

Essay



Program: A room for running in a world in flux



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Thank you!

Introduction

For all the attention paid to notions of flux in philosophy and architecture in recent years – of the movement and oscillation between seemingly hermetic states, the perpetual becoming of the world – it is surprising how little effort has been devoted to the architectural element most concerned with the dispersal of bodies between static spaces, namely the corridor.¹ As Rem Koolhaas argued at the 2014 Venice Architectural Biennale, the corridor has been “forced to retreat to the backstage of architecture.” The following text is neither a eulogy nor a hymn, but rather a zig-zagging promenade through the concept of *corridity*. Here, the corridor is not wholly understood as an architectural typology, *viz.* an interior narrow passage connecting rooms and dictating circulation in space. Neither is it understood solely in terms of its abundant metaphorical uses (such as the humanitarian corridor, or the informal space where politics ostensibly *really* happens). Rather, the thesis seeks to explore the corridor as a narrative element, a concept which oscillates between these real and fictional (non-)spaces, even connecting them (as corridors tend to do). The three stories about the corridor that will be recounted in the following text, could themselves be considered and traversed as a corridor of sorts, moving between the truth(s) and fictions that constitute them.

There are many stories about the corridor, that by no means falsify each other as much as they reveal the subtleties by which the truths and meanings of concepts are constructed and negotiated about in the social world. Etymologically, the corridor denotes “to run” (from the latin *curere*), a word initially used to describe a person carrying political messages across vast territorial distances. Later, political communication was progressively veiled by architecture, such as in the elevated Vassari Corridor connecting the Palazzo Vecchio to the Palazzo Pitti in Florence. From 1565 and onwards, the room served as a secret passageway for the Medici family. The political dynasty did not wish to disclose to their surroundings when, why, or by whom its communication channels were roamed. When the corridor-word appeared in plan drawings in the following century as the metonymic “room for the runner,” replacing the runner-person with the architectural element, they were new manifestations of Giorgio Vasari’s political invention.

In the 1600s, the corridor’s capacity for covert communication made it essential in aiding the Counter-Reformation alliances between the Jesuits and Roman administration. Separating circulation from the official courtyard entrance, the corridor spread to monastic construction, particularly in Austria and Germany, such as in the vast Augustinian complex of St. Florian (1686–1751)². Importantly, the functional political passageway concurrently entered the symbolic realm. By implying to outsiders that the corridor’s proprietor needed a political pipeline into their residences, the corridor itself became a potent sign of influence. The optical

¹ Most famously in Bruno Latour and Alben Yaneva's “Give me a Gun and I will make all Buildings Move”, 2008

² Jarzombek, Mark 2010, p. 735-738

illusion of Francesco Borromini's transformation of Palazzo Spada in 1632, plays out the fantasy of a purely symbolic corridor in emblematic fashion: while the visual appearance the arcaded passageway suggests thirty-seven meters long corridor, it is in fact only eight.³

Nowadays corridors are most often “narrow hallways” – spatial entities with walls on either side that distributes traffic to connecting rooms, or “a passageway (as in a hotel or office building) into which compartments or rooms open.”⁴ Yet, this general definition enables the corridor to be proficiently used as analogy, applicable for a wide range of phenomena. In the Norwegian national news media in 2022, the corridor was used as analogy in association with the Russian war in Ukraine, the COVID-19 pandemic, global warming, and the electricity crisis, to name a few examples. These so-called corridors varied in dimension from some interior square meters of a building (“We are standing in the end of a corridor in an office building in Kongsvinger [...]”)⁵ to contiguous spatial sequences crossing geographical borders (“For many years, polar bears have commuted between the ice edge and Svalbard. In the past, there was a corridor of ice between the two destinations all year round, this is no longer the case.”)⁶. There are instances where it is more ambiguous whether the corridor-word refers to a physical place or an abstract phenomenon: “On Wednesday, the Russians tried to storm the facility, although claiming to be opening a humanitarian corridor from it.” Or: “20,000 civilians finally got out through a humanitarian corridor.”⁷ Or even: “Such a corridor will give Russia control over the entire Sea of Azov.”⁸ The corridor-word insinuates both spatial and temporal events, and is even used in poetic subversion, when Willy Pedersen writes of Maria Stepanova's new book that “the hope is to find a corridor leading to new knowledge, and to new, bright rooms.”⁹

Despite the fit-for-all, explanatory potential inherent to the term's vagueness, and its full-circle morphology from *exterior route* to *interior passageway* and back to *exterior route*,¹⁰ there are several reports of architectural corridor-fatigue. According to Rem Koolhaas, the corridor is now “simply an exit-route” from what is regarded the architecture proper, only a “void sustained by a glimmering array of devices, from exit signs to motion sensors to fire sprinklers to illuminated, way-finding carpets.”¹¹ “To be honest, these spaces are merely passages, volumes to pass through on the way to somewhere else. These are the parts of the journey most likely to be done on autopilot, the minutes and hours vanishing into routine habit. Dead time and dead space,” writes Roger Luckhurst of the space separating the territory of his London duplex from the street outside¹².

³ *ibid*, p. 738

⁴ ‘corridor’, Merriam-Webster dictionary

⁵ VG, 6.3.22

⁶ DN 7.5.22

⁷ Klassekampen 18.3.22

⁸ Dagbladet 23.3.22

⁹ Morgenbladet 4.11.22

¹⁰ Koolhaas, Rem 2014, p. 903-904

¹¹ *ibid*, p. 904

¹² Luckhurst, Roger 2019, p. 13-14

However, fatigued circumstances in combination with ambiguity can provide first-rate growth conditions for curiosity. Thus, *A room for running in a world in flux* investigates whether the architectural potential of the corridor is not entirely exhausted.

Theory/ method

This thesis considers the vague boundaries of the corridor concept to provide great theoretical strength once a commitment towards identifying the limits of a concept is abandoned. Ambiguity is a result of the unceasing construction of the world – the becoming of meaning(s) through certain *propositions*. Propositions are various claims of truth and validity that temporarily fixate the meaning of the concept. The corridic concept can be traced through the fictional underground passages in Ursula K. Le Guinn’s *Tombs of Atuan* (1970), in critical narratives of the corridor’s relation to class and exploitation, or the more recent descriptions of corridors as dull, dark spaces of nothingness. Although propositions suggest a “certain cohesion” of a concept’s meaning, they themselves inevitably provide it with new layers of “irregular contours,” as explained by Elisabeth Grosz.¹³ Thus, Walter Benjamin’s assertion that “any person, any object, any relationship can mean absolutely anything else” does not necessarily entail that meaning is arbitrary or false, but that it emerges in and through communication and difference.¹⁴

Grosz builds on the philosophical framework of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Through *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972, 1980), the authors explore reality as comprised of non-constants – how the world and the “expression of world” is a relationship of certain fluctuations, movements and re-orderings.¹⁵ Symbiotic relationships, where the boundaries between seemingly isolated identities are blurred, are found everywhere, such as between book and reader, trees and fungi or, more famously, between the wasp and the orchid. In the latter, the flower imitates female wasps to attract male wasps for pollination. Deleuze and Guattari stress how this moment of symbiosis is not simply an instance of one subject mimicking another, but an active de-territorialization, relating and transforming the two apparently independent entities into one another.¹⁶ Interdependencies like these display the constant engagements of “becoming,” prompting to look into relationships and how they are expressed in communication, without searching for specific points of origin or final causes.

In a similar vein, Bruno Latour alongside Albena Yaneva speculate whether we cannot see the dynamism of buildings for all the static architectural renderings in their joint essay “Give Me

¹³ Grosz, Elisabeth 2002, p.77-86

¹⁴ Benjamin, Walter 1977 [1927], p. 175

¹⁵ Deleuze, Gilles; Guattari, Felix 1987, p. 5-11

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 10

a Gun and I Will Make All Buildings Move.” Invoking Étienne-Jules Marey’s prototypical video camera, the chronophotographic gun, the authors argue the necessity of a theoretical tool (expressed in architectural media) which might register how buildings are never self-contained, immobile monoliths, but moving projects. For the authors, capturing this movement in architectural media would free us from the “static view of the building.”¹⁷ “But why?” asked object oriented-ontology foreperson Graham Harman in his response “Buildings are not processes” arguing that a processual view of buildings is problematic and paradoxical. The object-turn in philosophy (and its percolation into adjacent fields such as literature and architecture) is marked by a rejection of process-based approaches, claiming that “philosophies of becoming seem more interested in flows, intensities, and the processes operating beneath or beyond things than in the things themselves.”¹⁸ The concern is that processual rhetoric in architecture actively constructs an irresolvable state of flux rather than revealing an existing reality. Harman claims that process-oriented architecture “favour[s] continuous gradients, blurred boundaries between building and environment, cornerless masses and a confessed inability to place doors and windows in anything but arbitrary fashion.”¹⁹ A turn towards thinking of delineable, definable entities, and away from “a strange subphenomenal world that we can’t see or know, but only try to imagine” is accordingly underway.²⁰ And so, Harman defines the primary task of object-oriented architecture to be an articulation of “thresholds and cutoff points.”²¹

Separating spatial territories according to legal ownership is already encircling the building-as an entity, with real and formal consequences. A building is often produced as a (project) entity, sold as an entity and officially governed by street naming and house numbering systems. The notion of ownership regarding territory is substantiated in the example of over-representation in court cases concerning trees refusing to grow in the direction allowed for them. Layers of social, financial and legal (dis)agreements govern what is a house, what is the edge of the house, what is no longer a house, thus fixing the spatial center and periphery. The box, the container of lives, the systematic assembly of materials and intentions in our built environment, accordingly rests calmly before us – and offers temporary shelter from the gust of wind that is becoming. Both Harman and Latour acknowledge the processual dimension that constitute the movements of the building, such as changes in ownership or physical alterations (the painting of a wall, the raising of a ceiling, etc.). Yet they both assume a top-down perspective from which it is easy to overlook that spatial boundaries are no longer boundaries when the frame of reference is mobile. What is inevitably true about human lives is that they are carried out in motion, wandering in and out of environments, repositioning constant new interactions with environment.

Architecture is forever tied to processes which affect without immediately revealing themselves, and which might be more visible in the traces they leave behind than in their

¹⁷ Latour, Bruno; Yaneva, Alben 2008, p. 103-111

¹⁸ Gannon, Todd 2015, p. 73

¹⁹ Harman, Graham 2020, p.183

²⁰ Wiscombe, Tom [Gannon et. Al.] 2014, p. 76, Lorens Holm p. 76

²¹ Harman, Graham 2020, p.183

present presence. Their traces can attain relative stasis in propositions that are made in stories, or the traces of past movement in the footprints on the floor of a corridor. Accepting that life inside and outside buildings are innately flowing in flux, the question becomes to what extent architectural objects are part of processes, insofar as they themselves become processes. As a spatial configuration dividing and connecting, the corridor serves as a reminder that architecture becomes in the flux of circulation. As an architectural element, the corridor innately raises the question of the limits of territory, and deconstructs the building as an entirely delineable box (ref. Vasari's corridor connecting two previously separate places of political power). To genuinely examine circulation is an acknowledgement of how center and periphery of world is relative to location, and the content of demands, desires and fluctuating circumstances of lives that urges the body to move towards, or away from, or in-between.

This thesis postulates that architecture becomes more readable as processes in the stories that it co-produces. The text is structured into three separate, but interconnecting *corridor-stories*. Here, the concept of *story* refers to a purposeful narrative frame of meaning. The corridor-concept becomes in the systematization of historical accounts, architectural plans and the abundance of fiction and non-fiction in which it is propositioned. This form of analysis does not suggest a mechanical 1:1 relationship between a story and a physical building. While stories and their propositions about space do not faithfully represent “true” events, they still have an affective purchase on reality, since stories exchange affect as “intensities that pass body to body (human, nonhuman, part-body, and otherwise).”²²

The first story, *Corridic grandeur and modern progress*, revolves around the notion of the corridor as a device for modern progress. The second, *Corridic alienation and modern discontent* is unsurprisingly more skeptical, dealing with the corridor as a manifestation of class division and disaffection. The third and final story, *Corridic non-space*, discusses the corridor as neutral, insignificant-bordering-invisible – what will be called, paraphrasing Marc Augé, *non-space*. In the final work-based part of the thesis the parallel truths these stories contain are treated as generative, not of specific architectural instructions, but of an architectural way of thinking, judging and valuing.

²² Gregg, Melissa; Seigworth, Gregory, 2010, p. 1

Story 1: Corridic grandeur and modern progress

In her personal notes and sketches for the totemic *To the Lighthouse* (1927), Virginia Woolf drew a nimble outline which she labelled “corridor.” The diagram is a note-to-self, illustrating the link, and the time passed, between the first and third part of the novel about the Ramsay-family and their endeavors on the Scottish island. The corridor appears several times in the novel as well, as break, bridge and render of time in-between important narrative events:²³ “Mrs. Ramsay has faded and gone, she thought. We can override her wishes, improve away her limited, old-fashioned ideas. She recedes further and further from us. Mockingly she seemed to see her there at the end of the corridor of years saying, of all incongruous things, ‘Marry, marry!’ (sitting very upright early in the morning with the birds beginning to cheep in the garden outside).”²⁴

The corridor has often been used in storytelling in order to mark a spatiotemporal threshold where an encounter, crisis or rupture in a given life occurs. In Dostoevsky’s literature, the corridor is dually symbolic and implicit, connecting the interior life to the outside open-air spaces with “the falls, resurrections, renewals, epiphanies, decisions that determine the whole life of a man.”²⁵ When literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin notes how corridors are among the spatiotemporal images that causes “blood to flow in the veins” of stories, it hints at how communication works – how one person can open her mouth in certain ways around other’s ears and thereby transmit imagery from one consciousness to another, or having imagery evoked by facing letters on a page.²⁶ However, transmission of spatial notions is not solely constructed internally within a work, but alongside context. This means that the corridor-word must always be understood in light of its connection to the corridor as a “real” event or place as it occurs in the world outside of the book. Thus, the features of the internal image evoked by reading the word “corridor” is induced by what is already familiar content to the reader.

The familiar content implied in the corridor-word had not always been an orderly arrangement of circulation in residential interiors, as it was increasingly understood as during the 1900s. Between the 1600s and 1700s, the corridor showed up in the plans of a number of aristocratic castles, rather than commonplace homes. One finds the corridor in the baroque Blenheim Palace (1705-1722), instating a symbolically symmetrical connection between the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough.²⁷ It showed up in the new plan of Luton Hoo (1767-1774) by Robert Adam some years later, as an internal walkway, connecting two interior spheres. The most common manifestation of the corridor connected an outside with the center of the body of the building. Here, the corridor organizes a restricted, interior space – shielding private life from the turbulent outside world by confining the movement to an insulated walkway.²⁸ Corridic passageways between exterior and interior also grew in intricacy since

²³ Marshall, Kate 2013, p. 1

²⁴ Woolf, Virginia 1927, p. 309

²⁵ Bakhtin, Mikhail [1934.1941] 1981, p. 250

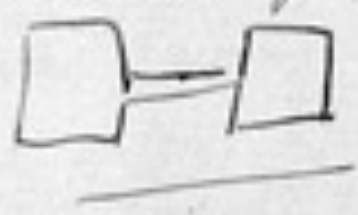
²⁶ Mandelker, Amy 1994, p. 7

²⁷ Koolhaas, Rem 2014

²⁸ Jarzombek, Mark 2010, p. 746

To the Lighthouse.

All character - not a view of the world.
Two blocks joined by a corridor.



Notes that may come in:
How her beauty is to be conveyed by the
impression that she makes on all these
people. One after another feeling it
knowing partly what she does to them,
to change her words.
Episode of taking Tansley to call on the poor.
How they see her.

Virginia Woolf's notes for *To the Lighthouse* (1927) ²⁹

²⁹ Goldman, June 2012

the epitomal Vasari Corridor in Florence. The corridic network of Welbeck Abbey established in the 1800s is an extreme example, echoing a sort of paranoiac wanderlust of its eccentric owner, the fifth Duke of Portland. The over 10-kilometer-long corridor system winds under the roots of the Sherwood forest and entirely encapsulated the life of the Duke who allegedly never left the premises.³⁰

The vital kinship between corridic architecture and the aristocracy produced a cultural offshoot in the literary Romantic's subgenre of the Gothic and the horror genre, beginning with Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764).³¹ Walpole's novel is set in a disintegrating aristocratic building. Although the corridor-word is not explicitly used by Walpole himself, the story immediately anchors mystery in architectural passageways:

“As these thoughts passed rapidly through her mind, she recollected a subterraneous passage which led from the vaults of the castle to the church of St. Nicholas. Could she reach the altar before she was overtaken, she knew even Manfred's violence would not dare to profane the sacredness of the place; and she determined, if no other means of deliverance offered, to shut herself up forever among the holy virgins whose convent was contiguous to the cathedral. In this resolution, she seized a lamp that burned at the foot of the staircase, and hurried towards the secret passage.”³²

By the Victorian era (1837-1901), many Gothic novels featured haunted manors, and haunted corridors emerged in the serial ghost stories published in newspapers. This tendency is as evident in Norwegian media, like the story of “Spøkeriet paa Sønderborg slot” from 1909. Here, a sergeant opens the door, and “walks into the scary corridor in his socks.”³³ Horror fiction played with the dual desolation of the remote locations of aristocratic residencies, and the disorienting intricacy of corridic interiors. At the heart of Bram Stoker's seminal novel *Dracula* (1897) one finds the uncanny corridor, always animated by the uncertainty of whether it is prowled by the vampire antagonist: “—I must have fallen asleep, for I was awakened by Mina, who was sitting up in bed, with a startled look on her face. I could see easily, for we did not leave the room in darkness. She had placed a warning hand over my mouth, and now she whispered in my ear, “Hush! There is someone in the corridor!”³⁴

Corridors fell out of fashion,³⁵ not much aided by the horror portrayals, during the 1700 and 1800s in France. Although corridors enabled the organization of early public institutions, they were frowned upon in residential buildings. Corridic organization had its counterpart in Palladian courtyard systems, preferred in French architecture well into the 1900s. A so-called Palladian turn was evident in British architecture as well, where even civic buildings were built without corridic passageways. Instead, lawyers and clients were expected to meet in

³⁰ Trüby, Stephan [Koolhaas] 2014, p. 961

³¹ Riely, Jon 1978, p. 1-17; Hamm Jr., Robert 2009, p. 667-692

³² Walpole, Horace 2009 [1764], p. 27

³³ Dagbladet 27.05.1909

³⁴ Stoker 2005[1897], p. 352

³⁵ Jarzombek, Mark 2010, p. 749-768

nearby coffeehouses before court hearings.³⁶ The construction of corridors eventually became aligned with the construction of modernity, when the corridor became “[related] first to speed, then to power, then to the regimentation of masculinity, then to emerging Victorian social structures, and finally, in the twentieth century, to hygiene, industrialization, and the corporatization of life.”³⁷ Corridors indexed the spaces of society as a cardiac system of sorts, enabling the modern organism of inter-dependable parts to operate as a single organism. Sociologists adhering to the functionalist tradition have emphasized how the “body of society” required increasingly specialized organs.³⁸ This phenomenon of functional differentiation entails that environments appearing as natural within a division of society, are in fact specialized “reality bubbles.”³⁹ Le Corbusier notably planned with the analogy of the body politic in mind, where the individual, private cell would serve as the basic building block for the super-organisms of cities. All other facilities were to be collectivized, as shown in the urban planning scheme of the Indian city Chandigarh. There are clearly defined divisions that correspond to the anatomy of the human body. The capitol complex is the head, the city center is the heart, the leisure valley and its green spaces are lungs, the cultural and educational institutions represent intellect, and the transport network is the circulatory system.⁴⁰ Similarly, Stephan Trüby refers to the “Room of One’s Own” programs of modernity as a *spherology* of countless isolated habitats.⁴¹

Following its absence during the Palladian-turn, the corridor regained architectural legitimacy in aiding spherological differentiation, and the post-Napoleon ideals of the nation-state. This was partly due to the technological invention of the military barrack, in combination with a political desire for military autonomy. Here, the corridor served a rational purpose. It was quick and low-cost to construct, and enabled unification of large troops within the same building body. Thus, when schools and hospitals were organized by central corridors in Germany during the late 1800s, the phrase *Barrackenstil* was coined as a nod to its military origins. Here, a wider ideological applicability became evident, namely to construct and constrict an unruly “inner world.” The corridor’s capacity to instate a spatial regime made them instruments for social stratification, as early examples of modern governmental organization might further demonstrate. The Royal Courts of Justice for instance, designed by George Edmund Street in 1870, features distinct corridors; one private, one for judges, one for attorneys, alongside a public corridor. The corridic machine involved distinct entrances, staircases and monitors.⁴²

The effects of corridity on modern progress becomes most clear in the development of early modern universities and early welfare institutions during the 1800-1900s, along with the building bodies of office culture in public and private sector whom “served a purpose to define the aspirations of civic society under the presumptive enlightenment of its elites, but

³⁶ *ibid*

³⁷ *ibid*

³⁸ Parsons, Talcott 1970; Luhmann, Niklas 2007

³⁹ Müller, Harro 1994, p. 45

⁴⁰ Evans, Robin 1978, p. 55-90

⁴¹ Trüby, Stephan [Koolhaas] 2014, p. 939

⁴² *ibid*

also an epistemological revolution that was taking place revolving around office work and governmental organization.”⁴³ Notable manifestations are the U-shaped plan of the Physikalische Institute in Berlin (1880), with its network of lobbies working as social mixers (albeit only for those of relatively high economic or social status), or the “infinite corridor” of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The corridor, which forms the proverbial backbone of MIT (sticking to the analogy of building as body), was finished in 1913 after the design of William Welles Bosworth, and demonstrates the dual symbolic and functional value of the corridor.⁴⁴ Twice a year, in mid-November and late January, the 251-meter long corridor aligns itself lengthwise with the sun, causing sunlight to pierce through the entire space. The event celebrated in the ritual of “MIThenge.” Here, students and staff solemnly gather in the circulation area to observe the phenomenon without interference from artificial lighting.⁴⁵



MIThenge, photo by Joseph Kaye, 1999

⁴³ *ibid*

⁴⁴ Koolhaas, Rem 2014, p. 917

⁴⁵ Olum, Ken; Foner, Lenny 2023

Several philosophical accounts of modernity emphasize how the modern individual transfers increasingly between realms of private and public, and how the various urban quasi-public passageways have become opposed to notions of private dwelling.⁴⁶ The movement through the quasi-public spaces of the modern world is described in the concept of *flânerie* and its performing figure, the *flâneur*:

“The crowd is his element, as the air is that of birds and water of fishes. His passion and his profession are to become one flesh with the crowd. For the perfect flâneur, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite. To be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world.”⁴⁷

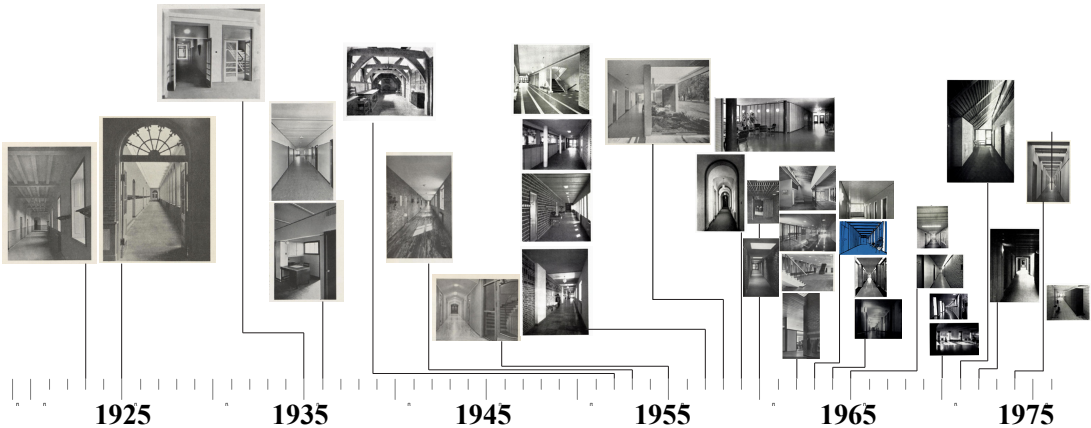
The flâneur is praised by Baudelaire, and later used by Walter Benjamin’s in his critique of urban modernity. Benjamin’s flâneur is the human embodiment of the spherological, functionally differentiated society. He describes the moving lives in and out of the arcades in 19th and 20th century Paris as a “liquid interiority” where the flâneur seeks refuge in the crowd.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Heidegger, Martin 1927; Habermas, Jurgen 1962; Goffman, Erving 1961; Arendt, Hannah 1958; Sennet, Richard 1976; Benjamin, Walter 2002 [1928-1940, unfinished]

⁴⁷ Baudelaire, Charles 1863, p. 9

⁴⁸ Benjamin, Walter 1999 [1927-1940, *unfinished*], p. 19-21

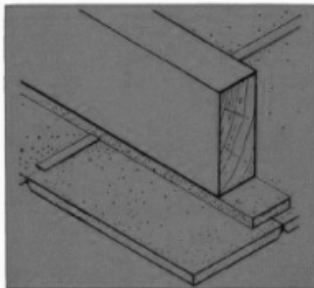
As architectural publications are historical documents, the various features of the corridor may indicate how passageways are central to the scenography of the flânerie of modern life.



Photographs of corridors appear regularly in the Norwegian architectural publication of *Byggekunst* (Arkitektur N, Arkitektur). Most mentioned are programmatic descriptions, like in the ground floor plan of Erling Viksjø's *Elkemhuset* (1966), or in the several accounts of the large development of the welfare state in the post-war period, with corridic institutions such as schools, public administration buildings and hospitals. Corridors also frequent several of the publication's advertisements. A curious case of a corridic *Zeitgeist* can be found in an advertisement in the 1963 issue, alongside the rhetorical question, "Just a regular corridor?" For the blue drawing shows no regular corridor, but rather a fire-resistant and asbestos-cladded passageway called ASBESTOLUX (in Ole Øvergaard's corridor of Akershus county hospital).



En vanlig korridor?



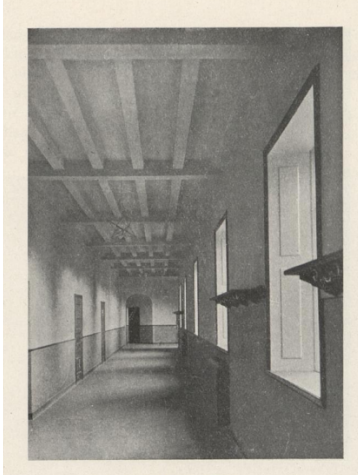
Forsåvidt er det ingen hvilken som helst korridor. Interiøret er fra Sykepleieskolen ved det nye Akershus Fylkessykehus. Det er imidlertid blitt vanlig at himling og vegger er kledd med ASBESTOLUX brannherdige plater, som anvendes i stadig større grad, på grunn av sine fremragende brann- og byggetekniske egenskaper.

Bygningsloven stiller idag særlig strenge krav til brannbeskyttelse i skoler, sykehus, gamle hjem og alle former for internatbygg. Med ASBESTOLUX er byggherren sikret å tilfredsstillere lovens krav.

ASBESTOLUX brannherdig bygningsplate i særklasse

ASBESTOLUX MARKEDSFØRES AV NORSK ETERNIT FABRIKK, OSLO

What follows is a selection of one corridor from each decade of Byggekunst,⁴⁹ inviting a chronological stroll through these semi-public spaces.



Tønsberg Sjømandsskole, Bjercke; Eliassen, 1923



Kristiansand sykehus, Øvergaard, 1936



“Reflections on hospital construction”, Lamberz-Nilssen, 1958

⁴⁹ The 1940s are consciously skipped, both because very few corridors feature the publication during this decade, and in consideration with the extraordinary circumstances affecting the editorial office during WW2.



Vik linjedelte ungdomsskole i Hole, Lund; Slaatto, 1962



Politihuset i Oslo, Aasen, 1979



Haugaland Videregående Skole, Torsvik; Thesen, 1985



Arktiske paviljonger, Blå Strek Arkitekter, 1992



Enebolig Faugli Meyer, Hjeltnes, 2002



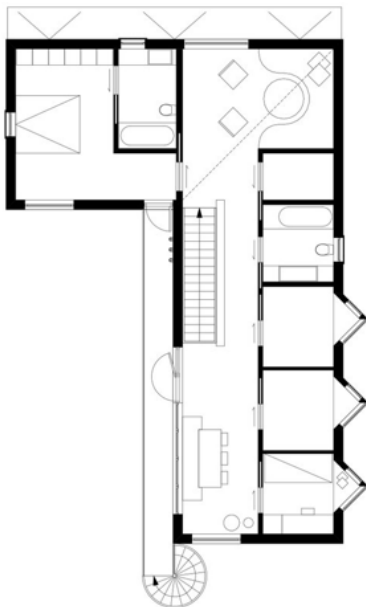
«En felles gate», Madsø; Sveen, 2010



«Fra Tuberkolose til Revmakirurgi», Eggen, 2022

Story 2: Corridic alienation and modern discontent

In the context of the OMA-curated 2014 Venice Biennale *Fundamentals*, Rem Koolhaas claimed that the corridor has been forced to retreat to the backstage of architecture. The circulation space that was vastly inhabited in the 1700-1800s, now acts as a mere exit route from architecture. More than being considered integral to the building, the corridor is a “void sustained by a glimmering array of devices, from exit signs to motion sensors to fire sprinklers to illuminated, way-finding carpets. The number and complexity of devices sustaining corridors increases as buildings grow bigger and higher.”⁵⁰ Stephan Trüby speculates on whether the corridor has become a form of “un-architecture,” typically regarded as dark, sinister and endless – “seemingly damned to forge pathways through enclaves of misery.”⁵¹ This apprehension is echoed in Norwegian architectural discourse as well. “Given the premise, where an entire family home is dictated by this corridor-like form, the result is surprisingly good,”⁵² Gaute Brochmann writes about Sanden+Hodnekvam’s finished project, HOUSE IN RED CONCRETE (2017-2020) with the clear presupposition that the corridor is inherently unfit for dwelling – only *despite* this intrinsic deficiency have Sanden+Hodnekvam been able to construct a “surprisingly good” family home. A similar assumption is evident in Brochmann's critique of a villa by Atle Leira two weeks later: “And by working with it almost as a self-imposed constraint, a narrow corridor is almost magically transformed into a good place to be in, not just to pass through.”⁵³



The second-floor plan of Atle Leira's villa in Lørenskog, 2021

⁵⁰ Koolhaas, Rem 2014, p. 903

⁵¹ Trüby, Stephan [Koolhaas] 2014, p. 939

⁵² Brochmann, Gaute, Morgenbladet 1.7.2022

⁵³ Brochmann, Gaute, Morgenbladet 15.7.2022

Here, the proposition of a place where it is “good to be” is diametrically opposed to the proposition of the space one “passes through.” This growing corridor-aversion among architects might be explained as what Sarah Ahmed has called negative affect becoming *sticky*,⁵⁴ which in turn is developed (or assumed) as an internal characteristic of whatever it sticks to – like the corridor. The social bond in discourses determines how positive or negative attributes are established as seemingly natural properties of an entity. Thus, “groups cohere around a shared orientation toward some things as being good, treating some things and not others as the cause of delight.”⁵⁵ As such, architectural voices (historians, critics, architects, residents, etc.) can be considered *storytellers* who narrate the events of building a house, using a house, what a house means, and so forth, ascribing them positive or negative values.⁵⁶

Corridor-critical historian Robin Evans argues (or narrates that) the corridor emerged as a solution for “the problem of the servants,” *viz.* their disturbing presence as an unavoidable side-effect of their acts of service. For Evans, the innovation of independent access and increasingly elaborate circulation systems within a house, indicates a cultural “change of mood.” This change is a consequence of a desire to control one’s exposure to company, particularly how the wealthy no longer wanted their minds “corrupted by lower classes,” according to Evans.⁵⁷ In this view, the corridor reflects how residents were considered a potential source of mutual irritation. Thus, the upper classes during the 1600s began to organize their homes in two separate systems of circulation: The official enfilade for residents, and the functional corridor for servants, causing a “split between an architecture to look through and an architecture to hide in.” The corridor “cut an unbridgeable gap dividing commodity from delight, utility from beauty and function from form.”⁵⁸ He further claims that this new rational or functional planning paradigm was a “sudden and purposeful [...] armoring of the self against a naughty world” by Christian puritans, rather than a predictable or natural evolutionary development of vernacular forms. For Evans, the emergence of the corridor was an indication that the notion of room indicated a kind of private hideaway or a closet of sorts: “With this came a recognizably modern definition of privacy, not as the answer to a perennial problem of ‘convenience’, but quite possibly as a way of fostering a nascent psychology in which the self was, for the first time, felt to be not just at risk in the presence of others, but actually disfigured by them.”⁵⁹

The corridor is intricately linked to the notion of privacy, both establishing the private, and determining when, where or how the private threshold is broken. In Michel Foucault’s perspective the corridor is not ascribed an inherent intention (in the sense that Evans assumes the corridor’s negativity), but is instead governed by a discursive “regime of truth,” or guided

⁵⁴ Ahmed, Sarah [Gregg; Seigworth] 2010, p. 35

⁵⁵ *ibid*

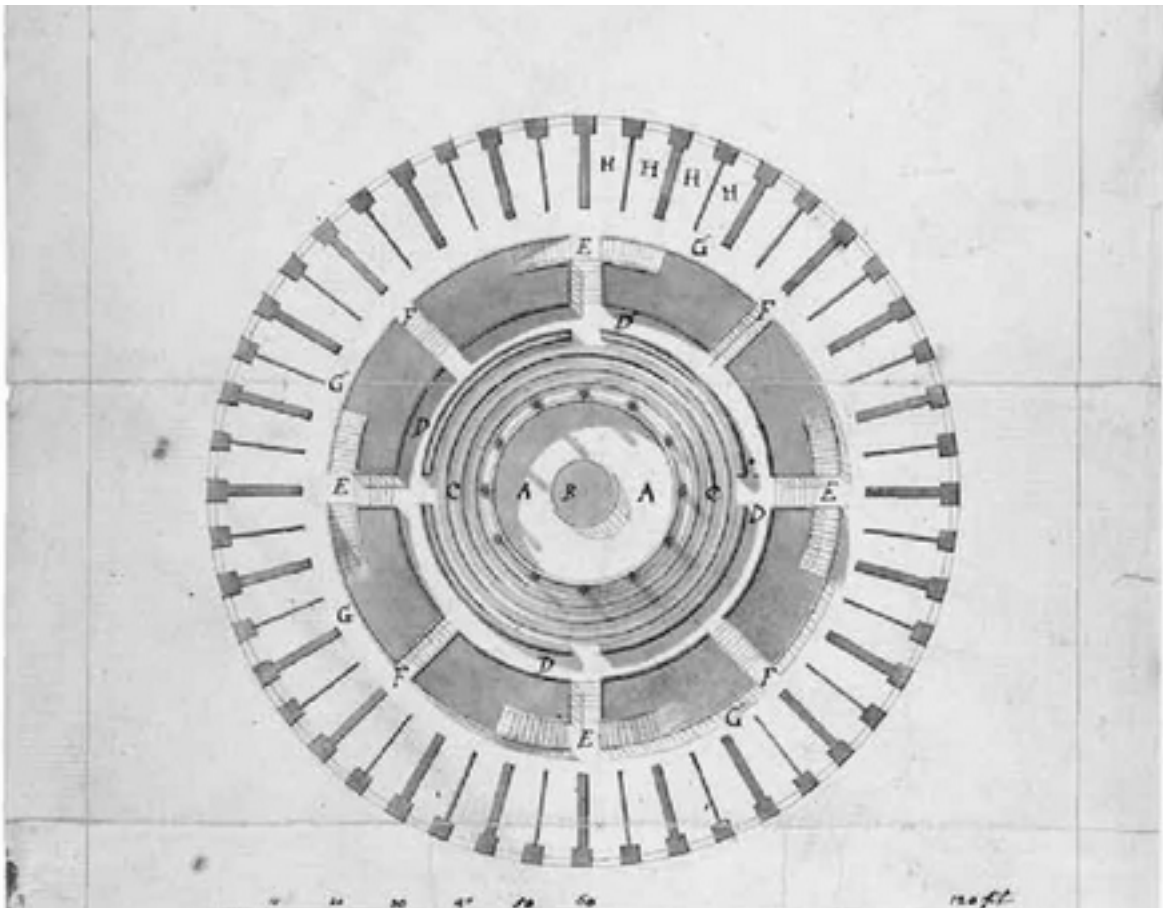
⁵⁶ Grosz, Elizabeth 2003, p. 77

⁵⁷ Evans, Robin 1978, p. 73

⁵⁸ *ibid*, p.74

⁵⁹ *ibid*, p. 75

by a form of “governmentality.” Instead of determining the functional differentiation of spheres as an expression of progress or regress, Foucault is concerned with the hidden system of rules that underlie and enable official and authorized statements of knowledge.⁶⁰ His psycho-sociological approach sought precisely to defamiliarize enlightenment ideas and functionalist narratives of linear progress. Once notions of linear progress are abandoned, and one realizes how practices are translated into meaning, it opens up for the notion of “displacement.” This means that any disciplinary effects of pre-modern public infliction of pain is displaced into new modes of discipline, such as surveillance, correction and training in an enclosed, private space. The panoptic prison system of Jeremy Bentham (1791) was a manifestation of the modern reliance on a “permanent possibility of visibility” as a general principle of exercising power over the body, and in the coordination of groups of bodies.⁶¹ In Bentham’s panopticon, it is the corridor that enables an intrusion of the privacy of the cell. The corridor monitors the cells through peepholes in the cell doors, popular in both prisons, asylums and early psychiatric hospitals, but could also be part of a panoptic corridic system where all the corridors meet in a central junction, an *origo*.



Sketch for Bentham's cell-corridor panopticon, by Willey Reveley 1771

⁶⁰ Peltonen, Matti 2004, p. 36-39

⁶¹ *ibid*

For Foucault, the modern individual has internalized the potential gaze of the other to the extent that one becomes one's own prison guard.⁶² The fear of the potential scrutinizing gaze of the other, made the corridor efficient in separating territory in all scales of modern architecture. The need for privacy in Foucault's view is not only a need to shield oneself from judgement, but also the pro-active protection of one's own truth(s): to exercise choice in whom to interact with in society. The phenomenon in reverse could be observed in the extensive institutionalization of the mentally ill during the 1800s, similarly sustained by intricate cell-corridor complexes. Foucault argued in his seminal work *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (1961) that all societies engage in definition processes of exclusion in order to ensure social symmetry, and placed the psychiatric institution in the center of this process of societal exclusion.⁶³ The corridor played an integral part in the development of psychiatric hospitals during the 1800s, demonstrated in the influential planning principles of physician Thomas Kirkbride: "With insanity [...] the universal experience is that a large majority of all such cases can be treated most successfully among strangers, and [...] only in institutions specially provided for the management of this class of diseases."⁶⁴ Stressing the importance of "institutions specially provided for the management" of insanity, Kirkbride imagined the corridor as an architectural solution to mental illness, providing natural ventilation and allegedly good light conditions, while allowing the vast linear expansion of psychiatric complexes. The corridor offered "less opportunity for patients on opposite sides seeing or calling to each other, and less probability of the quiet patients being disturbed by those who are noisy."⁶⁵

Corridic systems allowed communication without much contact, no longer requiring to pass serially through the occupied territory of rooms, with all the incidents and accidents the enfilades might harbor. Thus, they increasingly became the backbone in plans for commonplace dwelling. Potentially reducing irritation, corridic planning was praised in the work of Catherine Bauer (1934), where she refers to the flow-line diagram from Alexander Klein's *The Functional House for Frictionless living* (1928).⁶⁶ Here, the spatial organization works as an extension of the bodily integrity of the individual, restricting the way in which circulation paths cross in the same environment.

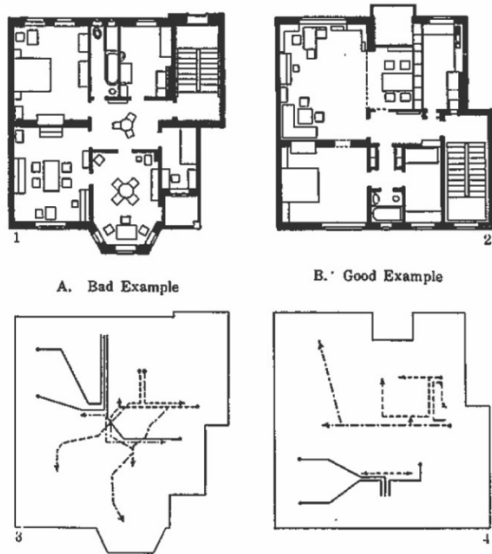
⁶² Foucault, Michel 1975, p. 189-90

⁶³ Foucault, Michel 1961

⁶⁴ Kirkbride, Thomas 1854

⁶⁵ Koolhaas 2014, p. 930

⁶⁶ Evans, Robin 1978, p. 84-87



Alexander Klein's *The Functional House for Frictionless living* 1928

Evans writes of Klein's plan diagram how the

“[...] journey between bed and bath – where trod the naked to enact the rawest acts of the body – was treated with particular caution and isolated from other routes. The justification for Klein's plan was the metaphor hidden in its title, which implied that all accidental encounters caused friction and therefore threatened the smooth running of the domestic machine: a delicately balanced and sensitive device it was too, always on the edge of malfunction.”⁶⁷

The diagram line communicates movement in a house to resemble repetitive scratching of the surface of the skin, requiring spheres to be *insulated* from one another through intermediate spaces, sequenced and distinguished both locally and “in their global configurational relations,” an expression of class distinctions.⁶⁸ Thus lobbies, passages and corridors became ways to institutionalize avoidance. Daniel Koch distinguishes between what he calls “programmed avoidance” and “performed avoidance.” While the former is inscribed in the architectural substance, the latter refers to society as a performed system of roles and relationships.⁶⁹ Performed avoidance reverberates Evans' phrasing about a “condemnation of intimacy as a form of violence, all relationships as forms of bondage.” Thus, the corridor is employed as a preventive measure against noise-transmission, differentiating movement patterns, odd smells, vandalism, accumulation of dirt, spread of disease, embarrassment, indecency – in short, “abolishing the unnecessary.” Accordingly, “the cumulative effect of architecture during the last two centuries has been like that of a general lobotomy performed on society at large, obliterating vast areas of social experience.”⁷⁰

⁶⁷ *ibid*

⁶⁸ [Hanson 1996] in Koch, Daniel 2015, p.1-11

⁶⁹ Koch, Daniel 2015, p. 1-11

⁷⁰ Evans, Robin 1978, p. 89-90

Thus, it might come as no surprise that, while vampires, mummies and ghosts have fallen in and out of fashion in the horror genre, the corridor has stayed perennially in vogue.⁷¹ Part of the reason is by virtue of psychiatric architectural history, as several horror movies are set in the abandoned hospital buildings (here one might just as well mention the uncanny psychosocial history of the institutions).⁷² The asylums built in Kirkbride's design closely resemble the desolate aristocratic castles of Walpole and Stoker's early Gothic horror novels. Thus, the eventual down-scaling and worldwide de-institutionalization of mental hospitals (and their both real and symbolic abandonment, like the castles of Walpole and Stoker), played an important role in carrying forward the corridor-cell-horror from the Gothic era. So-called *thanatourism* of dilapidated psychiatric institutions has become a widespread touristic practice of quasi-occult spectacle. For every empty psychiatric corridor-cell complex there is a corresponding ghost tour of the premises: "These terrifying and daunting buildings have given us some harrowing and menacing moments over the years but we have always wanted to return for more."⁷³ Although this specific unity of corridor and horror fiction is prevalent, it might be more informed by the pernicious history of psychiatric institutional practice, than corridic architecture per se (as far as, and if at all, they can be distinguished).

Of the established physical features of corridity is the *mise en abyme*, the placing of a copy of an image within itself, producing the effect of an infinite corridor through repetitive depth. Another is its modern rational capacities, where the dimensions and darkness of the corridor proved well-suited for the camera, allowing the lens to advance through its narrow space, magnifying the anticipatory fear of what is off screen, behind the doorways or behind the corner, expertly employed in Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* (1979).⁷⁴ The narrowness of corridors can become throat-like, restricting movement, forcing a character to face one way or the other. Shadows can gather at the far end or along featureless walls, appearing otherworldly.

Other fictional depictions of the corridor, however, use and subvert its capacities for shielding privacy. A noteworthy example can be found in Ben Stiller's thriller comedy *The Cable Guy* (1996), where the neutral corridor of the main character's apartment block is transformed into a panoptic cell-corridor machine. A peephole in the protagonist's front door is misappropriated as an optical device through which the stalker antagonist Chip Douglas (Jim Carrey) might supervise the tenants from the corridor. Chip invades the space of the private room precisely by penetrating the thin barrier between corridor and cell. Yet for the subversion of the corridor-cell division to affect fear or laughter, there must first exist certain architectural conventions that can in turn be transgressed – such as the corridor as the space of the quasi-public, the place of the *Other*, versus the cell as *our* place of the private. Only in the sudden intrusion of the one into the other is affect aroused, demonstrating how affect lies not

⁷¹ Marshall, Kate 2013, p. 171-173

⁷² Anderson, Brad, *Session 9*, 2001; Leonard, Brett *The Dead Pit*, 1989; Gieras, Gregory *Asylum* 2001; Ellis, David R *Asylum* 2008; Chapkanov, Todor *Asylum*, 2014, Calvo, A.D., *House of Du,t* 2013; Sager, Greg *Kingdom Come* 2014, etc.

⁷³ Haunted Happenings.co.uk 2023

⁷⁴ McLeod, Kevin [Koolhaas] 2014, p. 998-999

in the structures themselves, but that it is discursively proposed and (dis)assembled – how representation of interiority is neither transparently mediated, nor produced by the media alone.⁷⁵



Chip Douglas intruding the residency of the protagonist in The Cable Guy (1996)

⁷⁵ 'Marshall, Kate 2013, p. 171-173

There are similar mechanisms at work in the maintenance of the corridor as an efficient stage for uncanny experiences in film, and in the architectural fatigue that was previously diagnosed in the text. Both can be anchored in the development of the overly-rational corridor. The deeper and more intricate interior complexes become, the more air quality suffers. Military barracks were accompanied by a ghastly odor,⁷⁶ while hospital corridors were disease carriers.⁷⁷ In Jarzombek's speculations, mechanical ventilation was invented in order to save corridors from falling out of fashion (and history). To improve air quality, the height of rooms gradually increased during the 1800s to make room for tall windows with separate, openable frames of which the top part could be used for ventilation, even in winter. In 1931, the Swedish engineer Sven Romedahl drew attention to the fact that buildings were increasing in height, but decreasing in room size because ventilation ducts were taking up so much space. The solution was the so-called "overflow principle" for apartment blocks, where fresh air was introduced into "fine" rooms and then fed into "poor" rooms before being removed. In practice, this meant that air would enter via bedrooms and living rooms and be extracted via bathrooms, toilets and kitchens. The first apartment block to be ventilated using Romedahl's principles was built in Stockholm in 1931, and was fitted with mechanical ventilation based on electrically-driven air fans. During the 1970s buildings were progressively designed as airtight envelopes,⁷⁸ which in turn made for dark and increasingly drab corridors.⁷⁹ No longer did the corridor need the relative grandeur of room height or an immediate relation to the outdoor via window openings to function properly.

A sign of the "stickiness" of affect in corridic discourse is when the concept is used as an inherently negative analogy. This is especially when no elaboration is offered, not even an associative corridor-like, nor charged adjectives such as *dark* corridor, *narrow* corridor, *dull* corridor – but simply "corridor." The first time word is used as a shorthand for the undesirable in Byggekunst, is in the 1940-edition: "I have already mentioned how important it is for the garden that the house is placed correctly on the lot. An incorrect placement of the house can reduce the garden to a 'corridor' around the house,"⁸⁰ positioning the corridor as a threat to the sprawling and open environment of a garden. Two similar metaphorical examples can be found in the 1966-edition. One is in a report on an urban planning initiative in Rome: "In the Roman urban administration office the street is characterized as a large, desolate corridor. The project has already become the classic example of how an urban planning should not approach older parts of a city."⁸¹ Another appears in a characterization of a Slovakian village, which "every once in a while, [...] feels like a corridor, you just have to push through the whole thing. No one explains the certain atmosphere in these small communities better than Kafka – and at the same time he would wonder about this seemingly eternal village."⁸² Joseph K.'s dreary battle against the labyrinthic bureaucracy in Kafka's *The Trial* (1925) naturally contains several emotive recollections of forced flânerie in corridic passageways:

⁷⁶ Jarzombek, Mark 2010: 761-764

⁷⁷ Koolhaas, Rem 2014, p. 931

⁷⁸ Bednarova, Petra 2016

⁷⁹ Jarzombek, Mark 2010: 761-764

⁸⁰ Strøm, Eyvind, Byggekunst 1940

⁸¹ Gjesdal, Kristin Byggekunst 1966

⁸² Ljøsne, Anne Grete, Byggekunst 1966

“At the entrance he nearly fell over, as behind the door there was another step. ‘They don’t show much concern for the public,’ he said. ‘They don’t show any concern at all,’ said the usher, ‘just look at the waiting room here.’ It consisted of a long corridor from which roughly made doors led out to the separate departments of the attic. There was no direct source of light but it was not entirely dark as many of the departments, instead of solid walls, had just wooden bars reaching up to the ceiling to separate them from the corridor.”⁸³

⁸³ Kafka, Franz 1925, p. 122

Story 3: Corridic non-space

The stories surrounding the aforementioned corridors have (perhaps surprisingly) been tension-ridden and impassioned – infuriating some architects, impressing others, revolting some historians, while others take their defense. Corridors cause panic and confusion, fear of being watched, but are for similar reasons praised for their capacity to define private spheres. Corridors symbolize ritual pride for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, but are also the spaces in which the dead may walk, and where the stalker turns the corridic promise of privacy against itself. None of the stories told thus far correspond entirely with Luckhurst’s description of dead time and dead space, of “minutes and hours vanishing into routine habit,” or of Trüby’s notion of “un-architecture.” There seems to be a third story to be told, lurking in the background of (or in-between) the two poles. Here, the corridor is taken to mean nothingness and cause affective indifference. A space that is virtually non-space.

Telling a story about affective indifference is difficult – like telling a story about how there is no story. The ambiguity of in-betweenness is easier to substantiate when attending to “liminality” as a capacity in itself – the space that is the route, the transition between destinations. Liminality in anthropology deals with the disorientation that occurs in the middle phase of a rite of passage, when participants no longer have their pre-ritual status, awaiting the status they will have once the rite is complete.⁸⁴ However, liminality is not only applicable for rites or rituals. In keeping with its etymological origin, there may also be physical manifestations of it: *Limen* is the Latin word for “threshold,” indicating the movement of a person from one *spatial* circumstance to another. Their physical manifestations, streets, doors, portals, tunnels, corridors, etc. might induce feelings of ambiguity and unsettledness. A liminal space is above all also temporal, suspending the continuum between *what was* and *what follows*.⁸⁵

Liminality of corridors is particularly pronounced in stories where the moments of transition are prolonged, magnified or made more intricate. One example can be found in Ursula K. Le Guinn’s *Tombs of Atuan* (1972), symbolically anchoring its important events in underground corridic pathways. Tenar, a young girl who is believed to be the reborn high priestess of the Kargish Empire, is obliged to solitarily patrol the system of tunnels that winds below the society of the Kargad Lands.

“She had begun her full exploration with the Labyrinth. All the autumn she spent many days walking those endless corridors, and still there were regions of them she had never come to. There was a weariness in that tracing of the vast, meaningless web of ways; the legs got tired and the mind got bored, forever reckoning up the turnings and the passages behind and to come. It was wonderful, laid out in the solid rock

⁸⁴ Van Gennep, Arnold 1960 [1909]

⁸⁵ Saridogan, Eda 2020

underground like the streets of a great city; but it had been made to weary and confuse the mortal walking in it, and even its priestess must feel it to be nothing, in the end, but a great trap.”⁸⁶

The vast underground corridors house both prisoners and cherished treasures, comprising the DNA of the societal superstructure. Liminality is made a narrative resource through extensive, uncanny depictions (“The corridor now ran straight for a long way, giving false reassurance to the wanderer”), and secondly by the prevalent phobia of getting lost in the maze.⁸⁷ Forced to memorize her way around the pitch-black paths, there is a real fear of getting lost in the tangled circulation system – far superior to the fear she has of the book’s antagonist.

The prolonged liminal moment of corridic systems is similarly found in Jacques Tati’s *Playtime* (1967), although with different affective implications, replacing goosebumps with tears of laughter. The loose narrative pretext for the film is a visit to Paris by a group of American tourists, interwoven with the sub plot of Monsieur Hulot (Jacques Tati) desperately trying maneuver increasingly bewildering architecture to attend a job interview. The hyper-modernist, hyper-functional and hyper-rational architecture composes both the setting and plot of the film, where seemingly rational interior passageways become slapstick devices. Hulot keeps getting up from his chair to greet the person strolling down the corridor, when he has been assigned to a →waiting zone← by a guard. Increasingly aware of the approaching footsteps, Hulot is constantly tricked into thinking that the person is in near proximity. The guard urges him to sit down and wait until the official has completed the path through the corridor, reinforcing the norms of behavior in the confusingly open space. The tension and comic distress of the uncompromisingly long scene, lies in how the viewer becomes vicariously impatient through Hulot, and how the corridor, like the scene itself, is articulated to seem both temporally and physically endless.

⁸⁶ Le Guinn, Ursula K. 1971, p. 38

⁸⁷ Le Guinn, Ursula K. 1971, p. 65



Mr. Hulot in the 'waiting zone' Jacques Tati's *Playtime* (1967)

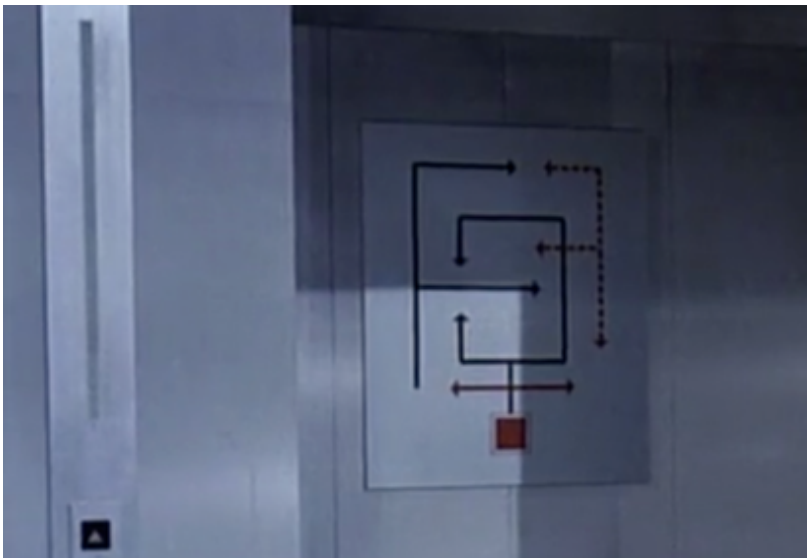
Hulot is forced into an impossible and awkward *flânerie* of the liquid interiors of hypermodern Paris, amid the monotony of steel and glass. He never quite seems to understand where the buildings begin or where they end, and is awkwardly caught in endless corridors, office landscapes and trade fairs, constantly bumping into the sleek surfaces of unmarked (im)practicality.



The dystopian extreme of the cell-corridor complex, where subjects are atomized and individuated into indistinguishable existences, becomes a source of humor. While the tenants seemingly engage with each other from the outside, in reality they lead compartmentalized copies of the same life, all watching the same television program.



This tension accumulates in the many scenes where Hulot is bewildered and lost, especially evident in a sequence where he seeks out an evacuation plan for help and is met with yet another incomprehensible diagrammatic mess.



Mr. Hulot inspecting the evacuation plan in Jacques Tati's *Playtime* (1967)

What is pointed out and affirmed in the satire, is the notion of an exceeded liminality in modern life, with new implications for flânerie. If Koolhaas is correct about “the corridor retreating backstage,” would it not follow that there also exists a frontstage of architecture? And to stay with the scenographic analogy, would not the leading role be played by Benjamin’s flâneur, veiled in the crowd where the familiar city appears as a landscape?⁸⁸ Exceeded liminality – a sharpened distinction between route and destination (architecture and un-architecture) leaves the corridor as less attractive for the flâneur. The contemporary affective indifference toward the corridor that Luckhurst, Trüby and Koolhaas diagnose, may well be connected to how corridors were mostly concerned with the interior separation of private and public throughout the 1900s, as narrated in stories 1 and 2. Benjamin’s asserts that

⁸⁸ Benjamin, Walter 1999 [1927-1940, *unfinished*], p. 19-21

interiority constitutes “[the flâneur’s] private surroundings,” representing a private universe, where “he brings together remote locales and memories of the past. His living room is a box in the theater of the world.”⁸⁹ It seems that the corridor’s precarious position between the public and private spheres has caused it to fall in-between the scenography of life, never part of the architectural frontstage, and failing to engage with the flâneur’s desire for disinterested strolling and sheer sensual attachment to space.⁹⁰

The sharpened distinction between route and destination is furthermore facilitated by how corridors seem to have become an architectural “necessary evil,” accompanied by signs all but encouraging their evacuation despite the absent danger. Finding oneself in a modern-day, hyper-rational corridor, one might even learn to appreciate the exit-sign, considering how a lack of windows makes non-semantic orientation virtually impossible (and after all, windows’ incidence of light could impair the visibility of signs).⁹¹ The corridor is caught between the two stools of public and private, route and destination, architecture and un-architecture, space and non-space, becoming what anthropologist Marc Augé referred to as a “non-place.” Emerging as a consequence of how circulation operates in the (in)flux of hypermodernity, non-places appear in transport, transit, commerce and leisure, in airports, parking lots, tunnels, highways, elevators and corridors. Importantly, Augé’s concept refers to the individual subject’s embeddedness in these places, which is not socially-organic, but based on contract. These contracts can be read and performed through the use-instruction of the sign: “Exit →,” “No smoking,” “Play area.”⁹² The opposite of the non-place is found in spaces offering individual identity, echoing the life-scenography of Benjamin’s “box in the theater of the world.” What is common for places as opposed to non-places is the prospect of meeting other people with shared social references. In a non-place, on the other hand, the individual remains anonymous and alienated.

Treating the corridor not only as physical place, but as a virtual category of space, architectural typology and metaphor, Augé’s concept can be transliterated from the anthropological non-place to the architectural notion of non-space. Evidently paradoxical (as time and space are all-encompassing entities), an idea of non-space confronts the fact that the hypermodern flâneur, through a sharpened distinction between route and destination, increasingly moves through spaces where space and time are supposed to *not really exist*. In a similar manner to how the non-place leaves the individual alienated, architectural non-space emerges as a virtual category deeming certain places unfit for dwelling. Various narrative proposals regard the corridor as non-space in this respect. During the Covid-pandemic, for instance, residing in the corridor became a potent social signifier of substandard health care conditions. The image of “dwelling-in-corridor” epitomizes economic challenges, health crises, and pressure against logistic capacities that threaten the welfare of the nation itself.

⁸⁹ *ibid*, p. 19

⁹⁰ Haaland, Torunn 2013, p. 595

⁹¹ Byggeteknisk forskrift (TEK17), II Inngangsparti, sikkerhet i bruk, kommunikasjonsvei, rom og lignende, § 12-6. Kommunikasjonsvei

⁹² Augé, Marc 1995, p. 94

“CROWDED: A corona patient in a wheelchair in a corridor of a hospital in Tianjin December 28.”⁹³

“And if you, as a patient, are offered to share a single-bed room or lie in a corridor, most people choose to go home to their own beds.”

Similar imagery has been proposed in Norwegian architectural publications, rhetorically urging to build when capacity is full:

“Before the [Student Learning Center] opened in February 2015, there was a desperate shortage of lecture hall space on Ryerson's urban campus. The main library was always full. Students travelling long-distance were forced to find space in empty corridors.”⁹⁴

Ideally, corridors are places where space and time do not occur on the level of experience. Rather, they ought to smoothly shuttle subjects between the 'real spaces' of private cells or public destinations of significance. Once time and space enter the corridor, rendering it experienceable, the incursion (of the ghost, the stalker, or the comedic flâneur) generates affects. The preconceived notion of the corridor as a place where only one thing should occur, namely temporally and spatially arrested movement, or anticipation of destination, is the premise on which Tati's *Playtime*, Le Guinn's *Tombs of Atuan*, and Kubrick's *The Shining* relies, and which they all break with great emphatic effect.⁹⁵

Accepting Augé's concept of a label for contemporary society, *hypermodernity* has been accused of changing central features of the traditional, folkloric road. The road is, of course, another important spatial category concerning the dispersal of bodies between destinations, and of great symbolic importance in stories. If the road of the 20th and 21st centuries is marked by its speed, the folkloric road was marked by slowness. By experiencing time in its full range, pausing in the road, observing it as an environmental structure, the speakers experience their own existence with greater awareness. Interconnections between their own past, present and future, between themselves and their environment, become experienceable.⁹⁶ The hypermodern road of the highway has, on the contrary, become a means of *obliterating time and space* in the cultural imaginary.⁹⁷ In Jack Kerouac's pivotal postwar beat novel *On The Road* (1957), the titular roads are offered little or no attention at all. The first-person narrator, Sal Paradise, only gets close to describing the road once in the entire novel, when he is crouching on the floor of his car in fear of an accident. Besides this, the only information relayed about the road is of its good or poor conditions or the number of other cars in traffic.⁹⁸ Kerouac's road is literally no space; no space to be described or to be experienced, where all

⁹³ VG 30.12.22

⁹⁴ Moussaoui, Raja, *Arkitektur N* 2016

⁹⁵ Bliss, Sylvia 1915, p. 242 (on Henri Bergson)

⁹⁶ Bakhtin 1981 [1934-1941], p. 120

⁹⁷ Müller, Timo 2010, p. 98-100

⁹⁸ *ibid*

that is left is to count the *passing cars* in order to *pass the time*, manifesting a form of thinking where destination eclipses the route. The flux of movement in the hypermodern world increases, literally, in correlation with speed. Milan Kundera examines the topic of hypermodern Timespace in his novel *Slowness* (1996), and claims there is a secret affinity between slowness and memory, and between speed and forgetting:

“A man is walking down the street. At a certain moment, he tries to recall something, but the recollection escapes him. Automatically, he slows down. Meanwhile, a person who wants to forget a disagreeable incident he has just lived through starts unconsciously to speed up his pace, as if he were trying to distance himself from a thing still too close to him in time.”⁹⁹

Thus, Kundera speculates in a similar manner to Müller how technological alteration of spatiotemporal circumstances directly affect both human cognition and desire.

“Speed is the form of ecstasy the technical revolution has bestowed on man. As opposed to a motorcyclist, the runner is always present in his body, forever required to think about his blisters, his exhaustion; when he runs he feels his weight, his age, more conscious than ever of himself and of his time of life. This all changes when man delegates the faculty of speed to a machine: from then on, his own body is outside the process, and he gives over to a speed that is noncorporeal, nonmaterial, pure speed, speed itself, ecstasy speed.”¹⁰⁰

Joan Didion’s essays, hybrids of journalism and first-person narrative, attend to the economic expansion and infrastructural development of postwar America. Although affirming the road as non-space, Didion’s depictions differ from Kerouac precisely in her detailed descriptions of the hypermodern road. By sprinkling the mundane, apathetic elements of modern life over the more spectacular and extreme, Didion’s directly attends to the so-called non-space in her essays.

“To understand what was going on it is perhaps necessary to have participated in the freeway experience, which is the only secular communion Los Angeles has. Mere driving on the freeway is in no way the same as participating in it. Anyone can ‘drive’ on the freeway, and many people with no vocation for it do, hesitating here and resisting there, losing the rhythm of the lane change, thinking about where they came from and where they are going. Actual participants think only about where they are. Actual participation requires a total surrender, a concentration so intense as to seem a kind of narcosis, a rapture-of-the-freeway. The mind goes clean. The rhythm takes over. A distortion of time occurs, the same distortion that characterizes the instant before an accident. It takes only a few seconds to get off the Santa Monica Freeway at National-Overland, which is a difficult exit requiring the driver to cross two new lanes

⁹⁹ Kundera, Milan 1996

¹⁰⁰ ‘ibid’

of traffic streamed in from the San Diego Freeway, but those few seconds always seem to me the longest part of the trip.”¹⁰¹

In the passage quoted above, roads are layered upon roads, their mind-numbing mundanity distorting time to the point where “the mind goes clean.” And yet it is precisely the disorientating effect of the road, that which belied Benjamin’s flâneur’s ability to stroll, which offers psychological reset.

“It had rained in Los Angeles until the cliff was crumbling into the surf and I did not feel like getting dressed in the morning, so we decided to go to Mexico, to Guaymas, where it was hot. We did not go for marlin. We did not go to skin-dive. We went to get away from ourselves, and the way to do that is to drive, down through Nogales some day when the pretty green places pall and all that will move the imagination is some place difficult, some desert. There is an airport in Hermosillo, and Hermosillo is only eighty-five miles above Guaymas, but to fly is to miss the point. The point is to become disoriented, shriven, by the heat and the deceptive perspectives and the oppressive sense of carrion. The road shimmers. The eyes want to close. And then, just past that moment when the desert has become the only reality, Route 15 hits the coast and there is Guaymas, a lunar thrust of volcanic hills and islands with the warm Gulf of California lapping idly all around, lapping even at the cactus, the water glassy as a mirage, the ships in the harbor whistling unsettlingly, moaning, ghost schooners, landlocked, lost. That is Guaymas.”¹⁰²

When Didion regards the liminality of non-space as an affective resource to engage with, an extension of human psychology, it is by accepting and even cherishing the speed of hypermodernity. This technological acceleration of speed – which for Didion carries with it the *benefit* of disorientation, and for Kundera a sort of mild (and not entirely unpleasant) intoxication – might be applicable to the metaphorical exterior corridor. It is not however, as easily translated to the architectural typology of the corridor, the interior space where one is more or less only equipped with a body and a bodily function. Although the corridor was originally related to the speed of communication, one no longer needs the enduring fast-paced person to roam a spatial channel in order to get messages across. Instead one dials by touching a rectangular piece of glass. Until we have accomplished the teleportation of bodies – transferring matter from one point to another without traversing the physical space between them – corridors can hardly facilitate a desired pace for the hypermodern non-space flânerie, causing it to fall not out of history, but out of synchronicity with the state of flux in the contemporary world. All the while communication across distances eventuates in a matter of seconds, and hundreds of kilometers are made to feel like nothing on a highway, it changes little about the fact that lives are anchored in constant journeys, from bed to bath, to work, to store, to a friend’s house or a travel abroad. The hypermodern corridor, squeezed between different stools of “frontstage architecture” comes across as an uncultivated by-product of

¹⁰¹ Didion, Joan [1976] 1979: p. 125-126

¹⁰² Didion 1968 [1965], p. 283-284

how dwelling is articulated. The dis-articulation of the corridor, either by displacing it from the domestic interior or the office landscape, by deeming it to not officially be part of “dwelling,” or by overly-rationalizing it, reveals a social distinction of what is considered important space and what is considered non-space. This conception pays little attention to the fact that bodies are always leaving rooms and buildings, no matter how impeccable they are.

Returning to the Latour/Harman polemic, the non-spatial corridor seems to be a vital concern for both the object prism and the process prism of architectural observation. The latter is difficult, as noted by Harman when questioning whether process-thinking could reinforce and reproduce a hypermodern ever-increasing flux-state. However, liminality becomes more tumultuous and loud-voiced the more reality is abruptly fragmented between places regarded as actual destinations. Thus, it seems imperative to oppose the notion of completely delineable territorial entities, and to further question whether a spatial edge is ever an edge. Resisting the dualism of route and destination does not necessarily mean to be bewildered like Mr. Hulot, but on the contrary, to include journey in destination, in the smooth spatial transitions that fuel the flaneur’s desire. Without proposing clear architectural instructions, the following work-based studies postulate that corridors cannot be architecturally avoided in the flux-world of movement, but must instead be reformulated and re-appropriated as a mindful connector – *a room for running in a world in flux*.

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