LONELINESS

AND

THE

BUILT

ENVIRONMENT

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Fernando Nieto and Rosana Rubio (editors)

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Ben Lazare Mijuskovic

Theories of Consciousness and Loneliness

Christina R. Victor

The Language of Loneliness

Juhani Pallasmaa

Loneliness and Solitude in Architecture



Seminar on Loneliness and the Built Environment. Philosophical, Societal and Technological Perspectives

December 16th, 2019. From 12:00 to 4:30 pm Rakennustalo RO107

Faculty of Built Environment
Hervanta Campus, Tampere University

Hosted by SPREAD research group https://research.tuni.fi/spread/ Funded by TAU Sustainable Welfare Systems

Tampere University

DATUTOP series editors Minna Chudoba and Gareth Griffiths gave us the opportunity to publish the contents of the seminar and the additional texts in the Tampere School of Architecture's publication series devoted to architectural theory. The latter's work in proofreading and copy-editing the texts has been invaluable.

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As the editors of this book, we wish to express our sincere gratitude to all the above-mentioned persons and to thank them for their generous contribution to the seminar and to this publication.

Fernando Nieto and Rosana Rubio



Introduction: Perspectives on Loneliness

Fernando Nieto and Rosana Rubio

'I believe all human feeling and thinking can be 'charted' between two poles: loneliness and the desire to belong. The only human absolute is loneliness, and all else emanates from it and is dependent on that source.' (B.L. Mijuskovic, Feeling Lonesome: The Philosophy and Psychology of Loneliness, 2015)

Nowadays, there are broad sectors of society that, for various reasons, suffer from loneliness. This situation is even perceived as a kind of epidemic. It is certainly pertinent to analyse such a phenomenon in order to understand whether the situation really is part of a normality that has not been sufficiently understood and managed. There is no doubt about the implications of loneliness in many psychiatric diseases and its inextricable relation to hostility. As such, we should confront the issue head on. It is also true that current socio-economic, political, environmental, and technological premises are triggering undesired situations that are increasing the feeling of loneliness in society.

Nonetheless, loneliness could also be considered not as a medical condition or illness but rather as a feeling consubstantial with the human condition. It is both a universal experience (i.e. we all are individual beings), and a private one (i.e. because of the many ways a person experiences being lonely). From a psychological perspective, there are nuances, ambiguities and emotional intricacies to consider.

There are varied and conflicting philosophical explanations of the phenomenon. On the one hand, there is the viewpoint of materialist, behaviourist, and empiricist paradigms, which consider loneliness to be caused by contextual factors, and therefore a contingent and transient experience. On the other hand, there are those traditions that consider the feeling of loneliness as an everlasting, inevitable condition that is immanent to the operation of consciousness. All in all, these viewpoints seem to lead us to the understanding that we are facing an extremely intricate phenomenon.

In view of its complex nature, countering the feeling of loneliness in terms of its negative consequences is a systemic problem due to multiple causes, ranging from individual cognitive capabilities and affective motives to the tensions and contradictions in the social and physical environments we are immersed in. From our perspective as architects, we ask ourselves whether architecture could be defined as the environment where Mijuskovic's two human poles of *loneliness* and *the desire to belong* are negotiated.

It is this reading of architecture that motivated the organisation of a seminar on loneliness and the built environment, titled 'Loneliness and the Built Environment: Philosophical, Societal and Technological Perspectives (LOBE seminar)', which took place at the Tampere University Faculty of Built Environment on December 16, 2019. The seminar addressed the phenomenon from a multidisciplinary perspective, with the Tampere University's strategic focus areas of health, society, and technology as the breeding ground for the forum. The invited keynote speakers represent the fields of philosophy and psychology, public health, and architecture. The three lectures were later transformed by the authors into the articles included in the present publication. In addition to them, two additional articles offer further perspectives on the topic from symmetrical – physical and virtual – viewpoints.

In his article "Theories of Consciousness and Loneliness", Ben Lazare Mijuskovic establishes the theoretical background of the seminar, delving into four themes around loneliness: first, that humans are innately lonely; second, that loneliness is a priori; third, that loneliness has consequences; and fourth, that there are remedies to loneliness. In the first theme, Mijuskovic argues that the fear of loneliness is the universal 'existential' condition of each of us, which motivates all our actions. In the second theme, he justifies loneliness based on 'a theory of consciousness that assumes the mind is both immaterial and active; reflexively selfconscious (Kant) and transcendently intentional (Husserl)' and, therefore, universal and unavoidable. His approach contrasts with the currently predominant research approach that claims loneliness is caused by external factors; hence being transient and avoidable. In the third theme, Mijuskovic explains how loneliness directly involves the dynamics of hostility, anxiety, and depression, leading to both destructive and self-destructive behaviours. Finally, in the fourth theme, he elaborates on the remedies to alleviate loneliness in terms of positively promoting empathy as the means to secure intimacy. Mijuskovic also elaborates on the role of the arts and architecture in this endeavour.

In her article "The Languages of Loneliness: Developing a Vocabulary for Researching Social Health", Christina R. Victor addresses issues of contemporary research on loneliness within the context of social health. Firstly, she defines, with the needed precision, the specificity of the concept, distinguishing it from other related yet distinct concepts. Secondly, she discusses the difficulty encountered in measuring loneliness, and states that there is a broad consensus that 'loneliness is an experience that is identified by individuals themselves and is not something that can be identified or observed by others'. Thirdly, she refers to loneliness in later life and how its reception and representation have been transformed,

through policy and practice, from being a social issue to become a public health problem. Finally, Victor proposes a reframing of the research agenda on contemporary loneliness: instead of tackling it from a medicalised point of view, it should be done from a positive perspective that promotes healthy social relationships.

In his article "Loneliness and Solitude in Architecture: Estrangement and Belonging in the Existential Experience", Juhani Pallasmaa elaborates on the two related – yet paradoxically opposed – feelings of loneliness and solitude. Through a series of short chapters, he develops a number of ideas such as the consideration of solitude as being a 'strengthened way of belonging'; the need of the creative mind for solitude in order to produce meaningful work; or that architecture and urban planning possess the power to unite and make us belong to a shared reality and, thus, counter loneliness. Pallasmaa reflects also on the loss of our capacity to dwell in space and time, due to today's ways of life, which nihilates the value of solitude as a positive mental state; and argues that the role of architecture to mediate between us and the world is disappearing, becoming unable to integrate us with our existential reality.

In their article titled "Techno-Architecture and Online Loneliness", Javier Echeverría, Atxu Amann y Alcocer, Flavio Martella and Lola S. Almendros reflect on how the information revolution of the late 20th century modified traditional boundaries and created hybrid conditions that are, simultaneously, material and informational: an information layer overlaps the material one. They elaborate on suggestive concepts and subjects to grasp how the new set of relationships and realities that they describe may influence the feeling of loneliness. The authors argue that all these concepts constitute a 'techno-habitat' in which there is a lack of

proper architectural reflection, one being built mostly by software engineers. This topic raises an interesting disciplinary question on how architectural knowledge, traditionally involved with materiality, can be transferred into the immaterial informational world, where the criteria of 'organization, decentralization, interchangeability and continuous transformation' have substituted key architectural categories such as 'harmony, purity and perfection'. The ontologically distinct 'offline' and 'online' worlds are discussed, arguing that despite their impossible reconciliation they are open for critical and creative experimentation.

The final article "Loneliness in Place" constitutes our proposal as editors of this publication and incipient researchers on the interweaving of the subjective feeling of loneliness with the objectivity of the reality that the built environment indicates. Through a terminology connected to the everlasting dualism of individuality and collectivity, we elaborate on some possible spatial implications for the feeling of loneliness, and vice versa, how space in its broadest sense connects this feeling to the physical reality while contributing to its alleviation. Deliberately contrasted yet forming a continuous discourse, the two sets of terms allude to very concrete ideas that possess a myriad of possible interpretations and simultaneously a considerable assemblage of symbolic and physical meanings.

In conclusion, the round-table discussion held at the end of the seminar has been transcribed with thorough attention to its original content. The three different perspectives of the speakers were contrasted against each other and in the light of the audience's points of view. Hence, the topics were re-elaborated and enriched during the discussion. Among the issues addressed were, for instance, the different spatial scales in which loneliness occurs (i.e., the city, the community and the home); the concept of architecture as a 'mediator' between ourselves and the world; the stigmas and prejudices around the feeling of loneliness; the role of 'emphatic' thinking in design; and the positive aspects of solitude.

Overall, the set of articles included in the present publication implies the initiation of an investigation of the theme of loneliness and the built environment. Our interest lies in the problem of properly designing the spatial gradation between the poles of privacy and community, which relates to the feeling of loneliness as described here. This is done by focusing on the interpretation of space as the core of the architectural practice, and speculating and reflecting on spatial qualities in architecture by exploring contemporary societal needs encompassed within disciplinary theories.

Nevertheless, we have asked ourselves, firstly, how the built environment, as a counterbalance to the pervasive information and communication technologies (ICT), enhances the creation of intimacy, thus helping us overcome – physically – our insularity. Knowing from psychologists that the sense of trust in others and the development of empathy are the highest goals and protections against loneliness, we believe that they could be tied into this discussion so as to investigate emerging building typologies, such as new hybrid solutions and urban models that promote collective ways of living, including the culture of sharing and the enhancement of the sense of belonging at their core. Secondly, we have asked how the environmental conditions are able to enhance people's intentionality, be it enabling or cancelling their capacity to undertake positive personal purposes and agencies, which are also acknowledged as tools against the feeling of loneliness.¹

One of the initial motivations of this investigation was to

detach the feeling of loneliness from its hackneyed meanings – very much present in the societal debates on the issue – whilst simultaneously attaching to it a spatial notion that is deliberately undefined in physical terms, and therefore left unresolved and opened up to each person's imagination. The difficulty in associating this feeling with the physical reality – at least the one we found as researchers – might be the reason why, at the discretion of their authors, none of the viewpoints included in this publication are illustrated with images.

Note

1. In this regard, at the time this book is being written, we are working on three multidisciplinary research projects addressing this issue of loneliness and its physical dimension. The project 'Social Robots and Ambient Assisted Living: The Independence and Isolation Balance' (SOCIETAL) focusses on the alleviation and detection of loneliness within the context of older adults by means of smart environments and technologies. The project 'Intelligent social technologies enhancing community interaction and sustainable use of shared living spaces in superblocks' (SocialBlock) develops co-design studies and concepts on how intelligent social technologies and spatial innovations may be used to enhance community interaction and shared spaces in order to promote the sustainable development of urban living areas within the context of the Hiedanranta area in Tampere. The project 'Implementation of contextual complexity in AI-based assessment systems of older people's social isolation' (AIsola) aims to depart from detection and prediction models to assess social isolation among older adults and to advance systems that contribute to its avoidance. The research groups involved in these projects belong to four different faculties at Tampere University: Faculty of Built Environment, Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Science, and Faculty of Management and Business. They are supported financially by the socalled Intelligent Society (INSO) platform, an Academy of Finland profiling initiative that seeks to strengthen cooperation on the Tampere University's strategy axis society-technology during the years 2019-2023.



Theories of Consciousness and Loneliness

Ben Lazare Mijuskovic

"We are lonely from the cradle to the grave—and perhaps beyond." (Joseph Conrad, An Outcaste of the Islands, 1896)

"Each man is like a nautilus, who lives in a house of his own making, and carries it around on his back."

(Brand Blanshard, *The Nature of Thought*, 1939)

There is a distinction between *theoretical* research and *practical* application. *Theoretical* knowledge teaches the reasoning, the techniques, and the theory supporting the knowledge. By contrast, *practical* knowledge is gained by *doing* things; it is based on real life endeavors, situations, and tasks. For example, Freud's writings elucidate his psychoanalytic theory and his teachings, while his therapeutic sessions were applications of his theory. Similarly, when I write articles and books about loneliness, I am creating a theory. And when I function as a therapist, I am applying and practicing my theory. Theory always precedes practice.

In what follows, I wish to establish four themes:

First theme: *that* all human beings are innately lonely; that the fear of loneliness is the universal *existential* condition of each of us, which motivates us in *all* our feelings, thoughts, and endeavors.

Second theme: *why* this is so, and I offer a theory of consciousness that assumes the mind is both immaterial and active; reflexively self-conscious (Kant) and transcendently intentional (Husserl).

Third theme: the *consequences* of loneliness, which directly involve the dynamics of hostility, anxiety, and depression leading to both destructive and self-destructive behaviors.

Fourth theme: *what* can be done about it; its remedies in terms of positively promoting empathy, which serves as the means to secure intimacy as its result.

First theme: Innate loneliness

The twin principles I propose to defend are that all we feel, think, say, and do occurs between the twin emotional and cognitive poles in human consciousness; between its self-conscious reflexive insularity (Kant) and the intentional desire to transcend loneliness (Husserl) by establishing empathy and intimacy with other self-conscious beings, whether divine, human, or animal. The two terminals of human feelings and thoughts, the intrinsic components of consciousness, which constitute the dynamics of repulsion and attraction, continually guide us through all our passions, thoughts, and actions. After the biological drives for air, water, nourishment, sleep—and before sex (contra Freud)—are met, the most insistent psychological motivational drives in human beings is to avoid loneliness and secure an intimate relation to other self-conscious beings. In effect, I wish to replace Freud's principle of libidinal energy with the anxiety of human isolation.

Thesis: Ever since the dawn of Western Consciousness—the grief of a lost friendship in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*; the *Book of Job*, when God tests him; *Genesis* 2:18, when God decides man needs a "helpmate"; the ancient Greek myths and tragedies, as for example, Oedipus Rex and Oedipus at Colonus, Achilles and Patroclus, Castor and Pollux, Antigone, Prometheus, Deucalion and Pyrrha, Demeter and Persephone, Orpheus and Eurydice, and Sisyphus; Aristophanes' speech on love in Plato's *Symposium*; Books VIII and IX of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* based on friendship; Christ

"forsaken" on the Cross; and St. Augustine's *Confessions*—the tension between loneliness and intimacy has dominated philosophical and literary thought in the West. For Freud, the Greek myths exhibit man's true human nature as primarily motivated by sexual instincts and aggression. By contrast, I believe the Greek myths symbolize man's universal loneliness. For example, Aristophanes' speech provides a classical illustration of loneliness as it recounts the story of the original race of humans, which was very different from us today. The body consisted of two sets of legs and arms; a head with two faces looking in different directions; and two sexual organs: male-male; female-female; and female-male. They were very powerful and aggressive rolly-polly creatures, destructive and mischievous. So much so, that one day, Zeus tired of their antics and split them in half: "So, you see gentlemen, ever since then each of us is seeking for our other half."

First proof: The evidence *that* the fear of loneliness is innate can be demonstrated by citing the psychological research on very young children conducted by Rene Spitz in his studies on "hospitalized" infants diagnosed with anaclytic depression,² which shows that without sufficient emotional nurturance, infants will retreat back toward the womb, deteriorate emotionally, cognitively, physically, and even die. Over half of the deaths of institutionalized infants in England under the age of one died from loneliness and neglect during the First World War when their mothers were recruited to work in factories in order to help with the war effort (See also John Bowlby's, subsequent research on childhood "attachment disorders").³

Second proof: The medical evidence attesting to the ravages of loneliness, especially on the heart in adults, but even in children, is amply documented as early as James Lynch's two studies, *The*

Broken Heart: The Medical Consequences of Loneliness (1975) and A Cry Unheard: New Insights into the Medical Consequences of Loneliness (2000).⁴

Third proof: Kant's philosophical insight that no human being would ever wish to be immortal at the price of being the only self-conscious creature in an entirely lifeless universe condemned to exist forever completely alone in the infinite and eternal expanses of space and time. "Carazan's Dream" tells the story of a miserly merchant who narcissistically cared for no one but himself, and one night in a dream the Angel of Death visited him and informed him that because of his lifelong disdain for his fellow man, he was doomed to be transported to the farthest and darkest corners of the universe to dwell there alone forever.

"Carazan... you have closed your heart to the love of humankind and held on to your treasures with an iron hand. You have only lived for yourself. And hence in the future you shall also live alone and excluded from all communion with the entirety of creation for eternity." (Kant, *Observations on the Beautiful and the Sublime*, 1764)⁵

For many religious people, the ultimate terrifying separation is to be abandoned by God.

"Who will give me help so that I may rest in you? Who will help me, O' Lord, so that you will come into my heart and inebriate it, to the end that I may forget my evils and embrace you, my one good? What are you to me? Have pity on me, so that I may speak. What am I myself to you that you command me to love you and grow angry and threaten me with mighty woes unless I do?" (St. Augustine, *The Confessions of St. Augustine*)⁶

But to be deserted by those we love on this earth is for many of us is just as frightening. Second theme: *A priori* loneliness

This directly involves the metaphysical conflict between the brain versus consciousness. The issue both historically and conceptually begins with Plato's prescient allusion to the "Battle between the Giants against the Gods" (*Sophist*, 245e; Cornford, 1964);⁷ and more specifically it addresses the ultimate question: whether senseless matter *alone* can think?⁸ It represents the conflict between two warring camps; materialists defending (a) the Brain (Science) pitted against both those championing (b) the Soul (e.g., Christianity) and (c) the Mind (Humanism). It involves the perennial cosmic struggle between, on the one side, the philosophic forces of materialism (all that exists is matter *plus* motion; Democritus);

mechanism (both the world and man operate like a machine;

Hobbes); determinism (every event consists of a chain of inflexible

causes and effects; Descartes); empiricism (all our ideas are derived

from precedent sensations, i.e. experience; Locke); phenomenalism (both the self and the world are merely constructions of passively

"given" mental impressions; Hume); behaviorism (all human

conduct can be reduced to bodily stimuli and responses; Ryle, Armstrong, Dennett); and the current neurosciences (the brain is

analogous to a computer and externally programmed); all of which

theories are aligned with the interests of science (Caccioppo).

Why are we a priori, i.e. necessarily, universally, and innately lonely?

Since the 1970's, the studies on loneliness have favored the current dominance of the neurosciences, coupled with a therapeutic alliance with psychiatric medications as "the drug of choice" in the English-speaking world. In opposition, my theoretical journey has decidedly flowed against this current.

By contrast, I promote dualism (there are only two substances,

extended matter and immaterial souls (b above; Plato, St. Augustine, Descartes); or immaterial minds (c above; Aristotle, Hume, Sartre); rationalism (some truths are known by reason alone independently of experience; Descartes, Leibniz, Kant); idealism (all that exists is mental, mind-dependent, or spiritual; G.E. Moore); freedom (man exhibits either an ethical free will or an epistemic spontaneity); phenomenology (consciousness is intentional, meaning intending; Husserl); and existentialism (man creates values for himself alone; Sartre). The struggle between the two camps and the three subdivisions exists today and promises to continue undiminished into the future. It pits Democritus against Plato; Epicurus against Plotinus; Atheists and Skeptics against St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas; Lorenzo Valla against Marsilio Ficino; Hobbes against Descartes; Locke against Leibniz; Hume against Kant; Marx against Hegel; and so on. The critical difference between Christianity and Humanism is that the first posits the immortality of the soul whereas the second does not.

According to Aristotle, philosophy is a search for "first principles," ultimate assumptions. For Pascal, "the heart has its reasons which the head does not know"; for Fichte, first principles are the result of our personal "inclinations and interests"; for Kierkegaard our "paradoxical faith"; for Nietzsche our "Will to Power"; and for William James our "passional natures." But for each of us, ultimately, a first principle can only be underived; it's always only an assumption. It can never be "proved."

I believe the "solution" to loneliness lies in the second set of principles, supports, and perspectives in opposition to those composing the materialist complex. It lies in the positions of metaphysical dualism; subjective idealism; and ontological existentialism. In all its aspects, it stands against the naivete of science, what Husserl criticized as "the natural outlook." Loneliness is grounded in the intrinsic nature of human consciousness itself. The brain is physical, reactionary, responsive to external stimuli but the mind is immaterial, spontaneously active, reflexive, and intentional.

This paradigm of consciousness can apply to theistic religions as well as to non-religious humanism. And it can also apply both to religious existentialists (Pascal, Kierkegaard, Dostoyevsky, Paul Tillich, Martin Buber, and Gabriel Marcel) as well as to atheistic existentialists (Nietzsche, Albert Camus, and Jean-Paul Sartre). Existentialism is the thesis that the universe is (a) intrinsically meaningless; (b) that each individual is radically free to create meanings and values for herself or himself alone; and (c) consequently that each of us is irredeemably lonely (Sartre: "Existentialism Is a Humanism"). Indeed, absolute loneliness is the necessary and universal prerequisite for our radical freedom. Neither the dictates of God; nor a "universal" human nature; nor the conventions of society can command our values and decisions. It is the free self alone that decides (existential anxiety).

All materialists, empiricists, phenomenalists, behaviorists, and neuroscientists assume that the brain is a physical entity, passively *caused*, and therefore essentially a "programmed" object; it consists of 100 billion neurons and electrical "causal" synapses. It is a "computer"; and hence programed externally. Language replaces consciousness. In this material world, both nature and man are determined. The emphasis on the reduction to the brain alone often leads solely to the use of psychiatric medications in addressing loneliness. When I retired from the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, we only provided six therapy sessions for patients before referring, i.e. "farming them

out" to their medical doctor for meds. This therapeutic regimen is ludicrously inadequate to address the deep issues of loneliness.

By contrast, all dualists, rationalists, idealists, phenomenologists, and existentialists assume as a first principle that the human mind is not only active and immaterial but also either ethically free or epistemically spontaneous. Within Christianity, for example, God not only creates time and space, the entire universe, but also each individual soul *ex nihilo*. None of the ancient Greeks believed in creation out of nothing, not the Pre-Socratics, Plato, Aristotle, the Epicureans, or the Stoics.

By contrast, according to both St. Augustine and Descartes, man is endowed with an ethical free will, which is separate from his intellect, as attested in Descartes's Fourth Meditation, 10 while by contrast humanists, contend that there is a creative "spontaneity" rather than free will—which plays a very different role in both our passional and intellectual makeup. This means that the latter's reactions to loneliness are absolutely subjective and spontaneous, i.e. free, unpredictable but productive as confirmed by Kant's Critique of Pure Reason and Critique of Judgment, Fichte's Science of Knowledge and Vocation of Man, Hegel's Science of Logic, Husserl's Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology, Bergson's Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness, and Sartre's Transcendence of the Ego. 11 Again, these tripartite classifications then proliferate into three distinct paradigms: Scientific; Religious (e.g. Christianity); and Humanistic. In turn, it establishes first the paradigms of the brain and science (Leucippus, Democritus, Epicurus, Lucretius, Hobbes and the current neurosciences [Ryle, Armstrong, Dennett]); second the soul and Christianity (St. Augustine, Descartes, Leibniz); and third the mind and humanism (Aristotle, Hume and Sartre). Each of these three dominating first principles and paradigms has its own unique—and forceful—manner of addressing loneliness.

Literature, as I emphasized in the beginning of this text, paid lavish homage to the theme of loneliness as early as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* of Homer. But both philosophy and psychology only recently addressed it within the province of "existentialism" and the companionship of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. And this interest was only accorded this importance as a result of our horror following the Second World War. We were forced to consider man in a much darker light. Thus, it is only since the 1970's when philosophers and psychologists very belatedly realized the importance of loneliness. But unfortunately, as matters now stand, the recent studies have greatly favored the current dominance of the neurosciences in the English-speaking world, which, as I mentioned, is now coupled with their "therapeutic" alliance in behalf of psychiatric medications. My own theoretical journey strongly flows against this powerful current.

As matters now stand, most current researchers studying loneliness believe it is externally caused by familial, environmental, cultural, situational, and even chemical imbalances in the brain and therefore transient, avoidable, and curable. Today's psychoanalysts, cognitive behavioral therapists, and neuroscientists uniformly assume validity of the principle of psychological causality thus allowing for both prediction and (presumably) control. By contrast, I argue that loneliness is "constituted" from within consciousness by the innate synthetic *a priori* activities of the mind; by the spontaneity of consciousness itself, and it is therefore unpredictable and uncontrollable. Because the first group believes in determinism—as opposed to free will or epistemic spontaneity—they are convinced that loneliness can be predicted, controlled,

and "cured," that it is essentially a classifiable medical disorder (Interestingly, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Psychiatric Disorders* does not list it). ¹² Psychoanalysts believe that childhood traumatic experiences cause neurotic symptoms. Behaviorists and cognitive behavioral therapists assume that humans are conditioned by stimulus-response mechanisms in the brain and then relayed to the body's central nervous system. Current neuroscientists analogize the "mind" to a computer; the brain is programmed from without, cellular neurons and synapses cause physical behaviors, and "intelligence" is reducible to a conventional artificial language composed of arbitrary symbols. Language *replaces* consciousness (again, Wittgenstein, Armstrong, Dennett). I wish to challenge these assumptions with assumptions of my own.

The human mind displays two complementary critical functions or activities: it (a) separates and distinguishes sensations, feelings, concepts, and judgments; and then it (b) unifies, binds, and synthesizes sensations, feelings, concepts, and judgments (This capacity is also shared by some higher order animals).

Loneliness is negatively defined and structured by seven critical forms of separation; and, by contrast, it is positively defined and structured by the unification of empathic acts resulting in intimacy, as we previously indicated.

There are seven developmental stages or levels of separation in human consciousness. Separation is the origin of loneliness.

The first stage of separation is the fetus' biological ejection from the womb (physical and painful object-object separation). Interestingly, it represents Freud's initial state of anxiety and it constitutes the initial acknowledgment of *subconscious—not* unconscious—loneliness.

"Here is once again the same situation as that which underlay the first great anxiety-state of birth and the infantile anxiety of longing [i.e. intimacy]—the anxiety due to separation from the protecting mother." (Freud, *The Ego and the Id,* 1923)¹³

The second stage of separation is preliminary to the third stage of separation of the ego from its objects, which is described by Freud as an "oceanic feeling":

"[O]riginally the ego includes everything. Later it separates off an external world from itself [our third stage]. Our present ego-feeling is therefore only a shrunken residue of a much more inclusive—indeed an all-embracing—feeling which corresponded to a more intimate bond between the ego and the world about it. We may assume that there are many people in whose mental life this primary ego-feeling has persisted to a greater or lesser degree... In that case, the ideational contents appropriate to it would be precisely those of limitlessness and of a bond with the universe—the... oceanic." (Freud, Civilization and its Discontents, 1930)¹⁴

The oceanic feeling is the ultimate origin of primary narcissism, of feelings—not concepts—of omnipotence, self-sufficiency, and entitlement. I say primary because at this level, there is nothing to oppose it. It also corresponds to the stage of immediate, amorphous Sense Certainty described in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and William James' description of *immediate*, i.e. non-relational infant consciousness.

"... the undeniable fact being that any number of impressions, from any number of sensory sources, falling simultaneously on a mind, which has not yet experienced them separately, will fuse into a single undivided object for that mind...The baby assailed by eyes, ears, nose, skin and entrails at once feels it all as one great blooming, buzzing confusion." (James, Principles of Psychology, 1890, his emphasis)¹⁵

Narcissism, emanating, "arising" from the fount of the "oceanic feeling," is the ultimate source of loneliness with its compulsive obsessional desires for instant gratifications.

The third stage of separation occurs when the infant emotionally and cognitively separates itself from the external world (subject-object separation, which equals the first true initial moment of self-consciousness). This occurs in Kant when the self actively distinguishes its self from a world of inanimate objects. In order to be *self*-conscious, the self must be able to distinguish its self, to separate its self from the world of objects. The subject-object relation is mutually constituted in *self*-consciousness as a synthetic *a priori* relation. This also corresponds to Hegel's category of Perception in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. 17

Similarly, in Freud the infant transitions from the unbounded feeling of undifferentiated oneness, the totality of its previous state of consciousness, as it experiences the "oceanic feeling," by relating its consciousness to the mother's breast as an inanimate object. In the beginning, the baby in the crib reaches out to touch the moon only to realize that it is not a part of its body. But with the mother's breast, it begins to realize the difference, the separation, and the relation between its own self against inanimate objects.

Freud speculates on this earliest of all stages of human selfconsciousness:

"Further reflections tell us that the adult's *ego-feeling* cannot have been the same from the beginning. It must have gone through a process of development, which cannot, of course, be demonstrated but which admits of being constructed with a fair degree of probability. An infant at the breast does not as yet distinguish his ego from the external world as the source of the sensations flowing in upon him. He gradually learns to do so in various promptings. He must be

very strongly impressed by the fact that some sources of excitation, which he will later recognize as his own bodily organs, can provide him with sensations at any moment, whereas other sources evade him from time to time—among what he desires most of all his mother's breast—and only reappear as a result of his screaming for help. In this way, there is for the first time set over against his ego an *object* in the form of something that exits *outside* of his consciousness and which is only forced to appear by a special action." (Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, 1930)¹⁸

This "constitutes" a subjective reality principle within the child. More specifically, it is structured as "an ego<>desire<>object" dynamic. At this stage of the child's development, loneliness is essentially *intra-psychic*; separation occurs "inside the self." There is as yet no other self. The baby yearns for the breast unaware that it is attached to a *person* in the same fashion in which it might miss its lost teddy bear. Hence the child fears separation from desired objects. The self is object-dependent. The infant distinguishes and feels separated from *valued* objects as no longer under his control, like his misplaced pacifier; and he feels angry and anxious when he is separated from desired special objects, especially what he wishes for and fantasizes about above all else, his mother's breast.¹⁹

For both Kant and Freud, self-consciousness is relationally constituted—not caused or externally conditioned—by the self/subject-inanimate/object relation, i.e. intra-personally. While for Hegel, in contrast to Kant, the self is mutually conditioned by its relation to an *other* self. Hegel's self is constituted as a social relation as opposed to an intra-psychic one.

The fourth stage of separation occurs when the loneliness becomes *inter-personal*. In Hegelian terms, the child's narcissistic ego *dialectically* separates its own self from the mother's self, thus generating conflicts of self-assertion, resistance, defiance, and

hostility toward the opposing "other" self; in this instance, the mother, who is an uncertain responding self in relation to the child (self/ego versus other-self/ego separation). This constitutes the fear of loneliness as a separation from a desired and special, unique other self.

Now the breast becomes something complicating and frustrating. It is something the mother can offer or withhold at will, thus creating interpersonal conflicts and generating in the child a vacillation between fear and anger, fear and anxiety, and fear and depression, thus leading to the dynamics of loneliness. The latter corresponds to Hegel's conflicted relation between Master and Slave, Lordship and Bondage; it is a "battle to the death" for narcissistic self-assertion and recognition at the expense of the other self. It also corresponds to Hegel's stage of social selfconsciousness generated by conflicts between other separate selfconsciousnesses, e.g., mother and child; siblings and child.²⁰ For Hegel, this is (a) the source of social self-consciousness as opposed to personal self-consciousness (self-object relation in Kant). But it is also the origin of personal conflicts with other selves leading to social separations and loneliness. In empiricism, this description corresponds to Hobbes' depiction of man's life as "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short"; "a war of all against all"; "wherein everyman is an enemy to every man."21

The fifth stage of separation is psychosis/madness/insanity, when the self is separated within its own consciousness; it stands against its own self as well as against external reality. The subject-object relation disintegrates and the internal fragmentation of the self becomes constituted by the inability of the self to come to terms within its own self; it is a forced, self-inflicted injury brought about by its desperate loneliness and its struggle to create

an alternate and more satisfying and fantastic protection against loneliness.

"[T]he feeling soul in its struggle with the immediacy of its substantial content to raise itself to the self-related simple subjectivity present in the I whereby it becomes completely self-possessed and conscious of its self, separates its self from itself...the mind, which is shut up within itself, has sunk into itself and consists in being no longer in immediate contact with reality but in having positively separated itself from its self." (Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, 1817, my emphasis)²²

Under the extreme pressures of loneliness, the self separates its self from reality and even from—and against—its own self; it tries to control the loneliness within by creating an internal realm of illusory and delusional fantasies in order to counteract the despair. Unable to deal with intense and/or prolonged loneliness, the mind separates its self from the social world dominated by others as it narcissistically retreats both into and within its own self (cf. Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*).²³ I recall, when "treating" schizophrenics it soon became obvious how difficult it is to penetrate, to enter within their protected spheres of consciousness.

The sixth stage of separation is from values (as opposed to objects or other selves). It consists of a separation from ethical, aesthetic, and/or religious values; from previously supportive "ways of life," which are forcibly abandoned because of racial or gender or class prejudice; from familiar cultural customs; by divorce; unemployment; migration; global wars; atrocities; holocausts; etc.

The seventh and final stage of separation is death; it is the soul's separation from life, with the ultimate and consequent realization that each of us dies all alone and that the world will go on uncaringly without us (cf. Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*; in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and the *Mayor of Casterbridge*,

both characters in the end wish to be buried in unmarked graves, as if they had never existed).

"[Death] is a truth that knows no exception that everything living dies for *internal* reasons—becomes inorganic once again—then we shall be compelled to say that *the aim of all life is death* and looking backwards, that *inanimate things existed before living ones.*" (Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 1920)²⁴

Once more, what remains critically important in all these modes of separation is the synthetic *a priori* relation between primary narcissism<>loneliness<>hostility.

Freud's conception of the narcissistic ego is the ultimate source of loneliness and its natural impulses for dominance are often self-destructive and unforgiving when they fail.

"But how can the sadistic instinct, whose aim it is to injure the object [i.e. other self] be derived from Eros, the preserver [and unifier] of life? Is it not plausible to suppose that this sadism is in fact a death instinct [the principle of Thanatos], which, under the influence of the narcissistic libido, has been forced away from the ego and has consequently only emerged in relation to the object? It now enters in the service of the sexual function. During the oral stage of organization of the libido, the act of obtaining erotic mastery over an object [by aggressively biting the mother's breast] coincides with that object's destruction." (Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, 1920)²⁵

And again:

"We have given it the name of narcissism. The subject behaves as though he were in love with himself; his egoistic instincts and his libidinal wishes are not yet separable...We suspect already that this narcissistic organization is never wholly abandoned. [Indeed!] A human being remains to some extent narcissistic even when he has found external objects for his libido." (Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 1950, my exclamation)²⁶

Again, it all begins with the oceanic feeling and its empowerment of primary narcissism.

"[T]he original stage of narcissism [begins with the oceanic feeling] in which the childish ego enjoyed self-sufficiency." (Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, 1921)²⁷

But narcissism always desires mastery over the other consciousness.²⁸

It is critical to understand that Freud's unconscious is mnemonic; it is accessible, retrievable by free association and the interpretation of dreams. His unconscious, although hidden, is in principle retrievable by and through memory. And Freud is a determinist. Presumably, by reexperiencing the original traumas, the ego gains insight, control, and relief over his symptoms.

By contrast, Kant's *epistemic subconscious* is spontaneous and inaccessible, irretrievable; it is the source for *how* consciousness itself is generated, created *below* self-consciousness and even below Fred's mnemonic unconscious.²⁹ However, Schopenhauer's spontaneous *affective subconscious is the irrational Will;* it is the subterranean source for the deepest narcissism, egoism, and ultimately evil.³⁰ This is precisely what civilization and culture must protect against and from.

Third theme: The consequences of loneliness

The first significant article written on loneliness as a subject matter in its own right is by a psychoanalyst, Gregory Zilboorg. In his 1938 article, "Loneliness," Zilboorg, who was quite familiar with Kant's philosophy, was the first to draw a clear synthetic *a priori* relation between narcissism<>loneliness<>hostility.³¹ In

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the article, he recounts the myth of Narcissus, an uncommonly handsome young man so attractive that all the maidens desired him. But they meant nothing to him. Poor Echo was so distraught that she pined away until nothing was left but her voice. And, so the goddess Nemesis decided to punish him and when he gazed into a reflective pool of water he fell in love with his own image and drowned. The point is that narcissism is intrinsically destructive; it is both a danger to others as well as to the self. In the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, a Narcissistic Personality disorder is essentially defined as an incorrigible and unrepentant life-long disorder;³² and it is closely related to Antisocial Personality disorders, which are individuals who lack a moral conscience.³³

Zilboorg then argues that when an infant is unduly pampered and spoiled, it develops powerful feelings of entitlement, delusions of grandeur, and megalomaniacal symptoms that will generate feelings of hostility whenever its desires are thwarted. If these feelings are not resolved, it frequently turns to murder followed by suicide. This violent reaction is equally true of groups as it is of nations.³⁴ Obviously, as early as 1933, Zilboorg would already have been writing with full awareness of the impending dangers of Hitler and Nazism. Similarly, Hannah Arendt, in The Origins of Totalitarianism, blames the humiliation and the punishment suffered by Germany's national pride after the defeat in the First World War for leading to Nazism and Hitler, as well Italian Fascism (Mussolini), and later Communism (i.e. Stalin).35 But the salient point is that whenever human desires are blocked and impeded, the reaction is anger—not anxiety or depression; those only follow later and if they are not resolved they will lead to acts of compulsive and obsessional revenge.

The second significant article on loneliness was by another psychoanalyst, Frieda Fromm-Reichman. Again, it is titled simply "Loneliness" and she identities it with anxiety: its meaning is *identical* to anxiety, and when it is severe, it is closely related to the inability to communicate, to reach others, and the conviction that no one is listening because no one cares.³⁶

The third psychoanalyst writing on loneliness was Eric Fromm, who forged a corresponding synthetic *a priori* connection between loneliness, guilt, and shame.³⁷ All this leads to the result that loneliness can be conceptually viewed as a synthetic *universal meaning*; that it constitutes a genus-to-species relation, which includes Hegel's dialectical discussion of the meaning of *alienation* in his "Lordship and Bondage" section leading to Marx; and his *estrangement* section in the "Unhappy Consciousness" section leading to Kierkegaard in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.³⁸ Loneliness has many faces and myriad expressions, including fear, hostility, anxiety, depression, jealousy, despair, neglect, abandonment, betrayal, rejection, guilt, shame, rage, humiliation, defeat, etc.

Currently in the United States there is an epidemic of killings conventionally described by the Press as "senseless," "meaningless," and "motiveless" acts. But I submit they are not motiveless at all. Indeed, they are all-too "motivefull." They are fueled and animated by narcissistic loneliness; by an anger fraught with desperation when the self's narcissistic desires have failed, and the only recourse is to indiscriminately punish others for one's loneliness regardless of the consequences.

Fourth theme: The remedy for loneliness

Aristotle supposedly defines friendship as one soul dwelling in two bodies, but certainly every meaningful concept must have a meaningful opposite. The opposite of loneliness is not love, rather it is intimacy. Love is one-sided; I can love someone who does not love me. By contrast, intimacy is grounded on feelings and acts of mutual empathy. But empathy must be distinguished from sympathy and/or pity, which are both superficial, one-sided, and non-interactive. The concept of empathy was first formulated by Theodor Lipps as an aesthetic relation between the self and the admired object. It means that the aesthetic pleasure is derived when the subject (the observer) actively projects her or his own feelings into the object, when the observer enters within the artistic expression by identifying with its harmony, proportions, balance, beauty, grace, vibrancy, freedom of movement, etc., and when the observer identifies, participates and is emotionally infused by the dancer's flowing motions.³⁹ But in Lipps, the projection is one sided; it is thrust forward from the self toward the object. There is no suggestion that the directional target of that attention derives any reciprocal benefit from the observer's concentration or interest.

Significantly, Husserl, in the Fourth and Fifth Meditations of *Cartesian Meditations*,⁴⁰ attempts to exploit Lipps' principle and paradigm in order to solve the classical problem of Cartesian solipsism, namely that I can only *know* that I alone exist; that everyone else is only a dubitable imaginary figment in my mind. This creates the paradox that if all I can know is my own mind, then any other "self" is a mere illusion. And if *only* I can think, then loneliness becomes a meaningless concept, a contradiction

in terms. In order to salvage the problem of other minds, Husserl invokes Lipps' empathy. We *mediately* (as opposed to immediately, intuitively, eidetically), "analogically," "ap-presentationally," and therefore *inferentially* place our body in the place of the body of "the other self." But this will never do because this maneuver is inferential, i.e. a *mediate* relation and therefore dubitable. I *know* my mind, but I can only *infer* yours.

The solution to loneliness requires a new definition of empathy, which truly leads to intimacy. It must be immediately, eidetically, and intuitively meant, that is, intended; it must be experienced simultaneously by both selves; reciprocally, between and within both minds. True intimacy firstly must be mutually shared, intersubjectively, interactively with the other self and grounded through empathy. Empathy depends on feelings of mutual trust; mutual age appropriate respect; and mutual affection. And secondly, it must depend on a mutual sharing of feelings, meanings, and values. For example, consider a young couple, who has just experienced the death of their only child. Their overwhelming grief is mutual. Or an elderly couple devoted to each other throughout a long life being told that one of them has just been diagnosed with terminal cancer. Intimacy and empathy are ethical relations, not merely psychological ones. In addition, empathy also secures Kant's second formulation of the categorical imperative, which commands treating the other self better than your own self; it stresses intentions and personal sacrifice over narcissism. Intimacy means both parties have mutual duties to the other self, a concept derived from the ancient Stoics. 41 In terms of the overarching quality of intimate relationships, there are two imperative requirements: (1) ethical (as opposed to egoistic and narcissistic) commitment to the other self (and consequently the abrogation of the Master-Slave dialectic); and (2) constant communication between the two selves.

Loneliness and architecture

The current approach of the neurosciences in relation to loneliness is woefully inadequate and limited. It reduces all reality to a single *quantitative* feature: *matter in motion*. But humanism denies that reality is reducible to, identical with, and/or explainable by just matter and motion *alone*. Science deals with extended material quantities, thus eliminating (an) the entire sphere of active, purposeful, and intentional consciousness; and by annihilating the entire realm of ideal *qualitative* values, including ethical and aesthetic values. Values then merely become relative and subjective, i.e. fictional.

The critical error and inconsistency of science is that it confesses that many eternities ago, *all* material existence was lifeless (e.g., Freud above). But at a certain uncaused and spontaneous juncture in nature (Epicurean chance?), a single act inexplicably produced living matter. Or it "emanated" (Plotinus); it "arose" from "dead" matter. Just so, humanism believes that consciousness has similarly emanated, arisen from animate nature. The consequence of this chance organic/ideal complex event is that the issue of loneliness must be addressed by inter-disciplinary principles, approaches, and methods in order to gain insight and understanding into the dynamics of loneliness and intimacy. Accordingly, anything that contributes to a comprehensively unified and positive interdisciplinarity between the self and its environment is to be welcomed.

Kant discusses architecture in his 1790 treatise on aesthetics, *The Critique of Judgement*, which deals with "disinterested judgments of taste." By "disinterested," Kant means that the interests of the ego are suspended. For example, if I'm speculating on art as a financial investment, that would be obviously an extrinsic interest.

Art is intrinsically *expressive* and intrinsically pleasant and in fact *therapeutic*. It pleases "in itself." Kant distinguishes two forms of art. The sublime *expresses* itself through the boundlessness of nature, in the starry heavens above and in the violence and majesty of a sea storm that pleases so long as we are not in danger. By contrast, the beautiful is *expressed* through distinct objects within definite lines of demarcation. The three forms of art are architecture, sculpture, and painting. And all art, according to Aristotle, involves production, manufacturing, making. We enjoy the "expressed" only insofar as we can recreate the feelings and the "making" depicted.

The guiding principle of therapeutic art is that it addresses loneliness by asking for nothing beyond itself; its therapeutic value consists entirely in its ability to lose the self by being completely absorbed, consumed by the natural event (the sublime) or by the object (the beautiful). In short, by *contemplation*.

There is a faculty of [aesthetic] taste for judging an object in reference to the imagination's *free conformity to law*. Now, if in the judgment of taste the imagination must be considered in its freedom, it is not regarded empirically as reproductive [i.e. imitative], as it is subject to the laws of association of ideas, but as *creative and spontaneous*, in short the product of genius.⁴³

Kant describes the *quality* of the judgment of appreciation of taste in teleological terms as a "purposiveness without a specific purpose." Again, it delights in-itself. The ego loses its self; it disappears and loneliness is extinguished. Unlike science, art concentrates on the *qualitative*—as opposed to the quantitative—on the features of the experience. Nevertheless, although the source of the enjoyment is subjective, the informed aesthetic judgment is expected to be "objective" and universally confirmed as either sublime or beautiful. Good taste is not relative.

Similarly, Schopenhauer, in The World as Will and Representation (1819), 45 following Kant, separates the phenomenal, empirical world into an essentially scientific realm composed of the intuitions of space and time, but instead of his predecessor's dozen categories of synthetic a priori relations, he reduces them to the single one of causality. Every event is reduced to a determinist causal necessity, physical and/or psychological. By contrast to Kant's subconscious epistemic spontaneity, Schopenhauer's is a subconscious affective spontaneity: it is an irrational, inaccessible, impermeable, dark, and fathomless Will. Whereas Kant postulates the existence of God, the freedom of the will, and the immortality of the soul for ethical purposes, Schopenhauer claims the Will, as a noumenal thing-in-Itself, is an unknowable reality, which ultimately serves as the source of all that exists and occurs in our realm of appearances. The closest approach—but indirect—is through the mediation of art: "All genuine art proceeds from knowledge of perception never from the concept."46 Perception serves as a figurative—but not a literal mediating—bridge between the phenomenal and the noumenal world. Our world is chock-full of misery, pain, suffering and narcissistic evil (contra Leibniz's claim that "this is the best of all possible worlds"). For Schopenhauer, it is the worst of all possible worlds.⁴⁷ But what mitigates all this suffering is art, which is disinterested and capable of achieving pure, i.e. will-less, contemplation and escaping "this veil of tears" by accessing a Platonic Realm of Eternal Ideas. According to Israel Knox, "Schopenhauer described beauty to be the quality of the world when contemplated, apart from all willing, for its own sake," and "he distinctly anticipates the contemporary empathy (Einfühlung) theory [of art]."48 Summarizing Schopenhauer's view on architecture, Knox goes on to say: "Architecture, therefore,

brings into clear distinction, some low-grade Ideas such as gravity, cohesion, rigidity, and hardness, those universal qualities of stone, those first, simplest, most important inarticulate manifestations of the Will."⁴⁹ And in turn, "The truest stage of the Will achieves a peaceful result from the violence of the Will's inner nature."⁵⁰

For Schopenhauer, we see the Will's inner nature revealing itself in discord; for, properly speaking, the conflict between gravity and rigidity—a form of objectification of the Will—resists the main problem for architecture, which is to make this conflict appear with perfect distinctness in many different ways. The beauty of a kind to be found in its activity is to display the forces of gravity and rigidity in the most distinct and yet varied manner. Against what architecture communicates to us is neither function, nor meaning, nor form but rather the existence of those fundamental forces of nature, the first Platonic Ideas, the lowest stages of the Will's objectivity. We recall that the entire Scientific Revolution was heralded by Newton's universal law of gravity. For Schopenhauer, architecture is the missing link between the realm of science and art; in turn, it is the most direct fusion of nature and Will.⁵¹

Thus, architecture represents the most immediate connection between the phenomenal world and the noumenal Will, the ontological link, the passage between the Great Chain of Being.⁵²

There are levels of reality as there are corresponding levels of cognition. As an advocate for Hinduism—all is Maya, all is Appearance—and Buddhism, Schopenhauer subscribes to the conviction that all life is suffering; all suffering is based in desire; all desire is based in the ego or self; eliminate the self and "you" will have annihilated all desire; even the desire not to desire.⁵³ Unlike science, which deals with spatial and temporal quantities and measurement, beauty deals with qualities. In the case of

architecture, the qualities of gravity, rigidity, light, and dynamism. This appreciation in the designs and the imagined manufacture of architectural edifices is what gives us a therapeutic aesthetic respite from the turbulence affecting the irrational narcissistic Will.

In the beginning of mankind, humans sought for a mate; then a family; then a tribe. And next to architecturally designing and manufacturing protections for themselves by building the walls of Ilium and medieval castles; and by erecting pyramids and medieval cathedrals, with their spires reaching to the heavens, as tributes to an existence beyond our present one. These monuments express both the fears and the aspirations of mankind.

In conclusion, there are numerous natural affiliations between disciplines that bear exploring and exploiting in our studies of loneliness, as for example between loneliness, architecture, and painting. During the Middle ages, the symbol of loneliness was poignantly conveyed by the painting of Christ's crucifixion. More currently, I believe Van Gogh's 28 self-portraits, confirmed by his letters of loneliness to his brother, Theo, underscores the depth of his sense of isolation. Closer to our own time, the connection between loneliness and architecture is powerfully displayed throughout Edward Hopper's paintings of deserted houses, buildings, lighthouses, restaurants, offices, railroad tracks going nowhere, empty rooms, and even lonelier individuals staring out into space and not talking to each other, looking past each other, lost and detached within their own inner worlds. Correspondingly, the works of Andrew Wyeth and his painting Christina's World, with her prone body lying in an open field and stretching out vearningly toward a deserted house, highlights the theme of loneliness, separation, and longing for home. Similarly, his painting Chambered Nautilus, of a solitary figure of a woman sitting upright on a bed and staring wistfully out an open window, expresses the solitude of daydreams. Further, his multiple studies of open windows titled "Looking Out: Looking In" each serve as haunting metaphors for the Husserlian intentionality and Kantian reflexivity of consciousness. All these paintings can be used for therapeutic interventions for sharing our sense of loneliness with each other.

Notes

- 1. Ben Mijuskovic, Feeling Lonesome: The Philosophy and Psychology of Loneliness (Santa Barbara, CA.: Praeger, 2015).
- 2. Rene Spitz, "Hospitalism: An Inquiry into the Genesis of Psychiatric Conditions in Early Childhood," *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 1 (1945), 53-74; cf. the videos: "Overt Primacy Rejection in Infancy," 1952: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=02tW5K91_kY (accessed 3.2020) and "Emotional Deprivation in Infancy," 1952: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z1eOpqV1fco (accessed 3.2020). See also Floyd Ruch, *Psychology and Life* (Chicago: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1953). See also Rene Spitz, *The First Year of Life: A Psychoanalytic Study of Normal and Deviant Development of Object Relations* (New York: International Universities Press, 1965). The term "object relations" standing for other selves underscores the psychoanalytic custom of describing other selves as phenomenalist constructions of sense data.
- 3. John Bowlby, *Attachment and Loss* (New York: Basic Books, 1969), Volume I; and *Separation, Anxiety, and Anger* (London: Hogarth Press), Volume II. Lane Degregory, "Girl in the window," *Tampa Bay Times*, August 3, 2008: https://projects.tampabay.com/projects/girl-in-the-window/danielle/ (accessed 2.2020).
- 4. James Lynch, The Broken Heart: The Medical Consequences of Loneliness (New York: Basic Books, 1977). James Lynch, A Cry Unheard: New Insights into the Medical Consequences of Loneliness (Baltimore: Bancroft Press, 2000). Cf. Margaret Mahler, Fred Pine, & Anni Bergman. The Psychological Birth of the Human Infant: Symbiosis and Individuation (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 78-79, 111 and passim.
- 5. Immanuel Kant, Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime, edited and translated by Patrick Frierson and Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011/1764).

- 6. St. Augustine. The Confessions of St. Augustine (New York: Doubleday, 1960). In Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit, in the "Lord and Bondage" description, Marx's economic alienation is mirrored by the worker's sense of separation from nature; his work; the product of his labor; and his fellow man by competition (Philosophical and Economic Manuscripts of 1844). In his "Unhappy Consciousness" treatment, Hegel illustrates religious estrangement as man's separation from God, which is later reflected in Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling. Ludwig Feuerbach, in The Essence of Christianity, argues that man projects his subjective self-consciousness into an illusory God in order to assuage his loneliness. Soren Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling (New York: Penguin Books, 1986/1843).
- 7. Plato, *Sophist*, translated by Benjamin Jowett. Project Gutenberg: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1735/1735-h/1735-h.htm (accessed 3.2020), 245e. See also F.M. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge: The Theaetetus and The Sophist of Plato* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964).
- 8. Ben Mijuskovic, The Achilles of Rationalist Arguments: The Simplicity, Unity, and Identity of Thought and Soul from the Cambridge Platonists to Kant (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974).
- 9. Ben Mijuskovic, *Consciousness and Loneliness: Theoria and Praxis* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).
- 10. Rene Descartes, *Philosophical Works of Descartes*, translated by E. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross (New York: Dover, 1931), Fourth and Fifth Meditations.
- 11. Ben Mijuskovic, Loneliness in Philosophy, Psychology, and Literature (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2012). Ben Mijuskovic, Feeling Lonesome: The Philosophy and Psychology of Loneliness (Santa Barbara, CA.: Praeger, 2015). Ben Mijuskovic, "Cognitive and Motivational Roots of Loneliness," in Addressing Loneliness: Coping, Prevention, and Clinical Interventions, edited by Ami Sha'ked and Ami Rokach (New York: Routledge, 2015), 20-34. Mijuskovic, Consciousness and Loneliness, op. cit.
- 12. American Psychiatric Association. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Publishing, 2013, 5th edition).
- 13. Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1960/1923), Part V, 56.
- 14. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1961/1930), Part 1, 58.

- 15. William James, *Principles of Psychology* (New York: Dover, 1950/1890), Vol. I, 488. A corresponding passage occurs in Hegel's description of Sense-Certainty in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Sections 90-110. And both anticipate Freud's description of the "oceanic feeling." G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A.V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977/1807).
- 16. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan and Co., 1958/1787), A 107-110.
- 17. Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, op. cit., sections 111-130.
- 18. Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, op. cit., 10.
- 19. Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, op. cit., sections 166-177.
- 20. Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, op. cit., sections 178-196.
- 21. Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan (London: Dent, 1931/1651), Chapter
- 13. The chapter corresponds to Hegel's stage of Civil Society in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Sections 586-589.
- 22. G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, translated by William Wallace and A.V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971/1817), Section 408 ff. Cf. Daniel Berthold-Bonds, *Hegel's Theory of Madness* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), 20.
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Definitions of propositions

- Analytic, *a priori*, universal and necessary: the relation between the subject term and the predicate term are identical, e.g. 2+3=5; or "All bachelors are unmarried males."
- Synthetic, *a posteriori:* the relation between the subject term and the predicate term are contingent and particular, e.g., "The cat is asleep."
- Both *a priori* and synthetic: the relation is universal and necessary, but the two terms are not identical but rather additive, "informative," e.g., "All causes have effects."
- Empirical causes and effects are externally related. *A priori* relations are internal.
- Constitutive relations are created *within* consciousness alone.
- Causal relations empirically, contingently associate two distinct terms.



The Languages of Loneliness: Developing a Vocabulary for Researching Social Health

Christina R. Victor

The context for this paper is the concept of social health. In 1948 The World Health Organisation defined health in terms of physical, mental and social well-being. The definition was framed in the positive, and is more expansive than simply the absence of illness, disease or disability. Whilst there is a recognition of the importance of wellbeing, we suggest that the concept of social health has been neglected relative to the physical and mental components of the definition. Furthermore, researchers continue to focus on deficit models of health in terms of focussing on disease and illness rather than what stops people and populations becoming unhealthy. We see the same emphasis in research focused on social health which predominantly focuses on loneliness and/ or isolation. Within the context of developing a research agenda for social health we examine three domains of the contemporary research landscape focused on loneliness in later life. We first consider how loneliness is defined and differentiated from other distinct but related concepts such as isolation, aloneness and solitude. We then focus on issues of how loneliness is measured. Finally, we examine the transformation of how loneliness in later life is framed. Initially conceptualised as a social problem of old age, then as a contemporary public health problem and ultimately as a modern moral panic. We conclude by considering a reframing of the loneliness research agenda into one that emphasises social health rather than social ill-health.

Terminological inexactitude: What are we talking about when we talk about loneliness?

Loneliness is a term used frequently and in many different contexts. It is used to describe individuals – 'He is a lonely person'; stages of life - 'She had a lonely old age'; times of day or year - 'He spent many lonely nights'; places - 'It is a lonely stretch of road'; communities - 'Big cities are such lonely places'; and entire nations, with Britain being described as the loneliest country in Europe. But what are we talking about when we use the word loneliness? The research literature, policy and practice are redolent with debates about concepts and terminology. Is an examination of the vocabulary used when taking about loneliness an academic indulgence or a prerequisite of an informed debate about contemporary society or the experience of ageing and later life? We argue that precision of the definition and use of concepts is important in conducting empirical research across disciplines and is essential for informing policy and practice. There are two key attributes to the accepted definition of loneliness. First, there is a broad consensus that loneliness is an experience that is identified by individuals themselves and is not something that can identified or observed by others. Second, loneliness is characterised by both having unpleasant/negative consequences for the individual and is not a state chosen by the individual. Solitude can be described as 'positive loneliness'. It is actively sought by an individual and usually has positive and restorative benefits to the experience. Illustrative of this are those who seek solitude for creative, spiritual and personal growth.1

Loneliness is an evaluative concept. It articulates the unwanted gap between an individual's desired quantity and/or quality of

social relationships and the relationships they have. Thus, we have the paradox that individuals may have a wide circle of family and friends but experience loneliness because these relationships do not fulfil an individual's expectations for the quality of their relationships. Conversely, an individual may have a small number of social relationships but not experience loneliness because of their quality. To date, loneliness has been anchored in the evaluation of the quantity/quality dimensions of relationships. A potentially emergent dimension of loneliness relates to the modality of social relations: in-person, by telephone or via a range of platforms such as Zoom, Skype, Facetime or WhatsApp. Has physical distancing and the conduct of social relationships remotely or virtually during COVID-19 creating loneliness by virtue of not being able to be with those people? Can loneliness be generated by the desire for in person contact with, for example grandchildren, when contacts are via Zoom? Does seeing but not being able to touch or hold those dearest to us generate loneliness? These are just some of the emerging research questions that have been developing over the last decade, but which have gained increased attention and importance during COVID-19.

It cannot be over-emphasised that loneliness is an evaluation by individuals of their social relationships and, as such, cannot be assigned to them by others. Within the broad 'cognitive gap' approach to loneliness there are three key conceptual types: social, emotional and existential loneliness. Social loneliness was the focus of 103 out of 144 papers included in the 2019 conceptual review by Mansfield et al.² Emotional loneliness was the focus of 24 studies and existential loneliness in 17. Drawing on the work of Sullivan et al,³ we can illustrate these three types of loneliness. Social loneliness is well described by the following comments: 'I was on the phone

to a friend for an hour... and she never asked about how I was.' Emotional loneliness following bereavement was described as 'loneliness of the heart. And that's it. I mean everything I touch, everything I do she's there.' Potentially, emotional loneliness could be the outcome of other types of losses or transitions such as loss of identity upon retirement or onset of chronic illness. Existential loneliness articulates not just the lack of meaningful relationships but as a visceral feeling of separation from the world and others summarised as 'on your own, with on one to talk to, nobody to care, and nobody to care for.'

Loneliness is distinct from, but related to, the concepts of solitude, aloneness, living alone and social isolation. ⁴Aloneness refers to the amount of time individuals spend alone, which maybe voluntary or involuntary. Voluntary time alone links to solitude or positive loneliness.

Involuntary time alone is where this is not the choice of the individual. For example, older people living in households where all the other members are out at work, school or other occupations for large amounts of the day. Although this was a factor included in early studies looking at loneliness,⁵ it seems to have fallen out of favour and replaced by living alone. However, recent work by Victor et al. suggest that time spent alone is an important predictor of loneliness.⁶ Living alone is simply a classification of household size. Although it is frequently used as a proxy measure for aloneness or loneliness, it does not imply a deficit in social relationships.

Social isolation is a broad term which describes the lack of social contacts/engagement with family, friends and neighbours. A basic measure of social isolation, as used by Townsend in *The Family Life of Old People* from 1957,⁷ is a simple count of daily/weekly contacts. This can then be extended to include enumerating

social networks and/or details of support received from network members. Rarely do such measures ask about support given, thereby not fully recognising the reciprocity of support between network members. Empirically, loneliness and isolation, the two concepts most often used interchangeably in academic, policy, practice and lay discourses, are distinct concepts as demonstrated by Victor et al.⁸ For a sample of 999 people aged 65+ living in the community in Britain, they show that 6% were lonely, 22% were isolated, 5% were both lonely and isolated and the majority, 67% were neither. Thus, both empirically and conceptually these are distinct concepts representing different dimensions of social health and are not interchangeable terms.

The language of loneliness measurement

When did you last feel lonely? Was this a mild feeling in response to something you heard or saw or an intense response thinking about the loss of a parent, partner or friend? Does loneliness occur frequently or is it a rare occurrence? When you experience loneliness how long does it last? Is it a fleeting experience or one of protracted duration? Despite this complexity, empirically loneliness is presented as an unproblematic concept that is universally understood and experienced homogeneously. People are either lonely or not lonely; and everyone explicitly understands when s/he is or is not lonely. We also assume a homogeneity of understanding across gender, generation, culture and setting despite the heterogeneity exhibited by these dimensions for other social science constructs.

Loneliness measures largely focus upon establishing the frequency of the experiences, asking questions such as do you

experience loneliness never, seldom, often or always. Rarely do studies include the duration of the loneliness experience or its intensity. Yet these may be important but neglected elements of trying to understand loneliness and its potential impact on individuals.9 The complexity of looking at the intersections of these domains may reveal the heterogeneity of loneliness as an experience. It may also have implications for policy and practice. Currently our evidence presumes more frequent loneliness generates worse outcomes. However, we do not know how this links with duration and intensity. Is a frequent, low intensity and short duration loneliness worse than less frequent but higher intensity and longer duration? How do these components interact across different population sub-groups and across the lifecourse? For example, do younger adults experience loneliness in terms of the intensity of the experience and older adults of frequency? These questions remain largely unanswered and there is clearly scope for more detailed and in-depth thinking about how individuals experience the different dimensions and types of loneliness.

How to 'best' empirically measure loneliness is the subject of considerable debate. Of course, given the evaluative nature of loneliness, there is no gold standard against which to validate scales. Two key areas of debate are: (a) the merits of single item questions as compared with scales, and (b) the advantages/disadvantages of asking directly about loneliness as compared with 'indirect' questions. Sheldon undertook a survey of older adults living in Wolverhampton in the UK in the immediate post-war period. Included in his 1948 book *The Social Medicine of Old Age* are data about the prevalence of loneliness based upon responses to a question which asked: *are you... very lonely, lonely at times or never lonely*? There are now numerous versions of this question, which

vary in terms of response options which can range from 2 to 7 and sometimes include a reference (e.g. in the last year, last week). A critique of the single item question is the use of the word *loneliness*. It is argued that these types of questions will not establish the 'true' prevalence of loneliness as not all participants will want to characterise themselves as lonely, especially if asked in a direct interview.

The single item measures may have limitations in terms of theoretical underpinning of the question, establishing the most efficient set of response categories and how well these measures identify changes in loneliness. However, there is no true 'gold standard' prevalence of loneliness – it is the personal evaluation of participants. One critique argues that these questions underestimate prevalence because participants may not answer 'honestly' given the potentially stigmatising nature of admitting to being lonely. This fundamentally misunderstands the nature of loneliness. If I don't think I am lonely, who are you to disagree and tell me that I really am? The single item questions generally show high levels of acceptability to older people. In large scale population surveys, using different methods of data collection- face-to-face, online, telephone and postal surveys very few participants decline to answer the question.¹¹ The more relevant critiques of the single item questions are their limited psychometric properties and the lack of a robust theoretical foundation. It seems likely that where responses consist of either two or three options, sensitivity to change is going to be limited, which may be problematic in evaluation studies.

There are a range of scales used to measure loneliness which do not include the word *loneliness* directly in any of the questions. Two of the most used are the University of California at Los

Angeles (UCLA) Loneliness Scale¹² and the de Jong-Gierveld (DJG) Loneliness Scale.¹³ The UCLA scale, which has a variety of versions from 40 to 3 questions, considers loneliness as unidimensional, and that it arises from 'social deficits' in close relationships. The DJG scale conceptualises loneliness as a multidimensional concept based upon the distinction between social and emotional loneliness developed by Weiss and is available in 6 and 11 item versions.¹⁴ For both scales higher scores indicate higher levels of loneliness. Sensitivity to detect change is unclear as also, perhaps more importantly, is what change 'means' to the life of an older person and their social health. We might see a reduction (or increase) of, for example, 2 points on the 11 item DJG scale as a result of an intervention, but how does that manifest itself in terms of the daily life of an individual? Of course, as statistical significance, but so too is the 'real world' impact of changed scores. Typically, results are reported as mean scores. For both the UCLA 3 item scale and the two versions of the DJG scale, threshold scores can be used to classify populations into groups of typically no/low loneliness; moderate loneliness and severe loneliness. However, whilst these scales do not use the word loneliness, they can ask some potentially stigmatising or upsetting questions. To illustrate this point, two items from the 11 item DJG scale ask I experience a general sense of emptiness' and 'I often feel rejected'.

The language of loneliness problematisation

In his 2012 book *Loneliness in Philosophy, Psychology and Literature*, Mijuskovic argues that loneliness is simply a part of being human, but contemporary perspectives demonstrated a 'problem focused' approach.¹⁵ The current language of loneliness has problematised

loneliness. This is continually reinforced in research, policy and practice where different disciplines seek to define and measure loneliness, determine risk factors, and argue it can be easily alleviated with the right intervention. The underlying assumptions are that there is a universal understanding of what loneliness is, that it is a homogeneous, static and/or linear experience, and that it is quantitatively accessible. In terms of how loneliness is presented in the UK, it has changed over the last 10 years from a social problem of old age to a moral panic than threatens the very existence of the welfare state, especially the National Health Service.

Loneliness as a problem of old age: Initially, loneliness was characterised as a problem of 'old age'. In a 1947 survey Rowntree stated that 'A distressing feature of old age is loneliness. All who have done welfare work among the old have found it the most common, if at the same time the most imponderable, of the ills from which the aged suffer, and its frequency was amply confirmed by our study.'16 Loneliness is seen as a problem of later life rather than other age groups and, perhaps to overstate the case, part of the ageing process. We expect to become lonely when we grow old lonely.¹⁷ This stereotype is illustrated in advertisements from agerelated charities which portray loneliness as a specific issue for older people, as exemplified by the Christmas holiday period, although there is no evidence that levels of loneliness for older adults are highest at Christmas.¹⁸ Recent research, stimulated in part by the redefinition of loneliness as a public health problem, has reported that loneliness is not unique to older people but is experienced by adults of all ages. UK data from the Office for National Statistics show that the prevalence of loneliness is highest amongst young adults with 10% of those aged 16-24 reporting they are often/ always lonely, compared with 3% of those aged 75+.19 From this

it could be argued that the framing of loneliness as a problem of old age constrained how we thought about the subject and limited our research horizons and consequently developments in terms of policy and practice.

Loneliness as a public health problem: The portrayal of loneliness in the UK has changed over the last decade from a social problem of old age to a public health problem, but still rooted in the focus on older people. Illustrative of this perspective is the 2017 publication from the Mental Health Foundation Scotland entitled Loneliness - The Public Health Challenge of our Time.²⁰ In a similar vein, in 2010 the Royal College of Nursing described loneliness as one of the greatest public health challenges of our time.²¹ Izzi Seccombe, Local Government Association spokeswoman for public health, said in 2016: Loneliness is a significant and growing concern for many older people and is something that is now being identified as a major public health issue.'22 It is not clear what drove this redefinition of loneliness but two factors in the UK are involved in this reprofiling: the link between loneliness and health outcomes, the notion of the loneliness epidemic and the role during the early to late 2010s of the UK's Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt.

Since the systematic review published in 1988 by House et al,²³ there had been evidence linking social relationships with health outcomes. House reported a link between low quantity of social relationships in both human and animal studies, i.e. social isolation, and increased risk of death. This work was much more cautious about the influence of loneliness as defined by quality of relationships on health outcomes. The publication in 2010 and 2015 by Holt Lunstad and colleagues of a series of systematic reviews on mortality and social relationships re-invigorated the debate started by House and colleagues.²⁴ Particularly important

was the comparisons drawn by these researchers in their reviews between the excess risk of death attributed to poor social health, about 30%, comparable with those attributed to smoking and obesity.²⁵ This observation has been transformed into statements such as that from Duncan Selbie, Head of Public Health England in April 2013 that 'Being isolated and living alone shortens life and increases disability'. It is equivalent to 15 cigarettes a day. How many in your community are over 65 and living alone?'²⁶ Similar comments were made in North America: 'Loneliness is Harmful to Our Nation's Health: Research underscores the role of social isolation in disease and mortality.'²⁷ This headline nicely illustrates the terminological inexactitude noted earlier, with loneliness and social isolation used interchangeably.

The other key narrative driving the reconceptualisation of loneliness as a public health problem is the concept of an epidemic of loneliness. Illustrative of this is another article in The Guardian from 2013 which states: 'Britain's loneliness epidemic: People in Britain are living longer, and increasingly, spending their last years alone. Now more of us than ever before describe ourselves as lonely.'28 Again, this headline demonstrates the terminological inexactitude seen in much commentary on this area. Versions of this argument are also evident in other countries.²⁹ An epidemic, broadly defined, is a public health term used to describe time limited increases in infectious diseases from a background level in defined locations. A looser definition is where the term is used to described increases in, for example, health related risk factors such as obesity or, in our case loneliness. What is the evidence to suggest that there has been an increase in loneliness? We have some limited evidence from older adults in the UK, where we can compare loneliness prevalence across surveys conducted at different points

in time using the single item question. For the period 1948 to 2005, Victor et al. reported the prevalence of severe loneliness, defined as those reporting they were often/always lonely, as broadly stable at 8-10%.³⁰ More recent data from for 2018 from the Office for National Statistics reports loneliness prevalence of about 3-5% for those aged 65+.³¹ Clearly there are more lonely adults in the UK in 2018 than 1948 because there are more people in this age group. However, in relative terms the prevalence has not increased, suggesting that there is not a loneliness epidemic. In evaluating loneliness reporting in terms of the number of people experiencing this, we need to have both absolute numbers and the relative proportions.

This links nicely to the influential 2013 speech by Jeremy Hunt, the UK's then Secretary of State for Health. He observed that the lonely constituted a 'forgotten million who live amongst us – ignored to our national shame.' He also stated that 'according to the Campaign to End Loneliness, there are 800,000 people in England who are chronically lonely.' This is an example of a common phenomenon in many contexts, that of specifying the number of people who have a specific problem or experience but not providing us with the population at risk – What is the total number of people who could have this? It is interesting to speculate as to why Jeremy Hunt choose to highlight loneliness at this period when there were many other pressing health related issues in the UK. One factor may have been the creation in 2011 of a charity focused exclusively on loneliness in later life, the Campaign to End Loneliness.³³

How do we define a public health problem and how well does loneliness fulfil these criteria? The criteria are flexible but generally include: (a) the issue poses a significant burden of ill-health on individuals, populations or health systems; (b) the problem is increasing; (c) there is a test that we can use to identify the problem; and (d) a proven intervention to reduce or eliminate the health burden. In terms of loneliness in the UK, two key criteria seem to have driven this agenda. The first is the perceived consequences in terms of health outcomes. If loneliness is as bad for population health as smoking, then we should implement policies to reduce loneliness. We would argue that the evidence for this is not as compelling as the reviews suggest because of variability in terms of how the exposure (loneliness) and outcomes (health status) are defined and measured and the dominance of cross sectional study designs which make disentangling cause and consequence problematic. If we observed a relationship between loneliness and dementia, is loneliness a cause or consequence of dementia? We have already noted that there is no evidence to support the proposition of a loneliness epidemic (at least for older adults).

Two further criteria need to be fulfilled for loneliness to be considered a public health problem: an effective 'test' to identify loneliness and effective interventions to prevent or ameliorate loneliness. We need to be able to identify our 'target' populations, using a 'biological/clinical' test or screening tool, and then provide effective interventions. A screening tool/test needs to be able to correctly differentiate, in our case, those who are lonely (true positives termed sensitivity), from those who are not (true negatives termed specificity). This is problematic in that there is no 'gold standard' biological, clinical or social 'diagnosis' of loneliness. Using data from Victor et al from 2005, with the single item question as our gold standard and the 11 item DJG scale as our test, there is a sensitivity of 79% and a specificity of 68%.³⁴ This means that our hypothetical intervention would not be given

to 31% of those in need but not identified by the test, and instead given to 32% of those who did not need it: overall, a very poorly performing test.

In terms of interventions, these could focus upon either (a) preventing loneliness in those who might be vulnerable or (b) reducing loneliness among those already lonely (or both). There are a plethora of interventions that focus on loneliness and these vary in terms of the mode of the intervention (group or individual; in person or on-line); the goal of the activity (preventing or reducing loneliness), the type of loneliness being addressed (chronic or temporary, emotional, social or existential). In 2018, Victor et al. reviewed 14 existing reviews of loneliness reporting 40 different intervention studies.³⁵ Most studies focused on social loneliness (n=36). There was a lack of clarity as to the intervention purpose and referral pathways were variable, as was the duration and intensity of the intervention. The review concluded that as a result of small sample sizes (mean sample size=116), the variety and adaptation of loneliness (outcome) measures used, the short follow up (only 6 studies reported post intervention follow up, of which only 1 was 12 months) evidence for the effectiveness of interventions could not be detected. No studies looked at preventing loneliness.

Loneliness as a 'moral panic': The most recent and, perhaps, most pernicious representation of loneliness in later life is as a 'moral panic', although I am stretching this concept somewhat. This conceptualisation links to statements that excess health service use by older adults will bring about the downfall of the health service in the UK. Lonely older people are characterised as using services simply because of their poor social health and not for 'legitimate' health reasons. In February 2016 Professor Keith Willett, Director for Acute Care for NHS England stated:

The consequences [of loneliness and isolation among older people] are increasing, unremitting demand on healthcare which will ultimately cripple the NHS.³⁶Again, this suggests that the relationship between loneliness and health outcomes is linear and unidirectional: loneliness is the cause (exposure) and excess service use is the consequence or outcome.

The empirical evidence to support this perspective is very limited. In 2018, Valtorta et al. undertook a systematic review of social relationships and health use by older adults.³⁷ They concluded that current evidence did not support the proposition that those with low levels of social support placed greater demands on health care independently of health status. In this approach we also see the terminological inconsistency that is so prevalent in discussions of loneliness. For example, a study published in 2018 reported that older people who lived alone were 50% more likely to visit the A&E department and visited their GP monthly.³⁸ This is then reported as 'Older people living alone visit GP every month due to loneliness'. 39 Similarly, a survey reported in the medical professionals' magazine Pulse that one in 10 GPs 'regularly' see lonely patients who are 'not unwell'. 40 However, this survey, like the one conducted by the Campaign to End Loneliness,⁴¹ had not asked the older adults why they are consulting or if they are lonely. Rather, it is the GPs who determining that (a) the older person is lonely and (b) that is their reason for the consultation.

Developing a new language for social health research

We argue that it is important to research the third component of health, social health, identified in the WHO definition with the diligence and resources given to physical and mental wellbeing. However, we should not simply focus on a deficit model – looking at loneliness and isolation – but also seek to identify what supports good social health. In developing a research agenda in social health, it is important to recognise that current perspectives engender a 'problem focused' approach to the study of loneliness, as illustrated earlier. There is an extensive body of work where single disciplines have problematised loneliness in order to define and measure it, determine risk factors, identify negative health outcomes and argue that it can be easily alleviated by appropriate intervention. Loneliness is being increasingly defined as a pathological state within the domain of the medical profession rather than a part of being human. This medicalisation of 'the problem' of loneliness constrains our thinking, excluding possibilities such as the existence (or otherwise) of positive experiences of loneliness.

Our focus on loneliness as a problem of old age has resulted in the neglect of compromised social health in other populations (e.g. young adults). Simple prevalence estimates are useful for estimating the size of a problem but, in terms of loneliness, mask the different types of groups encompassed. Within, for example, a 5% prevalence rate we have those who are the 'long-term' lonely and those whose loneliness is less established. Studies focused on prevalence are important, but we have largely neglected looking at loneliness across the life span (prevalence by age group) or life course – are those who are lonely in old age lonely when they were young? New work from Victor et al suggests that up to 70% of older adults have experienced loneliness at earlier phases of their life.42 Developing a life course approach may offer insights into effective interventions. Intergenerational work bringing together young and older adults may combat the fears or anxieties the young may have about loneliness. We also need to consider how

(or if) the nature of loneliness in terms of intensity, duration and frequency, varies across different age groups (and other axes of social differentiation such as ethnicity or gender). We also need to consider if the different types of loneliness – social, emotional and existential – vary across different age groups and the life course.

Victor and Pikhartova⁴³ note that there are a plethora of individual 'risk factors' such as age, gender, widowhood etc., many of which are not easily manipulated to reduce loneliness, but that less interest has been shown in meso (neighbourhood or community level) or macro society levels risk factors. Few have risen to the challenge of Victor and Sullivan to incorporate these three levels of analysis-micro, meso and macro into our models of understanding social health. 44 Perhaps the most radical shift would be to move away from a deficit model of studying social health and change the questions being asked. Rather than focus on loneliness or isolation, why not explore the reasons most adults are in these categories and learn from the factors that promote good social health? Such an approach will serve to focus research on healthy social relationships and seek the factors that promote these across the life course, rather than focussing on the negative, minority experience of single age groups.

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Loneliness and Solitude in Architecture: Estrangement and Belonging in the Existential Experience

Juhani Pallasmaa

"Existential outsideness involves a self-conscious and reflective uninvolvement and alienation from people and places, a homelessness, a sense of unreality of the world, and not of belonging."¹ (Edward Relph)

"Works of art are of an infinite solitude."²
(Rainer Maria Rilke)

We usually think of loneliness as a singular situational, social or mental experience of being detached from place, domicile, or other human beings. However, there are two modes of loneliness; one is due to external causes, while the second arises from internal mental causes. In all cases, loneliness is a subjective experience of feeling disconnected, un- and uprooted, and without interaction with the world. This understanding seems to be the implied meaning of the notion of "loneliness." In addition to signifying structural, spatial and social exclusion, loneliness can also be a mental condition, a psychic incapacity to experience being placed and connected, and this could be called "mental homelessness." Both cases are involuntary and undesirable detachments from the culturally and socially shared space. Place and placedness are fundamental conditions of human consciousness, as already Aristotle argued.³ Everything is necessarily always placed in the human world. Architecture structures and articulates the placedness of our experiential world.

The two modes of being alone

We usually regard loneliness as a solely negative condition, of the lack or loss of meaningful relationships and connections. But there is another, opposite and entirely positive manner of being alone, feeling a balance between the self and the world, though consciously withdrawing into oneself. This mode of being alone is conveyed by the English word solitude. It is a favourable and desired condition, a conditio sine qua non for creative work. As Rilke confesses in the motto of my talk: "Works of art are of an infinite solitude." The artist, writer and poet, sculptor, composer and architect, as well as the scientist and philosopher, needs this specific solitude and emotive separation in her creative work. Solitude is the mode of being alone without feeling cut off, estranged, distanced or emotionally disconnected. It is significant that this solitude can be voluntarily interrupted. We could even say, paradoxically, that solitude is a strengthened way of belonging and being connected and, in some specific ways, the interaction with the world and lived reality is intensified. In solitude the world is an internalized condition, a fusion of reality and self. This condition energizes and focuses the sense of self and, especially, the creative mind. Sadly, today's ways of life and values, and the obsessive desire to be connected, nihilates the value of solitude as a positive mental state.

Rooting and estrangement

Both conditions, loneliness and solitude, are reflected in environments and architecture, and our life world has a distinct role in the emergence of these experiences and mental states. Architectural and urban spaces can either strengthen or weaken the sense of belonging, the meaningfulness of being, self-identity and self-esteem, which are all essential foundations of meaningful existence. An urban setting or atmosphere can alienate and disconnect us from the cultural, social and human context, or it can enroot us, and make us feel grounded, accepted and supported. With the word *enrooting*, I am consciously refering to the beautiful title of Simone Weil's book *L' Enracinement*, which has been translated into English as *Taking Root.*⁴ I am currently publishing a book of my nine lectures delivered at the University of Arkansas in 2018 with the title *Rootedness*.

Simply, distinct properties and qualities of physical and spatial settings give specific contents and meanings to our sense of being, and make us feel participants, instead of outsiders or mere onlookers. We exist in a reality of our own making, not in an objective one, or anyone else's.

"In the fusion of place and soul, the soul is as much of a container of place as place is a container of soul, both are susceptiple to the same forces of destruction," the American literary scholar Robert Pogue Harrison argues poetically. The fundamental task of art, architecture and urbanity is to mediate between ourselves and the world. This metaphysical and existential mediation has been the most essential task of architecture until the late modernity in the mid-twentieth century; the disappearance of this mediation began with the ultra-rationalist ideas of the Enlightenment, which saw architecture as a language of reason, and it continued in the International Style and paradoxically also in the post-modern eclecticism, which was a calculated and aestheticized manipulation of historically established architectural images. Today's investment architecture is the final phase of this decline, in which architecture has lost its mental meanings, innocence and artistic autonomy, along with its fundamental mediating task.

The unity of the world and the mind

There is a constant interchange between our minds and our settings; as I enter a space, the space enters me. This fusion is immediate and almost solely unconscious, and, in fact, the world and the mind constitute a continuum. "I enter a building, see a room, and in the fraction of a second - have this feeling about it," Peter Zumthor confesses. ⁶I have often used the intriguing image of the Moebius strip, the constellation that has two sides but only one surface and one edge, to describe this magical unity of the word and the self, the interplay of perception and consciousness. The experience of loneliness and isolation leaves the individual alone without an identification or interaction with the setting, whereas in the positive case of integration one feels accepted, supported and safe. Simply, we are fused with our settings and situations, and this unity supports the sense of self. However, the experience of integration, relatedness and harmony is rarely projected by modern cities and buildings, as architecture has turned self-centered and unable to mediate between the lived outer world and the mental inner world, the material and the experiential, the physical and the spiritual, and to project meaning to our existence.

Throughout early history until the Renaissance era, architecture sought to express a unity, all the way to "The Music of the Spheres," the cosmic harmony. In fact, throughout its history, until the modern age, architecture has been a mediating and relational art; it has mediated between the world and ourselves, microcosm and macrocosm, or "Gods and mortals," to use an expression of Martin Heidegger. Architecture has been fundamentally about human existence in the world, and understanding existentially this relationship. "We come not to see the work of art, we come

to see the world according to the work," Maurice Merleau-Ponty writes wisely, but this is no longer the orientation of architecture or art in today's world. This is a very significant point, which has been disregarded in architectural theorizing, education, as well as practice. Even early modernism depicted a new utopian world, and our relationship with it, which included the new space-time concept of the physical world as well as the new understanding of perception and the layered mind, as expressed in Cubism and later developments in artistic thinking and representation.

The dehumanization of art

In his significant book The Dehumanization of Art and Other Essays on Art, Culture and Literature of 1925, José Ortega y Gasset, the Spanish philosophical writer (I use this definition, as his writings are philosophisizing essays rather than methodical philosophy) makes the thought-provoking suggestion that after the Renaissance art moved from representing "things" to representing "feelings," and eventually representing and being "ideas." Whether one agrees with Ortega or not, this view of art – and I would suggest architecture as well – as gradually distancing from the lived world and projecting the internal world of the artist's mind, is quite thought provoking. In our era of surreal materialism, consumption and quasi-rationality, architecture has lost its relational and descriptive essence, and it has turned into a self-sufficient, groundless, calculated, and often even autistic visual composition and aestheticization. In turning into aestheticization, architecture has lost its mediating capacity, innocence and echo in the world as well as in human life. "Why is it that architecture and architects, unlike film and filmmakers, are so little interested in people during the design process? Why are they so theoretical, so distant from life in general?" the Dutch filmmaker Jan Vrijman asks.⁹

We have been left alone with our built structures that are incapable of projecting meaning, value and dignity to our existence. How could mere aestheticized techno-economic structures project human value and metaphysical meaning? From where could such a meaning arise? Architecture has also made us ultimately homeless by turning homes into marketable property and investment, instead of creating nests for human occupation. This has weakened the meaning of the act of dwelling and left us alone by making us mere visual observers instead of dwellers. The loss of our capacity to dwell is one of the key messages in Heidegger's lecture "Building Dwelling Thinking." ¹⁰

Reality, sense and existential experience

The ties between us and the world are primarily sensory, and secondly mental and cerebral. Since the invention and mass application of Johannes Gutenberg's great invention of printing in the mid 15th century, writing and reading have had a significant role in us turning into visual creatures, as Walter J. Ong convincingly argues in his book *Orality & Literacy*. Historians tell us that until that period, humans primarily used their senses of hearing and smell, and vision came far behind these two senses in importance. As numerous scholars and thinkers, most notably Merleau-Ponty have declared, we are multi-sensory creatures and also our sense of reality is fundamentally multisensory. "My perception is not a sum of visual, tactile, and audible givens: I perceive in a total way with my whole being: I grasp a unique structure of the thing, a unique way of being, which speaks to all my senses at once," Merleau-

Ponty declares emphatically.¹³

Yet, as architects we are consciously using only one sense, vision, and consequently, more than half of the human sensorum has been rejected or censored in Western architecture. How could we feel a sense of belonging, having been cut off from our full sensory relationship with the world?

A dramatic loss in our built surroundings is the disappearance of unconscious tactility mediated by vision. In his influential book *Towards a New Architecture* Le Corbusier calls this quality *modénature*, the soft rounding of the moulding.¹⁴ We sense the world through all our senses simultaneously, and especially through the unconscious touch, and this indirect sensation makes us participants in architecture. It makes us fuse with "the flesh of the world," to use a notion of Merleau-Ponty.¹⁵ I wish to repeat my view; the exclusively visual architecture of our time makes us outsiders and onlookers. Instead of integrating us with our existential reality, it leaves us alone and it projects an air of loneliness.

As we all know, architecture is taught, evaluated and practiced as a visual reality. Yet, vision is not the most significant sense in our experience of being, due to essentially multi-sensory nature of our reality experience. Besides, our lived reality is not objectively out there, as it exists primarily in our experience. The reality experience is as much a mental phenomenon as it is a concrete condition in the world.

The loss of time

A fundamental lack in the built settings of our time is the catastrophic loss of the temporal dimension, the lacking experience of layered time and cultural continuity. Our experiential time is

constantly accelerating, and the urbanist-philosopher Paul Virilio even suggests that the most important product of the current societies is speed. Contemporary urban settings make us dwell outside of time, outside of the mentally seminal continuum and duration of time.

One of the most shocking urban experiences for me was to walk in the streets of Doha, the capital of Qatar, amidst brand new buildings designed by many of the leading international star architects of today, and feel a shocking absence of the sense of place, history and meaning. This experience attacked my sense of self violently, I began to doubt my own identity and very existence. Architects are usually only concerned with the human need to feel rooted spatially and materially, but we have an equally fundamental need to dwell in a continuum of culture and time. To feel one's existence in the continuum of time, history and culture is a seminal requirement of identity and mental balance, as well as of the act of dwelling; we need to dwell in time as much as in space. Karsten Harris, professor of philosophy at Yale University, makes a significant remark: "Architecture is not only about domesticating space, it is also a deep defence against the terror of time. The language of beauty is essentially the language of timeless reality."¹⁷ The philosopher uses the expression "the language of beauty," but the impact of today's architectural aestheticization is often forcefully manipulative, restricting and estranging. Instead of projecting human meaning, it eliminates meaning, which always has to be existentially grounded; existential meaning cannot be a subjective invention. Real beauty is a miracle and gift, not an object of deliberate fabrication.

True cities, buildings, and places structure our experiences of time through giving the measureless and endless natural time a human measure, scale and meaning. When we sense the past, we can also have confidence in the future, and not feel deserted and abandoned. Isn't this a mental satisfaction that strengthens our sense of life, the reason why we love to visit old cities, towns and settings? Even old objects strengthen the experience of time and duration. The Finnish writer Jarkko Laine writes of the things on his window ledge:

"I like looking at these things. I don't seek aesthetic pleasure in them... nor do I recall their origins: that is not important. But even so, they all arouse memories, real and imagined. A poem is a thing that arouses memories of real and imagined things... the things in the window act like a poem. They are images that do not reflect anything... I sing of the things in the window." 18

Such environments place us in the continuum of time, making it conceivable for us. The historicity and duration of the material world, with its processes of aging, wear and patina, turn into instruments of experiencing, measuring and understanding time. Just think of the deep pleasure of walking on the paved streets of old European towns, say in Split on the Dalmatian Coast, carved through centuries by human and animal feet and the wheels of carriages, or rising a stair of marble steps moulded by countless footsteps. You do not look at the erosion of form as a defect, but rather you imagine the endless number of people who have used those steps before you. And when you touch a centuries old bronze door pull, you touch the hands of hundreds of generations. You are accompanied by time and people of the past. Referring to contemporary nowness, T.S. Eliot regrets our culture "in which the dead hold no shares." ¹¹⁹

Contemporary cityscapes and settings have become increasingly self-centered, autistic and unable to mediate between the world and

ourselves, or between now and the past. Our cities of concrete, steel and glass have lost their secrets, shadows and narratives. "When walking in the streets, have you noticed that some of the buildings speak and a few, rare ones, sing?" Paul Valéry asks in his wonderful dialogue *Eupalinos, or The Architect*.²⁰ Has anyone of you recently encountered a building that sings? The experiences of belonging, sharing and identification are fundamental human needs. We need to add, that it is really a biological need, as we have recently read several amazing reports of the limitless networks of mushrooms and the communication systems and chemical languages of the smells of plants and trees. In accordance with one research project, the studied plants possessed 800 "words" and even local "dialects" could be identified.²¹

Space and psyche

Art, architecture and urban planning possess the power to unite and separate us, to make us belong to a shared reality, or feel rejected and isolated. They utilize our mental capacities of mirroring, empathy, and identification. Consciously and unconsciously, we internalize atmospheres, moods, and human situations and fates. For me, it is almost impossible to look at Titian's painting *The Punishment of Marsyas*, also titled *The Flaying of Marsyas*, in which the Satyr is skinned alive in the revenge of Apollo, as I unconsciously lend my skin to the Satyr and feel that it is cruelly torn off my body. "Be like me" is in Joseph Brodsky's view the command of poetic works. Unnoticeably, we mimic and internalize artistic images of paintings, poetry, music, dance and architecture. I feel the deep melancholy and solitude of Michelangelo's Laurentian Library, and tears come to my eyes. Between the gigantic columns of the Karnak Temple

in Luxor, I have simply lost my sense of self and fused with the sublime metaphysical space. I felt myself part of the universe, not a human individual. But we also internalize large entities such as landscapes and cities, which either invite, calm and stimulate us, or reject us, making us feel abandoned, supressed and lonely.

The task of education and growth is to connect us with the characteristics and qualities of culture - to enculturate us - to provide us simultaneously with the sense of citizenship and personal independence. But a creative capacity is centered on the sense of self. Only a person who can focus on herself and embrace her world can possess a creative capacity. Indeed, this relationship can be problematic and painful, but an active relationship is necessary. "Why do you want to shut out of your life any uneasiness, any misery, any depression, since after all you don't know what work these conditions are doing inside you?" Rilke advises in his remarkable book Letters to a Young Poet.²³ However, our current culture and educational philosophies do not acknowledge the significance of the sense of self, as education has become identical with information. Art has the power to make us identify ourselves with the collective, as in a rock concert, but - perhaps even more importantly – art makes us sense our own being and existence in an amplified manner. As we look at a masterpiece of art, our sense of the surrounding space and other people is weakened or eliminated entirely, and we enter a closed interaction or dialogue with the work and the imaginary world that it depicts. The work addresses me in my splendid and privileged solitude, in which I identify myself with the art work and its making. I look at masterpieces in total silence projected by the artwork itself, and the masterpieces silence the world and speak to me alone.

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Solitude in art

Significantly, Luis Barragán used to quote the line "Art is made by the alone for the alone" by the English literary critic Cyril Connolly. When you visit a Barragán building in Mexico, you encounter it experientially alone, regardless of the presence of others, in the same way that you encounter a poem, a masterpiece of painting or music alone. You are alone with the work as you locate it in your own private experience and consciousness. Barragán's sublime and dreamlike buildings do not seem to reflect qualities of a normal dwelling; the serene and unearthly beauty of his houses appears to be beyond life, as if they were dwellings for the mind and the soul rather than for embodied mortals. They are dwellings as rituals, stages and altars of serene beauty and of a purified and spiritual existence. Our ordinary lives in well-functioning utilitarian and technological houses, without a glimpse of another reality or a spiritual and transcending dimension, appear dissatifying.

A visit to a Barragán house feels like of a dream or an experience of faith. Regardless of the possible presence of others, you experience the dwelling and space totally alone; it seems to be built for you alone in your personal silence, regardless of the fact that it is someone else's home. In the same way, a book which you just read and a painting you just admired have become yours. And you are correct in your possessive feeling, as you have re-created the poetic reality of the piece through your own experience; the poem is just words on paper and the painting only paint on canvas. This is the same mysterious solitude and silence that we confront in the paintings of the Metaphysical painters, Giorgio de Chirico and Carlo Carrà. In de Chirico's paintings the silence and sense of having been left behind is emphasized by the smoke and imagined sound of the departing train. Everyone else has already left.

Solitude and silence

Art and architecture sensitize our relationship with the world. "Paul Cezanne's paintings make us feel how the world touches us," argues Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Indeed, art sensitizes our skin, our boundary with the world. The author Salman Rushdie makes a significant comment on the meaning of this boundary: "Literature is made at the boundary line between self and the world and during the creative act this borderline softens, turns penetrable and allows the world to flow into the artist and the artist to flow into the world." ²⁶

The experience of solitude and self is related with silence, as in the music of the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt, which is often silence itself addressing the listener. In a recent book Silence: In the Age of Noise the Norwegian explorer Erling Kagge tells touchingly of his solitary walk across the ice and snow covered continent of Antarctica to the South Pole over a period of fifty days without any connection to any other persons - he even intentionally removed the batteries of his radio.²⁷ He did not see a living creature during this entire time. The theme of solitude and its relations with silence also brings to mind The World of Silence by the Swiss philosopher Max Picard.²⁸ Our current cultural codes and habits make it increasingly difficult for us to even tolerate silence and solitude. Blaise Pascal, who theorized boredom in the 17th century wrote: "All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone."29 This is truly alarming, as it implies that in our world of noise we are losing the very core of our self, embedded in silence and solitude.

Nowadays, we have a strong desire to be connected, but even more through electronic communication than physical presence. But a recent study revealed shockingly that young children, who had been using smart-phones since an early age, have a weakened recognition of human faces and are unable to read emotions on faces. Are we going towards a world of aliens, alienated from each other?

Edward Relph has introduced the alarming notion of "existential outsideness" in reference to the growing loss of the sense of belonging, interiority and domicile. "Existential ousideness involves a selfconscious and reflective uninvolvement, an alienation from people and places, a homelessness, a sense of the unreality of the world, and of not belonging," writes Relph in his book *Place and Placelessness*.³⁰

The notion of homelessness normally refers to the condition of not having a home, a personal refuge for living, whereas existential homelessness implies the mental incapacity to feel placed and rooted in the world, its physical settings, culture, and society. Such a person is an "outcast" in the most dramatic sense of the word, cast outside of her own life world. In his essay "Building Dwelling Thinking," Heidegger presents the idea of dwelling as a specific "skill," and he suggests that the modern man is unable to dwell because she/he has lost this essential skill.³¹ Only a few decades after the philosopher's argument, we can even suggest that our very ability to be is being lost, as we have become consumers of our own lives.

In addition to homelessness, the lack of a physical place to dwell in, a new mental homelessness, the mental inability to dwell, is growing. This second type of homelessness is more alarming, because it arises from a mental and emotional incapacity, a defect that condemns the individual to permanent loneliness and outsideness. These thoughts also bring to mind Richard Sennett's seminal book

The Fall of the Public Man, which suggests yet another dimension of estrangement and loneliness as a consequence of the weakened institutions, practices and attachments that create the "public man." Regardless of all the new modes of communication, we are becoming increasingly lonely. In fact, the new fantastic modes of communication underline our loneliness and mental separation. These ideas and concerns would, however, expand the subject matter beyond the topic I have chosen for this lecture.

I wish to end my talk with a simple but profound call by Aldo van Eyck, who in the 1960s introduced anthropological structuralism into architecture: "Architecture need do no more, nor should it ever do less, than assist man's homecoming." ³³

Notes

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- 2. Rainer Maria Rilke, Letters to a Young Poet (New York: Random House, 2014), 23.
- 3. As quoted in Jeff Malpas, "Place, truth, and commitment," in Pekka Passinmäki and Klaske Havik (eds), *Understanding and Designing Place Considerations on Architecture and Philosophy*, Datutop 38 (Tampere: Datutop), 13.
- 4. Simone Weil, L'Enracinement (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1949).
- 5. Robert Pogue Harrison, *Gardens: An Essay on the Human Condition* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 130.
- 6. Peter Zumthor, Atmospheres: Architectural Environments Surrounding Objects (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2006), 13.
- 7. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, as quoted in Iain McGilchrist, *Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 2009), 409.
- 8. José Ortega y Gasset, *The Dehumanization of Art and Other Essays on Art, Culture, and Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968).
- 9. Jan Vrijman, "Filmakers Spacemakers," *The Berlage Papers* 11 (January, 1994).
- 10. Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," in Martin Heidegger:

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- Basic Writings, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), 320. The quote is the title of one of Heidegger's three lectures in the early 1950s included in the book: "Building Dwelling Thinking," "The Thing," and "Poetically Man Dwells."
- 11. Walter J. Ong, *Orality & Literacy The Technologizing of the World* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991).
- 12. See, for instance, Lucien Febvre, *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 437.
- 13. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Film and the New Psychology," in *Sense and Non-Sense* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 48.
- 14. Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture* (London: The Architectural Press, 1959). *Modénature* is here translated into English as "contour and profile," 5.
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Techno-Architecture and Online Loneliness

Javier Echeverría, Atxu Amann y Alcocer, Flavio Martella and Lola S. Almendros

The information revolution of the late 20th century has modified social existence in space and time, transforming our relationship with the city and our nearest environments, including dwellings, offices and spaces of entertainment. The traditional boundaries of internal/external, public/private, man/woman and work/leisure dualities are becoming less clear and tend to disappear within a reality that is simultaneously material and informational.

This also affects the generation of data, information and knowledge, in a process of continuous work in progress, or knowledge in 'permanent beta', as José Pérez de Lama calls it.1 Our time is characterized by the emergence of new desires and capabilities based on new relationships and agencies between machines and people. That is why today we can talk about technopersons,2 and even techno-animals and techno-vegetables. In fact, the techno-body hybridization affects not only human beings, as Donna Haraway already argued when talking about cyborgs,³ but every living being in general. Today we can distinguish between life and life on-line (on-life or techno-life),4 understanding the latter as a set of processes and technological, informational and digital interrelations between diverse entities. These processes are developed in the third environment,5 that is, in a new techno-social space-time superimposed on the biosphere (first environment) and on cities (second environment). These new relationships provide some solutions to loneliness in cities, but they also generate new forms of loneliness that affect especially those without access to these informational worlds or, having access, without awareness of who they are while there.

The new collective social space of WWW was firstly made possible by interconnected personal computers on the Internet. It has further been developed through mobile phones and social networks, thanks to a complex network of servers, interconnection software and various computer programs that have transformed the information and human communications, as well as war, finance, politics and everyday life itself. As Remedios Zafra argues, today 'we inhabit screens, not just homes'. This implies a profound transformation of contemporary architecture and the consequent emerging ways of inhabiting and acting.

In order to interpret this great contemporary transformation of human environments, we must distinguish between bodies and techno-bodies, genes and techno-genes, persons and technopersons and, in general terms, between humans and technohumans. Since the 1960s, the term cyborg (cybernetic organism) anticipated this profound change. With Haraway,7 the cyborg condition became an authentic alternative to classical humanism. She questioned the duality between the natural and the artificial, and introduced the hybrid as a new way of being in the world. The status of a woman, for example, changed radically: 'I prefer to be a cyborg than a Goddess', stated Haraway in her cyborg manifesto. In doing so, she also criticized the distinction between gods and humans, which has historically been one of the foundations of patriarchy. We also use post-human expression, something not understood in a temporal sense. As Haraway also elsewhere argues,8 the posthuman is not a singular, defined individual, but rather one who can 'become' or embody different identities and understand the world from multiple, heterogeneous perspectives. We choose to use the prefix techno-instead of post-in this contribution because there are no current definitions of post-animals or post-vegetables.

Three decades later, and following the emergence of the informational era, techno-persons take their place side by side with the cyborgs. Personal selves have spread and deployed in informational networks, generating new ways of being a person, thanks to new media and technologies. However, the actual techno-persons have neither limits nor are aware of themselves, because, first of all, they are data systems with their corresponding data architectures. They arise by overlapping the informational layer with the material one, expanding online those people who operate digitally on keyboards and screens. These new ways of being require new architectural forms, possibly hybrid, but in any case capable of reading this contemporary situation in order to create *cyborg architectures* as well as *techno-architectures*, to refer to the current process of hybridization of architectures and technologies on the two sides of the screen.

The social domain's ways have also been transformed through the Internet, thanks to these new relationships between humans and machines, which Peter Sloterdijk called *ontological polygamies.*⁹ Today we can talk about the techno-power of the *Air Lords*,¹⁰ but also about new forms of resistance and hacker counterpower, whose development requires new architectural forms, not only spatial but also temporal.

The information revolution has generated person/machine hybrids, not only cyber-organisms. They are material since they have an energetic support, but many of them are not biological entities, although they imitate them. Humanoid robots are good examples of techno-hybridization; but we must not forget other types of hybrids such as literary and cinematographic characters, which are also techno-persons. They are very influential, given their impact on the social and cultural imaginary of the 21st century

(for example, *The Matrix*, *Blade Runner*, and perhaps *Black Mirror* or other hybrid types).

Although computerized humans and humanized robots (as well as AIs) are not physical inhabitants, they coexist in the contemporary informational worlds with many computerized animals and vegetables, starting with the techno-genes and the species generated by synthetic bioengineering. The digital environment has opened new fields of action for the human being, generating online spaces that overlap the physical and tangible world. This new 'digital population' is composed of hybrid entities that are related online. However, right now, this emergent population live in a construction made primarily by systems and software engineers. There is a lack of proper architectural reflection on these possible techno-habitats, so we will attempt to begin in this article.

On-line techno-populations and their techno-dwellings are replacing the Albertian-Miesian ideals of harmony, purity, perfection and nature with those of network organization, decentralization, interchangeability and continuous transformation. These technoarchitectural constructions no longer aspire to last for long. The very meaning of time has changed. The modern concept of time is transformed into techno-time, once the arrangement 8/8/8 has been substituted by 24/7. Neither, it is not measured by traditional clocks in days and hours, but by technological systems such as GTS (Global Time System), which converts simultaneously everything that happens everywhere in the world right now, but also what has happened before, since present and past become simple data. Thus, techno-time is not successive, but recursive. The change that this implies is radical. Any event, for example a terrorist attack, continues to happen again and again on the screens. Something

terrible repeated without difference.

The structure of the new human groups existing in the informational layer is based on affinity, not identity. They group together autonomous but remotely connected techno-persons through informational networks, even though they operate far away from each other. This distance is not only spatial, but also temporal. In fact, past techno-persons could be as real as present ones; they can coexist and live actively in the informational layer. Technoscience's promise to recreate missing species, for example elephants turned into mammoths through biogenetic procedures. The difficulty is then to rebuild their habitat, the missing natural environments, not just the fossil-turned species.

From a political point of view, the ideas of identity, hegemony, hierarchy and spectacle are replaced by techno-persons with those of hybridization, plurality, horizontality and performance. Even the buildings for politics, today, are also informational and online: they are techno-politics.

We inhabit simultaneously physical and informational environments. We access them through our techno-bodies equipped with various types of gadgets and technological implementations. Various technoscientific systems - some biological and others informational - have radically transformed the original organic nature of our human body, which was slow and tied to the need of contact, presence and simultaneity. These new symbolic and imaginary references find in devices the material nodes of the digital environment where techno-persons live, whether human or not. Citizen life in informational environments is manifested through online interpersonal relationships that require architectural space and time to become developed.

The screen of those devices is designed 'unipersonally' for

eyes and hands with fingers that type individually, making the body almost invisible through the added value of virtual anonymity. Generically, we can talk about techno-bodies, many of which are not organic, but in any case biocomputer hybrids. We are protagonists of a historical change in terms of both forms of socialization and individualization. The computer interface is individualized, which marks the loneliness of access.

Once online, techno-persons are pure relationships, with no substance. In the first instance, they are data. The owners of the networks, who invade the users' privacy, and sometimes even their intimacy, manage this data. It would seem, then, that in the *third environment* loneliness is not possible. Everything is communication and, basically, domination by those who rule there.

The conditions of access to informational environments are never neutral. They generate different types of techno-persons based on the user's original profiles, but then modified according to the necessities. These profiles and data are recombined again and again by the Lords of the Networks, which provide new forms of personification and socialization, of which users are not even aware. That is why we can talk about the deep techno-loneliness of people in the online worlds. Each one is continually related with thousands of other techno-persons, presumed friends, but almost none of them manage to have a relationship with themselves, a proper conscience. Techno-persons cannot confront anyone with their selves; they have the same identity as the one given by those who manage their data, profiles and relationships. They do not have their own mirrors to look at. Online selfies are a clear example of automatic theft of images from the Cloud, where they are stored and available to data managers. Techno-persons are alone in the emergent techno-space; they are at the mercy of their owners.

This loneliness determines the intimate alliance between the machine and the subject or between the subjects through the machine: millions of people connected alone in their own rooms. Today, the connected bodies are usually bodies alone in front of the computer, where each screen is only for one person (although interconnected they constitute a crowd). The remarkable thing is that each body and each person does not know what and how their respective techno-person is on the other side of the screen. Only the software can access them, not the people themselves. This occurs for the simple reason that there is no coexistence or selves in online world, but just continuous data-flows generating new online techno-persons.

For the lone but connected person, everything is different. People are off the screen as cyborgs, but also inside, or better on the *other side* of the screen, where apparently no one is alone, because there is a plethora of friends and contacts. However, in there, there is the peculiarity that they are not organisms or people, but techno-persons and data. In the loneness of the connection, one can have the illusion of a 'return home', that is to say, a return to the self; but in the 'Clouds' there are no subjects, only data. Ontologically, the online worlds are radically different from the material worlds inhabited by organisms.

Through the different portable screens, we are producers and distributors of the data that concern us personally. Meanwhile, they are managed and appropriated by the large informational companies, whose global power is growing, especially since the rise of the social networks. Our interconnected rooms have become controlled and monitored cells, because they now produce valuable data. The multiplicity of communications and relationships does not exclude the isolation of the person, especially in their

relationship with themselves.

The digital media helps to create a new personal domestic environment that can be recalled in every moment and in every place. The homes are then potentially de-territorialized since they are losing their physical boundaries and are facing a structural modification in one of their main meanings: the family. Now an individualistic way of living predominates over the familiar nucleus. In fact, even living in a family context, the new urban digital inhabitants tend to establish more individual relationships (through digital devices) than in the past, creating their personal digital environment that responds just to their own needs, expanding themselves on a larger scale than the home. This behaviour radically affects the architectural environment by introducing diversity instead of homogeneity, flexibility, the sense of occupation and the possibility of identification against the imposed abstractions.

Website pages, especially social ones, are 'furnished' in the same way as homes, expressing what one loves, one wants, one is, and extending one's perception of oneself to the outside. The home-pages (curious, as both the name and the symbol refer to the idea of the house), the e-mail addresses (often indicated as the only address, instead of the house address), together with the profile pages, can represent a 'place' to live, a place to feel at home. Turning anonymous spaces (in this case digital spaces) into something that resembles us and that is pleasing to our peers shows how communication technology can be interpreted, among other things, as a form of 'interior decoration'. 13

New feelings of domesticity, society, production, leisure and commerce that influence the way of interaction with the urban material sphere are thus generated through the superimposition of the informational layer over the material one. They allow the creation of a techno-domestic environment that becomes an externalized representation of the self. It transcends its original physical boundaries so to appear outside, in the collective realm, instead of existing only inside a defined and closed environment, such as the private house. In fact, the domestic environment is now understood as a domain, a field or as a mental territory that goes beyond the material, concrete spatial and bodily limits of the house: it is a multidimensional environment, related to the intimate condition of human beings and their need for protection, care, rest, recovery and pleasure. The identity of the space/home is then constantly being redefined, depending on individual necessities and their moment during the day.

Both space and time have been transformed and replaced by the spaces of interconnected flows and a timeless time where present and past merge, replacing accelerated time. The construction of places where social and personal life takes place is no longer relevant, because now the meaning lies in the spatial experience of increasingly immaterial flows.

The relationship between the built environment and architecture is now increasingly distant and peculiar. We continue to appreciate the buildings as constructed realities, as artistic presences in the urban landscape, but we also recognize their inability to dialogue with the present, the relevance of which has to be sought in other practices linked to an emergent everyday life. Techno-time (real time), open broadcasting, participation from different geolocations and its staging can be the new keys to define architecture and generate new public spaces.

The individual's sense of domesticity, once closed on itself, now opens up to a public environment such as the digital one, paving the way for a new definition that exists in the overlap between

the material and informational worlds. This is a domesticity that no longer finds in the city its antagonist, but rather an ally where the spatial offering is potentially greater and where, therefore, it can allow a greater expression of individual personalities hovering between the public and the private sectors. The informational revolution among many social, political, economic and cultural events, led to a progressive reduction in the number of houses and an inevitable rediscovery of the semi-public context. This helps to convert the bedroom into a new multimedia/office living room; the kitchen into an urban expansion through delivery services of all kinds; the living room into a space no longer uniquely defined, yet omnipresent in every urban space, both public and privately owned; the bathroom into a place that rediscovers its own sensuality and its relationship with the body, as well as also being a new extension of the office.

The access to multiple realities, together with the reduction of distances, has meant that personal time is now 'dominated', both in individual daily routines and at the level of social organization, by the myths of mobility and speed. Transport and telecommunications are now two major infrastructures of everyday life; people, ideas, capital, and goods move faster and faster, according to the fundamentalism of the race that seems to be the categorical imperative of development.¹⁵

This acceleration in the operations of life cannot fail to have important repercussions on the perception of time itself. In fact, in the digital era, time is increasingly perceived as something that compresses or even annihilates space. We try to live faster (by increasing the number of actions per unit of time, or by doing more things in less time), we eat faster, sleep less, and talk less with family members. The spheres of personal life, in fact, are continuously

invaded by distant events, relationships and experiences: they constantly encounter symbolic and cultural worlds that are completely outside their range of action, relating them to the other spheres, even when they are not physically present. This abstraction goes in the dual direction of a dematerialization of experience, since the mediated communication involves a loss of clues and symbolic elements, 'and of its delocalization', ¹⁷ in the sense that the physical context of the subject is no longer a constraint and is thus easily bypassed. Hence, different environments could potentially be built in every material context, depending on the moment of the day and on the device that is used in that specific moment; domesticity could be found while commuting to the workplace, work could hit while sitting on the toilet, leisure while working, etc. According to Zygmunt Baumann:

'Space is the sediment of the time necessary to cancel it, and when the speed of the movement of capital and information equals the one of the electronic signal, the cancellation of distance is practically instantaneous and space loses its materiality, its capacity to slow down, stop, oppose or otherwise force the movement; all qualities that are normally considered the distinctive features of reality. In this case the place loses its value.'18

The speed of displacements has led to a further change in the relationships and ways of living as well as the context, guaranteeing the possibility of being in any place at any time. ¹⁹ Human beings are no longer discrete units plugged into the material infrastructure of their contiguous habitat; rather, they are nodes of a global network that supports remote and asynchronous interactions. ²⁰

The physical and virtual mobility multiplied by the media, however, together with the progressive deterritorialization of space, make it possible to outline the global condition in terms of a 'geographical promiscuity', ²¹ or in a condition of impossibility, typically contemporary, of knowing how to indicate the centre of one's life. ²²

The condition of the techno-person is therefore to be constantly in motion, from home to work, from one building to another, in the web. The contemporary individual becomes the *parasite* of Derrida, the *nomads* of Deleuze and Guattari or the *hoho* of Lyotard.²³ The individual of the 21st century is a *mestizo* model with many identities and multiple belongings. It often believes that can choose certain life strategies according to its values and beliefs, which are changing throughout its existence. This characteristic of being a flexible individual enables it to adapt without problems to the changing circumstances.

This leads the citizen to a condition in which it is impossible to recognize oneself in a single, uniquely defined place. In fact, the inhabitants of the contemporary city live in the condition that Bart Verschaffel has called 'a-topia': the human being becomes a nomadic subject freed from the concept of belonging and, therefore, is in a state of perennial transit.²⁴ With this new figure, the concepts of interior and exterior are transformed, and which need to be extended beyond life within the private property into the public sphere of the city.

This condition of perpetual transition, of interstitial situations, has modified and recombined the spaces of everyday life. Georges Teyssot's concept of *Threshold* can be juxtaposed with Homi K. Bhabha's *Third Space*. ²⁵ *The Third Space* is a situation of passage, exchange, and contamination, and is in continuous negotiation. These are spaces of the self, of waiting, of meeting, of temporary, and of absence, closed, open, semi-public, hybrid spaces, etc., in which diasporic, nomadic subjects act and move. ²⁶ There are also

spaces that respond more directly and appropriately to a different idea of living in the porous space of the post-identity city, flexible, inclusive, augmented, open to continuous exchange and interaction between cultures, spaces necessary to cope with all those requests that the social and cultural changes of the 21st century are slowly shaping.

In informational techno-worlds, there is no single way of reconciliation between the online world and the offline one, but there is great potential for critical and creative experimentation. Currently, multiple emerging processes are taking place; they participate in the spatiality of flows, network organization, configuring new dwellings and structures that, at first, try to arise against global capitalism. They are, as José Pérez de Lama calls them,²⁷ the geographies of the multitude with variable and liquid geometries that propose world transformation machines. They operate, for example, as the construction and diffusion of a meme; a symbolic virus that reproduces, contaminates, and modifies the DNA of the individual imaginary of the cyborgs and the technopersons.

The informational turn that has been taking place since the 90s has meant a radical change not only in the conceptualization of information, in its uses and possibilities, but also in the way of being, acting and relating in the world. The turn that preceded it, the computational one, involved the technification of information, making it magnitude and entity, that is, something to quantify. Among the peculiarities that define the information since the development of the World Wide Web, on the contrary, there is a shift towards the qualitative: information today is also architecture.

The computerization of life and human relationships consists largely of the quantification of qualitative characteristics of

information. This puts us in a context of meta-information or big data, where the technical, promising and progressive halo of computational sciences has been replaced by a hustle, salvific, innovative and omnipresent halo. The technical advance is no longer as relevant as in the past. In fact, the engineering innovation of the 80s differs very little from the current one. However, the innovative uses of information technology and communication have led to new social technologies, and with them, new forms of relational and personal solutions that could make us technopersons. Precisely because the informational turn is to take advantage of the qualitative characteristics of the information, it also modifies the qualitative characteristics of the informational relationships. Therefore, it is increasingly difficult to distinguish the digital from the analogue, the online from the offline. In this indeterminacy is life *onlife*.²⁸

The digitalization of the current forms of life and relationships leads us to three relevant issues: the resignification of the identity of spaces, the redefinition of practices, and the deconstruction of identities at both the individual and collective levels. The first of these issues is the result of the delocalization of spaces, which implies the possibility of their infinite reproducibility. This means a resignification of the identity of the spaces that, in turn, can increase their polysemies.

The computerization of space implies its de-spatialization, i.e. it ceases to be defined in terms of distance. In the same way, the computerization of time defines techno-time in terms of coexistence and not of succession. Both the de-spatialization of space and the timelessness of time multiply both magnitudes, although always within the limits of the building code. Thus, the techno-world is, above all, a linguistic world, a data architecture.

The loss of subjective identity has to do with experience. These experiential characteristics make up what we have called the life of techno-persons.²⁹ This way of life changes the meaning of space and time. There are no clear boundaries between 'here' and 'tomorrow', between 'there' and 'now', between 'there' and 'yesterday' The coordinates of loneliness today are not clear because the onlife consists of inhabiting time in instead of being time. In the onlife we are not defined (or delimited or determined) by time. The *onlife* existence is not a temporary existence: we do not build time; we inhabit it. Now, inhabiting time means spatializing it. That is why architecture today must be thought of as the architecture of time, because there is an urgency to create virtual spaces, that is, spaces of time or spaces for time.

The computerization of time and its consequent delocalized spatialization implies the need to (re)build (cyber)spaces. Architecture is no longer the result of the search for 'a plan for the spirit'. The spirit unfolds today in its natural place, the air. Architecture has to build times for society and loneliness, spaces for techno-society and techno-loneliness. It is about living *onlife*.

Notes

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Loneliness in Place

Fernando Nieto and Rosana Rubio

'Our intimate life, our life in solitude, is a dialogue with all men.' (Miguel de Unamuno)

There are no conclusive facts to which one could refer in order to demonstrate that architectural practices affect solitary living and, conversely, how loneliness is spatialised in the built environment. Although architecture as a humanistic discipline undoubtedly deals with the dual human condition of essential insularity and necessary sociability, 'no matter what happens in the world of human beings, it happens in a spatial setting'. Likewise, given the multifaceted characteristics of the causes and consequences of loneliness, from psychological to political aspects, it seems evident that it has a tangible reflection on spatial arrangements.

Loneliness and solitude are extremely complex human feelings, which have been addressed by multiple disciplines, ranging from the social and natural sciences to the arts. The present article draws from the hybrid condition of the discipline of architecture as a synthesis of science and the humanities. Thus, it attempts to examine the architectural implications of these two unwanted and desired emotional states; and, vice versa, it seeks to relate how these feelings are manifested in the built environment.

Starting out from an act of introspection, and following the ancient tradition of 'commonplace books', we have collated a series of concepts that gather together other people's ideas together with our own commentaries and reflections, as a way of establishing a 'dialogue with all men'. Our aim is to open a space of thought around 'proverbial wisdom' that relates the human feelings of

loneliness and solitude with architecture theories and practices. We have grouped these fragments of knowledge under a series of terms associated with space-related manifestations – 'Vital Space', 'Island', '(In)habit', 'Sharedness', 'Exchange' and 'In-betweenness' – which constitute an incomplete and ongoing conceptual framework around forms of individuality and community and their spatial reflection through a continuous act of 'crowded solitude'.⁴

Vital Space

In his seminal 1966 book The Hidden Dimension, Edward T. Hall crosses his disciplinary lines as an anthropologist to trace a framework for architectural space and city planning as a system of communication. The objective of the American anthropologist is to trace not a verbal but a basic 'underlying organizational system' that would 'increase self-knowledge and decrease alienation' among people.⁵ Hall named the technique 'proxemics'. Proxemics interrelates his theories and observations of man's use of space, rooting them in biology, physiology, and cultural idiosyncrasies. On that basis, Hall establishes a hierarchical organization of space, distinguishing between 'intimate', 'personal', 'social' and 'public' distances, accounting for man's perception of them;6 an experience that is 'not just visual, but 'multisensory'. Hall acknowledges the role of the different senses in spatial perception, categorizing them into two groups: 'the distance receptors (eyes, ears, and nose)' and 'the immediate receptors (skin and muscles)'.8 Furthermore, he maintains that there are many sensory worlds, depending on the groups of people and their cultures, leading to the statement that the environments that people build are expressions of a 'filteringscreening process'. Depending on the culture, some receptors are

enhanced while others are suppressed and this has consequences on spatial layouts and qualities such as materiality.¹⁰

In the end, Hall's goal is to provide architects and city planners with a technique that leads to a system of conventions, which spatial designers might adopt in order to organize the living environment and facilitate human communication. Unveiling the 'hidden dimensions', and accounting for its 'silent language', might be a valuable design instrument to ease people's social relationships while balancing individuals' needs, which might have implications on facilitating a personal space, and therefore solitude, while preventing social isolation and, consequently, loneliness.

Artists have discovered and applied resources related to proxemics without being conscious of it, as Hall himself acknowledges in the chapter 'Art as a Clue to Perception'. The history of the visual arts is full of conventional representational resources that enable artists to represent reality and to communicate with the observer. But, more importantly, it is worth highlighting what some artists have found besides the conventions addressed by Hall: something key to human existence, disclosing seminal reasons about what triggers the building of man's environment. This is evident, for instance, in the case of sculptor Alberto Giacometti and poet W.H. Auden.

Giacometti devoted his life to obsessively searching for a 'primal vision' and to destroy all the representation laws and conventions of art. He achieved it, precisely, by exploring the void between humans, 'between nothingness and being', ¹² attempting to capture his only interest: 'reality' – rather than its representation.

Jean-Paul Sartre once said of Giacometti: '[...] first of all, it is the man who has created the distance, and it makes sense in a human space: it separates Hero from Leandro and Marathon from

Athens, but not a pebble from another pebble. [...] An exhibition of Giacometti is a town. He sculpted men who cross a square without seeing each other; they cross themselves hopelessly alone and yet they are together.'¹³

Sartre understands Giacometti well due to his own experience:

'One night in April 1941 I understood what this is: I had spent two months in a prison camp, that is, inside a can of sardines, and had had the experience of absolute proximity: my skin was the border of my vital space; day and night I felt against me the heat from a back or a hip. It didn't bother me: the others were still myself. That first night of freedom I pushed the door of a cafe [...]. I was immediately afraid – or almost –: [...] The few customers seemed to me farther away than the stars [...] I had found bourgeois society: I needed to resume life 'at a respectful distance'. [...] This is the case with Giacometti: for him distance is not a voluntary isolation, nor a setback: it is a requirement, a ceremony, a sense of difficulties. It is the product – he said it himself – of powers of attraction and repulsive forces.'¹⁴

It is not by chance that the chapter of Hall's book titled "Distances in Man"¹⁵ opens with the following prologue, poem, *The Birth of Architecture*, by W.H. Auden, from the collection titled *Thanksgiving for a Habitat*:

Some thirty inches from my nose The frontier of my Person goes, And all the untilled air between Is private *pagus* or demesne. Stranger, unless with bedroom eyes I beckon you to fraternize, Beware of rudely crossing it: I have no gun, but I can spit.¹⁶

The title of Auden's poem eloquently evokes the genesis of

architecture as the negotiation of one's basic territorial unit, a *pagus*, and that of the 'stranger', both realms separated by a hidden boundary, whose measure he sets at thirty inches. Just as for Giacometti, it is through tensions, the 'powers of attraction and repulsive forces' that human space is created.

The poems that follow this prologue in *Thanksgiving for a Habitat* are a sequence of appreciative verses about Auden's house in Kirchstetten in Austria. The poems constitute a panegyric about the poet's 'vital space', which do nothing but abound on the following idea: the house is a shelter, even an extension of the human body, and simultaneously a place for sociability of the 'rational animal'. The house itself and the objects within it seem to stem from its inhabitants and the 'untilled air between' them; becoming an amalgamation orchestrated by the management of the demesne's hidden dimensions.

Architecture is constantly in search of the agreement between conventions and going beyond them, in a continuous re-thinking, re-dimensioning and re-designing of the human's vital space.

Island

The modern notions of 'loneliness' and 'aloneness' date from the nineteenth century, arising in parallel with the emergence of the ideology of the metropolis and, with it, with the rise of the 'individual';¹⁸ the 'modern, rational and secular versions of 'identity';¹⁹ and changes in states such as 'sociability', 'community', 'belonging', and the 'self'.²⁰ Prior to that, the word did not carry today's emotional and psychological connotations. 'Oneliness' (today an obsolete word) was the term that conveyed a sense of physical or geographical isolation', writes historian Fay Bound

Alberti, and supporting this argument by referring to the early 18th century writer Daniel Defoe's *Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, where still the modern concept of loneliness does not feature, being a narration about the long-term seclusion of a castaway on a remote tropical island.²¹ The island is nowadays a recurrent spatial metaphor, which helps to internalise 'oneliness', to convey what we currently understand as loneliness: lonely people often verbalise their mood like the feeling of 'being an island'; an island as a clearly demarcated territory bounded by impassable limits between oneself and the rest of the world, which impose a painful detachment from society. It is a feeling of uncanniness and anomality. However, this is just one of the possible interpretations of the figurative maritage between loneliness and the island.

Among all the suggestions that the island metaphor carries, there is that of being a space suitable for 'utopia', in all its forms and modalities. Interestingly, there is a primary ambivalence in the very word devised by Thomas More in his 1516 novel *Utopia* about an ideal society located in an idyllic island: 'utopia', a play on the words *eutopos*, 'good place' and *outopos*, 'non-place'. Islands are at once wonderlands, ideal and magical territories and places where anything and the extraordinary are possible, but also the home of the exiles from the ordinary, the condemned, the convicts, and the plagued. It is in this last sense that the contemporary meaning of loneliness is paralleled with that of the island, as a territory where people confine themselves or where society 'insulates' what it finds troubling to allocate or what it envisions as potential threats to its integrity.

Islands have been places to banish religious, intellectual and political dissidents, whose names have become indissolubly linked to that of the territory where they were sent into exile: St. John

on Patmos, Napoleon on St. Helena and Elba, Víctor Hugo on Guernsey, Unamuno on Fuerteventura, and Nelson Mandela on Robben Island. Similarly, islands have served to imprison criminals: Al Capone on Alcatraz. Sanitary reasons have also proved the island suitable for the 'internment' (fascinatingly, from the French *interner*: 'send to the interior') of the insane and infected; a paradigmatic example of which is the Lazzaretto Vecchio in the Venetian Lagoon away from the *terraferma*, which housed a hospital to quarantine plague victims from the 15th century till the end of the 17th century.

The last three examples mentioned are satellite islands in urban settlements (Cape Town, San Francisco, and Venice) that have served traditionally to expel, confine and even marginalize 'anomalous' citizens. That is also the case of Hart Island in New York City. This one-mile-long island in the northeastern Bronx, at the western end of Long Island Sound, has been, not only today but historically, a place for the City of New York authorities to displace social aspects and dynamics that they have found troubling to allocate within the City's area and its civic limits. While some structures were planned for Hart Island but remained unbuilt, such as a segregationist amusement park targeting negro citizens, others were functioning in different periods, sometimes overlapping in time, including a potter's field.²² From 1875 until today, Hart Island is the one New York City public cemetery that has acted as a temporary burial ground during sanitary crises (including the Spanish Flu, AIDS and COVID-19 epidemics) as well as for the homeless, poor people, stillborn babies, and unclaimed, unidentified or anonymous bodies. In this last respect, the island has long borne the stigma of many New Yorkers' anomalous anonymity, potentially because of a likewise anomalous loneliness:

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another 'contemporary epidemic', as some have described it, and not without controversy.

It is difficult to visualise loneliness at the urban scale: when living alone, people do not show recordable traces that differ significantly from those living with a family or others. However, it is when the person living alone passes away that disturbances in the norm become evident. In a sea of big data, the tracking of citizens' energy consumption patterns and, increasingly, the registering of their vital signs, show islands of inactivity becoming indicators of deaths of those living alone. While these behavioural irregularities are immaterially recorded in the digital realm, it is in the physical realm where the condition of living alone is spatialised: as materialised through the dead body. What is reflected by the massive burials taking place on Hart Island, if not the New Yorkers' loneliness (there is no record testifying that these people have experience existential, emotional or social loneliness during their lifetime), is at least their 'oneliness', in the sense of the physical, geographical, and metaphorical isolation of those New Yorkers from any societal bond. Each of the bodies buried on Hart Island are islands in themselves, and it is a cruel coincidence that all of them end up unified in an actual island that represents them. Strikingly, as Peter Sloterdijk points out, the well-known classical legend that explains the genesis of certain islands in the rocks thrown into the sea by the Olympian Gods to the giants, leads to an interpretation of the island as a tomb of giants or as the caps of sarcophagi for the enemies of the Gods.²³

If what we are visualizing on Hart Island is not just New York's 'oneliness' but also potential clues of an even deeper problem, its loneliness,²⁴ the struggle for designers and planners, from the perspective of David Harvey's Marxist economic geography, is the

advancement of 'more socially just' and 'politically emancipatory' practices and not giving in to those kinds of 'Gods', 'to those dictations imposed by uncontrolled capital accumulation, backed by class privilege and gross inequalities of political-economic power'. This instance, which is a telling and painful example of the dimension of isolated living in cities as well as an updated symbol of the contemporary identification of loneliness with the *outopian* connotations of the island, would disappear, opening a way to recover the *eutopian* dimension inherent in this metaphor.

(In)habit

The English words 'habit' (custom) and 'inhabit' (dwell), share an etymological origin: habere (to have). The frequentative of habere is habitare.26 Frequentative means that the action occurs repeatedly; so, 'habit' and 'inhabit' can be read as 'having repeatedly'; for example, the routine that you frequently have is your habit, or the physical place that you have continuously is the place that you inhabit. Language reveals how our recurring acts of everyday life, the 'typical human situations', as Dalibor Vesely puts it, ²⁷ intertwine with the physical place or space we occupy. They are originally 'attuned', using Alberto Pérez-Gómez's term.²⁸ Architecture's fundamental role is to mediate in such a tuning so as to enable a meaningful existence. Therefore, to grasp the intricate nature of human habits, and the feelings they relate to, is thus a central question that puzzles designers, who, overtime, have adopted different techniques to tackle this issue; for instance, technologies that allow the parametrisation and visualisation of habits, to grasp their spacio-temporal implications.

When the functionalist logic, proper to the industrial realm,

was adopted by architectural practices at the beginning of the 20th century, efficiency became the *leitmotiv* of the design of the daily-life environment. The above-mentioned 'attunement' consisted of 'mechanically' encompassing habits and the inhabitable space. The pioneers of the visual management techniques applied to industrial realms went on to develop movement charting techniques for that purpose, which were then later transferred to optimise domestic space. Nowadays, the smart technology – equally transferred from the industrial realm, in this case, from the systems-of-systems approach – allows one to delve even further into the mechanical procedures of the human body, penetrating its physiology and psychology, including the feeling of loneliness, supposedly reflected in daily domestic habits. In this latter case, the inhabitable space is the medium with which to gather data rather than its consequent result, as it was in the former instance.

An image particularly well-known within architectural circles is the chronocyclegraph that Sigfried Giedion included in his 1948 book *Mechanization Takes Command*, in which the architectural historian examines retrospectively the impact of mechanization on daily life. This long-exposure photograph, taken in 1924 by the American corporate consultant company Gilbreth Inc., 'shows the light path of the point of a rapier used by an expert fencer'.²⁹ It is obvious that with this suggestive image, Giedion wanted to convey an aestheticised vision of mechanisation, enabling simultaneously both the visualisation of the sequence of instants that make up a movement and its spatialisation. The time-and-motion studies of the founders of the Gilbreth Inc., Frank and Lillian Gilbreth, pioneers of industrial-organisational psychology, together with American women's domestic engineering studies,³⁰ had a great influence on the conception of early Modernist residential

programmes, especially in the influential housing development programme 'New Frankfurt' under the direction of architect Ernst May, and where the Austrian architect Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky oversaw the study of daily domestic habits and designed accordingly the space where they unfolded. Schütte-Lihotzky's investigations on the optimization of motion habits led to her most celebrated contribution, the so-called Frankfurt Kitchen; the utmost pragmatist domestic space derived from a prevailing scientistic paradigm, the ultimate goal of which is the reduction in building costs and the easing and optimisation of women's domestic labour, so as to allow them to dedicate their liberated time, in principle, to more pleasant and meaningful activities.

In line with this tracking and measuring of daily habits, current smart-home models and wearables are being tested to perform health metrics. Research is being conducted to 'detect' and 'predict' older adults' physical and sociopsychological decline, including their loneliness, based on their daily domestic habits.³¹ The collated big data is processed through intelligent algorithms that trace the inhabitants' behavioural profile. To 'teach' the algorithms, the researchers correlate these factual scores with ground truth measurements; i.e., subjecting the inhabitants to scientifically approved loneliness scales.³² Based on the correlation of the results of both quantitative methods, the researchers raise conclusions that relate the spatialisation of habits (e.g., the time spent in certain rooms or outdoors) and loneliness. The results of the refereed studies seem to back up a practical, reliable, and cheap way to open up the terra incognita of the feeling of loneliness, like the early 20th century pioneers of the visual management accomplished to unveil the hidden dynamics of movements in the domestic space. However, in these contemporary instances,

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researchers seem also not to take architectural characteristics into any significant consideration in their experiments, neither do they coordinate with architectural and urban design practices that could extract conclusions and attune the architectural space with healthy habits that ameliorate the feelings of loneliness in the senior population.

Both episodes, the modern and the contemporary, have good socio-economic intentions as their final goals: on the one hand, to procure affordable living spaces in a post-war situation or to provide gerontological assistance in a scenario of demographic change and potential shortage of caretakers; and on the other hand, to free women from hard domestic labour or to facilitate older adults' independence and to age-in-place. However, when framing both approaches to the attunement of architecture habits within philosopher Albert Borgmann's 'device paradigm', and his notion of 'focal events' as practices and elements able to trigger and gather meaningful human habits, the architectural results seem questionable in both cases. The Frankfurt Kitchen, besides its unquestionable efficiency, resulted in an 'inconspicuous' and 'neutral' space as possible in everyday life:33 it was reduced to perform just its prosaic and preprogramed function, resulting in a de-flavoured version of the complex implications that the architectural space we call 'kitchen' entails. Regarding the contemporary sensing technologies and big data processing, they constitute a technological system that does not generate by itself 'focal events'; in fact, their 'unobtrusiveness' is, eloquently, one of the characteristics determining the success of the system.³⁴ In order to have a meaningful impact, smart technologies probably need to be approached as part of a system conceived from a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspective, unified

under a humanistic perspective,³⁵ from the architectural 'unifying understanding' of 'typical humane situations'.³⁶

The Frankfurt Kitchen and the smart-home paradigm, as it is currently formulated, seem to be the result of the idolatry or even superstitious idea - of quantitative studies as applied to architecture in supposedly improving the life of the 'chimerical man', a man that 'does not exist', as referred to by Le Corbusier, as opposed to what he called 'our own' man, meaning an everyday man.³⁷ On being cautious with seductive and potentially deceitful practices, a 'whole batch of plans that have the wheel revolving around a fictious pivot' could be avoided.³⁸ What kind of kitchen would have been designed if the problem to be addressed would have been how to contribute to the consolidation of social bonds around culinary habits, rather than mere efficiency? What would the social consequences have been? How would the smart-home be if the problem to be addressed would be how to avoid loneliness or the social isolation of older adults, rather than its detection or prediction? And what would be its impact on people's lives?

Sharedness

In his writings on individuality and the so-called 'forms of sociation', George Simmel³⁹ points to the Renaissance as the period that created what we call 'individuality', which involved the liberation of the individual subject from the communal forms that were characteristic of the Middle Ages. Those forms of community entailed the constriction of the individual's activities and life impulses through homogenisation in groups, which in the end blurred the boundaries between individuals.⁴⁰

For Simmel, the Renaissance brought an emphasis

on uniqueness and selfhood, which resulted in a so-called individualism of 'distinction', which carried a conspicuous feeling of self-aggrandisement.⁴¹ On the other hand, an individualism of 'freedom' was used by individuals in the 18th century to self-assert themselves against the constrictions imposed by society. According to Simmel, freedom and equality do not exempt individuals from personal responsibility, which configures a 'natural law' based on a 'fiction of isolated and identical individuals', depicting the modern effort for differentiation that distinguishes them from one another.⁴² This is visualised by Simmel with the metaphor of the frame in artworks, which simultaneously connects and separates them and their surroundings, whilst at the same time symbolises the contradictory aspiration of individuals for group belonging and their assertion for autonomy.⁴³

When addressing the gathering place between individuality and forms of collectivity, Simmel makes a play on words distinguishing between the 'individuation of collectivities' and the 'indeterminacy of collective individualities', to state that 'the sense of individuality has overstepped the boundary of the individual, as it were, and has absorbed the social aspect of the person that normally constitutes the antithesis to his individual aspect.'44 However, he points out that it is in the fact of sharing with others where the individual discovers his own selfhood and freedom, in the end revealing himself 'to bear the loneliness of its own quality." Therefore, the idea of sociation with others as a way of overcoming the tightness of individuals' boundaries becomes the trigger of their own freedom as individuals. The expansion of those limits beyond one's individuality by overlapping and sharing them with others is something that architecture has contributed to construct as the physical mediator between individuals in space.

Exchange

Interaction through social relations lays at the core of Simmel's sociology, which considered the forms of social interaction to be more important than its actual content. According to him, the autonomy of personality and its isolation makes us identical to others, which is compensated by the possibility of interaction with them. As one of the forms of social interaction, the concept of 'exchange' implies an added worth in the sense that, when produced, the sum of values after an act of interaction between parties is greater than what it was before, giving each party more than previously possessed.

Exchange as a 'pattern of sociation' possesses a spatial dimension, too. It is within space that the exchange of conditions that conciliate the individual and communal spheres is produced. In his seminal 1909 text "Bridge and Door", Simmel delves into the spatial dimension of separation and connectedness through a distinction between the human and natural dimensions:

'[T]he objects remain banished in the merciless separation of space; no particle of matter can share its space with another and a real unity of the diverse does not exist in spatial terms. And, by virtue of this equal demand on self-excluding concepts, natural existence seems to resist any application of them at all. Only to humanity, in contrast to nature, has the right to connect and separate been granted, and in the distinctive manner that one of these activities is always the presupposition of the other. By choosing two items from the undisturbed store of natural things in order to designate them as 'separate', we have already related them to one another in our consciousness, we have emphasized these two together against whatever lies between them. And conversely, we can only sense those things to be related which we have previously somehow isolated from one another; things must first be separated from one another in order to be together.'48

Simmelelaborates on the natural symbiosis between separateness and connectedness with a physical metaphor, 'spatialising' his ideas about the limits of individuality by confronting the metaphors of the bridge and the door. 49 This confrontation qualifies a distinction on how the simultaneity of separateness and connectedness occurs in objects and in human beings. In spatial terms, according to Simmel, the bridge is the epitome of path building, whilst the door is the representation of the boundary point. Both concepts could in turn be the two physical modes in which exchange may be produced. On the one hand, the bridge acquires an aesthetic value insofar as it makes visible the separated elements it connects, be they the banks of a river or the two sections of a discontinued road. It therefore makes the separation visible. By contrast, the door visualises the connectedness and separateness as two sides of the same act, depicting a reversible boundary insofar as it may be removed by its opening.⁵⁰

Both bridge and door represent the possibility of exchange. The door allows the interchange not only of its own character as a boundary but also that of the elements it separates (or connects) on both sides. By contrast, the bridge, having an aesthetic value, makes visible the connection between the extremes it gathers 'not only resisting spatial separation but also giving aesthetic and symbolic form to this dominance of volition over space'. Moreover, the bridge may be crossed indistinctly in both directions, whilst the door, when traversed, produces a different meaning depending on the entry or exit direction one takes to cross it.

Architecture consequently possesses the capacity of positing the limits, while suggesting a meaning to them through a physical presence, aiming at solving the individual's needs for intimacy and solitude, the encounter between them and their integration with the environment, through an aesthetic presence.

In-betweenness

Among the spatial forms that Simmel distinguishes, the boundaries of space exert an important influence on social interactions, framing the pieces or units in which it is divided.⁵² Simmel states:

'[A] society is characterized as inwardly homogeneous because its sphere of existence is enclosed in acutely conscious boundaries; and conversely, the reciprocal unity and functional relationship of every element to every other one gains its spatial expression in the enclosing boundary... People seldom appreciate how marvellously the extensity of space accommodates the intensity of sociological relationships here, how the continuity of space, precisely because it nowhere contains an absolute objective border, therefore permits us to lay down anywhere such a boundary subjectively.'53

The idea of in-betweenness as a space of boundaries has been used in architecture in the revision of the first modernity at the second half of the 20th century. The expansion of boundaries has introduced spatial thickness as an overcoming of the dichotomies between inside-outside, private-public, and individual-collective, which is done through the negotiation between poles to obtain transitional spaces. The gradation of privacy in physical terms was analysed in the seminal 1963 book *Community and Privacy* by Serge Chermayeff and Christopher Alexander, who blurred the polarization in this dichotomy between extremes in architecture and urbanism through the notion of threshold.⁵⁴ The authors delve into overcoming the dichotomy between private and public spheres, which expands the distinction between individuality and collectivism poles:

In cultures both present and past where recognition of the dichotomy or separation of public and private has not been

overcome by complexities, as it is in modern industrialized society, there is clear physical expression of the need for varying degrees of privacy and the integrity of domains corresponding to these. There are many examples of hierarchical arrangements of space provided by history at many levels of sophistication.'55

Their main thesis advocates for the introduction of 'transition points' that may become transitional spaces between domains or realms with different degrees of privacy. Whilst this is produced at all scales, it is the so-called 'urban anatomy' that becomes a mediator between privacy and community living:

'Privacy is most urgently needed and most critical in the place where people live, be it house, apartment, or any other dwelling. [...] It is our further contention that to contain this kind of dwelling, and to develop both privacy and the true advantages of living in a community, an entirely new anatomy of urbanism is needed, built of many hierarchies of clearly articulated domains. Such an urban anatomy must provide special domains for all degrees of privacy and all degrees of community living, ranging from the most intimately private to the most intensely communal. To separate these domains, and yet allow their interaction, entirely new physical elements must be inserted between them. It is because these new elements of separation emerge as vital and independent units in their own right that a new urban order may develop from the hierarchy of domains. Only when the habitat of urbanizing man is given such an order shall we perhaps restore to urban life a fruitful balance between community and privacy.'56

Both spheres of community and privacy may be connected according to the characteristics of the transitional elements that may participate on the basis of the conditions of the elements at both sides in a spatial gradation. This is an in-between condition that, as a threshold, looks two ways at once by inducing a reciprocal state, where 'provision for voluntary communality rather than

inescapable togetherness is essential'.⁵⁷

The architecture of in-betweenness provides simultaneously both the possibility of solitude and the avoidance of unwanted social isolation – both situations very much needed in urban contexts.

The first three concepts described above – 'Vital space', 'Island', and '(In)habit' – are essentially related to the individual sphere of the subject and its relationship to the phenomenon of loneliness: 'Vital space' as the connection between oneself and the immediate surrounding; 'Island' as the physical epitome of the idea of 'oneliness', a territorial metaphor for the boundaries between individuals and their social sphere; and the act of 'Inhabitation' as the way of purposefully 'attuning' the space that surrounds one through the practice of habits. Thus, the act of habitation is directly connected to the grasping of routines and customary modes of action, the practices of everyday life.⁵⁸ The three concepts may be considered as the spatial manifestations of the practice of individuality, inasmuch as it is through our everyday habits in the space of inhabitation how we determine the will or unwantedness of our solitary or connected living.

These practices may be grouped in systems of everyday relations, as far as they are able to trigger connected ways of operating regarding space. According to Michel de Certeau:

'(T)he examination of such practices does not imply a return to individuality. The social atomism which over the past three centuries has served as the historical axiom of social analysis posits an elementary unit – the individual – on the basis of which groups are supposed to be formed and to which they are supposed to be always reducible [...] Analysis shows that a relation (always social) determines its terms, and not the reverse, and that each individual is

a locus in which an incoherent (and often contradictory) plurality of such relational determinations interact.'59

Beyond the individual sphere, the collective dimension of the subject was considered in the last three concepts – 'Sharedness', 'Exchange' and 'In-betweenness' – by exploring the spatial dimension of the modes of interaction with others. These latter concepts, built upon the sociology of space and theory of architecture, have acted as counterparts to the previous three concepts, drawing upon the relationship between the practices of collectivism and individuality, between community and privacy.

In order to grasp the notion of loneliness through spatialisation, the objective in delving into these six concepts has been to understand the implications of space in the physical relationships between the individual and communal spheres. They constitute the inception of a terminology that might become the above-mentioned 'commonplace book', allowing for the desired dialogue with all men.

Notes

- 1. Miguel de Unamuno, "Soledad", in *Ensayos, Vol. VI* (Madrid: Publicaciones de la Residencia de Estudiantes, 1918), 45.
- 2. Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), xi.
- 3. Unamuno, "Soledad", 45.
- 4. Mario Benedetti, "Rostro de vos", in *El amor, las mujeres y la vida* (México: Santillana, 1997), 44.
- 5. Hall, The Hidden Dimension, x, xii.
- 6. Ibid., 114-125.
- 7. Ibid., xi.
- 8. Ibid., 41-60.
- 9. Ibid., 2.
- 10. E.g. traditional Japanese paper screens are adequate to isolate a room,

since their auditory space is screened, because for them devices that intervene in the visual space suffice for the purpose of gaining intimacy. Ibid, 45.

- 11. Ibid, 77-80.
- 12. Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Search for the Absolute", in the Catalogue of the Alberto Giacometti exhibition at the Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York (New York: Pierre Matisse Gallery, 1948), 3.
- 13. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Sartre y Giacometti", *Debats* vol. 20, 1987, 23. 14. Ibid.
- 15. Hall, The Hidden Dimension, pp. 113-125.
- 16. W.H. Auden, "Thanksgiving for a Habitat", in *Collected Poems* (New York: Modern Library, 2007), 687.
- 17. Ibid, 688.
- 18. Fay Bound Alberti, "This 'Modern Epidemic': Loneliness as an Emotion Cluster and a Neglected Subject in the History of Emotions", *Emotion Review*, vol.10, n°3, 2018, 242.
- 19. Charles Taylor, Sources of the Self: Making of the Modern Identity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
- 20. R. Potter (ed.), Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present (London: Routledge, 1997).
- 21. Bound Alberti, "This Modern Epidemic", 245.
- 22. The structures installed at Hart Island have included: a training ground for the United States Colored Troops; a Union Civil War prison camp; a psychiatric institution; a quarantine sanatorium for yellow fever and tuberculosis epidemics; a homeless shelter; a boys' reformatory; a jail; and a drug rehabilitation centre. 'Hart Island Timeline', New York Correction History Society: http://www.correctionhistory.org/html/timeline/html/hartline.html (accessed 2.2.2021).
- 23. Peter Sloterdijk, Foams: Spheres Volume III: Plural Spherlology (Los Angeles: Semiotext (e)), 241.
- 24. The New Yorkers who die alone are mostly poor people or people of colour or both. It is a demonstrable fact that the ones that experience the highest levels of loneliness are the poor social groups, given the deterioration of their social networks, proportionally to their poverty levels. Thomas Scharf, "Social exclusion of older adults in deprived urban communities of England", European Journal of Ageing, 2 (2005): 76-87. Ethnicity is also an important indicator of loneliness. Richard L. Allen and Hayg Oshagan, "The UCLA Loneliness Scale", Personality and

Individual Differences, 19, (1995):185-195. Given this, to a certain degree we could infer that Hart Island reflects not only New York's levels of 'oneliness', but also those of loneliness generally.

- 25. David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1990).
- 26. Online Etymology Dictionary: https://www.etymonline.com (accessed 1.7.2020).
- 27. Dalibor Vesely, "Architecture as a Humanistic Discipline", in Soumyen Bandyopadhyay, Jane Lomholt, Nicholas Temple and Renée Tobe (eds.), *The Humanities in Architectural Design. A Contemporary and Historical Perspective* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 197-198, 200.
- 28. Alberto Pérez-Gómez, Attunement: Architectural Meaning after the Crisis of Modern Science (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016).
- 29. Siegfried Giedion, Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), 29.
- 30. Domestic manuals based on the scientific organization of labour, written by the Americans Catherine Beecher, Christine Frederick and Lillian Gilbreth, constituted the *leitmotiv* of social housing in Germany during the heroic years of Modernism. All these books registered exhaustively the housekeeper daily habits aiming for the optimisation of their movements within the domestic space. Carmen Espegel and Gustavo Rojas, "The trail of American domestic engineers in European social housing", *Proyecto, Progreso, Arquitectura*, 18 (2018): 58-73.
- 31. This assertion is based on the work done in the research projects 'Social Robots and Ambient Assisted Living: The Independence and Isolation Balance' (SOCIETAL) and 'Implementation of contextual complexity in AI-based assessment systems of older adults' social isolation' (AIsola), which are part of ongoing research carried out by the authors on the mutual implications between the built environment and the phenomena of loneliness and social isolation. Both projects are being developed during the period 2019-2022 by multidisciplinary teams at different faculties at Tampere University, combining the disciplines of architecture, philosophy, social psychology, gerontology, mechanical engineering, and electrical engineering.
- 32. In the specific case of loneliness, the scales used include, for example, the 'De Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale', the 'Lubben Social Network Scale', and the 'UCLA Loneliness Scale'.

- 33. Albert Borgmann, *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life. A Philosophical Inquiry* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 41-44, 48.
- 34. 'Nowadays, we find the ideas of availability, inconspicuousness, and spatial indifference in smart-home and smart-city ideologies but they were strongly present already in the machine metaphors of the modern architecture'. Pekka Passinmäki, "Technology, Focality and Place: on the Means and Goals of Architecture", in *Understanding and Designing Place, DATUTOP* 38 (Tampere: Tampere University, 2019), 74.
- 35. For instance, in the case of loneliness, there is no doubt that smart health interventions might help in assessing the problem but, of course, they do not solve it in its entire complexity.
- 36. Vesely, "Architecture as a Humanistic Discipline", pp. 197-198, 200.
- 37. Le Corbusier, *Talks with the Students* (Hudson, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 1991), 45.
- 38. Ibid., 5.
- 39. At the start of the 20th century, the German sociologist Georg Simmel (1858-1918) broadly wrote on individuality and social forms within the field of sociology of space. Simmel's sociology has constituted since then a reference for the social dimension of space, in which not only social theorists or sociologists, but also urban scientists and architectural theorists have constructed modern theories of spatial sociology. The two most important of Simmel's texts on the sociology of space are 'On Spatial Projections of Social Forms' and 'The Sociology of Space', both published in 1903 and included in his subsequent book *Soziologie* (1908). David Frisby, "Social space, the city and the metropolis", in *Simmel and Since: Essays on Georg Simmel's Social Theory* (London, New York: Routledge, 1992), 71-84.
- 40. George Simmel, "Freedom and the Individual", in *On Individuality and Social Forms* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), 217.
- 41. In relation to this idea of the individualism of distinction, some authors have pointed out how popular culture in modern times 'stresses the dangers of aloneness and, by contrast, the virtues of group-mindedness' to explain the idea of 'lonely success'. This is exemplified, for instance, in the well-known 1943 novel by Ayn Rand *The Fountainhead*, in which an architect embodies this notion. David Riesman, Nathan Glazer and Reuel Denney, *The Lonely Crowd: A study of the changing American character* (New Haven CN: Yale University Press, 1961), 155-156.

- 42. Simmel, "Freedom and the Individual", 220.
- 43. Georges Teyssot, *A Topology of Everyday Constellations* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), 270.
- 44. Ibid, 265-267.

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- 45. Simmel states that 'all relations with others are thus ultimately mere stations along the road by which the ego arrives at its self'. Ibid., 223.
- 46. George Ritzer, Sociological Theory (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011), 166.
- 47. Simmel's other forms of social interaction are conflict, domination, prostitution and sociability. Simmel, *On Individuality*, 41-140.
- 48. George Simmel, "Bridge and Door", in *Simmel On Culture: Selected Writings*, edited by David Frisby and Mike Featherstone, translated by Mark Ritter (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 170-171. Originally published as "Brücke und Tür", *Der Tag*, 15 September, 1909.
- 49. When referring to Simmel's assertion of human nature being formed by separation and unification, Georges Teyssot talks about a human being as 'an inhabitant of confines, a creature living enduringly on the frontier; yet, at the same time, he has no secure limits by which to enclose himself'. Teyssot, *A Topology*, 269.
- 50. Simmel, "Bridge and Door", 172.
- 51. Iain Borden, "Space beyond: spatiality and the city in the writings of Georg Simmel", *The Journal of Architecture*, 2:4 (1997): 313-335.
- 52. The other spatial forms that are confronted in social interaction are 'the exclusiveness or uniqueness of space, the fixing of social forms in space, spatial proximity and distance and the movement of space'. Frisby, *Simmel and Since*, 75.
- 53. George Simmel, "The sociology of space", in *Simmel on Culture*, 141. Originally published as "Soziologie des Raumes", *Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft*, 27, 1903.
- 54. Teyssot evokes Walter Benjamin's 'threshold magic' produced by places of transition. Teyssot, *A Topology*, 87. Architects such as Alison & Peter Smithson used the notion of 'threshold' in their revision of the Modern Movement. See Hadas Steiner, "Life at the Threshold", *October* 136 (2011), 133-55. This was later put into practice by Aldo van Eyck and Herman Hertzberger and other members of the Dutch Forum Group, part of the structuralist movement in architecture during the second half of the 20th century.
- 55. Serge Chermayeff and Christopher Alexander, 'Historic Integrity'

- (chapter: Anatomy of Urbanism), in *Community and Privacy: Toward a New Architecture of Humanism* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc.-Garden City, 1963), 130.
- 56. Chermayeff and Alexander, 'The Search for Privacy' (chapter: Erosion of the Human Habitat), in *Community and Privacy*, 38-39.
- 57. Chermayeff and Alexander 'A Family Hearth' (chapter: Anatomy of Privacy), in *Community and Privacy*, 204.
- 58. Teyssot, A Topology, 8.
- 59. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), xi.

The translations of quotes into English are by the authors.



Discussion: Mediated Loneliness

Ben Lazare Mijuskovic, Christina R. Victor, Juhani Pallasmaa, Fernando Nieto, Rosana Rubio

Speakers:

BM = Ben Lazare Mijuskovic

CV = Christina R. Victor

JP = Juhani Pallasmaa

Hosts:

FN = Fernando Nieto

RR = Rosana Rubio

Audience A= sociologist Dr. Richard Pieper, University of Eastern Finland, Department of Social Sciences, Social Work Audience B = architect and philosopher Gareth Griffiths

FN: Thank you very much for the interesting lectures we have had today. We will now have a sort of round table discussion, and we ask the audience to participate as well.

So, it's not easy to wrap up these topics, but we have tried to gather together in an interesting way a bunch of comments and questions for this discussion. To get the dialogue started, one possible framework is the topic of loneliness and its relation to the built environment; it's a distinction on three levels, which has to do with three different scopes and, at the same time, three different scales.

The first level is *the outside*, representing the 'strange', the 'unknown', the place for 'estrangement'; for us architects, it is the 'city' in its broadest sense. The second level would be *the community*, representing the 'nearby', the 'known', the place for 'proximate

relationships'; for us architects, it could be the 'neighbourhood', but also the 'communal spaces', both within and without the buildings. The third level would be *the inside*, representing the 'private', certainly the 'intimate', the place *par excellence* for 'loneliness' or 'solitude'; for us architects, it is the idea of 'home'.

So, we suggest that this conversation might have this distinction, perhaps not necessarily literally, but as a background or as a sort of spatial framework, where many of the associated issues may arise: but without having to make very strict environmentally related taxonomies. So, the first question can be associated with this distinction, and it could have to do with the people you have interviewed or patients you have formerly treated. Have these people ever mentioned or described their living environment as something that might enhance or palliate their feeling of loneliness? Do they use spatial metaphors to describe the feeling of loneliness?

BM: I was interested in Professor Pallasmaa's concept of 'mediation' and his discussion on art as mediating things. Historians of aesthetics distinguish three ages of art. Aristotle and Plato were committed to imitation as a form of art; Kant and the 18th century thought of the imagination as art – it had an element of freedom as well as sensuousness; and Benedetto Croce, the famous Italian aesthetician, thought of art as expression.

I was sort of following Professor Pallasmaa's theme of 'mediation'. Oddly enough, Arthur Schopenhauer, in *The World as Will and Representation*, takes up architecture as a basic form that mediates between *the thing in itself*, the irrational will, the subconscious, with the mediating ability of architecture and design to connect this subconscious, lower noumenal level with the most basic structure of architecture, because it incorporates or rests in gravity. We have to remember about Schopenhauer's time, that the

incredible feat of science was Newton's theory of gravity. So, the architecture and buildings would, somehow, fuse this lower level of subconscious with the phenomenal reality that we all share in a basically very superficial way.

CV: I guess when I have been talking to people, the discourse has been very much around the inside of the community, rather than the city. So, a much smaller scale comes into discussions about the locality in which people are living and how that enables, or doesn't enable, social interactions. My participants have not been asked erudite questions by the interviewers and myself on art and other kinds of levels. It's much more around the lived experience and how the home is – not always – seen as the place of connectivity, but particularly how the changes in the external environment when one gets older – the loss of familiar landmarks, the changes in street patterns – makes navigating and therefore maintaining social relationships much more problematic, and my view is a bit more about lived experience than theoretical.

JP: I would continue with a couple of sentences about the importance of mediation. In today's architectural world, architecture has turned into aestheticization. But not only architecture – in today's commercial world everything is aestheticized: personality, behaviour, even war. The Gulf War was the first aestheticized war, which was broadcast as television entertainment. In today's architecture, I must say, I rarely ever experience 'sincerity' because of this calculated aestheticization that tries to appeal to public taste. But that is not the task of architecture at all. Architecture has a much more important task. I would also say, as I teach constantly in a number of countries, architecture schools have stepped into this same mind. They teach architecture as an aesthetics, which is now even reinforced by computers. So, I say nowadays, without

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much doubt, that architecture as an art form is in its worst trouble since the beginning of Modernism at the beginning 20th century.

CV: Was there a golden age of architecture? When were you getting it right?

JP: Well, there are of course many golden ages. One of them clearly is the Renaissance, where the idea of harmonizing with the cosmos... was a very direct and conscious task.

BM: Man was more integrated into the universe.

JP: Yes, exactly. And then also I must say early Modernism always touches me emotionally, because there was so much good will, intention and confidence in the human capacity. Whereas in today's architecture I rarely experience this un-manipulated attitude.

BM: That is because we are nothing but computers nowadays.

JP: We are becoming more and more computerised because of our careless and uncritical use of technology. I would be a Luddite if I spoke against computers, but I would say very strongly that there is no technology that is innocent. All technologies always have a backside.

BM: And ulterior motives.

Audience B: Thank you all for your presentations. I have a theoretical point and a question. In the presentations there were discussions about both loneliness and solitude. And I was wondering whether a categorical distinction should be made between the two. In the first presentation, it was sort of a shock to me to hear that loneliness was described not so much as a medical condition yet as something so fundamental to our notion of what it is to be a human. But I saw it as different from the notion of solitude, because solitude in the history of philosophy is a kind of human aspiration or achievement. For instance, in Plato and also Montaigne, Rousseau and many others, who saw the whole

notion of human existence not in terms of a biological sense, as you were talking about, but more as something that gathers around the ultimate human achievement. There is also Aristotle's idea that the ultimate life is the contemplative life. So, I see a categorical distinction between the two. And my question: Professor Pallasmaa had a notion about solitude in a Barragán building, saying that you are experiencing it alone even when you are in a crowd. There is a whole series of scholarship looking at these ideas, but there is also a counter-example that comes from Wittgenstein – though he never discussed Barragán, of course. When it comes to art, are we really looking at it alone? He was trying to argue against the idea of a private language. His argument is that we see a pattern of mutual recognition that constitutes our self-consciousness. So in the Barragán case, it is not that you are alone: language is central to our existence and that is why you are not experiencing the world alone.

JP: My point was exactly to point out that there is a negative and positive connotation on being alone. Mental solitude really is an essential condition for certain creative work, for instance. One of my favourite poets, if not my favourite poet, Rilke, speaks so much about the importance of solitude.

BM: Generally speaking, solitude is positive, people enjoy solitude: the housewife that has gone crazy with the kids wants to go out and have some solitude. I think loneliness is generally, or at least I use it as, a negative thing. People don't want to be lonely. Sometimes you can even distinguish 'aloneness' as different from solitude and also different from loneliness. For example, I am not lonely that I have never met Immanuel Kant. I mean, I am alone and away and isolated from Kant. So, you can make those subtle decisions, but I think, for me and probably for us here, loneliness

is something to be addressed. For me, it is an incredible existential situation.

As I said, Existentialism is a post-World War II phenomenon. Nietzsche, Heidegger (not Heidegger!), Sartre, and Kierkegaard were lonely, they were talking about the sort of loneliness that I tried to give a talk on. For Wittgenstein there is no private language. I mean, this idea that only you know your own thoughts and no one else can access them, that you have some sort of privileged access to your own thoughts, for Wittgenstein is not possible. Language is consciousness. And if you cannot talk, even, at least, communicate at a very basic stage – like in St Augustine's example of the two men, one directing the other on how to build a wall by pointing and that sort of thing – that, at least, is an interaction.

CV: I am not a philosopher; I am a geographer. One of the things as academics that we need to be aware of is the constant drive of policy makers and practitioners and a range of other vested interests to try to categorize, define, and problematise particular human experiences. I'm sure there is a continuum from, on the one hand, loneliness and, on the other hand, solitude, with its positive connotations. I think we are not well served by debates that just try to categorize people into one box or another, without recognizing that we all exist in that continuum. We might be in different places in different times and we can move. It's a very reductionist argument, certainly in the UK, to try and limit the debate into this narrow kind of negative experience, which has now become a real problem, without really thinking it through.

Audience A: I would like to thank you for the inspiring lectures, but also I would like to make a critical comment. I experienced all the talks in an opposition; on the one side the self, maybe the existential self, the creative architect who kind of

solves his existential problems and, on the other hand, we have the world, and maybe the built environment, maybe even place. But what is kind of missing are the social relations on either side of the equation. The focus in all the talks was on the experience of loneliness and this is potentially always a self, the person and an undefined subject. Now, if you look at the social relations on the side of the world, it has been said that it takes a village to educate and raise a child. Now, if the village doesn't function, the child certainly has all the kind of problems you were mentioning. And it's no wonder, because the child is predisposed to be in the village, otherwise it doesn't work. And there has been no talk so far about whether any village will do. I think the village itself has to have a certain quality, it has to have social relations that are working to actually perform as the village for the child. So, I think we need to talk much more about the social relations that make a place than we have done so far. On the other side, what is also missing is the self of the architect, and if you are talking about architecture and built environments, I'm sorry architects, you are not alone! There happens to be, for example, social scientists, psychologists, medical people who know something about public health. There are teams! Architects who think they can build the architecture alone are missing a very vital point about the social relations that are necessary to make even architecture happen. And so, I think we have to look more at the team side, interdisciplinarity and cooperation on the architecture side, and more also at how the villages and communities are structured to be really functional for the people and, especially, our children.

BM: I think it's going in the wrong direction, that's why I stress loneliness. At first, the child is born into a family, within a couple: a child was born within an extended family, into a tribe. I think it's

going in the wrong direction; we are becoming more 'atomistic'. I wrote an article that appeared in the *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, where I contrasted the atomistic society – this comes from Plato, by the way – the atomistic society of the sophists and the politicians in Greek time, and the 'organic' community.

Audience A: But the atomistic society is also a society, either you have a society or not... There are relationships, but they might not be the ones you are thinking about.

BM: You are only thinking about one society – an organic one. But every meaningful concept has an opposite concept. This comes out of the father of sociology, Ferdinand Tönnies, who makes that distinction: *Gemeinschaft* and *Gessellschaft*. You're thinking that there's something wrong with our approach. But our approach, my approach at least, is to worry about the atomistic, the divorce, the collapse of the extended family, the collapse of the village. Look what's happening in the world; you have five or six dictators who have atomic weapons and they're getting crazier and crazier.

JP: I understand your point, but I would rather emphasize the institution of 'tradition' than, for instance, 'team work' and 'group work'. I think that as artists, architects and city planners, we need to internalise tradition much more than we're doing in today's world, which also means that we have to have a constant communication dialogue with the past. I always tell my students to be brave. Choose Michelangelo or Filippo Brunelleschi as your mentor! Because the wonderful quality of the artistic world is that everything is side by side in front of us, and you can really communicate with an artist or a thinker who has died 500 years ago. Tapio Wirkkala, the legendary Finnish designer, who was one of my closest friends, used to tell me that his real teacher was Piero della Francesca. Mind you, he died 476 years before my friend was

born, but yet Piero was his true mentor.

FN: That was a very good point, but I must say that it was on the list. So, that is perhaps why the idea of having the questions in the end was exactly in order to allow those topics to appear. But I have to say a few words about this, because Professor Christina Victor has mentioned the need for having a sense of connectedness as a palliative to loneliness, and we think that the built environment and architecture at its core has a lot to say there, since certain architectural typologies and environmental design studies can contribute to palliate loneliness. For instance, hybrid buildings, which are holding a mixture of users and therefore enhancing unexpected social encounters. But in a different way also in all universal design, design for all, in supporting people. But also in urban design; for instance, there is a renovation project in a neighbourhood in Barcelona where a sloped street had to be updated. The architects' answer was to create a very simple system of paved horizontal platforms along the slope, in order to allow people to place a chair, a table and to sit down to talk to their neighbours. So, I think that the solution had to do with the idea of taking over palliative spaces as well, and solving the problem with spatial thinking.

Audience A: Just a comment on your comment. I am a sociologist. I started teaching in social planning and architecture in the 1970s. So, the problem is, I was teaching, for example, together with Gerd Albers. He was a social planner, architect, and he had a distinct awareness of the need for architects' co-operation with other disciplines to really do their job. He saw it as very important how we structure the process of making architecture. It's not just about having great ideas or answers, but about how to do it. On the other hand, the question of what we shall do – *Apocalypse Now!*

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is not really the problem. We also have climate change activists, so maybe there is more community developing than you allow for. What I find discomforting, for example, in your presentation [referring to CV] – which I liked very much, by the way – is that you show a slide on what we can do perhaps with older people, with them making coffee and all these nice little things like having pets. Sure it was ready. But then it stopped just being little lists of the connectedness of things and other people. It's certainly not enough to address the question about how older people are supposed to live in the near future, even in the society that doesn't pay their rent.

CV: I think one of the big problems that we have in the UK – so I don't attribute it to my European cousins – is that the first thing is, people are interested in solving a problem. So, they want to know what we can do to provide older adults with meaningful social relationships, so that they will not be lonely. So, what they do is they study lonely people, who are five percent or maybe ten percent of the population, instead of looking at the ninety percent of older adults who are socially engaged, socially connected with relationships that are meaningful to them. Not necessarily to me or to us, but meaningful in their lives, and we don't spend any time, effort or interest in trying to understand what works. So, indeed, I have been trying to develop research in this sense. If there are any research funders in the audience, I have got a great research project called "Why are older people lonely?"

If you think about old age, perhaps you would have lost your employment roles, reduced income, increasing health problems, your children would have moved away and live somewhere else in the world, and your life-long partner would have died. And still ninety percent of people are not lonely. I think we could learn a

lot from older adults as experts by experience – what's meaningful to them? – and reframe our enterprise. For me, a lot of the interventions that are done in the UK are somebody's great idea: let's give them a hen or let's put men in sheds or let's get barbers to cut peoples' hair, or whatever it is, instead of going to the older people – this applies to the other groups as well – asking What would you like? What brings meaning to your life?

When I was a kid, I was a swimmer, a very keen swimmer. For me, what I want to do when I become deeply decrepit, I still want to be able to go swimming with my swimming buddies. That's what brings meaning to my life, just float around and enjoy the experience. I don't know if that answers the question, but a lot of the time we're asking the wrong question from the wrong people, and we don't take into the context that all of the research on loneliness in the UK is about bereavement or gender. It doesn't look at "Is there a bus service to take you to somewhere where you could meet your whist club or your Conservative Women's Association?" or whatever. Do we ask the people, Do they have enough money to get there? Do we ask if the pavement is walkable? All those kinds of things, those sort of contextual areas, we don't actually take into account.

My two big things for planning are benches – in the UK we don't have benches in public spaces, in case young people sit on them and get up to mischief, and we don't have public loos anymore either, because people might go in there and also get up to mischief. But both of those things really make the environment much more accessible for everybody.

BM: My own personal plan for continued non-loneliness is to hang around universities and talk to people like you.

CV: Or go to the library!

JP: I was going to comment on the same remark. I guess we two [referring to himself and to BM] would go for old people, but I don't believe either one of us feels lonely.

BM: No.

JP: Because the world gets more and more interesting every day.

BM: And keeping your intellectual abilities and talking to people, our interaction right now has made me a lot less lonely for the time that we converse.

RR: You have talked about place as a way not to be lonely, to be connected. Some thinkers have talked about the relationship of place and habits, and nowadays habits are changing so fast. So, that can also affect the way we inhabit and the way we make places. Thus, I want to ask you about the issue of habits and also about how technology is influencing our habits; for instance, how we take care of older people, introducing telecare and telehealth, and how this has transformed or can affect loneliness?

BM: Well, for me, habits are moving so fast. I have problems with the computer. My wife bought me a cell phone a number of years ago. It's a flip phone. Every time I opened it, it took pictures of me, and I couldn't stop it, so there were more selfies of me than of Kim Kardashian. I cannot log into these new habits, they alienate me. I will go with my colleague here, I will go to the old traditional things, the things that have been around forever and have survived. But I watch TV and every six weeks there's a brandnew car, and they're going faster and faster. It's just overwhelming. It's going in a wrong direction, that's all I can say.

CV: I don't entirely know how to answer the question; so, that's always a good start. In terms of ICT, Information and Communication Technology, I think there is good and bad. In

the UK, we periodically hear on the news about these Scrabble groups, so people can play Scrabble online with other people in the world, who are not spatially proximate, and can have an enjoyable experience playing a game they like, even if they cannot get out of the house, so they have an opportunity to do something they enjoy, facilitated by ICT, which is great. That perhaps enables people to have a better, meaningful old age, when perhaps their mobility is impaired, and they can't get out for whatever reason. So, that's really good. But I think as well that there are downsides to some of these things.

Perhaps if we think about families being dispersed around the world, Skype, Zoom or these conferencing systems are great. So, you can see your grandchildren in New Zealand, which will either make you feel very glad that you can see them, or make you feel desperately lonely because your grandchildren are not living down the road. So I think it perhaps depends on the individuals, and I guess probably, like all of these things, ICT is individual context specific, it's not a 100 percent good or bad thing.

BM: Are we becoming more dehumanised?

CV: I don't know. I guess another thing that I find interesting, certainly in the UK, is that we are desperate for telecare and telehealth to work. Again, it's like your social relationships: some things work really well. If you're an older adult who cannot get to a GP's [general practitioner] surgery, we can now do teleconsultations, so you can talk to your GP or your nurse and discuss what's going on: this is a great thing. But if that's then an excuse for the GP not to make a home visit, this is a bad thing. I am not saying that telecare isn't a good thing, but to say "it's good enough for old people, we will leave the doctors to deal with the young people, who are slightly less problematic"... And telehealthcare is

problematic as well, because most old people don't have only one thing wrong with them. The average 70-year old has at least five different comorbidities, and managing that kind of complexity at a distance is not easy. So, wearing my public health hat, I would rather say that we should think more sophisticatedly about managing multimorbidity than telecare; but I am biased.

Audience A: I would be a little bit careful about demonising modern technology. I mean, we have, on the one hand, the fact that young people are able to organize worldwide for climate-change programmes exactly with that kind of technology that people of our age may not be so used to anymore. But, on the other hand – a totally different example – one of the most rewarding experiences I had in my research was when a demented person was in a project that we had on using touch screens. There were very simple kinds of computer material, music and so on, and they could then choose just by touching the screen. When you see the demented person for the first time in their life sitting in front of a touch screen, and then kind of discovering that when you touch a certain part of the screen, things happen – which are just wonderful to look at – then, I think you get second thoughts about the technology. Blame the people who are using the technology incorrectly, but blaming the technology is too easy.

CV: And for people with disabilities; it's fantastic. If it can promote engagement!

JP: I'm not demonising technology. I'm just saying that we should be a bit more concerned and careful about the consequences. Also, in other kinds of things; for instance, at least the Finns here know that in Finnish schools teaching longhand writing was stopped two years ago, which is, I think, a catastrophic change, based on a complete lack of understanding of how the body is

engaged in language, writing, and speaking. Scientists argue today that language originates in hand gestures, which makes a lot of sense. So I'm just saying, that in the name of progress, we are doing rather serious changes. In today's newspaper there was a piece of news that I have mentioned in a couple of my essays: that is, the importance of making notes by hand, instead of making them on a machine. The news was that the memory capacity of those who did it by hand was much higher, which is very easy to understand because it goes through the muscular system. So, I'm just suggesting that we should be a little bit more careful.

BM: Recently, the system I came up with... the University of Chicago had a Great Books Program, and you read the texts of Aristotle, Plato and Newton and all, and you had to really kind of think and struggle with them. I just retired from teaching about a year ago, but gave a course where people had to buy or, at least, order the book, or they could order it online, which was fine. Books I used to read I would underline over and over again in different colours.

There are different exams you can give; you can give a true or false exam – that's not very sophisticated – or you can give multiple choice, but I liked to give essay exams. So, I put the three essay questions on the board and then everyone went to their computers and *googled* in the question, and what I got was a Google product.

Audience A: Just a note; he is talking in Finland, where computers are brought into schools at a rate Germany can only dream of. We [in Finland] had the best ratings in Pisa [Programme for International Student Assessment]. And the children are reading much more — and the parents with the children — than in any other European country. Is that now a case for you or against you?

BM: Well it depends where you live. For example, we have problems in the United States, as you must realise. Something is going wrong. I'm not political. I'm not nationalistic. I was actually from Europe, my parents were Montenegrins. I lived in Europe from 1937 to 1945 during World War II. So I'm not political, I'm not nationalistic, I'm not religious. I stay out of all that. But it depends where you live. In the United States now, I'm ready to give up my citizenship. I'm a nationalized citizen now but what they are doing is unethical because of Trump. I don't vote for him, or against him, I am out of that. I don't care about his politics but as a human being, ethically, I think things are going bad.

Audience A: But you have to vote against Trump.

BM: No, I stay out of it! I'm purely philosophical. There's a group of philosophers they used to call Stoics. They were cosmopolitans of the world, in other words, they were citizens of the world: all men are brothers, no man is born a slave and all that nonsense, and that's who I go with.

FN: Maybe we can leave politics out. Now that teaching and learning has come up, perhaps I would return to the idea of 'empathy', which has appeared in the talks. Especially we architects are centred in the built environment, are searching for expression rather than developing what professor Pallasmaa calls 'emphatic thinking', and making places for all. Now that we're in an academic environment, how can we teach empathy or empathic thinking to students?

JP: I'm glad to start by saying that architecture is the art form that is closest to choreography. Architecture choreographs human movements, not only physically but also mentally: it choreographs emotions, it scripts human behaviour very fundamentally. What I wish to say is that when a designer designs a house for another

person, it's not possible to do it for you as a separate self. I have to internalise you as a client and I design it for myself and then, at the end of the process, I give it as a gift to you. But that is the only way empathy works: there is no imagination hovering between two persons. It has to be located somewhere: the designer and artist has to locate and feel everything by herself.

I see empathy as a really important, essential, central quality for designers of anything. But I don't know of any school in the world where empathy would be taught, which is a very strange thing. Well, there are many other things that are missing in education. I think it's completely wrong to start architecture education or design education by teaching what architecture is or what design is. The first two years should be teaching who you are, who you are, who you are, because only around the core of the self can knowledge accumulate into something fruitful, in creative work. So, there are fundamental things that are missing in education today.

FN: Professor Mijuskovic, you have approached empathy with the idea of 'intimacy' as well, and you have said that a fairer definition for loneliness might be a new definition for empathy.

BM: One of the really serious revolutions in philosophy was initiated by Descartes. He changed everything that went before him and everything that went after. But in his statement "I think, therefore I am" the problem was: how do I know other selves? Not only how do we know the world, because it's a distortion of our sensations, but how do we know anyone else? That's why I talk about empathy. Empathy is the road to intimacy. But I think it can only be done on a very concrete and limited level.

I met my wife in a South Side bar in Chicago, and we drank for four straight nights; we drank really heavily. On the fourth night, I asked her to marry me and she said yes. I would have asked her on

the first night, but I was afraid she might think that I was rushing it. That was in 1965. We have an emphatic, intense relationship, and what holds it together is an ethical commitment to each other, and continuous communication. I suffered from loneliness as an only child during World War II. From 1937 to 1939, I moved from Budapest to Croatia to Montenegro to Palestine to Cairo in Egypt and, finally, to Ankara, before going to the United States. So, I struggled with loneliness on such an intense level that finally I figured out I better think this through. But the empathy was through emotion, through affective means, not through intellectually trying to see how.

Audience A: You needed a village.

BM: Well, it was a village of two. I mean, you can call it a village, it was a relationship. There was no village, it was all chaos. My mother was from Croatia. Croatians went with the Nazis. My father was from Montenegro, and they allied with the British and the Americans. They fought with the British 8th army against Rommel and the Nazis. You know, it was all chaos. The concentration camps! Jasenovac was one of the worst concentration camps. Even the Nazis were startled by what was going on in Croatia. Jesus Christ! I need a beer, I don't know about you!

RR: I'm interested in this capacity of architecture to convey meanings without an intellectual meaning behind it; about its emotional capacity. Professor Pallasmaa has talked extensively about 'atmospheres'. I was wondering if you could tell more about how these environments can help us to live with a temporary feeling of loneliness and create this empathy and unity.

BM: Professor Pallasmaa used the word 'mediation'. I kept talking about separation, but mediation is how you connect. I go along with that key word: how do we mediate with each other? But

I think, to do it successfully, you can't do it as a nation, we're too fragmented.

CV: I think that in a lot of the planning decisions in the UK we've looked at the plans and not at the people, and so we have very carelessly destroyed communities not, I don't think, deliberately, but inadvertently. We need to put people much more into the planning process and try and think about how we can promote connections at a number of different levels.

BM: You talked about a village, but unfortunately the United States is a nation. They had a Civil War, where they actually had slaves, and now this is another 'civil war'. We are not a village in the United States: it's just chaos.

CV: I want to offer a small ray of hope, based on my late mum – and it's always good to extrapolate from one's own family. It's kind of a simple thing that can build connections and bring people together. We lived in a town just outside of London. They built a big new supermarket, and for lot of the older people it was difficult to get there. The bus ride involved two busses and if you didn't have a car it was problematic. The local authority organized a bus – a coach, a mini-bus – to take older adults from a particular locality and take them shopping. This was not an intervention aimed at community building, or any kind of network building. It was merely a transport activity, so that the older adults could do their shopping and get back without having to spend four hours on a bus going somewhere.

This started off with a group of elderly women and a few men who were brave, going on this bus, maybe 25 people who did not know each other, and that ran for about two or three years, and at the end of which this group had formed a little... well, several communities. So, what went from "going shopping", to "after shopping we'll have some coffee" to "we'll exchange phone numbers", and then build a network based around a common problem and a solution to a common problem. Sometimes, we think in terms of loneliness interventions, we label some visual cure to loneliness, "I will give you a hen", when, actually, if I give you a bus and you can go and meet people who are in a similar kind of position to you, we might be able to grow networks. Isn't it Think Global, Act Local?

JP: Just one example, a personal example, of how to recognise or address the user from my own practice. I did a number of projects for the City of Helsinki, and I was always reminded that you should design things that are vandal-proof. I always refused to do it. Because if you design something that is vandal-proof, it makes everyone a vandal. Because it reminds you of violence. So, to do things which are fragile, they respect everybody's character, and they have – quoting a sentence from Joseph Brodsky – "Be like me". He says that of a poem, but also architecture has the same capacity to alter, unconsciously or subconsciously, human behaviour. None of my fragile projects have ever been vandalised.

BM: Lesson learned!

FN: I would like to bring up another topic that has appeared here, the issue of language. Professor Mijuskovic and Professor Victor have dealt with this limitation of language to express the feeling of loneliness, how problematic it may be when used as a parameter to measure loneliness, as well its potential capacity to influence, negatively or positively, and create stereotypes about feelings. In addition, it is also known that architecture has its own language as well, that, as with spoken or written language, includes its own elements, its phonemes, its own structure and syntax. Professor Pallasmaa has broadly written about the capacity of

architecture to convey symbolic meanings, as Rosana was referring to before. But to what extent can language contribute to the elimination of social stigma or, put the other way around, to really enhance it?

BM: Well, it is one of the critical arguments for the past fifty years: you mentioned Wittgenstein. Apocritical philosophers have claimed they have substituted language for consciousness. Husserl in the *Cartesian Meditations* argues that consciousness is primary, language is secondary. The analytic philosophers have turned that around, backwards, that's why I have been arguing on behalf of Subjective Idealism. There is Objective Idealism, that is, Hegelianism. For Hegel, the self is mutually conditioned by other selves. There is no such thing for Hegel as a single self, conscious self, there is always a social reference, which could appeal to you sociologically. For Kant, by contrast, the self is mutually conditioned by objects.

I was telling Rosana about one of the cases that is in the paper, but is also in a book that I have just published titled *Consciousness in Loneliness: Theoria and Praxis*, published by Brill in 2018. There is a case that I discuss, it was actually in the *Tampa Bay Times*, a newspaper. They discovered in Florida this little girl, six years old, who had been absolutely neglected by her mother and two older male siblings, so that she couldn't talk. A woman was walking by one day and saw her face in the window – actually, that's the name on a Google search, 'The girl in the window'. She saw this little girl that was staring beyond her, instead of looking at her, like the animals in the zoo – you know how they kind of look beyond you, they do not look at you, they are looking into the distance, somewhere. So, it was reported to child protective services – this is now 2005. The child protective service comes and removes the

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child from parental custody. They examine her, she does not seem autistic, she does not seem developmentally delayed or anything like that, but she will not make contact. She was a minor was still adopted after a few years, and she has some sort of minor response to the father, the adopted father, but she only relates to objects. I would say she is self-conscious. Whether she is lonely or not, she has no language to express it. So, they had to lock the refrigerator because she keeps eating everything herself; you know, she is nurturing herself or that sort of thing. Goofily enough, Oprah Winfrey gets involved, gets a contract with the parents so that only she and her staff can interact. So the reporter who had discovered this, wrote this stuff and got a Pulitzer Prize for it, can't even visit the girl. Now she is ten years older, 2015 was the last time, and she still can't talk.

So loneliness is crippling; it destroys you physically, emotionally and intellectually. Those are some of the things about loneliness. My problem with a lot of the violence from dictators, all the way down to the kids that bully and things like that, is that it's loneliness that drives this kind of narcissism; it drives us to the worst things in human beings. Obviously, I am very pessimistic, but not cynical. I think there are saints, I've known human saints, but it only takes one real thug to ruin happiness for a lot of people.

JP: You used the word 'symbolisation' or 'symbol'. Symbols are very often mentioned in relation to rituals and habits and also in art and architecture. I, myself, don't believe too much in the value of symbols, because symbols are agreements. The artistic world and the architectural world need to deal with more deeply grounded phenomena, and there is plenty of language of *materia*, the existential language of space, and distances and illumination, and up and down, and left and right, which are part of our physical

bodily being-in-the-world, and the real language of architecture arises from those, not from social or cultural agreements. I'm not suggesting that symbols should be eliminated, but we shouldn't be giving too much emphasis to those.

BM: Language is artificial, that is one problem. There is a difference with meaning that's rich with intentions, what Husserl calls "horizons and halos of meaning". But language itself is very artificial. Some cultures have one word with twenty different meanings, so to speak.

CV: I just had one minor point, which is once again, perhaps less erudite and more down to earth. Certainly, again from the UK context, I worry about the law of unintended consequences, that the reputation of statements such as "older adults are overconsuming health care services, because they are lonely" will result in older people – who we know in the UK are less likely to consult than other age groups – will stop people going to consult their GP because they don't want to be seen as either undeserving or stigmatised as lonely. And I think more problematically is that we have many locally run groups that bring older adults together.

So, forget all my kind of grumpy-old-lady kind of whinges about going to stroke chickens. If people like to stroke chickens, that's fine, go and do it. But we are increasingly finding that small groups like those who want to have befriending groups, or bring people together, when they are being asked to evaluate the effectiveness of their service in order to qualify for continued funding, it's no longer OK to say "we had 120 people come", or whatever it is. They are being asked now to demonstrate that their service will reduce health care consultations, because this idea has now taken such a grip in the minds of funders, that they are requiring local organizations to be able to show that they can

reduce GP consultations, which they will never be able to do, partly because there is no link, and partly because they are too small. I do think we need to be careful in how we perpetuate some of these tropes that could well end up having negative consequences for service provision in use.

BM: I actually was serious about the dogs that are bred to be kind and gentle, and that sort of thing. Theoretically, Plato thought that human beings could be genetically improved and made into philosopher kings and queens.

But let me just mention this. I have worked in so many different settings, from psychiatric wards to crisis and locked facilities and so forth, and also worked in day treatment. I remember there was a woman who was struggling in day treatment. Then one of the things that happened on a beach there in California, there was an oil spill and seabirds were covered with oil. So, the day treatment team went out there and they started cleaning these birds up, so they could fly again. She was terribly lonely, was in a process of getting a divorce; her husband, I guess, had had enough. She really got into these pelicans. Then one day she did not show up, then on the second day she did not show up, and on the third day she did not show up, and it turned out she had hanged herself. One of the best things if you are lonely: try to help somebody else: it will get you out of yourself. Whatever depression is, it's internal, it's reflexive, you keep brooding on the damn thing over and over again. If you can get out of yourself, you got it, and it just makes you feel better: it makes you feel like a community, right?

Audience A: I think, obviously, that one of the first things we have to do is to listen to other people, to what they have to say. I think you just brought out some good examples of how you tried to listen. What's necessary is that you trust that those people really

have something meaningful and important to say. That's the reason why you listen.

And strangely enough, you [referring to CV] have been apologising twice already now for not being able to talk about Plato or whatever. But I think you also have something to say, and those people talking about Plato should listen. I mean you are like twiceremoved already from those people who are there in the streets. So, if we really don't develop this strategy of seriously listening to other people then it will not work. And this has to go through all strata. This needs empathy, that's right – I agree with you [referring to JP]. But you made a typical mistake when you again refer to empathy. You said: as an architect you have to show empathy, and listen to me, to trust in me, but what about my empathy talking to you? I also start understanding what you are saying and thinking as an architect. What happens if all of a sudden in the empathy I have a very good architectural idea? It's not that you have to just listen to me and then do your thing, it's also really expecting and trusting in my empathy for you. We get places when we all listen to each other and try to break into our thinking and communicate again on what this world's problem is about. We do not communicate anymore, we're not together, and we should.

I have spent like two years of my life with Aristotle, trying to catch up from the very beginning. And I went to history and so on. But I also tried to listen to modern philosophers. What about people *after* Heidegger? We still have a living philosophy, for example, the neo-pragmatists: Richard Rorty, Charles Taylor, Jürgen Habermas if you like, and Bruno Latour. There are so many philosophers and social scientists out there right now. We also have to listen to those people who may already have a better understanding of what is happening in modern society and whether everything now

is simply going down the drain, or whether in society there actually are signs of a better future, new movements, which make for hope rather than just despair.

You [referring to BM] described wonderfully and touchingly what happened when you did not have a village that protected you in those years in the 1930s and 1940s. So, you know very well what can happen, and how crucial it is to experience loneliness, and these kinds of influences. OK, but not everybody has these experiences, and I'm always proud to say it and I say it again now: I'm a 68-movement guy. I was one of those who went into the streets and told their parents what kinds of things they did, which you experienced, and that we want to have a better world. It didn't really work out. Maybe we still have hope that it will.

JP: Let me give a personal example of a communication between the user and the designer. My last built project is a concert hall in Rovaniemi, and I decided from the very beginning, in addition to collaborating with an acoustician, to talk with the members of the orchestra and the conductor. I even had orchestra members go through the colour selections and we talked about them, because I had understood from our first meeting that the real problem in modern concert halls is not what the audience hears but what the musicians hear of their own music making. That's the biggest mistake in modern concert halls.

In their opening concert, after the concert, many of the musicians came with tears in their eyes to hug me for the acoustic qualities, which were a consequence of our conversations and communications about these issues. I'm not at all trying to say that the architect or designer or whoever should just ask and then turn away, but I mean to say that there is no way that I or anyone else can enter another person. It has to be an imaginary act and,

consequently, an architect needs also to be some sort of an actor.

BM: But I think to your point, communication is something that you feel is very, very strong, right? The communication between people, and that is something that's very important in terms of avoiding loneliness, if you communicate. I think, as I mentioned, what keeps my marriage strong is the constant communication. Frieda Fromm-Reichmann – she was a famous Freudian – was working in a psychiatric hospital in Maryland, and she was trying to break through to a catatonic woman - a woman who was not responding – and she was not getting anywhere. Then, suddenly she put up one finger and said, "that lonely", and that opened up the flood of communication. Communication is a critical thing in a relationship of intimacy. Another thing that is even more important is 'mutual trust'. If you want things to go bad, if you want loneliness to catch you by the ass, start doing things that are mistrustful to your partner. Trust is the key to all human decency - whether it is a student to a professor, a mother to a child - trust is the key to everything. Once that element of distrust enters in, it's gonna go bad.

Audience B: I would like to mention Iris Andersson's Master's Thesis at Aalto University in Helsinki. She wrote a thesis [now a book, *In the Author's House*] about the house of Göran and Christine Schildt on the Greek island of Leros. An essential part of writing her thesis is that she lived there for a while with Christine, who is now a widow, and she got to know her and her life there in Greece. Her house back home in Finland is one of the famous works by Alvar Aalto, Villa Skeppet in Tammisaari, and Iris asked her doesn't she like living there. Christine replied, however, that she hated that house, even though it was designed especially for them. So, why was that? Because of the expectations of how they

should live their lives. So, they had bought this rustic house on a Greek island, and whenever they had a chance, they rather lived in that house. They made themselves a courtyard and landscaping and even improved the local ecology. She said they preferred living there as a part of the community, rather than as they did in this architect-designed house. It seems that they would live with this guilt for the whole time they were living there, which is interesting to think about. Such a great architecture but they felt they could not really live with it.

FN: I think we should start thinking about closing, but perhaps there is still time for one last question or comment.

CV: I'm done, I have already said everything. Leave them wanting more!

FN: One thing that I wanted to add is the idea of artistic and architectural creation. Professor Pallasmaa defends architecture as a way to make us aware of our environmental solitude, but it does not mean that collaborative work is something we cannot do, definitely. But you have another sort of idea of collaborative work, the idea of working in collaboration with history and tradition. But perhaps this is a topic for another forum or discussion. Rosana, you wished to announce something, don't you?

RR: Yes, there is a conference in Poland on Loneliness coming up, maybe Professor Mijuskovic wants to say something about it.

BM: Different groups are organising. The British have instituted their Ministry of Loneliness. People are realising it is a huge problem. Loneliness only became a serious topic in the 1970s. Now Japan is having serious problems with older people, not because they are old but because they are not used to what's going on, so their families are taking care of them now. Poland organized a meeting in 2018 and has another arranged for 2020, at

the University of Szczecin. It is starting to spread out. One thing that would help your viewpoint is if people recognise they are lonely, then they will be more tempted to reach out. If they are more narcissistic and only want what they can get out of others, then it's not going to work out. My problem is narcissism, but I respect your positive viewpoint to realize that we're lonely and mutually meld with each other, fuse with each other, and so on.

FN: So, with Professor Mijuskovic's words we end the discussion. Thank you to the speakers for making this seminar possible, and on behalf of Rosana and myself thanks to the audience for your interest.

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Architecture can be defined as the environment mediating the two human poles of loneliness and the desire to belong. It is this reading of architecture that motivated the organisation of a seminar on loneliness and the built environment at the Tampere University Faculty of Built Environment in December 2019. The seminar addressed the phenomenon from a multidisciplinary perspective. The invited keynote speakers represented the fields of philosophy and psychology, public health, and architecture. The three seminar lectures became the articles included in the present publication. In addition to these, two extra articles offer further perspectives on the topic from symmetrical - physical and virtual viewpoints. The full set of texts offers an equidistant and unprejudiced outlook on the question of loneliness with the built environment as the common ground.

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