You Are Not Here: Sartre's Phenomenological Ontology and the Architecture of Absence

Susan Herrington

Introduction

This paper examines Jean-Paul Sartre's phenomenological ontology; demonstrating that imagination is an important experiential dimension of architecture [Fig. 1]. Sartre posits that absence is the unconditional principle of all imagination.[1] Thus, architecture that attempts to account for absence - in-situ commemorative structures (space), sacred sites (place), and spontaneous memorials (location) - are singled out here. They provide tangible evidence of the absent. Although, these examples are often discussed under the rubric of memory making, they also trigger imagination. Sartre distinguishes imagination from remembering, perceiving, and other more passive types of consciousness.[2] It is argued here that, by understanding how direct experiences with places that account for absence invite imagination, we may gain insight into an ontology of architecture.

The phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty feature frequently in architectural theories regarding experience. So why are Sartre's phenomenology and views on imagination salient? First, Sartre offers an interpretation of imagination that is in relationship to the world, invited by the physical objects and spaces we encounter. For example, walking down the street you see a building on the corner. You can only perceive two sides of this building, but you know there is a whole physical object - the building - there. You don't perceive the entirety of the building, but there is a 'real sense' that you perceive the whole building. In terms of the Sartrean imagination, you see the whole building, but not the whole of the building; linking imaging with imagining.[3] Like Husserl's phenomenology, Sartre's work accepts the qualitative messiness of the world. Unlike Husserl, Sartre does not bracket off phenomena to determine their essential structure. Instead Sartre's imagining consciousness remains enmeshed within the rich milieu of the world, oscillating between being and nothingness. Indeed, Sartre's writing is filled with anecdotes from a very chaotic and concrete world, ranging from looking down bustling city streets to observing the behaviours of a busy waiter. Thus, his views may be very relevant to explorations of architecture that situate and are situated by this world.

Influenced by Heidegger, Sartre also concerns himself with being in the world. However, the two philosophers' approaches to being are distinct. Unlike Heidegger, Sartre does not eschew a dualistic ontology, but uses it as a starting point for his phenomenology.[4] For Sartre, you can no more be the table you are encountering, than the table can be you. According to philosopher Robert Bernasconi, 'neither consciousness, nor "the thing", has priority'.[5] Sartre's binary distinction between consciousness and the external world is where encounters start. Moreover, this dualism can only be overcome by descriptions,[6] and these descriptions come in rich and varied forms. Sartre wrote academic texts, but also short stories, novels, plays, and political analyses.

Fig. 1: Jean-Paul Sartre

Lastly, Sartre builds upon Merleau-Ponty's bodily engagement by positing perception as imagination; an activity that is ultimately linked to human freedom.[7] The ability to imagine is what makes us free. Sartre's views on freedom ultimately took political aim. The fact that humans are free, ontologically speaking, gives meaning to oppression.[8] Revealing the role of an imagining consciousness of architecture is certainly pertinent to architectural education. Given the free fall of representational media available to architecture students, it is entirely possible that the very human ability to imagine through direct experiences is eroding. This may have repercussions outside of academic institutions, because imagination is central to cognitive processes. According to developmental psychologists, imagination is not only the engine of creativity, but it enables us to make rational decisions.[9]

Unfortunately, Sartre's phenomenology has been overlooked in aesthetics as well.[10] However, with Arthur Danto's claim that Sartre's phenomenological ontology is 'a piece of ambitious metaphysical architecture, not just a description of what is there,'[11] Sartre's work is being reconsidered in aesthetics. Scholars revisiting his work find that consciousness is an imaginative act that not only reveals present meaning, but enables 'us to think of the world other than it is,'[12] a vital activity for educators, researcher, and practitioners who are often charged with this task.

The Space of Negation
In *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology* Sartre describes the complimentary processes of being and nothingness. At the heart of being for Sartre is the process of negation. Negation is a powerful tool of the imagining consciousness that arises from being in the world. It colours experience and gives it depth. Sartre describes negation by telling a story of Pierre's absence from a room.

The room of someone absent, the books of which

he turned the pages, the objects which he touched are in themselves only books, objects, i.e., full actualities. The very traces which he has left can be deciphered as traces of him only within a situation where he has been already appointed as absent. Pierre's absence, in order to be established or realized, requires a negative moment. If in terms of my perceptions of the room, I conceive of the former inhabitant who is no longer in the room, I am of necessity to produce an act of thought which no prior state can determine nor motivate, in short to effect in myself a break in being.[13]

In this way, being is an intentional activity structuring reality where there are 'breaks' of nothingness. This reciprocal relationship between 'being' and 'nothingness,' posits that nothingness is born from negation and it cannot exist apart from being because nothingness occurs through consciousness. In short, Pierre's non-existence in the room is dependent on Pierre at one point being there and his absence is experienced as present.

For Sartre, 'every psychic process of negation implies a cleavage between the past and the present - this cleavage is nothingness'.[14] Pierre's absence can be spatial. He can be in another part of the city, for example. Absence can be temporal as well. Pierre is dead. Moreover, we do not need to have had a direct experience with the absent. Sartre writes in *The Imaginary*:

I look, for example, at a portrait of Charles VIII at the Uffizi in Florence. I know that it is Charles VIII who is dead. But on the other hand in the imagined state: the dead Charles VIII is there present before us. It is he that we see, not the picture, and yet we posit him as not being there. We have only reached him 'as imaged,' 'by the intermediary' of the picture. One sees that the relation that consciousness posits in the imaging attitude between the portrait and its subject is magical.[15]

Fig. 2: The canal house Prinsengracht 263, where Anne Frank spent fifteen months in hiding, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Thus, the painting (physical representation) gives Charles VIII, though he is not there. Like Charles VIII's mental counterpart or representation, we are conscious of this due to the negation of present reality. The painting of the deceased monarch and the room devoid of Pierre are what Sartre calls 'analogons'. According to Adrienne Dengerink Chaplin, an analogon is the 'physical matter of the image to the extent that it allows us to see it as a representation of something'.[16] An analogon invites us and through it we call forth Charles VIII, not the painting of Charles VIII.

Consider 263 Prinsengracht in Amsterdam, the canal house where Anne Frank spent fifteen months in hiding with seven other Jews [Fig. 2]. During its restoration in 1960 as a memorial and youth center, the secret annex was left in its original condition as much as possible. Since this time, exhibition spaces at 265 and 267 Prinsengracht have been connected to the four-storey canal house to narrate and contextualise Anne Frank's story and the Holocaust. In addition to these physical developments, the house has been painstakingly documented virtually. Detailed computer models depict the layout of the house and annex, and a live webcam gives you a view from the annex window to the chestnut tree that Anne writes about in her diary.

Visiting the house today, one must navigate through numerous exhibits and video installations, and other tourists. Yet, once behind the bookcase at the end of the corridor on the third floor, you climb into a space that prompts negation [Fig. 2]. What strikes you first is the palpable emptiness of the annex. After the arrests of those in hiding, all major furniture, clothing, and other items were removed and redistributed to people who lost their effects in bombing raids. This was a common practice of the Nazi regime; conflating the desire to obliterate with the need to accommodate in acts that only fascism can rationalise.

Walking on the creaky floorboards that register every move, you realise that the building is an accomplice, but also a betrayal to their hiding. The wooden floors, thin walls, and rudimentary plumbing render the existence of its hiding inhabitants. In a small corridor space, a wall registers human dimensions with markings of the final heights of Otto Frank's children, measures no parent ever wants to know. Entering Anne's room, you immediately notice the faded clippings of celebrities that are taped to her wall. The invented life of movie stars, the private world of a diary, and the buoyancy of hope must have supplanted the real lives suspended in these rooms. Indeed, the absence of Anne is everywhere, profoundly shaping your imagining consciousness of her as absent.

According to Sartre, we know who is absent is not real. They are *irreal*. In order for the qualities of the real to appear as irreal, we must believe that the analogon refers to something true about the real. This is what disturbs architect Mabel O. Wilson during her visit to the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee.[17] Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated on the balcony of this motel on April 4, 1968, after staying as a guest in room 307. In the following years, the motel's owner preserved Dr. King's room and several adjoining rooms as a shrine. In the 1980s the Martin Luther King Memorial Foundation raised enough funds to purchase the motel and build around it the National Civil Rights Museum, which opened in 1991. After an extensive expansion in 2001, including adjacent buildings, today it offers all the amenities of an in-situ memorial and museum, with traveling exhibits, life-size dioramas, education activities for children, and a bookshop.

Visiting the museum, one can experience a portion of the saved motel and surrounding landscape. Knowledge of King's fate contrasts sharply with the optimism of the motel's boomerang neon sign, and the parking lot containing cars from the 1950s and 1960s [Fig. 3]. The new museum has

Fig. 3: Lorraine Motel in Memphis in the National Civil Rights Museum, Tennessee. Courtesy of Martin Lewis.

been built around the preserved motel. Inside, exhibits and dioramas tell of the struggles of the civil rights movement. At the end of the tour, you can enter the saved motel through a vestibule that provides views into two rooms, both labeled 307. As Wilson notes, King's original room was destroyed to construct this viewing vestibule [Fig. 3]. She notes that by displaying the two rooms (which were never room 307), memory is not constructed for the visitor. Be that as it may, the destruction of the room might inhibit negation, because King did not stay in these rooms. The analogon is not true.

In addition to the analogon containing something that is genuine, the power of the analogon is in direct proportion to the degree to which absence is relevant. Anne Frank's absence from the secret annex or Martin Luther King Jr.'s absence from the Lorraine Motel will exude greater imaginative force than Rodin's absence from his preserved studio at the Hôtel Biron, now the Musée Rodin. Anne Frank's death is relevant to the Holocaust as Dr. Martin Luther King's absence is meaningful to the struggles of the Civil Rights Movement.

The Place of Nothingness
The connections between religious experience and imagination have been well documented. On the contrary, Sartre professed no interest or belief in religious experience, and never directly compared negation with religious thought. In fact, he spent most of his life refuting the Catholic religion. Nonetheless, analyses of his writing find him a 'spirit-haunted atheist'.[18] Christina Howells reveals implicit connections between Sartre's being and nothingness and the negative tradition of religious beliefs. Howells argues that the ontological status of nothingness given by Sartre protects human consciousness from materialism, which holds that only matter truly exists.[19]

Howell draws connections between religious concepts, such as the idea of salvation through failure, and Sartre's monographs of nineteenth-century writers and poets.[20] However, there may also be links between religious experiences and negation. Sartre himself posits that imagination provides a realm beyond the reach of the senses, noting: 'imagination, far from appearing as an accidental characteristic of consciousness, is disclosed as an essential and transcendental condition of consciousness'.[21] Raoul Mortley notes that the role of silence in many Western religions is a form of negative theology. According to Mortley, silence was a 'part of the protocol in mysteries; a ritual recognition of the awesomeness of the divinity, and apart from its ritual value it also had real value, in that the divine presence was thought to strike dumb'.[22] Certainly moments of silence are not only practiced in religious experiences with sacred places, but also in more general acts of mourning or commemoration. Moreover, in the practices of Shinto, a Japanese folk religion, negation is integral to experiencing its sacred sites.[23]

Closely tied to Buddhism, Shinto venerates spirits (*kami*) in both animate and inanimate objects. Shinto complexes occupy sacred sites where the absence of a shrine structure is equally important to its presence. Consider Ise Jingu [Fig. 4], the most sacred Shinto shrine complex in Japan. It contains an Outer Shrine (Geku), which venerates Toyouke, the *kami* of clothing, food and housing, and the Inner Shrine (Naiku), which is dedicated to the Sun Goddess and progenitor of the Imperial Family, Amaterasu. Like many Shinto shrine complexes, its sacred structures have been rebuilt 'anew' every 20 years since the seventh century (with several lapses due to war). Called '*shikinen sengu*', this rebuilding process involves a serious material commitment of approximately 16,000 cypress trees that are ideally 200 years old and at least 60 centimeters in diameter. The felling, transport and preparation of these special trees, as well as the creation of numerous ceremonial items, adhere to a set of elaborate Shinto rituals, which take eight years to complete.[24]
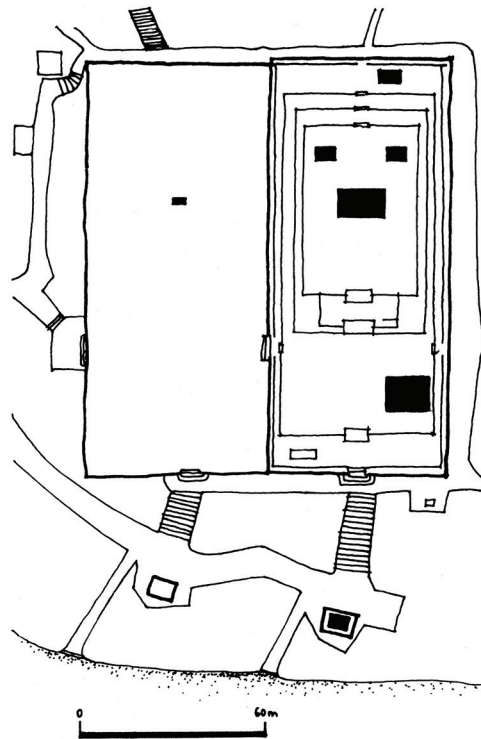
Fig. 4: The Ise Jingu Shinto shrine complex, Ise, Mie prefecture, Japan. Courtesy of Dominic McIver Lopes.

Approaching the main shrine to Amaterasu at Naiku, the entire experience is shrouded in what you cannot see. Echoing Basil Chamberlin's warning to 19th century travelers to Ise, 'there is nothing to see and they won't let you see it;'[25] once you have arrived at the gate to the main shrine, you are turned away. While average people are encouraged to pilgrimage to Ise, the Imperial family and their priests only access the inner sanctums of both the Naiku and Geku shrines. Most visitors can only stand at the entry gate and imagine what lies beyond. This is remindful of Sartre who notes, 'one must imagine what one is denied'.[26]

In the 1950s, Watanabe Yoshio was allowed to photograph the inner shrine areas of Ise. Johnathan Reynolds posits that these published images provided a visual documentation of Ise that stressed the 'very material substance' of the architectural experience.[27] Indeed, Yoshio's photographs as well as contemporary imagery of the outer shrine structures exude materiality. The pristine ground plane, the seemingly perfect wood members and geometric orthodoxy of the shrine, and the taunt bristles of its thatched roof, emphasise its material beauty.

Nonetheless, during a direct experience with Ise, what is most striking is the fact that the raised plinth accommodating the shrine is next to an equally large flat empty space. Surfaced with small white pebbles and one tiny shed-like structure, this space is called '*kodenchi*'. It denotes the place where the shrine structure from the last *sengu* is now absent. The next shrine will be built on the *kodenchi*, and the current site with the shrine will be taken down and become the *kodenchi*. The space that does not contain the shrine, is always part of what the shrine complex is and how it is experienced.

Philosopher Dominic Lopes, argues that '*shik-inen sengu*' provides an ontology of Japanese architecture that extends beyond Shinto shrines to present-day architecture, such as Shigeru Ban's

paper works and the fact that thirty percent of Tokyo is rebuilt every year.[28] The ontological question posed by Lopes asks: is Ise more than a thousand years old or is it only twenty years old? According to Lopes the permanence of Japanese architecture is achieved through consistent rebuilding.[29] He concludes that 'some architectural works are to be appreciated more like plays than like statues'.[30] In effect, Ise's shrines are over 1300 years old and they have appeared sixty times.[31] Importantly, experiencing these performances of Ise invites negation as part of what they are.

Building upon the Japanese concept of '*ma*,' which values the intervals or gaps between buildings, Lindsay Jones posits that this negative space serves as a magnet for *kami*. A gap is created, 'a "negative space," a sacred *ma*, a vacuum into which rushes the formless energy of (ki) of kami'.[32] One would need to be of Shinto faith to experience *ma*. Nonetheless, given the emphasis on what is not there at Ise, it is evident for non-Shinto visitors that negation is integral to a religious experience with Ise.

The Location of Being
Both the Anne Frank house and Ise Jingu invite our imagination through negation. They function as analogons. An analogon prompts imagination because it is the 'imperfect and muddled appearance of what it could be through what it is'.[33] Thus far, encountering nothingness has not considered other people. Sartre's thoughts on 'others' are introduced in *Being and Nothingness* and later in *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, where he includes others in experiences of collective groups or group praxis. These are experiences that both give meaning to existence and oblige us to a set of customs and behaviours. For Sartre, it is the worked-matter that we encounter in everyday experiences that link us to the collective. This is because much of this matter is more than what it is, and it is a type of being that plays a special role in Sartre's structure of consciousness.

Fig. 5: Spontaneous memorial of Flight 93, Shangsville, Pennsylvania, USA. Courtesy of Cynthia Girling and Ron Kellett.

Sartre proposes that the structure of consciousness rests upon the basic premise that 'to be aware of an object is not to be the object'.[34] Thus being has two forms: in-itself (*en-soi*) and for-itself (*pour-soi*).[35] *En-soi* is a thing that exists and is not conscious of itself, a table for example, and it can be anything that one is conscious of. *Pour-soi* exists but it is conscious of itself, you for example. While *en-soi* and *pour-soi* have different features, human reality consistently fuses them. According to Hazel E. Barnes, these are types of being 'in which psychic overlay and matter have been blended'.[36] They are worked-matter that includes 'all the human stamped physical and cultural environments (bus routes, institutions, customs, and so on) in which we live'.[37] As Sartre describes:

I need only glance out the window and: I will be able to see which are men and drivers, who are cars, a policemen who is directing traffic at the corner of the street, the same traffic being controlled by red and green lights: hundreds of exigencies rise up towards me: pedestrian crossings, notices prohibitions; collectives (a branch of the Credit Lyonnais, a cafe, a church, blocks of flats, and also a visible seriality: people queueing in front of a shop) and instruments (pavements, a thoroughfare, a taxi rank. a bus stop etc., proclaiming with their frozen voices how they are to be used) [...] *Later I will go down and become their thing.*[38]

For Sartre this worked-matter is the vehicle for actions that enable consciousness to give meaning to being. 'A ticket is a ticket rather than a pasteboard rectangle only insofar as it is supported by consciousness, but you cannot get into the theater without it. By means of worked-matter we individually and collectively carve out our being in a world by our concrete actions or praxis'.[39] This group praxis also relates to Sartre's third form of being, being for-others (*pour-autrui*). Group praxis constitutes itself in given moments, with an emphasis on the ontological empowerment of the individual, while simultaneously acknowledging the individual as a group member - and it arises out of scarcity and need.[40] While Sartre largely concerned himself with class status or warring states as particular forms of group praxis, other groups with specific relationships in the world can also be considered.

The rise of spontaneous memorials is an example where both worked- matter and how it relates to the individual and the group, provide moments of collective praxis. Their popularity in recent decades may also point to a need or scarcity in society. While competitions for professionally designed memorials have become commonplace since the Vietnam Memorial competition in Washington D.C., so have spontaneous memorials prompted by Lin's design. Spontaneous memorials are created when people *en masse* bring items to the location of a tragedy - a murder, a car accident, a shooting, or a bombing. Along with flags and flowers, these items can be the most mundane of personal effects, including baseball caps, candles, cards, stuffed animals, wind chimes, t-shirts, or photographs. A bottle of 'Old Spice' left at a spontaneous memorial is no longer simply a toiletry product, but rather an analogon that calls forth the deceased by giving us what he smelled like. It prompts us to imagine the aftershave other than it is; the being for-itself haunts being in-itself in the context for-others.

Some of these items may have belonged to the deceased, but many are possessions of the living. According to Harriet Senie, 'like the ground on which they rest these ritual objects are seen as somehow sacred - as artifacts that should not be destroyed'.[41] In the case of many prominent spontaneous memorials, where the contributions of items quickly outgrow the fence, items are collected, catalogued, and saved for a future, permanent memorial.

There are virtual memorials for all the 9-11 terrorist attacks in the United States, yet the physical places of the attacks still attract people. Immediately

after September 11, 2001, numerous spontaneous memorials emerged as individual testimonies in a collective praxis that created hallowed spaces within the city of New York. According to Joseph Catalano, negation in collective practice 'means both the positive force of transcending matter and the weakening of praxis through seriality'.[42] Indeed, Sartre argues in *Critique of Dialectical Reason* that we will realise the 'dialectic moment only when group praxis has been identified as part of our history'.[43] If we fail to see our actions as historically situated, they become part of the status quo. For example, over time, contributions made to most spontaneous memorials seemingly defer to what is expected at these locations.

Consider the Flight 93 spontaneous memorial, which is still performing while the selected, permanent memorial is debated. Soon after the crash, the people of Shanksville, Pennsylvania paid tribute to the 40 unsuspecting passengers and crew members who perished. They erected a single fence on a small plateau, a substantial distance from the crater created when flight 93 crashed to the ground [Fig. 5]. The fence does not enclose anything, but serves as a repository for items brought by visitors to the site. Despite its isolated location (compared with Washington D.C. and New York City), many family members of the victims have come to Shanksville to commemorate this tragic event. By 2007 this memorial received visitors from all over North America.

Walking around this windy, barren field, past the benches dedicated to the passengers, the angel plaques in patriotic garb, and the fence that is draped with hundreds of items, one is taken by the amount of worked-matter left in commemoration [Fig. 5]. During my visit the majority of the contributions are American flags, T-shirts, and hand-made signs that say things like 'thanks for saving us.' Other messages have been left on everything, from post-it notes to rocks to guardrails.[44]

Spontaneous memorials suggest that these acts of group praxis indicate a need. There is a need to acknowledge the transition from for-itself to in-itself (life to death) for-others. Senie suggests that spontaneous memorials replace the role that cemeteries and burial rituals played in traditional societies. Each town had a space for the dead, and the remains of the dead were brought through the center of town as part of town life.[45] This acknowledgement of death is certainly absent from many North American contexts, where 'planned communities' have designed every need of the living within a ten minute walking distance, and where everything is accounted for except the one act we will all encounter, death. Moreover in times of war, acknowledgement of death in life is never more present.

Conclusion: Phenomenology and ontology

An ontology of architecture seeks to understand the question: what kind of thing is architecture? Surely an explanation of its materials, modes of production, and representations cannot completely account for an ontology. Alberto Perez-Gomez eloquently notes that 'architecture hides sometimes'.[46] Perhaps Sartre's interpretation of the imagining consciousness reveals what is hidden. Sartre's theory of negation demonstrates that architecture can invite us to imagine what or who is not. With regard to in-situ commemorative structures, we know that a great deal of effort is made to literally manufacture memory for us. Preservation specialists, architectural historians and exhibit designers are consulted, and curatorial collection management policies are established. Debates ensue to determine the proper message, the materials to be preserved, and the way it is presented to the public. Yet, equally important is what is not there and a visitor's ability to imagine it. Regarding sacred places, Lopes posits that Ise demonstrates that an architectural ontology may include architecture as performance. Indeed, the role of nothingness at Ise triggers not only what is not, but asks us to consider architecture as 'events,'

particular occurrences rather than only types with particular properties. This suggests that events as part of architecture go beyond architecture's material qualities to engage experience as part of what it is. Lastly, spontaneous memorials and Sartre's ideas regarding group praxis indicate that there are immaterial needs of people, particularly regarding the mourning of the deceased as part of life.

Notes

1. Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Imaginary*, trans. Jonathan Webber (London, New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 188.

2. See Sartre, 2004, last section, pp. 179-94.

3. This also correlates with Jean Piaget's theory of projective vision in children, where geometrical properties of an object, such as a block being a cube, can be understood even when the child can only see one side. See Jean Piaget, *The Child's Construction of Reality* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955).

4. Steven Priest, *Jean-Paul Sartre: Basic Writings* (New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 60-61.

5. Robert Bernasconi, *How to Read Sartre* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), p. 26.

6. Robert Bernasconi, *How to Read Sartre*, p. 27.

7. It's also significant to note that Sartre's engagement involves the body. Paralleling Merleau-Ponty's idea that I am my body, and my body is the point where knowledge and action happen, Sartre's phenomenology is full of corporeal descriptions. He 'thumbs through the pages' of Pierre's book and 'pokes his finger in the jar of jam.' See Arthur C. Danto, *Sartre* (London: Fontana Press, 1991), p. 82.

8. Robert Bernasconi, *How to Read Sartre* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), p. 58.

9. See Paul Harris, *The Work of the Imagination* (London: Blackwell, 2000).

10. See Hazel E. Barnes, 'Sartre's ontology: The revealing of making and being', in *The Cambridge Companion to Sartre*, ed. Christina Howells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 13; Arthur C. Danto, Sartre (London: Fontana Press, 1991), p. 39; and Adrienne

Dengerink Chaplin, *Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, 2nd ed., ed. Dominic Lopes and Berys Gaut (London: Routledge, 2000, 2005), p. 161.

11. Danto, 1991, p. 39.

12. Dengerink Chaplin, 2005, p. 164.

13. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), pp. 26-27.

14. Sartre, 1956, p. 27.

15. Sartre, 2004, p. 24.

16. Dengerink Chaplin, 2005, p. 163.

17. See Mabel O. Wilson, 'Between Rooms 307,' *Harvard Design Magazine*. Fall 1999, pp. 28 -31.

18. Christina Howells, *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 76, No. 3, July, 1981, pp. 549-55 (p. 549). See also Paul Ricoeur, *Figuring the sacred: religion, narrative, and imagination*, trans. David Pellauer, ed. Mark I. Wallace (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995); Patricia Cox Miller, The poetry of thought in late antiquity: essays in imagination and religion (Aldershot, England; Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2001), and Jacques Salvan, *The Scandalous Ghost, Sartre's Existentialism as related to Vitalism Humanism, Mysticism, Marxism* (Detroit, 1967).

19. Howells, 1981, pp. 552-54.

20. Howells, 1981, pp. 552-54.

21. Sartre, 2004, p. 188.

22. Raoul Mortley, 'Negative Theology and Abstraction in Plotinus,' *The American Journal of Philology*, 96, No. 4, winter 1975, p. 366.

23. For discussions on 'ma' see Arata Isozaki, *Ma: Space-time in Japan* (New York: Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 1980); and Richard B. Pilgrim, *Buddhism and the arts of Japan* (Chambersburg, Pa: Anima Publications, 1993).

24. I thank the University of British Columbia for a Study Leave to Japan in 2006. For a detailed account of the rebuilding in the 1970s, see Felicia Bock, 'The Rites of Renewal at Ise', *Monumenta Nipponica*, 29, No.1, Spring 1974, pp. 55-68.

25. Basil Hall Chamberlain, *A Handbook for Travelers in Japan* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1893), p. 245.

26. Sartre, 2004, p. 188.

27. Johnathan Reynolds, 'Ise Shrine: Modernism and Japanese Tradition', *The Art Bulletin*, 83, No. 2, June 2001, pp. 316-41. According to Reynolds, Watanabe Yoshio's unprecedented photographs of the inner shrine reaches of the shrine complex, 'reconstituted Ise within a rigorously modernist aesthetic, rendering the shrines' architecture intelligible in a way that the hazy, poetic representations from the past could not.'

28. See Dominic McIver Lopes, 'Shikinen Sengu: The Ontology of Architecture in Japan,' *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 65, 2007, pp. 77-84.

29. Lopes, 2007, p. 83.

30. Lopes, 2007, p. 83.

31. As to *why* the shrines are rebuilt, Noboru Kawazoe notes that in rebuilding they are 'preserving an intangible essence within the style'(quoted from Jones, 2000, p. 248). For political reasons why the shrines are rebuilt, see William H. Coaldrake, *Architecture and Authority in Japan* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 51.

32. Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture: Experience, Interpretation, Comparison*, Cambridge. MA: Harvard University Press, 2000, p. 282.

33. Sartre, 2004, p. 193.

34. Barnes, 1999, p. 14.

35. Sartre, 1956, p. lxiii.

36. Barnes, 1999, p. 25.

37. Barnes, 1999, pp. 26-27.

38. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, trans. Alan Sheridan-Smith (London: Verso, 1976).

39. Barnes, 1999, p. 26.

40. See Joseph S. Catalano, *A Commentary of Jean-Paul Sartre's Critique of Dialectical Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 161.

41. Harriet F. Senie, 'Mourning in Protest', *Harvard Design Magazine*, fall 1999, p. 24.

42. Catalano, 1986, p. 161.

43. Catalano, 1986, p. 162.

44. These contributions function less as analogons -prompting negation and imagination- and more like acts conditioned as reactions to the story of 911. This is when the being for-itself in lieu of being for-others reverts to the status quo; society is taken as a given. See Bernasconi, 2006, 'In war there are no innocent victims', p. 43-52; and 'bad faith', a Sartrean term for a lie to oneself that is made to avoid responsible freedom, 1956, p. 67.

45. See Harriet F. Senie, 'Mourning in Protest', *Harvard Design Magazine*, fall 1999, pp. 23-27.

46. Lecture at the University of British Columbia, April 2008.

Biography

Susan Herrington is an Associate Professor in the School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at the University of British Columbia. She teaches history, theory, and design studios in the architecture, landscape architecture, and environmental design programs. Herrington has published numerous articles and chapters. Her book, *On Landscapes*, is forthcoming in 2008 as part of Routledge's general philosophy series, Thinking In Action.