Discussing the ontological relationship between the Glass House, the Brick House and their architect, Philip Johnson.

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Synopsis.

This essay seeks to provide a perspective on two works by renowned American architect Philip Johnson; the Glass House (1949) and lesser-known Brick House (1949.) These buildings will be discussed as objects, before understanding their relevance to the life of their architect and resident.

Each building provides a unique insight into the changing approach and attitude of Johnson's architectural practice. An approach that transcends minimal and modernist as fully explored in the Glass House, and it's origins in Mies van de Rohe's Farnsworth House, into a thoroughly postmodern appreciation; the latter is first seen in the confines and privacy of the Brick House, starting a journey from postmodern interior experimentation to architectural realisation. Indeed, this naturally raises discussions with Beatriz Colomina's ideas of privacy and publicity in architecture, which I will explore further.

Each building facilitates its own way of living and existing, defining principles of residential space; the building housing ornament, against the building as ornament - I have proposed the two ways in which these are delivered through the mediums of these buildings. This references individuals such as Thorstein Veblen and Jean Baudrillard and their ideas on class, ornament and belongings in relation to the modernist aesthetic context of these spaces.

I will explore how this journey develops in relation to Johnson's own sexuality; in particular, the shared experiences with other homosexual artists and designers of the time, and how his architecture impacted on their civic image. This will be further critiqued by discussion with the author Christopher Reed - in particular, his opinion of the Glass House in relation to his own homosexuality as well as Johnson's.

This analysis is supplemented with Reyner Banham's exploration of the Unhouse, somewhat ironically distilling residential structure to its utilities and systems; the Glass House, in it's succinct appearance, is argued as a blueprint to this. Ultimately, this essay attempts to use the architecture of Philip Johnson to define the diffuse, eclectic positions of the individual himself.

List of Illustrations.

“Interior Design is presumably an art and since we live in interiors, we must also live in art.”

- Stanley Abercrombie.

Introduction.

112 Firshaw Road was a house that intrigued me as a child as I passed every day on my way to and from secondary school. Anatomising as I would any structure, I was always perplexed by one simple element: the windows. Beachy-toned roughcast facades framed an abundant array of fenestration, providing little-to-no privacy for interior spaces. Of course, the promenade vista of the seaside location probably contributed to such an architectural decision, although I would later discover the residents were the owners of a glass making company. The evocation of this space came about as I discovered a building by the late American architect Philip Johnson. I drew parallels between 112 Firshaw Road and the Glass House (1949, New Canaan, Connecticut) due to their collateral approaches to presenting a complete interior from the exterior. Built to serve as Johnson's weekend retreat, the eponymous structure, with an architectural palette of pure glass and steel, makes very plain the activities that occur throughout. Diaphanously balanced on the landscape, an aesthetic antithesis to what sits adjacent: the Brick House. Built collaterally and originally for guest use, this structure is a purely solid mass with no ornamentation. Only the west facade sports fenestration; four circular portholes, supplementing internal skylights. It clearly privatises all interior activities in direct contrast to the candour of the Glass House.

Whilst the Glass House has been heavily dissected by scholars and architects alike,[1] the lesser-known Brick House is a far more intriguing and less documented entity. Alas, it's very existence as a more privatised spatial circumstance inherently generates interest in the internal domesticated sphere. This essay will explore correlations between these opposing ways of Modernist residential building, the dichotomy of these spaces which challenges our existing notions of domesticity. The Glass House, the visible interior, where every display is designed so pristine. The Brick House, the unseen interior, pure structure devoid of traditional visual stimuli, allowing for all ways of living free of observation. In a more modern context, metaphorically, the idea that a house can draft different ways of living; how we perceive viewership of our houses and belongings with awareness to contemporary modernist dialogue and critique. Further, this essay seeks to clearly understand the connection between these two buildings and their architect, Philip Johnson. It will utilise these structures in understanding his character, how they evolved alongside their creator and shed just as much light on the saga of the individual as the saga of the architectural.

[1] Adelyn Perez, "AD Classics: The Glass House / Philip Johnson", *Archdaily*, 2010 <https://www.archdaily.com/60259/ad-classics-the-glass-house-philip-johnson> [Accessed 4 October 2019].

The
Glass House.

In 2007, Nicolai Ouroussoff posthumously spoke of Philip Johnson, regarding his building as a "celebrity" who "may have done more to make Modernism palatable to the country's social elites than any other structure of the 20th century."[2] The building in question is the eponymous Glass House, a building now revered as one of America's most cherished and defining examples of reductionist modernism. One cannot overlook the obvious similarities to Farnsworth House (1951)[3], the building of friend (and competitor) Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Indeed, it was Johnson's observations of early Farnsworth House drawings that inspired him - even completing it two years earlier in 1949. Both buildings can trace aesthetic details to early forms of modernism. The layout of the Glass House, for example, is - in plan - reminiscent of late painterly experiments in artistic structural Modernism by Theo van Doesburg within the De Stijl movement.[4] They can also be defined as an example of "Gesamtkunstwerk"; Penny Sparkle discusses this concept in *The Modern Interior*. A motion to prioritise the work of the architect in the most fastidious of modernist architectural thinking, to create "overtly modern spaces that reflected their own era and to cross the private and the public divide."[5] One could argue that initial analysis of these buildings with their glass walls indicates that they inherently generate this dynamic.

Indeed, they can also be traced to early Germanic Modernist glass structures typified by Paul Scheerbart in his 1914 book *Glasarchitektur.*[6] Each building attempts to create visual lightness to accompany the complete glass cladding - Johnson in the deftness of dark, thin steel; Farnsworth utilising a physical uplift of 5ft over the ground. But whilst van der Rohe's building seeks to create a relationship of monumentalism and purity[7] with it's natural surroundings through thick, white, marblesque steel, the Glass House is an altogether more recessive entity. Strong visual verticality

[2] Nicolai Ouroussoff, "Philip Johnson - Glass House - Architecture - Review", *nytimes.com*, 2007 <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/06/arts/design/06glas.html> [Accessed 11 January 2020].
[3] Maritz Vandenberg, Peter Cook and John Hewitt, *Farnsworth House, Plano, Illinois, 1946-51. Architect: Ludwig Mies Van Der Rohe*, 1st edn (London: Phaidon Press, 2003).
[4] Cohen, Stuart. "A tale of two houses: the all-glass masterworks by Philip Johnson and Mies van der Rohe are less connected than they seem." *Residential Architect,* Apr. 2005, p. 49+. Gale Academic Onefile, [Accessed 13 Jan. 2020]
[5] Penny Sparke, *The Modern Interior,* 1st edn (London: Reaktion Books, 2008), pp. 189-195.
[6] Paul Scheerbart and John A Stuart, The Gray Cloth: A Novel On Glass Architecture (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 2003), pp. xiii-xlvii.
[7] Miles David Samson, Hut Pavilion Shrine: Architectural Archetypes In Mid-Century Modernism (Oxford: Routledge), pp. 1-14.

of the dark steelwork allows the building to almost blend into the trees. These layer over glimpses of interior activities to create vistas on and of the landscape, vibrant reflections dancing on glass, an almost temporary-looking insertion amongst the foliage. [Fig. 2] This blurring of the internal/external boundary was one of the key design elements of the building, one of the most defining features of modernist American architecture at the time.[8] Daniel Boorstin argued the innovative use of glass windows "leveled the environment" by encouraging the "removal of sharp distinctions between indoors and outdoors," thus creating an "ambiguity" between public and private space.[9] The Glass House was a defined example of this, but distilled to decorative; Johnson once described it by saying "I have expensive wallpaper."[10]

Figure [2]; Michael Biondo, 2018. "The Glass House."

Such is the intrinsically detailed structure that we can apply Le Corbusier's theories of a "promenade architecturale" to the space.[11] Having never visited the space personally, I must, from

[8] Katherine Morrow Ford and Thomas H. Creighton, *The American House Tihrlay* (New York: Reinhold Publishing Co., 1931), p. 139.
[9] Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The Democratic Experienc*e (New York: Vintage Books, 1973). pp. 336-345.
[10] Elisa Niemack, *Very Expensive Wallpaper,* The New York Sun, 2007 <https://www.nysun.com/arts/very-expensive-wallpaper/57066/> [Accessed 3 December 2019].
[11] Flora Samuel, *Le Corbusier And The Architectural Promenade* (Basel, Switzerland: Birkhäuser, 2010), pp. 85-100.

my own perspective, generate this experience digitally. Online technologies allow for walkarounds, photographs and videos. Beginning at the road, immaculate landscaping shades the space. The only notions of its existence from afar are vague striations of charcoal-painted steel, sharp verticality piercing the landscape but disguised amongst the verdant forestry. Upon closer gaze, you would start to make out the geometry of various interior elements; a Barcelona chair by van der Rohe, the crisp white linen of a bed removed of pillows, all sharing a singular spatial context. Upon entering, it is a space devoid of interior walls with the only internal structure belonging to a central brick cylinder housing a bathroom and firepit. Indeed, this is entirely observable without actually crossing into the interior threshold. I would not even need to enter for all is perceivable from the exterior, for that is the result of the application of glass. This internal arrangement is interesting; how exactly have these been placed? Do they align with Johnson's own cycle and routines? Do they become mere extensions of the physical structure? The delineation of 'rooms' within this continuous space comes via this precise arrangement of interior elements. Each functions for a specific purpose in a specific zone; thus, for the complete effect, the placement of items is paramount. The bed, specifically placed. The pedantry is evidenced in Jean Baudrillard's *System of Objects*; Baudrillard argues about "Man as an Interior Designer;" he does not "consume objects," he "dominates, controls and orders them." Baudrillard describes the "modern man" as "obsessed with perfect circulation of messages. Wanting everything to intercommunicate; functional and organized."[12] Such fastidious attention to detail requires certain ways of living - a highly controlled domesticity. Indeed, a very Modernist way of living, prioritising inherent function over form; merely a rephrasing of Louis Sullivan's fabled axiom "form follows function". Developing from this leads us to Adolf Loos' *Ornament and Crime*. His written use of the modern house was as an onslaught on conventional ideas, if not necessarily on how domestic life should be lived, then at least on how it should look.[13] But, does this existence come as a result of the building itself, or the items within it?

[12] Jean Baudrillard, *The System Of Objects* (London: Verso, 2005), pp. 15-29.
[13] Christopher Long, "The Origins And Context Of Adolf Loos's "Ornament and Crime", Journal Of The Society Of Architectural Historians, 68 (2009), pp. 200-223 <www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jsah.2009.68.2.200.>

The
Regulated House.

Loos' *Ornament and Crime* is regarded as a text symbolic with modernism as a whole.[14] If Johnson applied such defining modernist thinking to his Glass House, one could look to Beatriz Colomina's assessment of Loos to be just as relevant to Johnson. In *Intimacy and Spectacle*, she argues that for Loos, and by extension Johnson, domesticity is not so much lived as staged.[15] In displaying everything so thoughtfully and precisely, we are inadvertently generating a prettiness to our spaces that rejects any kind of perceived livability. This is evident when we consider the Marxist argument of the Bourgeois.[16] Initially, this is ironic, given that modernism could be described as a distinctive break with Victorian Bourgeois morality - rejection of nineteenth-century optimism that presents a more pessimistic picture of culture.[17] A Marxist Bourgeois sensibility in the context of belongings, however, would be to approach the itemisation of belongings in a format to look pretty, prioritising aesthetic qualities. However, ulterior motives fundamentally portray such individuals as affluent through material goods - acting as a way to display one's economic supremacy in society.[18]

This approach makes sense in the context of the Glass House when we explore the socioeconomic history of Philip Johnson. Born into a wealthy and privileged family, he was once described as having been "born with a silver spoon, if not in his mouth then close by."[19] His Harvard education was almost a given. Troubled by his sexuality and seeking time away, he traveled to Europe between studies in philosophy, his interests drifting towards European modernist architecture introduced to him by architectural historian Henry-Russell Hitchcock.[20] It is intriguing that he was drawn to modernism's inherently egalitarian rhetoric given his background.

[14] Long, "*The Origins And Context Of Adolf Loos's "Ornament and Crime",* pp. 200-223
[15] Beatriz Colomina, "Intimacy And Spectacle: The Interiors Of Adolf Loos", *AA Files*, 1990, pp. 5-15 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29543700> [Accessed 26 November 2019].
[16] Paul Manning, "Owning And Belonging: A Semiotic Investigation Of The Affective Categories Of A Bourgeois Society", *Comparative Studies In Society And History,* 46.02 (2004), pp. 300-325 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3879532>.
[17] Christopher Keep, Tim McLaughlin and Robin Parmar, "Modernism And The Modern Novel", *www.lath.virginia.edu* <http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/elab/hfl0255.html> [Accessed 29 December 2019].
[18] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Communist Manifesto - Chapter 1: Bourgeois And Proletarians", *marxists.org* <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm#007> [Accessed 29 December 2019].
[19] Mark Lamster, *The Man In The Glass House*, 1st edn (New York: Hachette, 2018), p. 164.
[20] Andrew Saint, "Obituary: Philip Johnson", *The Guardian*, 2005 <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2005/jan/29/guardianobituaries.artsobituaries1> [Accessed 16 December 2019].

However, it is a well-researched anthropological critique of modernism that such rhetoric is far less proclaimed in practice. One only needs to look to Le Corbusier's "The Modulor," a harmoniously applicable anthropometric scale of proportions based on the ideas of humanistic universalism. "The Modulor Man" is a healthy white male enhanced by natural proportionals, such as Fibonacci and the Golden Ratio.[21] He represents the normative body around which Le Corbusier devised his designs.[22] In fact, he represents the mannequin for modernism's eugenic project for human betterment.[23] Johnson fits such an ideal - his position, privileged and male, would be welcomed at the gates of modernist babylon - which maybe goes some way to justifying why he was so drawn to it. Philip Johnson's Glass House succeeds in a formal, modernist appraisal because the Glass House is built for Philip Johnson: a typified example and disciple of the movement. In reality, this approach was a dangerous rejection of history and humanity. Human beings are far more equivocal; more diverse, emotional, squishy, but it was clear that in some circles of modernism that this was completely overlooked. David Ashford's book *Autarchies: The Invention of Selfishness* concludes with the theoretical re-evaluation that modernism is inherently selfish.[24] A potential selfishness can consequently be found in Johnson's designs, his arrangement for wealth-fueled social distinction.

Thorstein Veblen further stigmatised the application of socially motivated decoration in his book *The Theory of the Leisure Class* as "conspicuous consumption".[25] The term refers to conspicuous waste (i.e. ornament) with a purpose to display pecuniary beauty. I accept that this study as a source is one more than 120 years old, so the contextual discussion may be somewhat limited. However, I believe it to be a very important piece in the wider context of modernism thanks to the advent and beginnings of modernism as a movement in the late 19th Century;[26] for example, the seminal aforementioned *Ornament and Crime* arrives just 10 years later. Appreciating Veblen's theory in a modern context, this is applied to consumers who buy items to display wealth rather than to cover the real needs of the consumer, using such behaviour to maintain or gain higher

[21] Federica Buzzi, "Human, All Too Human: A Critique On The Modulor - Failed Architecture", *Failed Architecture*, 2017 <https://failedarchitecture.com/human-all-too-human-a-critique-on-the-modulor/> [Accessed 3 January 2020].
[22] Fabiola López-Durán, "Architecture And Eugenics: Modernist Design As An Orthopedic Apparatus", *The Funambulist Podcast,* 2015 <https://soundcloud.com/the-funambulist/fabiola-lopez-duran-architecture-and-eugenics-modernist-design-as-an-orthopedic-apparatus> [Accessed 6 December 2019].
[23] Donald J Childs, *Modernism And Eugenics: Woolf, Eliot, Yeats, And The Culture Of Degeneration* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 7.
[24] David Ashford, *Autarchies: The Invention Of Selfishness*, 1st edn (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), pp. 119-130.
[25] Thorstein Veblen and William Dean Howells, *The Theory Of The Leisure Class* (New York: Dover Publications, 1994), pp. 106-130.
[26] Kathleen Kuiper, 'Modernism | Definition, History, & Examples', *Encyclopedia Britannica,* 2019 <https://www.britannica.com/art/Modernism-art> [Accessed 6 January 2020]

social status. The result, according to Veblen, is a society inhibited by wasted time and money. This theory characterises individuals concerned more with displaying wealth and object through social means as if they were living in a shop window display.

Johnson's Glass House can facilitate the most extreme entity of this, providing the most visible canvas for the display of wealth. This building serves as an ornament, and by extension so does it's internal belongings. It is in itself a work of art - a National Historic Landmark, no less[27] - and it's resident must consign themselves to living within a work of art. A designed product with its own set of rules. Such a space demands a particular lifestyle - clutter not allowed to take over for it may intrude on the aesthetic qualities in the same way. Of course, this is far trickier when we consider the tribulations that a residential lifestyle brings with it in a spatial sense. Fundamentally, the Glass House harbours a primary function of a home, but how one would perceive the domestic context of this building is that of varying interest. Melchionne cites a concept of "perceived livability"[28] in our spaces. In this example, the Glass House would be accused of suffering from a "lack of domesticity" due to its meticulous arrangement and lack of anything that would appear visually useful in a typical domestic context.

Again, Adolf Loos' *Ornament and Crime*[29] feels relevant, the very definition of modernist asceticism. Witold Rybeczynski's *Home: A Short History of an Idea* cites Loos as a pioneer in the "process of stripping away, which is so characteristic of modern interiors."[30] One could go further and accuse the arrangement of items being akin to that in a museum. Beth Lord discusses a museum's values of freedom of (and to) critique, and thus as a "heterotopia"[31], developing Michel Foucault's concept of the "heterotopia."[32] A site that exists as an 'other,' worlds within worlds, mirroring and yet upsetting both outside and within. Johnson has, by default, created a space that is subject to critique and objectification by allowing it's full observation. Furthermore, it as a "heterotopia;" the internal world could clearly manifest as the domesticated sphere, but the external is hazier. Readings of both Johnson's Glass House and van der Rohe's Farnsworth House

[27] "National Historic Landmarks Program (NHL)", *Web.Archive.Org*, 1997 <https://web.archive.org/web/20071002191846/http://tps.cr.nps.gov/nhl/detail.cfm?ResourceId=2202&ResourceType=District> [Accessed 15 December 2019].
[28] Kevin Melchionne, "Living In Glass Houses: Domesticity, Interior Decoration, And Environmental Aesthetics.", *The Journal Of Aesthetics And Art Criticism,* 56.2 (1998), 191-200 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/432257> [Accessed 19 November 2019].
[29] Long, "The Origins And Context Of Adolf Loos's "Ornament and Crime", 200-223
[30] Witold Rybczynski, *Home: A Short History Of An Idea* (London: Penguin Books, 1987), p. 198.
[31] Lord, Beth, "Foucault's Museum: Difference, Representation, And Genealogy", Museum & Society, 4 (2006), pp. 1-14 <https://journals.le.ac.uk/ojs1/index.php/mas/article/view/74/89> [Accessed 3 November 2019]
[32] Peter Johnson, "What's It About? – Heterotopian Studies", *heterotopiastudies.com,* 2018 <http://www.heterotopiastudies.com/whats-it-about/> [Accessed 9 December 2019]

indicate the natural world, the "expensive wallpaper,"[33] as the primary focus and the utilisation of glass to explore a relationship with it. As Paul Goldberger put it, "The elegantly arranged landscape is as much a part of the house as the furniture."[34] Hence, the Glass House becomes a heterotopic site that is completely visible, acknowledging the obvious physical properties of glass in a look-but-cannot-touch connection, in the same way a child will observe what they perceive to be a haven of toys across the glass of Hamleys. A relationship between nature and furniture - for an onlooker, a gaze into a halcyon of modernism, subject to critique. For the resident, the furniture organised to provide the right amount of functionality and reduce awareness of the transparent walls.

With such a specific organisation as discussed over these chapters, one could look to apply Michael Sorkin's theory of a glasshouse as a "synthetic regulatory paradise."[35] Whilst his readings suggest reference to more conventional glasshouses designed for vegetative growth, it is interesting to see his perspective of an utterly observed environment of regulated nature and controlled serenity. Indeed, he refers to philosopher Jeremy Bentham's design for a Panopticon, the ever-watching.[36] A scheme originally designed as radical new prison system in the 18th Century and dressed up as a "social control mechanism." A watchtower sits in the central atrium of an orbicular architectural structure built up of prison cells; in theory, all inmates can be observed at any one moment. To prisoners, authority becomes an internalised omniscience - discipline becomes inherent in angst of a potential ever-watching presence. Discipline may not be an issue within the residential purpose of the Glass House, but the anxiety of public bystanders with an agenda for pansophical observation may be.

How this lack of privacy affected the behaviour of Johnson in the Glass House is unclear. As Sparke continues, the role of the architect in this "Gesamtkunstwerk" approach was brought to the forefront thanks to mass media and the desire for the modern "designed interior." This was seen as both as a mechanism for social elevation and as a means by which large numbers of people could participate in the exciting new world of "progressive modernity."[37] It is telling of the Glass House that, just three years after it's construction, Johnson remodelled the adjacent

[33] Niemack, *Very Expensive Wallpaper*
[34] Margot Guralnick, "14 Lessons In Minimalism From The Glass House", *Remodelista*, 2014 <https://www.remodelista.com/posts/lessons-in-minimalism-from-the-glass-house-by-philip-johnson-new-canaan-connecticut/> [Accessed 23 October 2019]
[35] Michael Sorkin, *Exquisite Corpse* (London: Verso, 1994), pp. 238-240
[36] "Internalized Authority And The Prison Of The Mind: Bentham And Foucault's Panopticon", *brown.edu*, 2008 <http://brown.edu/Departments/Joukowsky_Institute/courses/13things/7121.html> [Accessed 5 January 2020]
[37] Sparke, *The Modern Interior,* pp. 189-195.

Brick House to generate a second, more private living space for himself. Regardless, he continued to reside between the two with partner David Whitney until their deaths in 2005 - but it would not be wise to overlook the voyeuristic position he created for himself as a homosexual man in post-war America. In fact, Johnson used this to his advantage, utilising the notoriety and transparency of the building. It's extended function was as a safe and controlled canvas to celebrate the works of friends and associates such as Merce Cunningham and Andy Warhol [Fig. 3.] Donald Albrecht notes;

> "[Johnson and Whitney] presided over an intellectually adventurous site during a period when the artistic contributions of gay men were prevalent and increasingly acknowledged within mainstream culture."[38]

Figure [3]; David McCabe, 1964. "Andy Warhol, David Whitney, Philip Johnson, Dr. John Dalton and architect Robert Stein at Philip Johnson's Glass House." A highlight of the highly modernist attire, a desire for dressing aesthetically and in tune with the architecture itself; a wish to be taken seriously.

[38] Jon Cornachio, "The Glass House Celebrates Its 70th Anniversary With Retrospective Of Gay Artists", Archpaper.Com, 2019 <https://archpaper.com/2019/05/glass-house-gay-gatherings/> [Accessed 17 November 2019]

Utilising the architecture of his Glass House allowed such celebration in plain sight, lest be restricted to social confines of behind-closed-door gatherings. Christopher Reed critiques Johnson's dynamic in that the idea of queer space - or "designed-to-be-queer space" - is overwhelmingly domestic space, arguing that such distinction "ignores both the broad range of queer public space and the imminence of queer domesticity."[39] Reed is also gay, which makes this a unique assessment on identity in the "private" sphere of sexuality - however, this opinion is formed far more recently in a more accepting socioeconomic environment. Regarding privacy, a critic once asked Johnson if one has a glass house whether one should have sex in the basement; In response, Johnson replied;

> "...I don't have a basement, so I don't ball in the basement. But much more important than exhibitionism is the interface of architecture and the desire for all kinds of sexual experiments."[40]

He generated a pseudo-dangerous tension between seeing and being seen, hiding and exposing. An open architecture designed for a more open future. This adjacent Brick House is typically a far lesser known structure, one that's history is equally revealing of both Johnson's character and Johnson's America.

[39] Christopher Reed, "Imminent Domain: Queer Space in the Built Environment." *Art Journal*, vol. 55, no. 4, 1996, pp. 64–70.
[40] Philip Johnson, Hillary Lewis, John T. O'Connor, *Philip Johnson: The Architect in His Own Words* (New York: Rizzoli, 1994), p. 49

The
Brick House.

The 1953 remodelling of the Brick House was an entirely internal affair, utilising no structural changes. It's original construction was completed just a few months prior to the Glass House in 1949; it stands with a similarly eponymous materiality in complete aesthetic contrast, despite residing less than 80 feet away. The role of the Brick House is interesting because it exists, at least on a surface level, as further living spaces. Indeed Johnson's original aim for this was as three separate guest rooms to coexist with his own residence in glass. Structurally, they are rectangular masses both fifty-five feet long. However, the Brick House is only half as deep at the Glass House, and the aesthetic contrast could not be more apparent. Obviously, the most palpable difference is the material use of brick in the construction of this house. Brick is, inherently, an earth-based solid object of little individual value. However, en masse it becomes something far greater as a whole. Potential appears for it to become decorative, to generate shapes and forms that are ornamental. [Fig 4 & 5.]

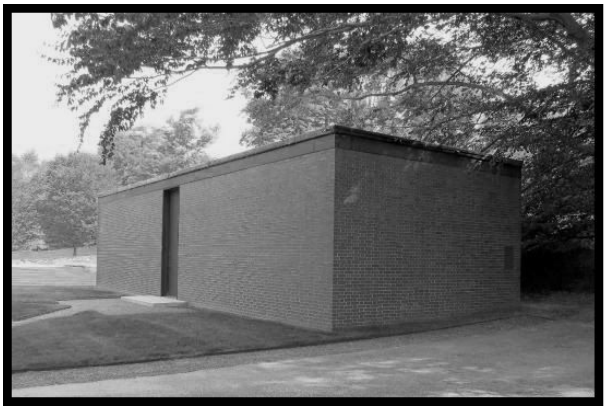

Figure [4]; jjctraveler, 2015. "The Brick House." In this context the mass of brick has generated a larger form of a brick, a simple box of pure, functional structure devoid of fenestration on the north, south and west facades. It's scope as a material can be far wider reaching, however.

Figure [5]; Philip Speakman Webb, 2009. "The Red House." An example of ornamental brick tracing back to the Arts & Crafts period; the Red House (William Morris, 1861) is a celebration of the delicacy that brick can possess in antithesis to Johnson's own Brick House.

By using an ornamental material, does the building become an ornamental object? At least, the material facilitates this. But then arguably any material has the potential to become decorative depending on it's application - that is subjective. But, this structure could very well be decorative in the same way that glass has been applied, but it is very deliberately and stylistically not. So, if

the structure itself is not an ornament in the same way that the Glass House is, we must look within. Internally, the 1953 remodelling sought to create a new personal bedroom space to replace the guest rooms. It is clear that this was an early sign of Johnson's budding architectural restlessness;[41] he was becoming tired of modernism and approaching the end of his love affair with it. In 1991, Johnson spoke of his decision to remodel the Brick House;

> "A very few years after I moved in, I changed everything on the inside of the Brick House in order to express what I was working on at the time, which was another wave of emotion that overcame me for the arch and for the eighteenth-century and for Sir John Soane, the great English architect, so I started deliberately copying whatever I felt like it."[42]

Plush, elegant materials like silk and cotton were implemented in lighter, warmer tones. A structural appreciation for emphasis on bold, straight lines began to subside; the entire internal space was highlighted by illuminated arched surfaces in his newfound admiration for such form.[43] The effect created an almost womb-like environment as a complete antithesis not just to its structural cocoon, but to the interior of the rigorously functional Glass House adjacent. As an early experiment drifting from confines of modernism, it maybe represents a defining point looking towards the later years of Johnson's architectural portfolio. Within 20 years he would have evolved further, reinventing himself as a thoroughly postmodernist thinker, generating buildings like the JFK Memorial in Dallas (1970) and the Boston Public Library (1973) [Fig. 6]. Mark Lamster has been highly critical of these later works, describing them as "architecture of staggeringly indelicate historical detailing slapped onto leaden structures that made negative contributions to civic space."[44] The Brick House feels like an early introduction to this. It charts an exterior correlating with the low-key, elegant, private houses schemes he began with - a genesis in 9 Ash St., Cambridge (1941) - and an interior colluding with the bombastic, tawdry schemes of postmodern America. The Brick House provided a sanctuary, a haven for experimentation through a lack of visibility; quite understandably given he had only begun on the path to practicing architecture in 1941 at the age of 35. Perhaps the fact that most architect's careers begin with domestic commissions is what fuels a staunch antipathy to the

[41] Christopher Hawthorne, "Architect Philip Johnson's Glass House", *Architectural Digest*, 2012 <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/architect-philip-johnson-glass-house-modernism-article> [Accessed 4 November 2020].
[42] Devens and others, "Brick House Overview | The Glass House"
[43] Eleanor Devens and others, "Brick House Overview | The Glass House", *theglasshouse.org* <http://theglasshouse.org/explore/brick-house/> [Accessed 10 January 2020]
[44] Lamster, *The Man In The Glass House*, Chapter 10

Figure [6]; Anon, unknown. "Boston Public Library."

traditional home.[45] In the use of the International Style that is so existing in the Glass House, Johnson added historical records of modernist form without breaking from tradition;

> "The main question is, were the products of the International Style beautiful, and not even eternally beautiful, but relatively beautiful to those of us who enjoy looking at well-designed buildings."[46]

Glenna Matthews criticises the International Style as an example of a "cold storage cube" that "quickly began to dominate the most prestigious ranks of architecture and design."[47] Maybe Johnson quickly began to critique his own style as well, regarding true modernism as an ephemeral passage - alas, little would be known of this to those outside of Johnson's circles until they manifested as postmodernist buildings in later years. The fundamentals of the Brick House, and indeed any brick house means that one's personality cannot be distinguished. An exterior that hides all interior does not divulge into layouts, belongings and ornament in quite the same way as one made of glass.

[45] Christopher Reed, *Not At Home: The Suppression Of Domesticity In Modern Art And Architecture,* 1st edn (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), pp. 7-10.
[46] Johnson, Philip, *Philip Johnson: Writings,* 1st edn (New York: Oxford University. Press, 1979), p. 103
[47] Reed, *Not At Home: The Suppression Of Domesticity In Modern Art And Architecture,* pp. 7-10.

The
Esoteric House.

The Brick House allowed for a scenario whereby an interior is hidden from viewership. Implementation of brick, present for centuries, inherently prevents this. Hence, there may be no anxiety over the viewership of the internal belongings - and if there is no anxiety to such viewership, who or what governs our ways of living? Indeed, the answer should be no one other than ourselves. Our own belongings are that: our own, our lived experiences, choices, purchases, each with their own stories and histories. Returning to *The System of Objects*, Jean Baudrillard argues that the role of objects is to "personify human relationships, to fill the space between them."[48] Objects must act not as the centre of our worlds, but merely to facilitate experiences and emotions; a saucepan for a meal with friends, a basin for personal cleanliness.

A department store is a good example of this. The store is arranged in such a way that it embodies the official certainties of the shop; the products sell but this arrangement presents an emotional value to the specific brand, and this creates a considerable effect on the consumer. Thus, the object itself is not the determining factor but the emotional value created in the atmosphere is significant. In a residential context, this forms an arrangement that can of course be structured, but one that also comes naturally through continuous use. Melchionne's earlier theory of "perceived livability"[49] is less important from a critical perspective, but just as important in a practical sense as the evidence is in the visible use and enjoyment often seen only by the resident. In the further contexts of houses clad in glass and brick, this evidence of enjoyment is either fully observed or not, respectively. The threshold of public and private space, and public and private viewership, is determined by these materials. There is no notion of perceived livability in a Brick House as there is no act of perceiving that occurs to begin with; the materiality does not facilitate this. A natural form of esotericism is generated. Only the resident will observe the space within compared with virtually any individual passing the Glass House. When unobserved, are there any rules to ornamentation? Items, stuff, excess - any combination through to an ultimate veiled rejection of modernist thinking. One of the most known items of furniture in the Glass House, for example, the Barcelona Chair; the arrant function of sitting leaves the item with interest.

[48] Baudrillard, *The System Of Objects*, pp. 15-29.
[49] Melchionne, "Living In Glass Houses: Domesticity, Interior Decoration, And Environmental Aesthetics.", 191-200

Further, I would interpret Sandino's claims that "[object] materiality is a fundamental aspect of cultural production and classifications"[50] as a rejection of modernist value. As explored earlier, modernist design effectively rejects historical practice and styles by nature - a removal of heritage, perhaps. Maybe modernism, in an interior sensibility, is an embrace of Zárate's "cultural inertia;"[51] facilitating a society standing still in avoiding cultural change and records of it. No ornament, no evidence; are you displaying a lack of culture?

If we return to the mindset of Johnson during his 1953 remodelling of the Brick House, it was clear that he began to explore history merely 36 months after rejecting it for the glass idyll. In critique of this move, Joan Ockman compares Johnson to the Nietzschean antiquarian who "reveres" the past but ultimately only as a means to understand his own "soul;"

> "For Johnson, the pursuit of a relationship with history impels the trying out and discarding of past styles like a succession of ill-fitting costumes. Yet such a relationship proves elusive. The effort to ascribe any meaning to Johnson's iconographic repertory is thus a mostly meaningless exercise, except as an index of the increasing availability of history itself in the twentieth century as an object to be ransacked and consumed."[52]

An attempt to understand himself - this approach was truly what drove a regeneration in the practice of Johnson, challenging previous architectural precedent. Johnson maintained these two spatial positions of glass interior and brick interior simultaneously. This could be seen as an example of his own intellectual dexterity or opposingly, as a deep character flaw, the sign of a "nihilist with a detached moral compass."[53] This dynamic leads us to return to Beatrice Colomina and her investigations in *Sexuality & Space*. She again cites Loos and his relationship he develops between the interior and exterior facades;

> "The house does not have to tell anything to the exterior; instead, all its richness must manifest in the interior. "[54]

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[50] Sandino, Linda, "Here Today, Gone Tomorrow: Transient Materiality In Contemporary Cultural Artefacts", *Journal Of Design History,* 17 (2004), p. 284 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3527118>
[51] Michael Zárate and others, "Cultural Inertia: The Effects Of Cultural Change On Intergroup Relations And The Self-Concept", *Journal Of Experimental Social Psychology,* 48.3 (2012), 634-645 <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330376007_Cultural_inertia_identity_and_intergroup_dynamics_in_a_changing_context>.
[52] Joan Ockman, "The Figurehead: On Monumentality and Nihilism in Philip Johnson's Life and Work", in Petit (ed.), *The Constancy of Change,* (London: Yale Publishing, 2009) pp. 82–83
[53] Lamster, *The Man In The Glass House*, Chapter 10
[54] Beatriz Colomina, *Sexuality and Space* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992), 94. p. 32

Colomina argues the facade as a mask, a protection for the inhabitants. This can be applicable to the use of eponymous material usage in Johnson's Brick House, protecting his new exploration. Johnson's travels and learning in Europe had certainly provided a platform for self-rumination, but now began a more intrinsic and practical exploration initially through the insulated bubble of a brick-clad house.

The
Digital House.

The glass, on the other hand, did not provide the freedom to experiment in such a way. Glass provided Johnson a canvas to display himself, his friends and his belongings to true effect, to any degree of itemisation, Bourgeois or not. This idea of living in a glass house is however, inherently one of disgust for many people. To be so exposed during almost every facet of daily residential existence; sleep, cook, dress. A New Canaan newspaper at the time infamously printed the phrase "If Mr. Johnson has to make a fool of himself why doesn't he do it in somebody else's town?"[55] A lack of support, but also an apprehension for the transparent domicile he had dispensed upon the town.

Intriguingly, in a modern context, this is technically not such a radical concept. Modern societal developments in digital systems means that these are the kind of activities that we share openly on a daily basis. Social channels such as Instagram, Facebook and YouTube facilitate the sharing of photos and media of residential existence in much the same way that I was able to generate my own journey of "promenade architecturale"[56] through the Glass House from a sedentary position over 3,000 miles away. In fact, a little experiment can be had. One would regard the bedroom as the most private room in the house but, despite this, my own search on Instagram for '#bedroom' results in over ten million photographs.[57] Evidently, the concept of privacy does not quite extend to what it once was. The notion of architecturally-generated intrusion mirrors a current society where our lives can be transparent, via everything digitally exhibited. Modern social media provides a platform for sharing, an activity every human being naturally revels in. A study by the Common Cause Foundation showed that of 1,000 people surveyed, 74% identified more strongly with unselfish values than with selfish values.[58] It is in human nature to share, display; surely, the Glass House is merely a vessel that facilitates this. A facetious conclusion - this dispels Ashford's conclusion regarding modernism

[55] "Philip Johnson Obituary", *kmpfurniture.com*, 2005 <https://www.kmpfurniture.com/designer-news/the-glasshouse:-philip-johnson_88.html> [Accessed 7 November 2020]
[56] Samuel, Le Corbusier And The Architectural Promenade, pp. 85-100.
[57] "#Bedroom Hashtag On Instagram • Photos And Videos", *instagram.com*, 2019 <https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/bedroom/?hl=en> [Accessed 9 December 2019].
[58] George Monbiot, "We're Not as Selfish as We Think We Are. Here's the Proof," *The Guardian,* 2015 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/oct/14/selfish-proof-ego-humans-inherently-good> [Accessed 27 November 2020]

as selfish in a building so intrinsically celebrated for being modernist. Thus, a house where everything is on display - why would someone be shocked by this, given it is a tangible form of the divulgent and invasive modern society that shares everything? It is surely no more revealing in theory to be watched whilst making breakfast in the morning than to have it videoed and uploaded online. Indeed, the question of consent must be considered here, but it would be a conscious decision to reside in a house of glass.

This complex relationship between the activity in question and the viewership observing transcends into morality, a prevalent issue of the digital age. The perceived notions of societal status instigate digital animosity between individuals over likes, followers and comments. One's prestige could well and truly be defined by how they carry themselves online, or by their belongings; here, we can return to the notions of conspicuous consumption and Bourgois arrangement. A layout of life staged online just to define notoriety and popularity, an entirely digital existence of fakery with an ultimate aim to look good. Maybe Johnson, with his wealthy upbringing, truly wanted this.[59] His Glass House synthesises a tangible form of observation in a pre-digital age. Maybe he sought validation of himself and his belongings, in lieu of some latent self-doubt in his work, perhaps, as a relatively fresh face in architecture. He clearly gave himself two options with the construction of the Brick House adjacent. Hypothetically speaking, he almost tricked people, deliberately focusing on the spatial qualities of the Glass House, appearing almost as a perfect human being with a life on display. Visitors would conveniently forget all about the Brick House adjacent as, of course, critique of Johnson's life is far less likely to manifest in a brick structure with an imperceptible interior.

[59] Lamster, The Man In The Glass House, Chapter 10

The
Unhouse.

How Philip Johnson divided his time between his two residential spaces was his personal doing. Whilst his own relationship between the two buildings is highly intrinsic, it is also relevant to observe that the relationship between the two houses as structures goes further than as two residential spaces. In fact, the Brick House it exists in a symbiotic relationship with the Glass House, providing it's maintenance systems[60] - such as the boiler and water supply - from afar [Fig. 7.]

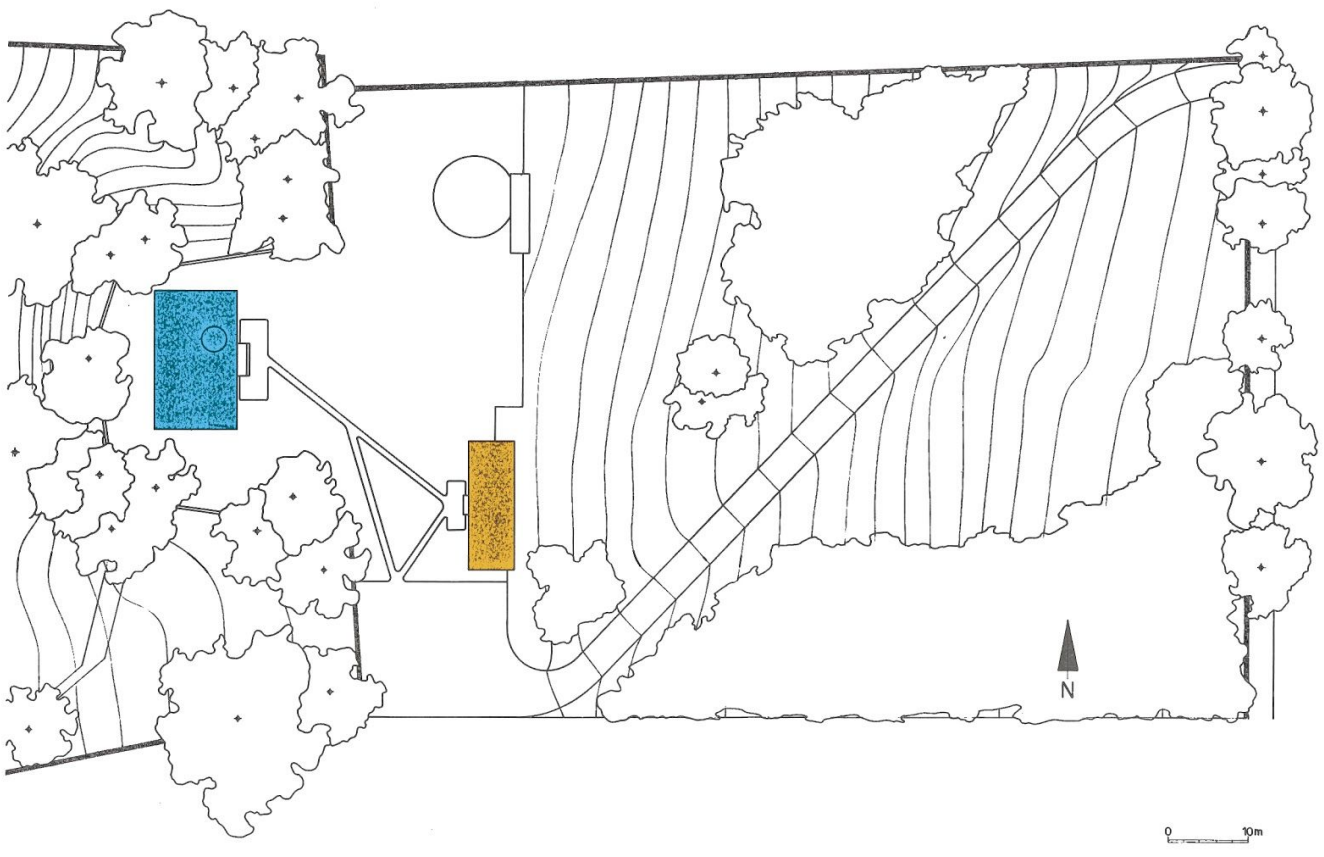

Figure [7]; Alessandro Bianchi and Giancarlo Camagni, 1990. "Site plan with the Glass House (blue) and the Brick House (yellow)." The only tangible connection between the two structures is the pathway between, with the services concealed underground.

[60] Daniel Sterner, "The Philip Johnson Brick House (1949)", *Historic Buildings Of Connecticut*, 2011 <https://historicbuildingsct.com/the-philip-johnson-brick-house-1949/> [Accessed 6 January 2020].

Reyner Banham attempts to utilise this as an ideal for his theory of an Unhouse.[61] It seeks to justify his explorations into the facility management of houses, regarding that housing structures feature building systems based on new environmental sciences. He proposes a dematerialisation of a residential property to its most basic needs; he furthers the points made by Baudrillard and Loos, regarding a priority of function in these spaces, but challenges these in a dystopian design quest to develop the concept of an Unhouse [Fig. 8], a somewhat satirical reaction.[62]

> "...when it contains so many services that the hardware could stand up by itself without any assistance from the house, why have a house to hold it up? When the cost of all this tackle is half the total outlay what is the house doing except concealing your mechanical pudenda from the stares of folks on the sidewalks."[63]

Writing in *A Home is Not a House,* he describes the Glass House as little more than a "service core" that can ultimately be "distilled into two services: heated floor slabs, and a chimney."[64] He views the Glass House as the most direct response to his discussion, that such spaces devoid of utility can exist in our everyday usage. It is a difficult entity - it cannot even hold its own maintenance functions, and it appears that Banham was unaware of the shared domain of these houses - a celebration of its autonomy and simplicity was ill-conceived. It appears that the Glass House is an aesthetic trap. On face value, Banham would take it as a celebration of the modernist expunge of services and evidence of domesticity, the items that all that should be dealt with by someone else, activities not part of the machine for living in.[65]

[61] Reyner Banham, "A Home is Not a House", *Art in America*, 2 (1965) pp. 70-79 <http://mindcontrol-research.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/4_banham_home_not_house.pdf>
[62] Robert Rubin, "Unveiling The Unhouse", *artnews.com*, 2015 <https://www.artnews.com/art-in-america/features/unveiling-the-unhouse-63068/> [Accessed 26 November 2020]
[63] Banham, "A Home is Not a House", pp. 70-79
[64] Banham, "A Home is Not a House", pp. 70-79
[65] Le Corbusier and John Goodman, *Toward An Architecture* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2008), pp. 151-153.

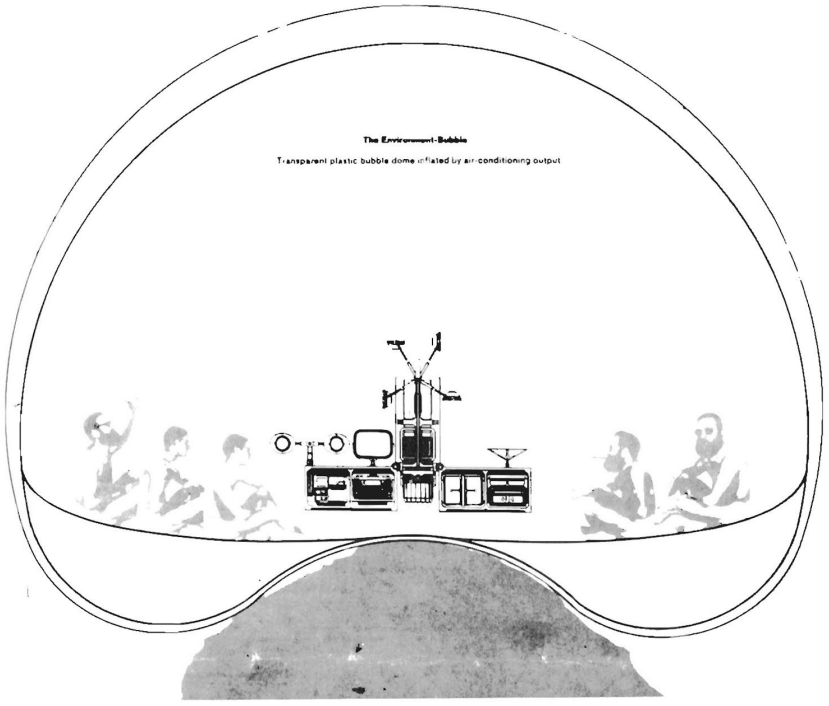

Figure [8]; François Dallegret, 1965. "Unhouse mechanical Drawing 1/6, the Environment Bubble." The architecture as a dystopian environment fit for human activities - a domestic tableaux and Banham's face on Dallegret's naked body in a perfect cybernetic paradise.

Banham's understanding and exploration of the services required in the modernist home format culminated in 1969 with the release of *The Architecture of the Well-Tempered Environment.* His technical appraisal of the Glass House in this context is generous, given his earlier research and conclusions. In both readings, he mentions the phrase "controlled environment" in describing the Glass House, echoing the words of it's architect.[66] This is in a way that critiques such a disposition - a "controlled environment" cannot be had in a facilities sense due to the technical properties of glass, developing his own earlier work in *A Home is Not a House.*[67] The sensibilities of glass prohibit a tempered living environment thanks to poor material factors regarding circulation, heat, visibility. Whilst this flaw exists, his phrase could act as a poetic metaphor for the lifestyle that the glass generates for its residents. The transparency controls the items within, and indeed controlled Johnson's own belongings and activities. Controlled atmospherically, not quite; controlled aesthetically, certainly.

[66] Reyner Banham, *The Architecture Of The Well-Tempered Environment,* 1st edn (London: Architectural Press, 1969), pp. 228-233.
[67] Banham, "A Home is Not a House", pp. 70-79

Conclusion.

The control of lifestyles within both the Glass House and the Brick House are clearly opposing thanks to their antithetical materialities. This extended exploration acts as a manifesto to highlight the two ways of living that Johnson has represented with his houses in New Canaan; these manifestations can act as proposals for modern living. Both buildings have celebrated their 70th anniversary recently, yet feel timeless and relevant with materials long-existing in the realms of architectural construction; but in approaches to domesticated living, feel incredibly applicable to a modern context.

Beginning, the 'Show,' through the medium of the Glass House. Basing society on visual approval, displaying wealth, possessions and experiences in a purely aesthetic, arranged existence. Now, more than ever in an age rife of conspicuous consumption, this feels relevant. In the earlier relation to the concept of a heterotopia, Foucault summarises six principles, one being a space that can "mutate and have specific operations at different points in history."[68] Maybe the perspective of the Glass House has changed; I would argue it is also relevant again, too. The saying "Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones" rings true in more than just it's metaphorical disposition. The irony of this, in a culture we are indoctrinated in, a machine that turns, that we must abide by, that we all use social media of some format with a display of one's self outwards. Our physical walls are becoming more translucent the more connected we become.

Conversely, the 'Unshow,' through the construction of the Brick House. A space that does not care for the triviality of perceived livability for there is no act of perceiving that will take place. In that space, Johnson felt comfortable and free to experiment with his own explorations in postmodernism. I believe that this Unshow, a less socially connected but more personally appealing system, is a healthier approach to living conditions; a freedom to express and generate a room catered to the individual and not to society. It does not seem wise nor healthy to display one's entire life to the external world.

These two buildings symbolise the opposing styles that defined Johnson's practice over the years, from restrained modernist to exuberant postmodernist in glass and brick respectively.

[68] Johnson, "What's It About? – Heterotopian Studies", 2018

An approach that sought to cocoon his personal development away from public viewership behind brick walls until he, and indeed the civic environment, were ready. They represent both sides of an intriguing character that sought redemption and parity through his work - a certain duality, he followed the winds of changing taste, while seeming to “know the very ways in which they would blow.”[69]

[69] Evan Moffitt, "The Duality Of Philip Johnson On The 70Th Anniversary Of His Iconic Glass House", *standardhotels.com*, 2019 <https://www.standardhotels.com/culture/Philip_Johnson_glass_house_70> [Accessed 9 January 2020]

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