELF If we took this behavioral pattern into the design field, which is what I am interested in, and you have experienced a childhood where...well, I do not like to place examples about the mother and the child to explain it.

OTHER But it is your reference and it makes it easier to understand.

SELF I know, so I guess I should go on with the example of a childhood experiencing failure: that experience and feeling of failure stays with you in adulthood and when you are designing, being creative, and you are placing momentum of your past - and present - into something external you are designing with that feeling which, from my point of view, is already intrinsic and you cannot separate it from what you do. But how to interpret this? the designer might see it clear in his/her design but...how to make it clear for others?

OTHER So you are saying that, in terms of design and creative activity, there is some relation with your experience as a child and the potential space. So, in a way, how you practice as an adult creatively that is affected by that.

SELF Yes, I believe so.

OTHER I think that is probably true. But are you saying that one is better than the other? Like if you feel abandoned as a child and, therefore, insecure is that a bad thing for design?

SELF Not at all. Before, I was curious about whether or not some persons who did not have this feeling of failure in childhood were more creative than others who did have the same feeling. But I think that is irrelevant, creativity from one people to another does not rely on the failure of a potential space as a child.

OTHER There is not much point in trying to arrive at statistics or truth because you end up boxing people in. The question is why are you interested in it and how you are interested in it? What you might do with that thinking? It is not about prove that you are right because it is a boring thinking. I just wonder how that relates to what you are talking about the people that you have worked for and the feeling that you have that they do not care about what they are actually doing in design...how does that relate to that conversation?

SELF I do not consider relevant the way they work or their outcome. It is just that the way they work triggers some of the ideas that I have in relation to being or not being intimate with your own work. It is complicated.
OTHER  Why is it complicated? Does it need to be complicated?

SELF It does not need to be complicated. It is just that I find the topic loaded with so many things related to it... It comes to my mind Wright as an example, and going back to your question, of a person who had an extreme support of his mother giving him self confidence for everything he did –from what you can read of course. And we read and hear from him as a very arrogant and narcissist man who believed in himself. So I wonder why is it that provokes a creative person to be so? And why so many artists, who suffer from depression, for instance, are as creative as some who do not suffer from it. One of the questions that come to my mind is: Is there a way of representing the potential space in a general way?

OTHER But that seems to be the difficulty though. Because you keep coming back to the mental space and since you cannot represent it...but then it is a problem, because it is like trying to illustrate an idea and I think from what you have just said, that there is a potential space already brought into any designer, good and bad. As you also because you said that is how it informs people’s practice later on. So in a way: Why do you want to bring potential space? Why do you want to represent it in architecture? Why not how?

SELF I think it would be amazing if we could make our intimate thoughts conscious in order to understand in a deeper sense design. Basically I am talking about the design process.

OTHER But you say that you want to represent the potential space rather than designing which is a practice rather than an outcome...

SELF I cannot bring it because I think it is already there but the question would be: how to represent it, how to make it visible and be aware of it?

OTHER And by noticing it what would that do?

SELF That would bring you as a designer closer to the understanding of a design processes. I believe we must be aware of the design process in order to evolve...in the same process, that is.

OTHER Of yourself or other designers as well?

SELF I can only talk for myself but I think it would work for some others. I recall the work that we used to do at school and how we talked about the reasons we had for doing something I remember my friends and I used to answer: ‘I do not know, I just like it’... and it is not just because you liked it, there is a reason for it and I think if we could understand more of it the outcome would be so much more solid. Perhaps many other ideas could open up possibilities for developing the concept. Also for engaging with the outside in spacial terms.
OTHER Do you think sometimes you know too much about yourself that it could be not a good thing?

SELF For design?

OTHER Yes, say for design. If everything is too conscious. That maybe everything becomes self conscious and if it is self conscious then maybe you cannot be creative. It is like ninety five percent, isn’t it? I do not know for sure but it is some huge figure and that we are only conscious of five percent of the brain activity. You and I are having a conversation now, but there is all this other stuff that is happening unconsciously...and how we smell each other that is actually shaping whatever...emotions, ways of thinking but not conscious thinking. But the fact of not thinking consciously does not mean that there are not other things happening as well. So my question is about that.

SELF I am not saying that the unconscious would disappear. I do agree with you, but only if we talked about painting or sculpture. For architecture involves a conscious act. A conscious act in terms of many other things for architecture is not an act of purely self expression. You must take into account so many other considerations that are real and do not involve, necessarily, unconscious aspects...

OTHER Sometimes you just can do something and then you can go back to it and understand it in a conscious manner. But I do not think you can, should, do this with architecture because it involves more responsibility. Architecture should not be like an action about being free and let the unconscious work for you, even though at some point you cannot avoid it.

SELF Yes, sometimes it works like that. You do the work and later on you understand some of the reasons why you did it and you begin to make links. Sometimes you do not understand these reasons though you might think you do. And sometimes I think about it and I believe I am conscious about many things. But the truth is that I might never find out if that is true.

OTHER Yes, that is the part of the subconscious. And following up what we were saying before every act is composed of conscious and unconscious aspects.

SELF I consider a lot of paintings to be an act of pure self expression. For instance, surrealism which is primarily based on free association. However, there are examples of architecture out there which are the result of self expression but, unfortunately or not, architecture deals with much more complex aspects than that.

OTHER That is a classic understanding of art as self expression, it is a 20th century description of art or a way of thinking about art and a lot of artists now they really reject that because it is not just about MYSELF on the work of art. I am not saying I consider art is like that, just some paintings like some other work of art.

SELF Does that mean they reject the conscious and the rational in art?
OTHER No, but just the idea that it is about purely self expression and then somebody comes to look at, to sort of understand what the intention of the artist was. That is a great conventional way of thinking about what art is.

SELF But what is art anyway?

OTHER Well, the big question.

SELF It is interesting. Perhaps if we were more consciously aware design and art would be boring.

THIRD 050705 _ duration: 24.16

SELF While transcribing a couple of conversations we have had, it has become evident how free association has come into play. I mention this because the potential space happens, I believe, in an unstructured situation such as a free associative conversation.

OTHER I think that is how these conversations should be like. I think you should be thinking about the potential space in relation with the design practice and what that means.

SELF That is the problem because when I try to think about it as something that you can see or can become visible in the design field I get blocked. The potential space is something mental.

OTHER Instead of mental, maybe process is a better word? It is about thinking about something and not about something which is represented in design, not in the actual space.

SELF But if it is something unconscious...and this relates to a conversation we had about processes. These are not always conscious but they could be unconscious as well and being conscious in design process always helps. However, you are dealing with things you do not even realize, they just happen. But what could really help is that the potential space happens because of external factors that triggers it.

OTHER Which is the same as the transitional object, that is why it becomes important doesn’t it? As a child there is something from the outside that comes in, that you take and enables that process to happen.

SELF Absolutely. What I have been thinking about is going back to the transitional object because that is how the potential space happens in a way, by using something external that gives us that self confidence of not being abandoned. Trust.
And the transitional object could be anything. It is just the meaning that matters and that is when something starts happening, maybe the beginning of experiencing the potential space. So speaking of the transitional object, not as the teddy bear or the famous blanket but as the design process itself. Because in a way, what we interpret of our own design and the meaning we over impose to it that allows this separation that the potential space represents.

OTHER As designers or as people that are engaged with their work? Because sometimes I think there is a bit of confusion, maybe not on your part, of the transitional object in relationship to the design process and people designing. Or if it is for other people who might use it like a playground which is then more for other people, like for people after the design to engage with the transitional.

SELF Designers engaging with their own design or just users? Because when I was thinking about the playground I had the concept of the different meanings that people can give to things and objects.

OTHER It is confusing because you are thinking about the potential space in a whole range of different ways so maybe you just have to focus on one and think whether is about designers and their design process or is it about producing... well it is not about making potential space because it is actually something where you might put in something and then it has the potential where other people to engage with it.

SELF How can the people engage with it?

OTHER You always want to move to the straight answer without even sort of thinking through to begin with what those things might be. So cannot answer that question because you have not done the hard work of thinking about what that might be and it is kind of quite literal then that you are just coming up with the immediate idea of what the potential space might be and how difficult it would be for someone else to experience what you say it is. And yes, sure it is so you have to work out how to develop that and this is the design process. So it does have that effect on people and it might not be what you assume it to be. What is the list of potential spaces that you are thinking about?

SELF There is just one but it can be represented in so many ways.

OTHER And what is it?

SELF It is a mental process that helps you to transit from one stage to another.

OTHER And a stage from what to what?

SELF As an architect it allows you...
FOURTH  120705  XX.XX  Recorder not working

FIFTH  190705  _ duration: 33.06

SELF I questioned myself about setting up my own understanding of the potential space into a very structured meaning, with limitations...when the potential space is about precisely the opposite. Creativity, which is given by the potential space, is about being free without being set within certain limits and constraints.

OTHER Is that how you think about potential space, as being structured?

SELF I do not think the potential space is structured but I have certainly have been structured at the moment of trying to find a meaning to it. And I consider that you have to start from some solid basis but now I think that you should not position it in a limited framework. Since the potential space varies from individual to individual. The only person who can possibly talk about it is oneself. Or maybe not even oneself. So I wonder about the potential space becoming something physical. One example would be how some people can not write when they are sitting down so they have to walk in order to be creative. Thus walking itself provokes creativity...so in that sense it is when ‘it’ becomes physical. But I wonder what the potential space actually is. I think the action of walking might trigger the potential space but this does not mean that ‘it’ becomes something physical. So I would say it is manifested in a physical way. For instance, sometimes you get hyperactive and that is a moment when you have impulses for being creative.

OTHER So by saying that, do you still think is a mental process?

SELF I still think it is a mental process and it is emotionally experienced - and when you are being creative emotions arouse in one way or the other. The meaning of the potential space has been changing for me from the start, as an evolution. And not necessarily changing my mind but settling my own ideas, and also the new ones that come from new readings. The re-thinking of everything over and over. I guess, for me, the potential space is the moment of discovery and in the design process you are discovering, or intending to. You are going through an evolutive process and during this process you are gathering information.

OTHER I think that you are creative when you are living. Sometimes, I think that people talk about creativity as being something really special but everyone’s life is different so there must be a creativity when someone has to make a decision
about something, even the simplest thing: ‘Will I go here or there? Will I eat this or will I mix it whit that?’ So the idea of a higher level of creativity becomes a little bit of a problem, because it is like saying than some people are more creative than other people and I think that rather than being within the person itself it is in the situation. There is a value of things like art in a particular way where some people say: ‘Oh, that person is so creative’...and they surely are, but within the context of art in which they are working. For instance, someone like Van Gogh. They said that he was mad but not creative and then more than one hundred years later he is considered to be creative.

But thinking about the potential space, I would say that instead of the idea of ‘having’ to define it, it is more about thinking what is it about it and the qualities that define it best and which ones are important for you. Which ones would they be?

SELF When I think about it I come up with a structured answer. I do not find anything wrong in structuring the meaning of the potential space because ‘that’ is not the potential space. The potential space is something that you experience. Hence by giving a meaning to it that does not mean you are actually experiencing it. So now that I think about which qualities would describe the potential space one comes to my mind which is that allows you to be independent creatively. Which is that must be experienced within a certain sense of individuality. It symbolizes the moment in which you are making external your ideas. I do not think that we are independent though, we are always attached to something, we are always tied-up to something or someone. But when we are creative that ‘freedom’ might exist. I cannot think of a ‘list’ of qualities.

OTHER You have already mentioned a couple. One is about the outside but maybe it is not about the outside when you are talking about a mental process. But there are things like the potential space being a process or being a place, not one particular place but like you keep on saying that it is kind of ordered. Do you think of it as a place rather than a process? The idea of potential is it about movement from inside to outside? Is the idea of independence important to define quality of the meaning? And independence of what or from who and in the context in what you are looking at? You could have two diagrams with the child and the mother potential space but then also the potential space that you are trying to situate in the design context. So, is creativity a quality of potential space?

SELF I think this research is about me and that process through which one is discovering aspects about oneself. And I think about the research as a process that allows you to grow and mature in a self creative process which is something that develops throughout life.

OTHER You mentioned that before, that you have learned a lot about you.

SELF I think it is a constant analysis and process, not just for the research but for the process of designing. I think that any creative process goes through ‘you’ before you make it external. But to think about the potential space is something intimate and it allows you to get closer to the understanding of that creative process, of that self discovery too.

OTHER And how would you make that information assessable for a masters, because if it is about you how can anybody
assess that and come to an understanding of that?

SELF Well, the meaning of the potential space might keep on changing along the research and there might be a point, perhaps, where it stops and the meaning for me becomes something constant.

Another thing that I think is important is to allow ‘fluency’ in order to let happen the potential space. And when we were talking about boundaries...I think it is a matter of not setting too many boundaries.

OTHER What do you think about those boundaries?

SELF I think there is a thin line between setting boundaries to the concept of potential space itself and to your own experience of potential space. I do not find anything wrong in setting limits for defining the term but I think we should not set any boundaries to the experience of the potential space by justifying what it should be or how it should happen. I think Winnicott defines the potential space as an experience which is set within certain limitations and constraints.

OTHER In terms of psychoanalysis or even just conversations I think that there are limits. And making reference to the writing that you submited describing a spatial experience. There is all this stuff which is outside of you, which affects you and it is really beyond your control and at the same time you cannot ignore it. Therefore you are not free and quite often these things are forceful and maybe sad, they are not always happy. And the same with psychoanalysis: you go through a process of analysis where you are actually dealing with things that often are really at the limit of something too. So maybe limits and boundaries are not quite the right thing because it is not actually about shutting everything off but neither is freedom the same thing because what you are doing is that you are kind of constantly coming up...there are things that are affecting you which you are in a conversation with. So that is potential space to some degree and what people find is transitional objects or transitional things. Maybe, that might sort of help them to move through that but sometimes it is not as easy as saying: ‘This conversations will be our transitional object now’. And it was not conscious but I thought that it would be good to have these conversations not at RMIT and go to other space and the one that I could think of was this, instead of a coffee-shop because that would have been different. So how does this space also contributes? Perhaps it is not the potential space but it might be a transitional thing that allows for a movement: the movement of you and the movement of me. So this conversation is not just about you either because you are having a ‘conversation’ and in a way I am changing and realizing or even moving and all sorts of things at the same time.

SELF Yes, and for instance the spaces that I have been in ‘therapy’ before they are, apparently, set in a certain way with that purpose. The objects around: the paintings - sometimes provocative ones -, the furniture, etc.

OTHER And Freud had a mirror in a frame hanging in between two windows or something like that.

SELF Yes, and it comes to my mind his two dogs as well. So with all these things and what you actually find in them there
I think the space itself for analysis is already a boundary. So it becomes hard to talk about freedom...I do not believe in it.

OTHER Yes, and when you think about being completely free you ask yourself what does that mean really.

SELF If I tried to conceive myself as someone completely free and picture myself being lonely - and feeling lonely -, and getting detached from everything that is material. Maybe why not just walk outside without any clothes on...?

OTHER And also the feelings that you have for people and the relationships with them.

SELF Yes, relationships tie you up.

OTHER Yes, but it would be awful not to have them. I think in a way that sense of being free is to pretend. Sometimes people get that idea of a relationship as a ‘freedom of’, but it is not to be free of everything it is just some kind of other relationship where you are not dominated by certain ideas, people, own feelings and wishes have their momentums themselves. And you can feel that you can do things maybe more than just being completely free.

SELF And even when you are being creative, and perhaps experiencing a potential space, you are thinking about what you are doing with even a small purpose, so were is freedom? You are often tied up to something. And it is the same along the design process for you cannot be free. So I wonder if you could be creative in completely freedom without any purpose. I am not sure if that would be possible. You are always trapped between certain boundaries.

OTHER Maybe boundaries is a difficult term, maybe it would be more like constraints and this issue of the outside having his own little kind of forces that come back at you, so the outside is not something that you can separate and outside of one’s self so actually in our conversations there is something always that come back and act like a force which you then might resist or even embrace. And again like what you wrote before you get the sense of going into this space and all the relationships when you are experiencing that space and, by looking around corners, how that space affects...and not just the physical space but also memories and how that comes back and then affects your feelings. So there are outside forces and things that affect in terms of what you feel, so they are not really boundaries so much but there are still things that they are having an effect in a way where it is coming back at you.

SELF I think if they were actually boundaries they would stay there and once you were out of ‘there’, or them, you would be free in a way and you would get rid of. Then you would have a certain freedom again. So maybe that is the problem, that when you are out of there you are still completely linked to that space, to whatever it represents to you. So I would not know what the difference between constraints and boundaries is. Yet, the issue is certainly about being linked and that is what I see with creativity and the design process: you are linked; you are not completely free, you are attached to a past in a way...to your past and own experiences. This is something within you and which you bring out at the moment of being creative.
[K1] From this formlessness, I infer that this material is a representation of one’s self-intimate traits and/or emotions which we are eager to make external in order to take shape in the physical world.

[K2] ...playing could not only be confined to the actual bodily experience where creativity, as part of making, features physical activity – and perhaps becomes more evident, but also to the actual activity of thinking and developing inner processes of ideas, thoughts and emotions between the self and the outer reality.

[K3] In a sense, this is what psychotherapy – or more precisely, the analyst – is attempting to recreate in the patient by assembling that thinking process into the self in order to encounter a potential space.

[K4]...where the individual re-creates his ‘toys’ or playing tools for artistic creativity.

[K7] We can no longer relive the past, other than in memory, which is itself triggered by an association with some thing which ‘symbolizes’ what is lost. It is here that the transitional object, as elaborated on by Winnicott, becomes meaningful.
[K10] The ‘how’ to master absence or lack from an objective standpoint.

[K11] ...it is more a question of merging with it - the void - while engaging with the outside through the body of work and/or the thinking process. This process allows reparation and, thus, overcomes the sense of loss, by ‘restoring’ oneself.

[K12] This ‘introject’ is the internalization of the symbol of an object. In this case, the successful introjected object would be what the therapist represents to the patient in terms of trust. The patient creates a new internal world of symbols upon which he/she can rely on his/her own feelings.

[K13] Thus the transitional object does not cease to exist, it is just transferred throughout one's lifetime.

[K15] The projective play technique becomes evident, as it is here where repressed feelings, attitudes, personal structure etc. emerge in an unstructured situation – play.

[K17] ...suggests that neither inner nor outer are important for conception. Rather, the emphasis resides in the occurrence within that space of encounter where the experience of setting out meaning in an object becomes subjectively meaningful. This is where creativity occurs: through the recreation of the object set forth by the individual.
‘When I design a building, I frequently find myself sinking into old, half forgotten memories, and then I try to recollect what the remembered architectural situation was really like, what it had meant to me at the time, and I try to think how it could help me now to revive that vibrant atmosphere pervaded by the simple presence of things, in which everything had its own specific place and form. And although I cannot trace any special forms, there is a hint of fullness and of richness that makes me think: this I have seen before. Yet, at the same time, I know that it is all new and different, and that there is no direct reference to a former work of architecture which might divulge the secret of the memory-laden mood.’

Peter Zumthor

This project is based on written experiences and drew on the influence of the preceding project as an approach to writing. The intention being to explore spatial experiences.

A self-introspective method allowed feelings and thoughts to be recalled, but was confined to images. It seems difficult for me to recall memories without an accompanying spatial scenario. Memories allow unconscious chains of fantasies and wishes to be reconstructed and then re-interpreted in order to discover underlying structures, but what seems to be compelling is the fact that recalling these moments brings all our senses into play. This relates to the suggestion that writing, in this project, brings bodily experience into the experience of

memorias
thinking. For writing becomes a means of playing with words in such a way to convey meanings through the re-creation of images, smells, sounds, etcetera and how these can possibly create a world anew. This might be a good example of how the transitional object works.

Memorias attempt to emphasise the importance for an individual to place him/herself in a particular space which becomes familiar, and in which there is enough trust to become fearless or enough confidence to externalize his/her thoughts. Ideally, this is what the method of psychotherapy [K3] should generate. The writing itself becomes a space for thinking and for self-introspection. [K2] This suggests that a space – not necessarily in a physical setting – is fundamental for working and re-creating toys or playing tools. [K4] In other words, it is a ‘holding environment’ 26 which connects back to a sense of continuity and allows for connections between past and present. Adding to this connectivity is a sense of continuous time and the completion of processes that belong to a crucial psychological field in the individual, determined by the awareness and empathy of an external world. 27

The project denotes an introjected mechanism by which aspects of written memories express themselves through symbols. [K7] Therefore, aspects of the external world are incorporated into the self, where the internal representation then takes over and they are represented as feelings, smells, sensations or sounds. 28 [K12]

At this point, what becomes apparent is that the introjected mechanism is that from which we create what we know, what we give significance to, what has become meaningful to us and what has become engraved within us. These subjective priorities create an externalization of inner structures that brings into play a projective mechanism [K15] that simultaneously reveals the transitional object. The object to which we impose meaning, over and over, in our creative process. [K13]

If we were to consider the design process as one in which there is a space for memory, could we not also consider writing as another method of reparation and as part of the design process? A space in which we allow ourselves to be creative, to repair ourselves through creative activity, and to allow something triggered
by a sense of loss and melancholy to happen?

Here, it seems appropriate to quote Barragán: ‘Nostalgia is the poetic awareness of our personal past, and since the artist’s own past is the mainspring of his creative potential, the architect must listen and heed his nostalgic revelations’.29 This suggests that the architect cannot return to his own roots or ‘realize’ them until he has been away from them and sees this loss. It is when melancholy makes its presence felt and calls to mind memories as a manifest of our search. This search is a mode by which we may feel repaired [K11] and may master our absences from an outer (objective) standpoint. [K10] For self recognition might allow externalization, thus reparation. Without this search the design process would not be able to evolve as it is a matter of searching inside and outside the self, based on oneself and on ‘the other’, therefore implicating envelopment and detachment equally. However, the emphasis is on the space of encounter created by both counterparts, as neither inner nor outer work individually for conception. [K17] The process between inner and outer becomes reiterative; it is as if we could make sense of our lack by recalling memories and imposing shapes upon them. [K1]

**Memorias _conclusions**

Bringing so much of the past into present experiences brought the dialectic of a presence-absence paradox when thinking in logical imagery. The awareness of this paradox brought the advantage of self recognition in relation to loss allowing a reparative method through a creative process. This paradox becomes also evident through the ‘space’ of writing. That is, the development of the design process could be defined by the space in which it is being developed. In this case writing provided a holding environment, for the activity itself influenced the psychic activity allowing re-creation of own significances through memory. In this project memory re-iterated the ‘absent’. However, it is through this absence that writing comes along in order to make present what is being lost.

The following are the written spatial experiences upon which I made this analysis.
Often before designing anything my mind starts digging everywhere, completely vague. I try to confine all the ideas and images that I think of as if I could find the answer by bridging them, by putting them all in 'order'.¹ I think about the past, the present and even time that I do not know yet, all apparently nonsensical. But what always seems to make sense in the end, rather than picturing all those images and intending to give meaning to those thoughts, is the feeling that they bring.
When I was a child I remember, and I recall again and again, even in dreams, the long walk along the entrapped L shape stairs; the color of the little marble pieces in the concrete steps always seemed to fade away in the darkness and it seemed to become darker as I went up. From the top, I could see the corner from which the corridor started and the light that came from a window which seemed to be more of an escapade for the space itself rather than something that contained it, embraced it. From there, it resembled the beginning of a long day, a day in which I was neither supposed to talk much nor even ask. Soft music, a symphony; could have been anyone, could not tell really the difference but rather than being melancholic it was sad. First room, the one of the dissected insects, butterflies; the untouchable world map under the glass of the big square heavy wood table right in the middle of the room and the squeaky sound of the dark polished floor boards when my brother and I were walking around it as if there was something to look for, the only room I remember which had light. The smell
of wood wax and the slow motion of anything that happened. Right next to this room, not separated by any door but a hollow brick wall, there it was...cold, dark and full of questions: the room that was no more than a re-adapted space like an invented corner, not the ensconcing corner for some peace of solitude but the corner to hide from the ‘corner’ itself. The smell of loneliness seemed to me more obvious with there being only a minuscule hidden window, beside the old mirrored wardrobe, which did not allow in any light or air. It was as if everyone in that room could not breathe enough, yet not even my father could sense that. It was only me who felt it. The eternal silence I wanted to evade by escaping and walking around the old kitchen: the white rusty metal cabinets that seemed older than they surely were and the lack of any warm sign; the constant curiosity of visiting the forbidden room at the end of the corridor into which I can hardly remember going but, for some reason, I still recall the same smell of wood wax and everything untouched, unrevealed, in complete order, as if time had been standing still.

Every time we were on our way out I used to look from the edge of the door into that room which was right beside the L shaped stairs; where I can still see myself, in dreams, entering hundreds of times. I used to wonder
and I also used to feel scared, tiny and there was nothing I could do but wait. I did not know what exactly for, but just wait. I did not use to make up any reasons to justify my feelings, I just pretended to forget about them as soon as I walked out of there until I found myself in another similar experience...it was some sort of reviving, as if I was repeating myself over and over through something external, something over which I could have no control.

I remember sinking into that mood when the outside was separated from everything else, as if it was a matter of fragmenting oneself, myself. What felt to be a child, how it felt to move, how it felt just to be there.

Perhaps this is not the way it was it is just the way I remember it and senseless seems to me to speak about those spaces by themselves, since merged within them I find the memory and the intimate relationship that grew within me.

1 ‘Now realization, I think, is thought and feeling together. Because feeling itself is completely unable to act, and thought also is unable to act, but thought and feeling combined create a kind of realization. This realization can be said to be a sense of order...’ Louis Kahn 1959.
The long corridor meant time, everything. Outside my room I could hear the sound from the patched door: that weak wooden structure which could barely stand as an entrance but nevertheless, it did not matter to me. It was a meaningless day until that only sound starts to take place within the whole space. The feeling of running along the soft wood floor in the darkness. To get there, right until the start of the corridor...that was all that mattered. Both the sounds of my father’s key-ring and the uneven sound of each step on the wooden seem stuck in my memory.

Some short steps further divide the living and the kitchen where the wall verges on the left side, where those detailed lines across the white tapestry intertwined and where the captured dust and traces of crayons allowed for a place ‘to be’ somewhere between the beginning of that edge and the walls: a game of my own that no one could play. The great contrast of the corridor against the unfolded
space iterated by book shelves, without any sense of order. The gradient of the floor where the wall used to be and the deep hollow sound of my own steps every time I walked across the new room lighted by the small cornered window.

The smell of timber ingrained on each of the piano keys, always covered with a piece of green felt fabric. Sometimes the music seemed to be carried away by that same scent, solacing oneself into a lurking corner.

Directly across the new room, and heading back into the corridor, I still remember the closed door of the room into which I can hardly remember stepping into. Distanced and fragmented. Yet, I do not recall the reason why. Yet, I can see myself entering, not sure about it being real or not. Yet, I was still ending up missing its shape, the light and the misguided feeling that seemed to come back just by recalling. That room already dejected from its inside, isolated as if it was another room in another place—perhaps that is the reason why it seems hard to remember. The room that I still bethink, still, and from where I used to walk back, feeling deceived, to my room at end of the corridor, thinking and holding grasp of my feet on the wood floor as if it was the only thing left to do to justify a sense of loss.

My room kept me awake for nights, it was shadowed by the yellow coloured effect of
the trees on the wallpaper and the path that lead to the wood cabin which I walked towards, and much further, hundreds of times. Lonely, yet alleviating. The white steel handle of the window in my hand before and after spending hours looking outside as if it was a matter of living the ‘outside’ as a better composition of myself. The orange drawers and the wood conglomerate scenting... all toys impregnated with the same comforting smell.

Right across the corridor there it was, the room where I used to stay in the presence of no one. Where I used to spend hours in the floor, laying my head over the window, and confronted with the outside which always lead me to expect, to wait. Its enormity both embraced and exposed everything not allowing anyone nor anything to hide but still questioning the obvious; always trying to talk the inside.

In the end, it seems hard to recall all those moments that are loaded of sturdy feelings that seem to be disguised by others thus losing track of the real ones. The clay colored tiles on the balcony floor and the smoked glass under the gold aluminum hand rail seems to be one of those. The place where everything was supposed to remain: impassive; the one to cling on to. No looming sad faces, just a camera and the lens in which some buildings and a volcano were reflected. Keeping the white stuffed rabbit right beside me as a stolid picture in memory.
The memory of spaces, our own spaces. That memory captured by spatial experience. That conceived memory by the sum of experiences in one space regardless of both the order and matter of events. Memory comes back by means of emotions, not mere thoughts.
The feeling I had entering the squared metal-tube gate, as the grating sound announced time. The vanishing color that seemed to dull every week. It felt sad to know that everything was getting older, as if I knew that it all would come to an end. To walk along the big cracked concrete slabs of the endless garage floor just to reach the white dusty metal door I used to knock on expecting someone special to open. On the right side: the living room enclosed by the opaque windows that made barely possible the view to the garden outside full of dried pine branches and hidden snails. I could feel dust, I still do. The feeling of the old blue velvet fabric and the golden frame that held the big mirror on top of the dusty piano, often, out of tune. That useless mirror: the uncontainable mirror cracked along the black lines... a wasted space in the wall.

Along the hallway, a space in between that used to separate the kitchen from everything else. The smell of the cabinets as if never before opened, the divided kitchen within the space itself that lead to the grey backyard and the old room full of dusty, attractive and ‘memory loaded’ objects: the room where we used to hide; where I used to search for something while climbing those old wood cabinets. Where everything seemed to be hiding from the outside.

The first two edge rounded steps on both sides of the stairway embraced the space
fixed within the white concrete, golden marble pieces and the silver glimpse of that enfolded stairway of the endless memory, the one to grasp, a time where I should have stopped...a fleeting memory which opens a space for reflection. I remember walking up the stairs towards the third floor sliding my hands along the white railing, it resembled a runaway path where the further you climbed the greater the chance of feeling in place, perhaps belonging. Once at the top and passing through that door I used to walk past that space where everything around was meaningless in time. Right in the middle the wooden door, which dried veins gave a dead appearance. Its blurry window made it impossible to see where the light came from. The drawing tables were showered with light from the big window panel across the room; the smell of rubber and the pieces of shaved carbon pencil always seemed unfamiliar and enlivening. The lack of sense of order in everything which stated that space, the comforting smell of dust that almost made me feel in my place. Being neutral in a space that belonged to no one.

Memory is what remains from the past, often mixed with that which we perceive of. What we recall from our own history is not merely what it actually was but the integration of both past and present. What we design does not only reside in the thought of the present and what the present itself represents but, also, the thought and feeling of what we still sense from far behind.
No matter how distorted the question remains the same for me. Perhaps because it is me, in the first place, who formulates it. Death? Who am I to know about it? Some friends ask me the Hows, Whats and Wheres and eager, as if they were about to listen to an explanation about something that I am completely ignorant of, they stare...What do they expect to listen to anyway? Experiencing loss does
not give a sense of its meaning. However, everything becomes impregnated with that loss’s presence. It is the unknown, that which we cannot see nor touch. Yet it prevails, turning every space we inhabit into a pulsory reminder of that absence, as if absence itself was much more meaningful than presence, stronger. Reinforcing itself and perishing the real. Yet, the memory of that physical absence does not come isolated, but often comes along with a spatial presence, with a spatial physicality. Rather than picturing the person as a sole image, we picture his/her physicality among a place where the person interacts, whether it is fantasy or reality...we remember the person acting - walking, talking, etc. - within the spatial scene that comes into play with that physical absence.

To depict the pendent emotions that this absence brings on continously within each space inhabited; to portray the spatial perspective infatuated with hundreds of memories of that absence. The smells, sounds and no longer spoken phrases appear as if written on every single wall and every single surface...shaping the space upon the absent, leaving a physical trace of that which is no longer tangible.

A room, a window and, at last, a patio. I recall it in that same order. My father. A perfect and accurate image of him comes right in front of me, leaving my hands in suspension.
Squared glasses resting half way his nose. Confident steps. His head rests upon a high level from the ground, up in the air...and his shoe soles determine certain softness carrying it through the wooden floor. No rush, yet he knows where he is heading...as usual. Leading me with his deep glance, quiet. He walks into that room. The dark wood book shelf embraces the wall besides the window, that large window which frames the desk where he spends hours, where I can see him opening the right hand drawer from which a strong smell of wood comes out. Those wooden cubes which impregnate everything, the whole room, the whole senses. Every piece of wood I come across with is stained with that scent, with that scene. And everytime he heads back, he holds in his hand, delicately fold, the politics journal that he will finish reading this afternoon. Imposes a passive walk and heads for the door; walking out of the room. The piano looms as he descends the wooden circular stairs in the dark hallway lightened by the yellow coloured glass. Fresh air can be felt as he reaches the bottom. The crisp wind blows from the grey marble floor and, as if breathing from its cracks, it drifts up soothing my his face. On the left hand and four steps below, he walks beside the piano, beside the cutlery, beside Rivera’s lithograph – which always reminds me of a peon carrying sugar cane. Now the space is brighter. He plays some music, Beethoven. Opens the sliding glass doors, announces himself as he walks through. The patio awaits, as always.
Brown tiles which delineate the surface all along the in-built benches and the whole ground. Perfect squares drawn on the floor cuddled with dry leaves from the ivy which climbs onto the wall and up to the sky. It is shiny, all showered by light; by silence...so much live. He sits calmly and reads; expresses himself among this silence, among light. He belongs there. He does not mention all he knows, he barely talks about it, he just stays there and leaves it all floating. Perhaps someone could get a hold of it one day.

The sense of a space in perfect solitude, calmly showered by sun light and hidden among silence is intrinsically connected to my own idea of what a patio must be like.

Now a pure phantom of what the space was is left...and that fantasy is recreated over and over in every experienced spatial encounter, in every sketch I draw and every mental making which intention is to overcome that lack and make it tangible. To overcome myself within that radical absence which can no longer be effaced. Intending to make sense with that which is not more than an idea tangled up with feelings; with a pure written mixture of past images and melancholy which together, sometimes, form the real essence of our own inhabitable and longing spaces.
What holds up the spatial memory is the feeling that comes along with the image. That simple glimpse into imagination which starts it all and makes a mapping to be possible, a conceivable mental sketch. Yet, this inscription happens as a result of an emotional state brought up by recalling a spatial experience.

The growing moss on the rocks by the edge of the pool; the dirty feeling of swimming in a place which could not persuade anything nor anyone around...its unclear cold water which made almost impossible to look underneath. Holding a cigarette, my dad watched from somewhere distant as if setting his own limits within his great confidence and his own time frame. And, as if running away from that outer scene he waited calmly to step inside
the room of that high insect nested ceiling which enclosed equally sized white clothed round tables all seemingly ripped apart by time. The humid scent seemed to be disguised by the greasy food coming from the white tiled kitchen saturating everything and everyone with it. Yet, there was no way of disguising the sense of the dusty and unswept floor when walking barefoot to get some oil soaked food from the buffet whilst sliding the tray along the stainless steel tubes and watching the smile of a Mexican woman behind the bar. Engraved with it, I used to wonder and felt as if I belonged just for seconds. How could everyone seem to omit all those obvious details of every corner? Were they all anaesthetized? I kept on wondering...Couldn’t they feel the grayish color amid the place? I guess I always looked for something to cope with enthralling myself within my father’s laughter which caressed the space, turning the emptiness of it into a boundless image of what a dining place must feel like. His smile reached his eyes and his immaculate pose made that space bearable.

The glass doors and the window frames gave a remote impression of a plain and clean structured in-warding space. Still no one seemed to notice the hazy view from behind the glass sliding windows enclosing everything, entrapping the space by hundreds of dead insects laid on the aluminium tracks and the edges of the worn out white walls...a room resembling a large gallery where the sun scarcely strayed in. Where often lost track of the minutes which passed by. Killing time by walking repeatedly
towards the wooden bar on the opposite side of the kitchen. An old steering ship wheel seemed to match with the color of that same tavern and the ceiling fan. I remember I often tried to find a suitable corner where I could sit and make time tolerable. Yet, the drab feeling of the wooden chairs would not allow this to happen. It was a room in which I killed any feeling of solitude. A feeling which probably grew as I walked back to the rooms along the pieces of the cracked concrete path...as if it had been left half constructed, unfinished and half forgotten.

Not far from the greasy smell, which was left by the caravan cars, two steps above ground level I recall the tedious corridor which lead to the rooms. The in-built concrete beds and its rough sheets, the unwelcoming balcony with dried Bugambilia. The austere color of the room and the ineffable feeling of walking in tiptoes...dripping wet and leaving sandy footprints on the drenched white marble pieces of the brown floor. The anxiety of stepping on any looming insect from untidy corners when heading towards the translucent and weak door of the bathroom. The golden mirror frame, the unbearable absence of a look, the stuffy air by the weird plaster scent which scorned every wish for a long stay. Constantly attempting to drain oneself killing time among the cutting pieces of shelves of the heatless beach connected to the dried sandy path among trees. All ingrained in one feeling. Always awaiting for the last day.
To walk into a room which coloured walls would make feel anyone entrapped. I cannot recall accurately how many layers were laid behind the last one...blue, green, pink, orange...I lose track. The air was caught up in the high steep side of the white ceiling and the cracks around the gray hanging lamp would usually made
me feel apprehensive towards something that was invisible; something behind those fractured lines which I wanted to change and make faultless.

I remember spending hours, taciturn, lying in bed looking up as trying to find a way out by staring at the shapes drawn upon the ceiling plaster. Perhaps my mind's eye could possibly take me somewhere else, out of there. Perhaps that could efface the fear of both staying inside and stepping outside. Though reality was that there was no way out anyway and everything around, every single object, every piece of furniture was interrelated. Everything was too bright, stuffed with color and announcing hundreds of images and abstract sentences. All confusing, disarranging senses, failing to distinguish any untwisted thread of reality. There was not enough space...everything was locked up in between a large silver aluminium window frame and white timber doors. The minuscule stripes of glass panes which hampered any air entrance.

The small golden handles and the wooden mouldings framing each one of the inbuilt wardrobe doors intending vainly to hold the door frame which accessed the echoing bathroom spattered by the dusty acrylic skylight amid. The sound of the shower-bath sliding frame and the tiny blue tiles all laid out overlapping each other. The circular pattern of the grayish floor tiles, which
did not coincide with one and other. The cold gray marble plate on top of a
cantilevered piece of joinery. In truth, few things made sense. A space fringing
any rules of independence. I can still feel, whenever I think of it, the same
anxiety...fixated upon me. At times, just some writing could smooth away the
feeling...silence always helped. The sound of birds and, every now and then, some
squeaking tree branches. The chimney whistle of the sweet potatoes man cart who
was strolling around the streets seemed usually to give calm to the sleepless nights.

I kept the door closed...though at times my father came around intending to have
a look, and maybe talk, in his usual tender way. Unfortunately, then, I did not
want anyone to see inside nor touch anything. Anyone could have disrupted such
chaos, such lucidity in which I was only able to re-create a world anew. Always
making changes: tearing down walls, changing colors, undressing floors and
reconstructing my own mind frame. I do not think anyone ever understood. I guess
my deep desire of wanting someone to, kept me there for a long time. I imagine
that was my own inward journey, my own acceptance of not knowing and, still, feeling
some awkward strength, that was my own way of relying...not on someone, but
somewhere, on a place where I was not disturbed by anything except myself. A place
which textures got engraved in my hands; which exact colors I still picture; which
conjured sounds relive repeatedly a place back in memory.
[K2] ...playing could not only be confined to the actual bodily experience where creativity, as part of making, features physical activity – and perhaps becomes more evident, but also to the actual activity of thinking and developing inner
processes of ideas, thoughts and emotions between the self and the outer reality.

[K4]...where the individual re-creates his ‘toys’ or playing tools for artistic creativity.

[K5] It is in this space, where the child encounters himself in boredom or solitude, that creativity and imagination occur.

[K7] We can no longer relive the past, other than in memory, which is itself triggered by an association with some thing which ‘symbolizes’ what is lost. It is here that the transitional object, as elaborated on by Winnicott, becomes meaningful.

[K9] the urge to restore, repair and recreate the world anew is inseparable from an individual's evolving realistic relationship to the external world,

[K10] The ‘how’ to master absence or lack from an objective standpoint.

[K13]Thus the transitional object does not cease to exist, it is just transferred throughout one's lifetime.

[K14] Playing is itself a therapy.

[K15] The projective play technique becomes evident, as it is here where repressed feelings, attitudes, personal structure etc. emerge in an unstructured situation – play.
This approach relates to ‘memorias’ in the sense that the analysis that came about from my writing seemed to expose motives and ‘objects’³⁰ from a personal history that then led me to propose something tangible. This technique attempted to offer a means by which materiality and the use of familiar object(s) that were recalled through memory could be explored. I proposed to use the same process to convey inner memory, such that the result of memories and emotional traits could be symbolized and/or externalized through an engraved surface made out of clay. Clay was selected as a material with the intention being to explore and reflect upon the possibilities of the relationship between the design process and the notion of potential space by working with a material that was unfamiliar to me. The unpredictable quality of clay was revealing with regard to the relationship between process and potential space: in order to produce compositional impressions, objects such as rubber
bands were pressed into the surface of the clay. However, it was the process itself that informed the core of the research, rather than an analysis of the impressions and geometrical shapes produced by the objects.

It is important to mention how Winnicott’s idea of the transitional object becomes meaningful when the use of rubber bands appear as a representation of objects with an emotional investment [K13], as a symbolization of what is lost [K7] since it is through memory that this symbols became apparent. The imposed meaning of rubber bands was a result of an emotional attachment that became apparent to me while writing, thus I set forward their use as an object not separated from familiarity.

This project was based on bodily experience, or play, where the manipulation of clay and rubber bands – the playing tools or toys – were physically worked with. [K4] Playing can be said to involve the body because it engages with the manipulation of objects [K5] and I reiterate here the idea that playing itself may be considered as therapy. [K14] Therefore, it is in this area in space and time that the potential space could be encountered by the individual.

Anxiety could be described as a state that is distinguished by its ‘often objectless’ [K2] with associated emotions of apprehension, uneasiness, etc. That is, it is a feeling provoked by unconscious motivations. For me, this feeling of anxiety became apparent while working with clay. When manipulating the clay with my hands an uncomfortable bodily sensation materialised and would not allow me to keep working on the project. This externalised an internal conflict I had not anticipated, having initially been positive to discover what this new
material would be like to work with. This makes evident a projective technique [K15] where a series of repressed traits that appeared in an unstructured situation, such as play, become apparent. It could be said that this projective play transcribes an insight into personal repression. Simultaneously, this links back to manipulation and anxiety, as here, anxiety presents as a factor that interrupted the duration of the design process. This awkward relationship could block creativity and create discontinuity for analysis and for making in space and time, consequently impeding the speed of work. Thus it could be said that if playing does not represent a holding environment it can lead to an unbearable degree of anxiety that could destroy play. This connects to the idea of discontinuity which threatens creativity and, therefore threatens the sense of existing as a person.33 It is this sense of discontinuity, as we have seen in previous projects, that can be experienced as annihilation, of no longer having a place in space and time.

It is this objectless – the unknown, the unfamiliar, the lack of awareness from which feelings of dread and disease arise – that is simultaneously related to the process of transformation. But, isn’t transformation a main quality of the design process? Therefore, is it not innate to encounter anxiety throughout the design process? I suggest it is the absence, the void, the lack – perhaps the lack of knowledge – of the ‘object’ that triggers anxiety and produces the feeling itself. However, in this project the ‘objectless’ quality that characterizes anxiety is paradoxical as the anxiety was triggered by working with a certain material, in this case, clay. Could this realization help avoid discontinuity and distortion in time within the design process? This question inherently gestures to the notion of potential space, for potential space enters at the moment in which we are able to pose
self analysis in relation to emotional states encountered along the design process, thus allowing parallel creativity. [K2] This consequently suggests that by identifying the ‘object’ that causes feelings of apprehension one could actually change the course of the physical and/or mental state that the individual might encounter in the design process, thus possibly changing the course of the design itself.

I propose that this realization could open the possibility of mastering ‘absence’ or ‘lack’ from an outer standpoint. [K10] That is, by identifying the previously ‘objectless’ quality means it is no longer a threatening factor and can instead possibly annihilate anxiety, and consequently engage with a sense of continuity. It is this sense of continuity that will allow for the connection between past, present and future, furthering development of the design process. This continuity connects back to earlier discussions about reparation. That is, continuity allows an opportunity for the individual to feel restored by the re-creation of a realistic relationship to the external world. [K9]

A psychosomatic pattern reflects the way that psychic structures become externalized through bodily reactions. That is, the body becomes the place of both enclosure and revelation of internal buried structures. It could be said then, that anxiety becomes apparent as a result of an interaction between both psychic and bodily components.

Zumthor writes: ‘The sense that I try to instil into materials is beyond all rules of composition, and their tangibility, smell, and acoustic qualities are merely elements of the language that we are obliged to use. Sense emerges
when I succeed in bringing out the specific meanings of certain materials in my buildings, meanings that can only be perceived in just this way, in this one building. If we work towards this goal, we must constantly ask ourselves what the use of a particular material could mean in a specific architectural context.\textsuperscript{34}

Though Zumthor’s quote refers to an architectural context I would like to apply his words to the design process, for it is here that we may not only bring out the specific meanings of certain materials, but also realise how these meanings surface. The essence of materials is the result of a mixture of collected feelings, as part of an inner psychic structure, which we impose on materials. Possibly, this sense emerges when self-acceptance is accomplished, instilled by that intermediate area between inner and outer realities. But why is it that we tend to think of the design process as an appeaseable one? Perhaps, we would be able to engage in a more intimate way with the process itself through acceptance. That is, as part of the design process itself we could allow ourselves to be repaired through recognising the anxieties of our buried inner psychic realities.

**mapping memory \textsuperscript{4} the tangible _ conclusions**

This suggests that the design process involves psychosomatic patterns throughout, as the externalization of psychic and inner structures are manifest through the body, and in this case, through materiality. This relates to potential space in the sense that the design process happens at the same time that attitudes from an inner world to an external one are displaced, or transferred. Thus, the potential space can not only be a source of creativity but also one of anxiety.
Notes


2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.


7 Winnicott, Donald *Playing and Reality* pp.1-34.

8 Method used in psychoanalysis as the unconstrained association of ideas, thoughts, words, etc., in order to uncover subconscious structures.

9 Winnicott, Donald *Playing and Reality*, p.154.


11 Winnicott, Donald *Playing and Reality*, p. 152.


19 Winnicott, Donald *Playing and Reality*, p. 69.

20 Winnicott, Donald *Playing and Reality*, p. 150.


23 Winnicott, Donald ‘Living Creatively’ in *Home is where we start from*, p. 53.

24 I set forth this as an example of a possible encounter between designer and client. Where speaking could possibly become much more than a simple conversation in which both counterparts - each individually - encounter in
the ‘other’ a place for displacement. That is, that displacement of feelings and attitudes towards the other in order to engage in a deeper level towards a design.


26 Winnicott, Donald *Playing and Reality*, p. 150.


28 Also, when the parent figures are the representation of external objects, the introjects become the values of the parents in the individual.


30 As I have already suggested, in psychoanalytic theory an ‘object’ stands for a person, a part of a person or a symbol which is representative of either, towards which inner traits and emotions are oriented. However, in ‘the tangible’, the usage of the word ‘object’ refers to the literal use of an object as a thing in which emotions are invested given by the meaning brought by memories. Yet, not a transitional object which is used by the individual as means for detachment.


32 Some psychoanalysts claim that ‘usually’, some others insist on ‘always’. The objectless quality in anxiety differs from fear in the sense that fear assumes a specific feared object, person or event.

33 I would then dare to ask rhetorically: Would it be relevant to bring into consideration these psychosomatic patterns within the design process in relation to materiality and eventually to the architectural outcome?

34 Zumthor, Peter *Thinking Architecture*, p. 10.
Through this research I have sought to investigate and explain the relation between the self and the design process through personal experience, drawing on my understanding of D. W. Winnicott’s potential space theory, which I believe could play a crucial role in revealing the importance of inner thought processes to designers. This proposal seemed essential to understand the significance of the design process as a method by which internal structures could be externalized.

The process of the discussed projects cannot be explained in totality as important aspects of them, which encompass a primordial role through the design process, are part of an unconscious mental structure and are therefore unable to be considered as a thorough method for analysis. However, there are almost always disjointed pieces of information that could be nurtured retrospectively, driving a process to follow a non-linear course. The projects therefore are approached as an interplay where inner processes inform outer expressions and vice versa in a looping and/or random manner. Simultaneously, this relationship is interconnected with an iterative questioning system that informs the process itself.

Winnicott died before he could conclude his potential space theory and perhaps this inconclusiveness reiterates his stated theoretical intent. It seems appropriate then, to quote Anne Clancier’s words which justify this perception: ‘For, according to Winnicott, the paradox must be accepted, tolerated, and not be resolved: by flight to split-off intellectual functioning it is possible to resolve the paradox but the price of this is the loss of the value of the paradox itself. This paradox, once accepted and tolerated has value for every human individual who is not only alive and living in this world but who is also capable of being infinitely enriched by exploitation of the cultural link with the past and with the future.’

This hypothesis is drawn upon in my conclusion to the research. It is exactly this inconclusiveness that typifies each one of the projects - the video, models, conversations, mapping, memorias, and the tangible - and,
paradoxically, states the main research theme. As such, the answer to the research question ‘How the notion of the potential space can possibly contribute to design practice?’ might be approached by my suggestion that, despite each project having a conclusion, the projects are not conclusive. Their significance relies in the unresolved paradox which can be read in parallel to Winnicott’s open-ended notion of potential space. That is, it is not the conclusion of the projects, but the analyses of them that set forth the possibility to unpack other’s contents. Setting forth the potentiality of an interpretation (intellectual and/or emotional) between inner and outer realities by which the subject interplays in order to engage with their own design practice. Offering, at the same time, the possibility of mastery from an outer standpoint in relation to his/her own work that can, paradoxically, allow for a more intimate connection with it.

However, rather than proposing to other practitioners a possible way of working, the proposition of this research is that an understanding of the notion of potential space assists a designer to engage with his/her practice in a way which also influences the final functional designed outcomes and thereby, engages the ‘other’ (user). That is, the development of a self inner sense in relation to one’s practice opens the possibility of recognition and identification in relation to the outside world. It is at this point when an interrelationship occurs as the result of one’s capability of separating both inner and outer worlds. The recognition of others is a consequence of the recognition of the self creating an interconnection between both (other/self). This then enables the designer to be responsive to the necessities and demands of the ‘other’ in relation to the built environment. To further illustrate this idea I find it useful to quote Winnicott: ‘When I look I am seen, so I exist. I can now afford to look and see. I now look creatively and what I apperceive I also perceive.’

Hence, the value of the research lies in the process of developing an introspective and self-reparative method which could be used to position perspectives of the self in relation to an interior awareness. This suggests an intimate recognition with one’s own design processes. Not only through the acknowledgement and discovery
of personal traits as an intellectual act but also as an affective one, with the intention of engaging with an outside - others, clients, users, architectural projects, briefs, other designers, etc. Potentially, this may enhance a confidence to approach our own work as a way of discovering how to engage oneself at every stage. Perhaps, then, this will allow for a clearer discernment in that what we discover may open up the possibility to persuasively ‘space out’ to ‘the other’.

Personally, I have found this research method particularly alluring for its ability to encourage increased identification with my creative practice and how it may legitimize self-recognition in relation to my own thinking about architecture. And in turn how critical this is to the practice of architecture and shifting it, opening up the possibility of practising not solely driven by functional aspects. I find particularly meaningful to realize that this research has not necessarily changed the way I move towards the different methods for exploring my own design process but how a deeper and different level of understanding of it, through the potential space theory, has helped me articulate it externally. Thus it is precisely this ability of externalization I find revealing as a way of engaging not only with my practice, but also my practice with the ‘outside’ and, simultaneously, that outside with my practice.

The following quote by Adrian Snodgrass is compelling, as I find his words precisely describe my own shifting point of view of the design process; this as part of my own apperceptive knowledge: ‘Designing can be re-thought as ‘grasping betweenness’….It is to think of designing not as a process of creating or manipulating forms, but of clearing a space, a gap, for form/emptiness to declare itself, a declaration that is at once a sounding forth and a clarification.’³ Expanding on this idea by reiterating my own: the architect’s/designer’s purpose lies in the primal reason of recovering place: inside and out; to ‘take hold’ of it and to offer it up to oneself and others. A journey between, rather than to or from, inwardness and outwardness becomes a site for that recovery of place which I argue motivates the main reason for our design approach.

Along with these hypotheses I would like to conclude with a final interpretation:
Childlike, we pursue. Not the outer place in which we frivol away neither the one in which revealed we dwell. As the longing to attain spaced out figures keeps us enamored...so we laugh and rejoice, rebounding amidst mindfulness. Forfeited in worldly portraits we repeat ourselves...naming a city; colouring memory. A persistent stage with unchanged boundaries. Cuddled in sounds; all adrift in distorted mirrors. Yet, we cease to continue and vanish in the same place. For to join fragments is to behold the fleeting encounter of the merged inner of an outside.
Notes


bibliography


Milner, Marion *On not Being able to Paint*, London: Heinemann, 1957.


Video Documentation

Clark, Tim and Ryan, Janne *In the mind of the architect*, Video-recording episodes 1-2-3 Australian Broadcasting Corporation.