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Architectural Epistemes of Housing: Towards an Analytical Apparatus for Reading Individualization

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Architectural Epistemes of Housing: Towards an Analytical Apparatus for Reading Individualization

ABSTRACT

Contemporary theories of dwelling have extended architectural analysis beyond form, function and typology toward embodied experience, enactment, temporal change and affective relations. Yet their translation into a transparent procedure for reading architectural evidence remains underdeveloped. This paper develops an apparatus for examining architecture's potential to support individualization, understood as relational differentiation within architectural continuity rather than as personalization or flexibility. An integrative conceptual review and framework analysis synthesize phenomenology, performativity and affect theory into six architectural epistemes: Space, Body, Time, Threshold, Atmosphere and Act. Their translation into guiding questions directs the analysis of published plans, sections, photographs, audio and video materials and project descriptions. Findings are combined through abductive cross-episteme synthesis to identify architectural mechanisms. The procedure is applied to and demonstrated through Moriyama House (2002-2005) by Ryue Nishizawa. The analysis identifies four mechanisms: 1) dispersing volumes and functions, 2) externalizing circulation and part of dwelling, 3) overlapping territories and 4) distributing distances and views. The possibilities these mechanisms offer for autonomy, change and contact among residents remain conditional on weather, accessibility, privacy and unequal control over space.

Keywords: *architectural epistemes, phenomenology, performativity, affect theory, individualization*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Housing is commonly examined through form, function, typology, standards and technical performance. While these approaches remain indispensable, they do not exhaust what dwelling is. Dwelling is both a place and a state: it is encountered through a body, enacted through repeated routines, altered over time, negotiated at boundaries and felt through atmospheres. In this paper, dwelling is therefore understood as a relational and processual phenomenon produced through the continuing interaction of architectural organization, inhabitants, practices, temporal rhythms and environmental conditions.

Treating dwelling in this way creates a methodological problem for architectural analysis. The aspects of dwelling included in this definition have been developed within distinct theoretical traditions, each using different concepts and making different relations visible. Phenomenology explains dwelling as embodied being-in-the-world and gives architectural significance to place, orientation and sensory experience [1], [2], [3], [4]. Performative and process-oriented accounts show that space is socially produced and continually enacted through movement, event, duration, repetition and everyday practice [5], [6], [7], [8], [9], [10]. Affect theory, when applied to architecture, highlights how environments and bodies alter one another through conditions, intensities and atmospheres that precede conscious interpretation [11], [12], [13], [14]. Together, these traditions explain why dwelling exceeds neutral container. What remains less explicit is how their insights can be translated into a transparent procedure for reading architectural evidence such as published plans, sections, photographs, descriptions etc. Theory explains how dwelling takes place and conventional analysis describes the building but the link between the two is often left implicit.

The same difficulty surrounds individualization. The term itself is usually associated with flexible layouts, consumer choice, customized finishes etc. And while these may contribute to individualized use, none constitutes individualization on its own. A resident, for example, may personalize an interior while remaining within a spatial organization that fixes relations of privacy, co-presence, use and change. Conversely, a dwelling may support markedly different lives without displaying individualized form.

For the purpose of this paper, individualization is defined as the capacity of an architectural organization to support different ways of dwelling by allowing inhabitants to adjust the relations of withdrawal and co-presence, use and appropriation, exposure and protection, sensory conditions and temporal change, but without requiring a unique architectural form for each person. In short, individualization is a relational differentiation within architectural continuity. Personalization, by contrast, refers to the changes in visible attributes, such as colors, surface finishes or decorative elements. These choices primarily alter how a dwelling looks and could contribute to the expression of identity. Individualization concerns the range of spatial, temporal, bodily, social, sensory and affective relations that the dwelling allows residents to establish and adjust. Personalization may contribute to individualization, but it does not constitute it on its own. Flexibility, for example, may expand this relational range, but it is neither a synonym nor a sufficient condition for individualization.

Yet individualization cannot be established from architectural evidence alone. Architectural analysis can identify only configurations that support it: configurations that distribute autonomy, leave future allocations open, mediate relations, permit local environmental adjustment or enable appropriation. Whether residents use these possibilities, experience them as enabling or have equitable access to them cannot be established without empirical research with the residents themselves.

The question is therefore: how can an abstract and multidimensional account of dwelling be translated into a transparent architectural reading without reducing individualization to flexibility? The answer lies in the concept of an architectural episteme: a theory-derived way of reading architecture that poses a guiding question, defines what counts as relevant evidence and traces the relations relevant to that question. The term episteme emphasizes the connection between how architecture is approached and the knowledge produced via that reading. The same architectural configuration can reveal different relations depending on the question asked. Each episteme pursues its question across the layout as a whole in order to make the interpretation explicit: what is being examined, based on what evidence and how that evidence informs the resulting findings.

The apparatus develops six such epistemes: Space, Body, Time, Threshold, Atmosphere and Act, each explained in Section 3. They function as complementary analytical orientations rather than architectural categories, design principles or predicted outcomes. Each makes particular relations visible, while their shared focus on the same architectural organization allows the findings to be compared and connected. This is essential to the synthesis: when findings from several epistemes converge around the same architectural operation, they provide the basis for identifying architectural mechanism. The proposed apparatus thus moves from distinct questions about architecture to a connected explanation of what its organization does and what it makes possible for residents.

Since no single theory can cover every dimension of relational individualization, all three are needed to generate these epistemes. Phenomenology displaces abstract space toward embodied and meaningful experience. Performative accounts displace the building as a finished object toward dwelling as a socially produced, enacted, appropriated and changed through time. Affect theory displaces experience understood through conscious meaning toward the material and atmospheric modulation of what bodies and environments can do. The three registers are thus a minimal complementary set, not an exhaustive theory of dwelling: each corrects a reduction left by the others, while none is treated as a master framework. Their conceptual merging generates the six epistemes while their differences prevent dwelling from being reduced to experience, practice or affect alone.

In the broader research, epistemes guide the reading of different architectural cases; intersecting findings reveal mechanisms; and recurring combinations of mechanisms across cases are later abstracted as spatial logics. Spatial logics must then be related to empirically examined relational capacities before strategies of individualization can be formulated. This paper covers the derivation of the epistemes and their application within one case, leading to architectural mechanism, architecturally grounded possibilities for residents and finally, limitations. It develops and demonstrates a new analytical apparatus for examining how architectural organization may support different ways of dwelling. It does not perform cross-case comparison, empirically validate relational capacities or formulate strategies.

The contribution is therefore, methodological rather than universalizing. First, the paper documents how the theoretical corpus was selected and how the epistemes were derived. Then it operationalizes each episteme through observable indicators after which it demonstrates the procedure in one information-rich critical case study: Moriyama House (2002-2005) by Ryue Nishizawa.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study uses a theory-led, two-stage research design.

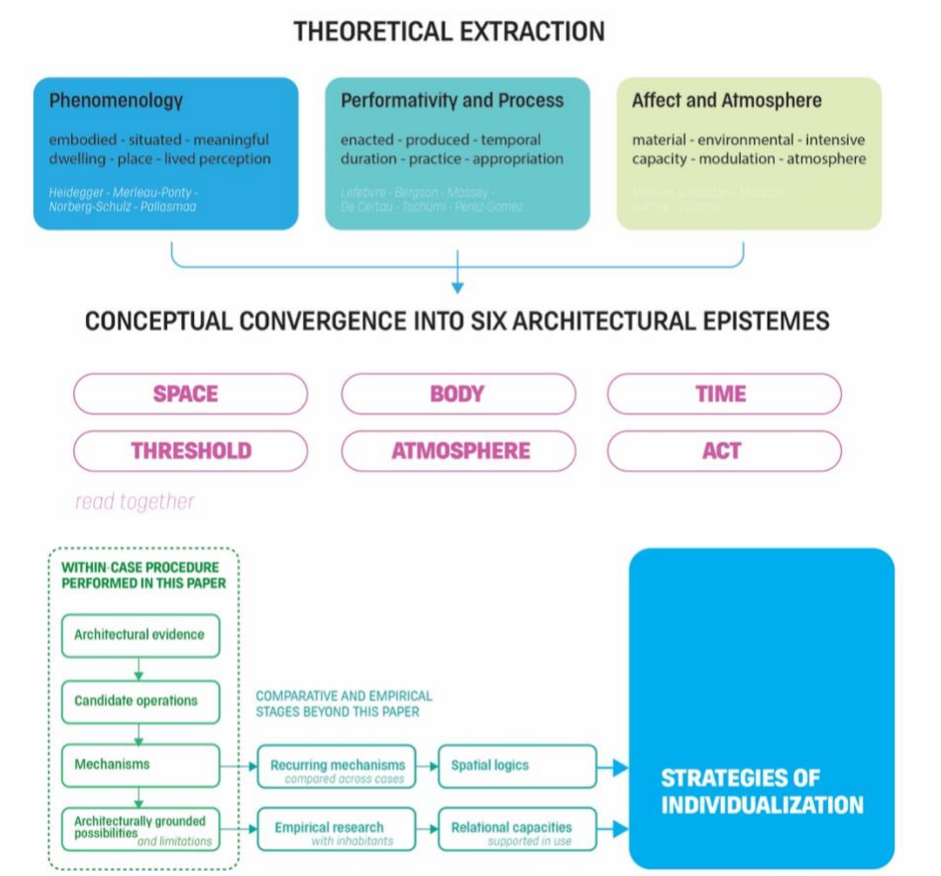


Figure 1. Derivation, analytical hierarchy and scope of the procedure. Three non-redundant theoretical registers are synthesized into six epistemes as ways of reading. This paper performs the within-case sequence from evidence to mechanism and architecturally grounded possibilities and limitations. Cross-case derivation of spatial logics, empirical examination of relational capacities and their intersection in strategies of individualization remain beyond the scope of this paper.

The first stage derives an analytical apparatus from three theoretical registers. The second applies this apparatus to Moriyama House and brings the resulting findings into relation through an abductive synthesis. Figure 1 presents this sequence, but also distinguishes the work performed in this paper from the comparative and empirical stages of the wider research.

2.1. RESEARCH DESIGN AND THEORETICAL CORPUS

In the first stage, concepts drawn from three theoretical registers were selected, compared and organized into six epistemes: Space, Body, Time, Threshold, Atmosphere and Act. In the second stage, epistemes were then applied to architecture. Each defined the questions asked of the project and directed attention towards distinct architectural evidence. Findings from different epistemes were then compared and brought together through abductive cross-episteme synthesis to identify architectural mechanisms. The method moves from theory to modes of reading, from modes of reading to architectural findings and from their cross-episteme interpretation to mechanism.

The theoretical stage combines an integrative conceptual review, which relates concepts from heterogeneous bodies of literature to generate a new interpretive framework, with conceptual framework analysis [15], [16]. These methods were chosen because the aim was not to exhaust all scholarship on dwelling or to measure how often particular terms appear. Instead, the aim was to develop an architecturally usable framework from different but complementary accounts of how dwelling takes place.

Three theoretical registers were selected in relation to the definition of individualization used in this study. The framework must address how spatial relations are experienced by situated bodies, how they are enacted and altered through practice and time, and how they are affected by material and environmental conditions. Phenomenology, performativity and affect theory provide complementary starting points for these questions. That said, no single register sufficiently explains all three. Other theories could extend the apparatus but removing any of these three would leave one requirement conceptually under-specified.

Within these registers, texts and authors were selected purposively. They were included when they: 1) made an influential contribution to the understanding of dwelling, lived space, everyday spatial practice and affective environment; 2) addressed the relation between architecture and inhabitation rather than architectural form alone; 3) offered concepts that can be translated into architectural questions; and 4) contributed a dimension not sufficiently explained by the other selected traditions.

The phenomenological corpus includes Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Norberg-Schulz and Pallasmaa [1], [2], [3], [4]. Their work makes dwelling read and understood as embodied, situated, multisensory and meaningful experience. Lefebvre, Bergson, Massey, de Certeau, Tschumi and Perez-Gomez [5], [6], [7], [8], [9], [10], belong to the performative and process-based corpus. In their research they direct attention to the production of space, duration, everyday practices, repetition, appropriation and event. The affective corpus includes Deleuze & Guattari, Massumi, Bohme and Zumthor [11], [12], [13], [14] who explain how bodies are affected by material conditions, sensory intensities and atmospheres that cannot be reduced to conscious interpretation. Architectural accounts of intermediate domains and threshold spaces by van Eyck, Hertzberger and Boettger further inform the treatment of spatial mediation [17], [18] [19]. These traditions are not combined into a single philosophical position. Their differences are retained because each makes a different dimension of dwelling visible and because they provide the theoretical basis from which the six epistemes are derived.

2.2. DERIVING THE ARCHITECTURAL EPISTEMES

Concepts were first identified and extracted from each theoretical register and compared across the corpus. Concepts addressing the same aspect of dwelling were brought together. Each group was translated into concrete questions that could be investigated by examining plans, sections, photographs, written descriptions or other architectural evidence. Through repeated comparison and refinement, six architectural epistemes were defined: Space, Body, Time, Threshold, Atmosphere and Act.

An episteme was retained only if it met three conditions: it was supported by concepts from more than one theoretical framework; it posed a distinct analytical question that could not be reduced to another episteme; and it could be investigated through observable spatial, material, temporal or environmental features. The resulting epistemes are explained in Section 3, before their application to Moriyama House. The theoretical synthesis is summarized in Tables 1 and 2 in Section 5.1.

Each episteme was operationalized by translating its conceptual focus into a fundamental question, identifying the architectural relations relevant to that question and specifying the evidence through which those relations could be examined. This translation links theoretical concepts to features such as adjacencies, level changes, entrances, openings, material conditions, routes and possibilities for reallocation of use.

For example, Space draws most strongly on phenomenological and relational accounts, Act on performative accounts and Atmosphere on affect theory; nevertheless, each episteme incorporates concepts from at least one other register, which broadens the architectural question it can address. The six epistemes are therefore analytical orientations that overlap by design. They are distinct but may examine the same architectural feature from different perspectives. To illustrate, both Space and Threshold may examine a doorway, but Space asks how the doorway organizes relations across a whole layout, whereas Threshold asks how it regulates the transition between different degrees of privacy, belonging or exposure. Body and Atmosphere may both examine light. Body asks how inhabitants perceive and respond to it. Atmosphere asks how it works with materials, enclosure and environmental conditions to shape the sensory character of a space.

Therefore, the indicators direct attention to evidence but their presence does not establish individualization or predict residents' experience. The same architectural feature can be examined through more than one episteme, provided that each reading addresses a distinct question. The resulting operational matrix is presented in Table 3 in Section 5.2.

2.3. CASE SELECTION

Moriyama House was selected as an information-rich case for demonstrating the procedure rather than as a representative example of individualized housing per se [20].

Its detached volumes, exterior connections and differentiated patterns of occupation make the relations under investigation particularly visible. The analytical test is whether the apparatus can move beyond this familiar image of fragmented composition to distinguish interacting architectural operations and their architecturally grounded possibilities and limitations.

2.4. FROM EPISTEMES TO MECHANISMS: ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE

An architectural mechanism is a distinct and traceable operation performed by a spatial, material or organizational configuration. Architecturally grounded possibilities for residents denote the range of relations (to oneself, others, space and environment) that an operation might make possible on the basis of architectural evidence. The application proceeds via following five crucial steps:

1. Evidence identification (plans, sections, photographs and published project descriptions are read through each episteme to identify the architectural relations relevant to its guiding question).

2. Candidate operations (the identified evidence is reformulated as an active architectural operation, expressed by a verb rather than a quality: architecture disperses, externalizes, overlaps or distributes).

3. Cross-episteme examination (findings are compared across the six readings and clustered while a mechanism is retained when it is traceable to the architectural material, supported by more than one episteme and more than one form of architectural evidence).

4. Capacity and limitation (for every mechanism, architecturally grounded possibility for residents and the architectural limitation or tension it introduces are stated separately).

5. Scope control (claims are restricted to what the available material supports, the analysis is interpretative, it identifies only potential and does not infer residents' actual behavior, experience or satisfaction without empirical evidence).

2.5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The paper develops the apparatus and performs the within-case research sequence from architectural evidence to mechanisms, architecturally grounded possibilities for residents and limitations. It does not undertake cross-case comparison, derive recurring spatial logics, relational capacities or formulate strategies of individualization. In the wider research, comparative analysis would examine recurring combination of mechanisms, while research with inhabitants would investigate which capacities are available and used, by whom and under which constraints. Only then could strategies be formulated by critically relating the two sets of findings.

3. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK: ARCHITECTURAL EPISTEMES

3.1. SPACE

The shift from space as a neutral container to space as a relational field and organization is the starting point here. Heidegger's account of gathering, Norberg-Schulz's emphasis on orientation and place and Lefebvre's socially produced spaces differ substantially, yet they all refuse the assumption that spatial meaning is contained in geometry alone [1], [2], [5]. Space is analyzed not as an abstract substance but as architecture's distribution of relations among inhabitants, their activities and surroundings. In this sense, the episteme asks how the configuration connects, separates, ranks or equalizes domains. A plan is therefore read through adjacency, distance, proximity, orientation, continuity, relation, circulation etc. Its outcome is to go beyond space as "open" or "fragmented". The focus is to try and identify what its configuration does: whether it concentrates or disperses activity, fixes or leaves the relations between personal and shared field negotiable, centralizes or not, etc.

3.2. BODY

Merleau-Ponty's lived body displaces the observer: the body is the medium through which a world becomes available [3]. Pallasmaa translates this very position into architectural experience by insisting on multisensory and haptic perception [4]. Affect theory further amplifies phenomenological body by treating it as both a perceiving subject as well as a capacity that changes through encounters [11], [12]. With that in mind, Body examines how architecture positions and moves human bodies and how scale, level, light, sound, air, view, temperature support or constrain them. The analytical question is therefore not simply how a space feels, but whose body can enter, move, withdraw, orient or remain comfortable there.

3.3. TIME

Time transforms the relationship between architecture and inhabitants. Individualization is always temporal, not instantaneous. Bergson's duration views time as a lived continuity and not as a sequence of equivalent moments [6]; Massey describes space as unfinished and produced through relations [7]; everyday practice repeats and modifies spatial orders [8].

In the context of this paper, temporal openness does not mean that every element moves. A stable structure may support change because it permits functions, territories or levels of occupancy to be redistributed without losing coherence or logic or its utilitarian function.

3.4. THRESHOLD

A threshold is not merely a line crossed by movement. Heidegger's understanding of the boundary as the beginning of presencing, van Eyck's in-between realm, Hertzberger's work on intermediate domains and Boettger's account of threshold spaces as spatially ambivalent sequences establish the threshold as a spatial condition in which differences are brought into relation [1], [17], [18], [19]. Performative and affective views extend this understanding by showing how thresholds are repeatedly used and negotiated, thereby modulating exposure and contact between bodies and their environments. Entrances, galleries, garden edges, balconies, passages, windows etc. are examined according to the spatial depth they create and the possibilities they offer. The question is therefore whether relations between private and collective, inside and outside, withdrawal and encounter are organized as binary oppositions or mediated through habitable transitional spaces that allow different degrees of privacy and openness and different possibilities for withdrawal or contact.

3.5. ATMOSPHERE

Atmosphere is never fixed. It is neither stylistic effect nor an intimate emotion projected onto a neutral room. For Bohme, atmosphere emerges between subject and environment as tuned space [13]. For Zumthor it is materially orchestrated through light, sound, texture, temperature and presence [14]. Deleuzian affect and Massumi's intensities prevent this tuning from being reduced to conscious interpretation [11], [12]. The focus is thus on the question of how architecture modulates a field in which bodies and environment affect one another. It examines the distribution and adjustability of daylight, air, acoustic exposure, thermal conditions, vegetation, contact and degrees of enclosure. Because atmosphere changes with weather, occupation and time, analysis can identify the architectural range and controls offered, but not prescribe what every inhabitant will feel.

3.6. ACT

A dwelling is continually enacted: through entering, cooking, sleeping, cleaning, working, caring, rearranging, repairing, meeting and withdrawing. Lefebvre's production of space and de Certeau's everyday tactics make such practices constitutive rather than secondary [5], [8]. Tschumi and Perez-Gomez likewise challenge the idea of separating architecture from event and performance [9], [10]. So, the focus here would be what residents can do in a space and how its organization supports, enables or limits their actions. How surfaces can be used, how routes direct and enable movement, whether shared, collective areas can be occupied and rooms without fixed functions ca be adapted to different needs. Architecture does not determine what people will do, but it affects how much effort an action requires, who has access, which activities remain visible and what uses are possible.

3.7. FROM ARCHITECTURAL EPISTEMES TO INDIVIDUALIZATION

As established, the six epistemes are six complementary analytical orientations. Each makes a distinct dimension of architectural evidence visible but no single episteme identifies a mechanism on its own. They emerge when findings from several epistemes converge around the same architectural operation. Each mechanism then supports a provisional claim about an architecturally grounded possibility for its residents and the limitations

through which that possibility remains conditional. Read together, the six epistemes show how architecture may support different relations of occupation, movement, privacy, encounter, exposure, appropriation and overall change over time. Individualization is therefore approached not as property of form, but as a relational potential produced through the interaction of architectural organization, embodied experience, temporal continuity, mediation, atmosphere and everyday practice. Architecture becomes significant not simply through what it is, but through what it does and what it makes possible.

4. ANALYSIS: MORIYAMA HOUSE

Moriyama House is widely recognized through its image of fragmented composition. If the proposed apparatus merely redescribes that form, it adds little; its task is therefore to show how this fragmentation shapes everyday movement, exposure and withdrawal. To examine these relations the analysis draws on published plans, photographs and project descriptions as its primary architectural evidence [21], [22]. Documented accounts of the owner's and tenants' spatial allocations, including the film Moriyama-San, contextualize the patterns of use [21], [22], [23]; however, they are not treated as empirical validation.

4.1. ARCHITECTURAL ORGANIZATION

Moriyama House was designed by the Office of Ryue Nishizawa in Ohta-ku, Tokyo, between 2002 and 2005. On a plot 290 m2 in size, ten freestanding steel volumes of different surfaces and heights accommodate the owner's house, one unit on four floors, and five separate rental units [21], [22].



Figure 2. Moriyama House, interior/exterior field between freestanding volumes. Photo: Shinkenchiku-sha, reproduced in Arquitectura Viva [22]

Some volumes contain compact apartments, while others accommodate a single domestic function. Although the volumes themselves do not touch, gardens, paths and small exterior working or sitting areas connect the spaces between them, providing each resident with an outdoor space of their own. The project is therefore neither a conventional house nor a

conventional apartment: continuous enclosure gives way to a field of relations among detached volumes. This arrangement creates "a new kind of semi-communal lifestyle" [21] that can evolve over time. Movement between rooms is not standard either, because it requires crossing the outdoor space, which can compromise privacy. Yet, privacy does not depend on distance alone: the placement of openings avoids direct window-to-window confrontation even where buildings stand close together [21], [22].

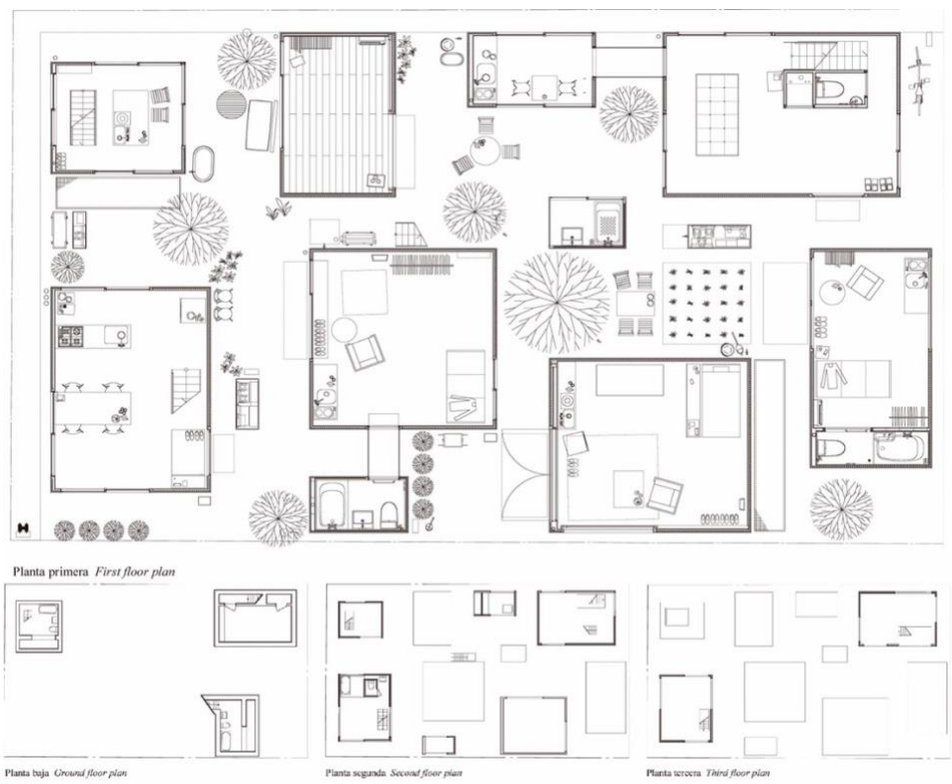


Figure 3. Moriyama House, floor plans: Office of Ryue Nishizawa, reproduced in Arquitectura Viva [22]

4.2. READING THROUGH THE SIX EPISTEMES

4.2.1. Space: from object to distributed fields

The plan disperses functions and residential units across ten freestanding volumes rather than enclosing them into one whole. There is no internal corridor that unifies the entire complex and no single shared room that represents the collective community. Connection, that still exists here, is produced in the way volumes, paths, gardens and views are finally arranged. Space therefore operates on two levels: each volume, establishes a relatively autonomous domain, whereas the plot establishes a common relational field.

The ground-floor plan shows differently sized volumes, or units as the architect calls them, positioned across the whole plot, with open interstices instead of one dominant center. Adjacency is what primarily connects living, bathing, working and circulation. The same composition can support owner's dispersed dwelling and several compact tenancies. Yet this capacity is not infinite. For example, functions placed in separate units depend heavily on exterior movement, while territorial clarity may vary with occupancy and ownership.

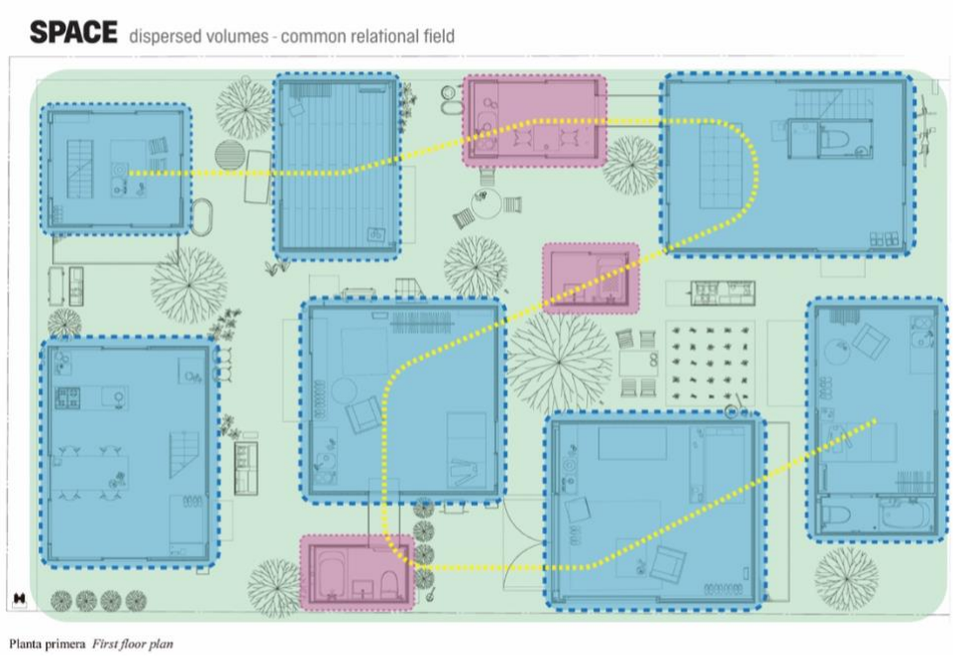


Figure 4. Space - analytical overlay by author, based on the published and accessible plan [22]

4.2.2. Body: domestic movement through exterior space

Movement in Moriyama is not a neutral transition between functions - for example, from room to a bathroom - within the inside of a protected corridor, as it would be elsewhere, given that several routes between rooms cross gardens and passages.

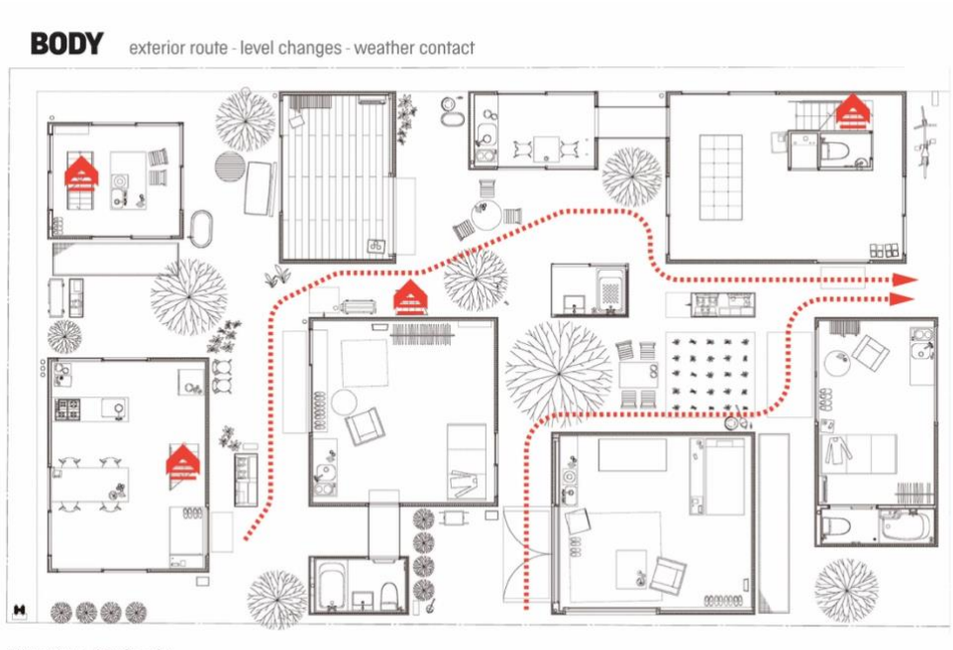


Figure 5. Body - analytical overlay by author, based on the published and accessible plan [22]

The body repeatedly exits a volume, crosses the ground, moves back inside and repeats this cycle over and over again. In this way, the body is bound to encounter diverse changes: of enclosure, ground, light, air and weather. Short walks become part of routine. Approaching another room is dissimilar to approaching another room elsewhere - here, it carries more meaning - because it also entails the approaching the domain of others. Large openings and small distances create visual awareness across the plot, while stairs and compact multi-level volumes intensify vertical movement and different views.

The arrangement like this produces a choreography of the body, while also revealing its exclusion. For one, exterior circulation and regular level changes may be a bit difficult for inhabitants with reduced mobility. Second, weather is not merely viewed but physically encountered. Third, thin envelopes and large openings may intensify thermal and acoustic exposure. The Body therefore identifies both an expanded sensory field as well as the absence of universally protected, accessible route connecting all domestic functions.

4.2.3. Time: change through reallocation

Moriyama House is often described as flexible, but its primary temporal operation is not a movable or transformable structure. The volumes themselves are fixed. Their openness lies in the possibility of changing their allocation and combination. Published accounts describe the owner's use different rooms at different times and envisage the future incorporation of rental units into his dwelling [21], [22]. These accounts contextualize possible patterns of use, while the architectural capacity itself is inferred from the relative autonomy and possible recombination of the volumes.

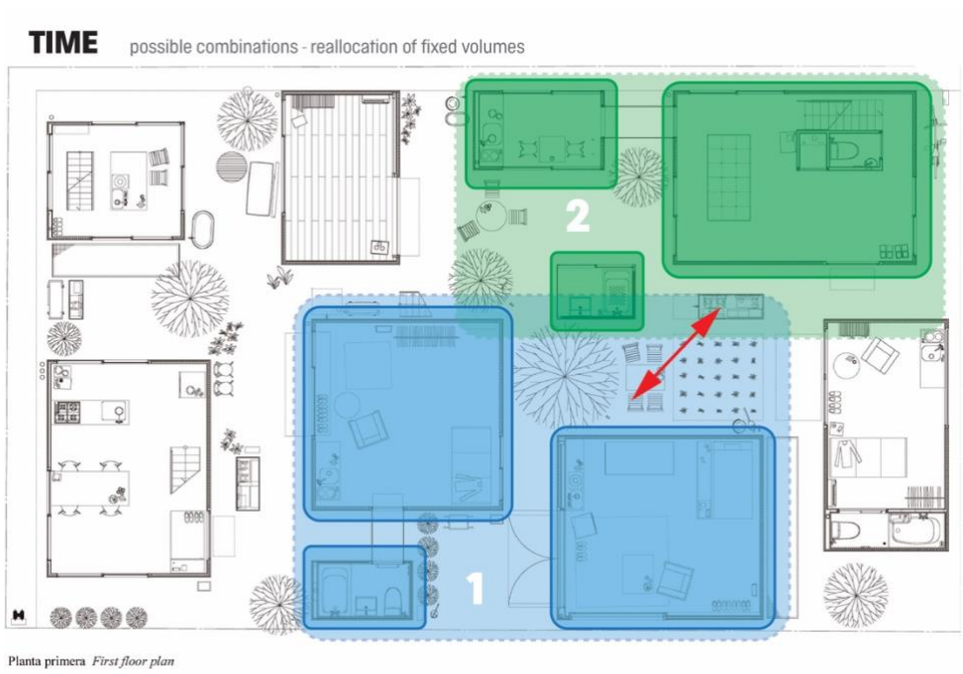


Figure 6. Time - analytical overlay by author, based on the published and accessible plan [22]

Time is therefore embedded in the redundancy and relative autonomy of volumes. Layout and configuration can accommodate different patterns of occupancy without requiring the whole to be rebuilt. Nevertheless, reallocation depends on tenure, availability and the

practical, functional duplication of kitchens or bathrooms. The possibility of reallocating volumes therefore depends on ownership and access to resources, which is not equally available to all residents.

4.2.4. Threshold: multiplied mediation without a single front door

The project multiplies threshold. Each volume has its own entrance. Garden paths, gaps, windows, small paved areas and vegetation mediate between interiors. The plot edge remains visually and spatially connected to the surrounding neighborhood. The dwelling, therefore, cannot be reduced to an inside, meaning, a single inside that begins at one front door. Instead, it unfolds through a sequence of partial entries and exits.

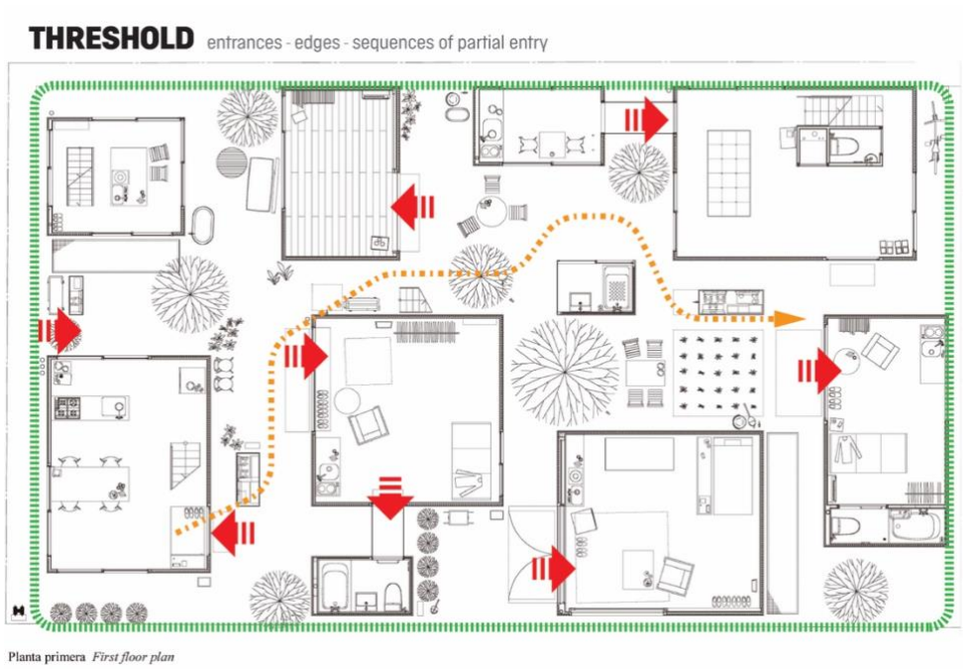


Figure 7. Threshold - analytical overlay by author, based on the published and accessible plan [22]

These thresholds offer choices of approach, avoidance, observation and encounter. They also produce ambiguity. Because shared and personal territories overlap in the interstitial field, privacy is continuously negotiated rather than completely guaranteed. Large glazing and close proximity can very well expose domestic acts. And while the arrangement puts a great effort in avoiding direct window confrontations, it is unable to completely eliminate unequal control between owner and tenant or between a person crossing the garden and person being visible inside.

4.2.5. Atmosphere: environmental variation as part of dwelling

White steel envelope, thin construction, large glazed window openings, narrow passages and gardens, varying heights of the volumes and the repeated transition between interior and exterior create a range of situations and scenes: a long shadow on a façade, sunlight glittering in a tree canopy, the flicker of leaves on billowing curtains, an exposed roof terrace and a narrow passage where footsteps echo.

These scenes are not fixed images of architecture. Their qualities depend on the time of day, season, weather, condition of the vegetation, openness of doors and windows and presence of other residents. Air, humidity, light, temperature and sound do not stop at the boundaries of individual units. Neither do views, which are layered through glass, planting and gaps, producing alternation of intimacy, openness, exposure, brightness and shadow.



Figure 8. Atmosphere - analytical overlay by author, based on the published and accessible plan [22]

This creates atmospheric plurality rather than one controlled domestic climate. Different volumes, orientations and heights produce different conditions that can support seasonal or situational choice but they can also reduce local control over acoustic, visual or thermal exposure. The apparatus therefore reads atmosphere as a calibrated range with tensions, not as inherently positive aesthetic effect.

4.2.6. Act: appropriation with a deliberately incomplete domestic script

The layout and organization do not assign all domestic life to one prescribed sequence. The absence of a conventional common room shifts collective life to a small exterior and various threshold situations.

Sleeping, working, dining, bathing, reading, gardening, listening to music and watching films may take place in and on different units, so the home is enacted anew each day through the ways in which the resident connects the separate units and decides where particular activities will take place.

Leaving and entering, understood here as acts, are therefore, not empty intervals between "real" or "right" rooms. They are actions through which the resident establishes the extent of their home each single day. The film, Moriyama-San [23], directly demonstrates this: how the act of movement continually reproduces the house as a shared field.



Figure 9. Act - analytical overlay by author, based on the published and accessible plan [22]

Yet openness to appropriation is uneven. Small single-purpose volumes, designed and conceived in this way, can be less adaptable than neutral rooms and exterior commonality may depend on climate and social tolerance. The owner has a different capacity to reallocate space than tenants. The Act therefore, prevents "freedom" from being read as a formal property. Instead, it asks which practices are supported, by whom and under what spatial and institutional conditions.

5. RESULTS

The study yields two connected results:

1) an analytical apparatus derived from the theoretical synthesis and

2) four architectural mechanisms identified through its application to Moriyama House.

The following sections present the theoretical synthesis and its analytical translation; they summarize the case-study findings, and relate the mechanisms to architecturally grounded possibilities (for residents) and limitations.

5.1. THEORETICAL SYNTHESIS

The synthesis of phenomenology, performativity and affect theory produces the following six architectural epistemes: Space, Body, Time, Threshold, Atmosphere and Act.

They are complementary analytical orientations rather than architectural categories, design principles or predicted outcomes.

Table 1 summarizes the main contribution of each theoretical register through selected authors and key concepts.

Table 1. Theoretical foundations of architectural epistemes

Theoretical register	Selected authors	Key concepts	Primary contributions to the apparatus	Epistemes informed
Phenomenology and its architectural translation	Heidegger; Merleau-Ponty; Norberg-Schulz, Pallasmaa	dwelling as being, gathering, place and orientation; lived body; multisensory perception; boundary	Understands dwelling as embodied, situated and meaningful rather than as occupation of a neutral container	Space, Body, Threshold, Atmosphere
Performativity and process	Lefebvre; Bergson; Massey, de Certeau; Tschumi; Perez-Gomez	production of space; duration; event; relationality; everyday practice, repetition; appropriation	Understands dwelling as an ongoing process shaped by use, social relations and change over time	Time, Act, Space, Threshold
Affect and atmosphere	Deleuze and Guattari; Massumi; Bohme; Zumthor	capacity to affect and be affected; intensity; attunement; pre-conscious; material and sensory orchestration;	Understands dwelling as a body-environment relation that exceeds representation and conscious interpretation	Atmosphere, Body, Time, Threshold, Act

Table 2 shows how concepts from the registers converge to define the analytical focus of each episteme.

Table 2. Derivation and analytical focus of the six architectural epistemes

Episteme	Phenomenological register	Performative and process register	Affect and atmosphere register	Conceptual convergence and resulting analytical orientation
Space	place, orientation, gathering	production of space, relationality	spatial field, distributed intensity	Relational organization of personal, shared and environmental domains rather than a neutral container.
Body	lived body, situated and multisensory perception	movement, repetition, bodily enactment	capacity to affect and be affected	Situated capacity to access, move, perceive, act and be exposed within architecture.
Time	continuity of dwelling, lived temporality	duration, repetition, event, transformation	modulation through encounter, seasons and life change	Relation between architectural persistence and changing routines, occupation and households.
Threshold	boundary, in-between, transition	passage, negotiation, repeated crossing	modulation of proximity, exposure and intensity	Spatial mediation that grades privacy, belonging, withdrawal, encounter and environmental exposure.
Atmosphere	multisensory experience, feeling character of place	alteration through occupation, event and rhythm	tuned space, intensity, sensory orchestration	Variable environmental field relating to bodies, material and conditions.
Act	embodied action, inhabitation as being	everyday practice, event, appropriation, performance	capacity emerging through encounters	Practices architecture invites, supports, distributes, makes visible, negotiates or constrains.

The three theoretical registers do not contribute equally to every episteme. Space draws most strongly on phenomenological and relational accounts, Act on performative accounts and Atmosphere on affect theory; nevertheless, each incorporates concepts from at least one other register. The resulting apparatus retains distinct questions while allowing the same architectural feature to be examined from vastly different perspectives. This overlap provides the basis for bringing findings into relation without treating the six readings as independent results.

5.2. ANALYTICAL TRANSLATION

The transition from theory to architectural analysis is operationalized in Table 3. Each episteme is defined through a fundamental question, an architectural focus and indicative evidence. The indicators are not a checklist whose presence proves individualization. They direct attention to evidence from which architectural operations may be inferred. The result is apparatus that specifies what to ask, where to look and what can be interpreted from the available material.

Table 3. Operational definition of the six architectural epistemes

Episteme	Fundamental question	Architectural focus	Indicative evidence
Space	How does architecture organize the relations through which dwelling occurs?	distribution and relation among personal, shared and environmental domains	adjacency, distance, hierarchy, orientation, continuity, enclosure, circulation, fields of view
Body	How does architecture position, move, support and expose different bodies?	embodied access, movement, perception and comfort	route, level change, reach, scale, proportion, tactility, light, acoustic and thermal conditions
Time	How can dwelling persist while occupations, routines and household structures change?	continuity, repetition, reversibility and transformation	redundant or equivalent spaces, non-fixed allocation, seasonal routes, adaptability, incompleteness, capacity for combination
Threshold	How are relations of privacy, exposure, proximity, withdrawal and belonging mediated?	spatial depth and negotiation between domains	multiple entrances, sequences, buffers, galleries, garden edges, openings, adjustable boundaries
Atmosphere	How does architecture modulate the affective relations between body and environment?	environmental and sensory tuning	daylight, air, sound, temperature, material, vegetation, transparency, shadow, degree of enclosure
Act	What practices does architecture invite, support, distribute, negotiate or constrain?	enactment and appropriation of dwelling	multiple use, movable elements, work surfaces, shared routes, occupation of residual space, maintenance and care

5.3. FINDINGS FROM THE ANALYSIS OF MORIYAMA HOUSE

The six readings reveal that Moriyama operates on two connected levels: the detached volumes establish relatively autonomous domains, while the plot forms a common

relational field. Functions and residential units are distributed across ten freestanding volumes. Gardens, paths, gaps and views connect these parts without a continuous internal corridor or a single shared room. For the dispersed domestic functions, movement between rooms entails crossing exterior space, making changes in enclosure, ground surface, light, air and weather part of domestic routines.

Temporal openness lies primarily in the possible reallocation and recombination of fixed volumes [21], [22]. These accounts contextualize possible patterns of use, but do not establish that all residents have equivalent opportunities for change. Reallocation depends on ownership, availability and access to resources.

Multiple entrances, garden paths, windows and vegetation create a sequence of partial entries and exits. These conditions may support approach, avoidance and encounter, while also making territorial boundaries and privacy less definite. Different orientations, openings and outdoor conditions produce environmental variation, but this variation is accompanied by exposure to weather and by potentially limited control over visual, acoustic and thermal conditions. The analysis therefore identifies possibilities of appropriation and differentiated use together with the spatial and institutional conditions that constrain them.

5.4. FOUR ARCHITECTURAL MECHANISMS

The six readings do not yield six independent mechanisms. This is a crucial methodological result: an architectural episteme is not an architectural mechanism and a mechanism does not belong solely to one episteme.

In light of this, the cross-episteme synthesis applied to Moriyama identifies four interacting architectural mechanisms: dispersing volumes and functions, externalizing circulation and part of dwelling, overlapping territories and distributing distances and views. Table 4 traces the findings.

Table 4. Cross-episteme synthesis of the findings

Mechanisms	Epistemes that contribute	Findings that intersect
Disperses volumes and functions	Space, Time, Act, Threshold	Autonomous parts replace a single enclosed whole; Functions and units can be combined and allocated in different ways; Each volume has its own entrance; The house does not prescribe a single permanent sequence of use.
Externalizes circulation and part of dwelling	Body, Threshold, Atmosphere, Act	Movement between functions and volumes take place through gardens and passages; Repeating entrances and exits are incorporated into domestic routines; The body is exposed to weather, air, light, earth; Work, leisure, encounter extend beyond the enclosure of the building.
Overlaps territories	Space, Body, Threshold, Act	Personal and shared domains coexist; In-between space enables encounter, observation, avoidance and withdrawal; Private and the shared are not completely separated.
Distributes distances and views	Space, Body, Threshold, Atmosphere	The position of volumes, windows, openings and vegetation regulate proximity, daylight and exposure; Direct window-to-window confrontation is avoided without eliminating the presence of others.

The first mechanism distributes functions among separate volumes across the site. This does not refer simply to the fragmented appearance of the house. Since the volumes form distinct units, they can be assigned to different users and used in different combinations

over time. The second mechanism turns the spaces between the volumes into routes and extensions of dwelling, which become inherent part of domestic infrastructure. Moving between rooms therefore requires going outside and by doing so it makes weather, light, vegetation and the soil part of everyday domestic experience. The third concerns how these same outdoor spaces mediate social relations between residents. They are neither entirely private gardens nor a conventional shared courtyard. Given that the placement of distances and visual relations between the separate volumes regulates vicinity and lines of sight, the fourth mechanism shows that dispersion is carefully calibrated through proximity and visual orientation rather than random scattering.

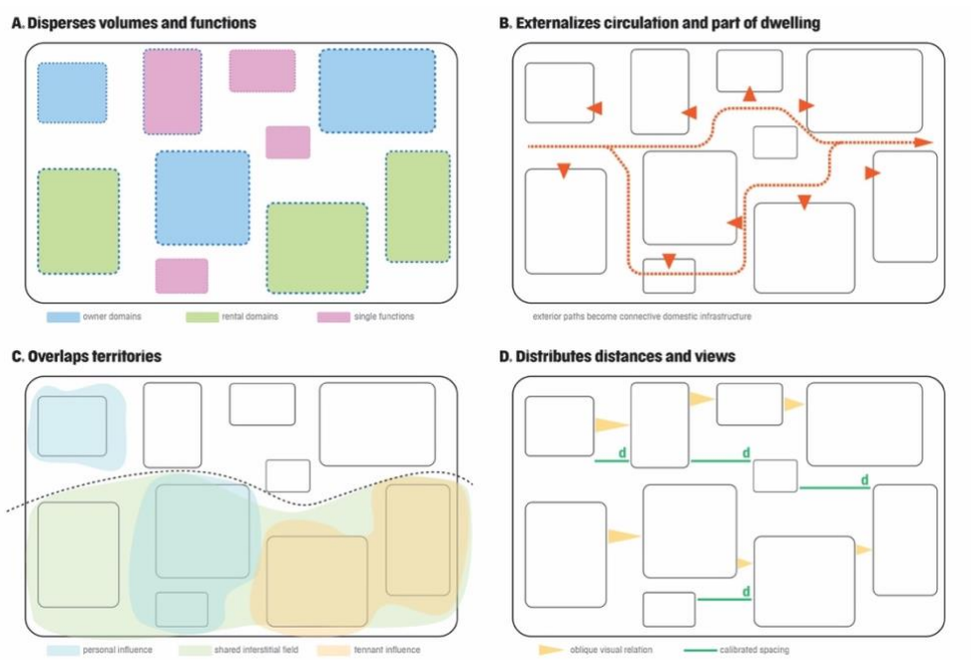


Figure 10. Analytical diagrams of the four mechanisms identified in Moriyama House: dispersion of volumes and functions; externalization of circulation and part of the dwelling; overlapping territories; distribution of distances and views. Diagrams by author. They are schematic and not in scale.

As seen in the Figures 4-10, the derivation of architectural mechanisms proceeds in two stages. The first stage involves the analytical decomposition of the project through the six epistemes (shown schematically in Figures 4-9), while the second recomposes the resulting findings through an abductive cross-episteme synthesis (shown schematically in Figure 10). The six epistemes therefore function as distinct ways of reading, while the mechanisms emerge as synthetic answers to the question: which architectural operations can explain findings identified through several architectural epistemes?

The six episteme-based readings were not treated as six independent results. Instead, after each reading, the architectural evidence identified under one episteme was compared with the evidence made salient by the others. Observations were then clustered according to the underlying spatial operation they described, rather than according to the architectural episteme from which they emerged. Architectural mechanism, as a cluster, was retained only when it: 1) could be traced to plans, sections, photographs or project descriptions; 2) recurred across more than one episteme; 3) described what the architectural organization

does; and 4) could not be reduced to another operation without losing its explanatory precision. This abductive cross-episteme synthesis produced four architectural mechanisms for House Moriyama. Each mechanism therefore links an observable architectural operation to an architecturally grounded possibility for its residents and to the limitation or tension through which that possibility remains conditional.

These mechanisms reinforce one another. Dispersion makes exterior circulation needed. Exterior circulation activates interstitial territories. Overlapping territories require careful distribution of distance and view. Controlled views allow close volumes to remain partly autonomous. Individualized potential lies in the interaction of mechanism through which autonomy and relation, stability and reallocation, enclosure and environmental exposure remain simultaneously available.

5.5. CAPACITIES AND LIMITATIONS

Table 5 links each architectural mechanism to its supportive evidence, the possibilities it may offer residents and limitations or tensions that condition those possibilities.

Table 5. Architectural mechanisms, architecturally grounded possibilities and limitations in Moriyama House

Architectural mechanism	Architectural evidence and operation	Architecturally grounded possibilities for residents	Architectural limitation or tension
Disperses volumes and functions	Ten detached volumes distribute complete units and individual domestic functions across the plot, replacing enclosure with a network	May support relative autonomy, different combinations of occupation as well as differentiated personal and shared domains	Fragmentation increases dependence on exterior movement and may produce territorial ambiguity
Externalizes circulation and part of dwelling	Gardens, paths and gaps connect rooms, while movement, work, sitting and encounter extend outside the envelope	May make movement, environmental change and optional encounter part of domestic life	Climate, accessibility, safety and privacy can limit who can use the distributed field comfortably
Overlaps territories	Multiple entrances, garden edges, windows and small interstitial, in-between areas place private, shared and neighborhood-facing domains in proximity	May allow degrees of withdrawal, awareness, encounter and belonging to be negotiated without a single common room	Control is unequal between owner and tenants while visual and acoustic exposure may be difficult to regulate
Distributes distances and views	Volumes, openings and vegetation are positioned to modulate proximity and avoid direct window-to-window confrontation	May enable selective visual connection, daylight, environmental awareness and partial privacy	Distances and openings are largely fixed, meaning transparency may expose activities and cannot guarantee privacy

The findings also sharpen the definition of individualization. Moriyama House does not qualify because every inhabitant can personalize a unit or because its form is unique. Its architectural potential lies in the possibility that changing phases of one life can establish different combinations of territory, movement, exposure, encounter and use within overall a firm and stable structure. And while the analysis identifies this possibility it does not claim nor demonstrate that all occupants experience it equally or positively.

6. DISCUSSION

The case shows what the apparatus adds to a conventional formal account. "Ten scattered white boxes" accurately describes the composition but it does not thoroughly explain what this arrangement does since it collapses several operations into one single image. The six epistemes, on the other hand, distinguish at least four operations: it reorganizes autonomy, displaces circulation, creates a field of territorial negotiation and calibrates views and proximity. The main analytical contribution of the apparatus is therefore to move from describing form to explaining its operations.

The procedure also reveals limits that celebratory accounts of openness may overlook. The same exterior routes that expand environmental experience can impede accessibility and protection from weather. The same openings that produce daylight and visual connection can increase exposure, both visual and thermal. The same field without a clear hierarchy that enables optional encounter can make responsibility for common space less obvious and straightforward. The same possibility of changing the allocation of volumes is tied to ownership, which means that the owner may take rented units back into personal use, when tenants do not have an equal option. The potential for individualization is thus relational and uneven: it depends on who controls particular spaces and resources.

The findings suggest that the theoretical framework must relate the architectural conditions of embodied and atmospheric experience to the social organization of everyday practice. The unequal control of owner and tenants can be read through Lefebvre's concept of the social production of space: property relations help constitute possibilities of use and reallocation, rather than merely constraining an otherwise autonomous architectural object [5]. Individualization therefore depends on how spatial organization, everyday practices and rights of control interact.

The use of three theoretical traditions also carries a risk. Phenomenology, performativity and affect theory rest on different epistemological assumptions and cannot simply be merged into one coherent theory. The apparatus therefore maintains three distinctions: 1) experience is not equated with practice, 2) practice is not equated with affect, 3) affect is not reduced to emotion. The six epistemes draw from these theories without merging them. For example, Body addresses both lived perception and the body's capacity to act and be affected. Atmosphere examines how material conditions are organized without claiming that they produce a predictable feeling. Act examines how residents use and appropriate space without assuming that they can act independently, free from spatial or institutional constraint. The apparatus is therefore theoretically plural rather than unified.

The analysis also clarifies what architectural elements can and cannot demonstrate. Rooms, windows and routes, they do not in themselves demonstrate individualization nor can they "measure" it. They become relevant evidence only when interpreted in relation to other elements and to an explicit analytical question: what do they allow residents to do or regulate, and what constraints do they introduce? Each mechanism is therefore described through both its potential and its restraint.

Several limitations remain. First, the analysis of a single case can demonstrate how the procedure works and makes each analytical step traceable, but one case cannot establish whether the apparatus can produce meaningful and comparable readings across different housing types and cultural contexts. The paper therefore does not claim that the apparatus has already been comparatively validated. Second, drawings document designed layouts: dimensions, adjacencies, entrances, opening, levels, circulation use and indicated uses.

Published photographs show selected views of materials, light, vegetation, transparency, furnishing and signs of use at particular moments. The apparatus relates these features and interprets operations they may support, but neither can establish acoustic performance in use, thermal comfort, conflicts, habits or the meanings residents attach to spaces and thresholds. Third, Moriyama House is an atypical case: emphasized spatial separation makes the mechanisms unusually visible. More conventional apartment plans may require finer evidence to distinguish them. Fourth, the selection of concepts remains interpretative. Another researcher could derive a completely different set of epistemes and identify different architectural mechanisms. This possibility however, does not make the present findings arbitrary: each episteme is traced to selected theoretical concepts and each mechanism to specific architectural evidence.

That said, even before comparative validation, the apparatus provides a clear and traceable way to move beyond broad formal labels and explain how architectural relations may enable or constrain individualization.

7. CONCLUSION

This paper set out to make architecture's potential for individualization analytically clear. The resulting apparatus provides a traceable sequence - from theoretical concepts, through six architectural epistemes and architectural evidence, to the identification of mechanisms.

The Moriyama House analysis shows that an apparently simple formal condition - dispersion - operates through several distinct but related mechanisms. The apparatus identifies the possibilities and constraints created by these mechanisms. However, it does not establish how residents actually use or experience them. Its contribution is therefore not a fixed classification, a prediction or a design rule, but an analytical procedure for explaining how architectural relations may support or restrict individualization.

Read together, these four mechanisms - dispersing volumes and functions, externalizing circulation and part of dwelling, overlapping territories and distributing distances and views - reveal the dual role of exterior space: gardens and passages connect separate parts of one household's dwelling while bringing distinct households into relation. A route through one's own home can therefore also become a route past someone else's. The space between the houses forms part of the organization of the home, suggesting that different ways of dwelling can coexist within a shared field without a single common center or uniform participation. That said, this potential is conditional. Exterior movement depends on weather, porous territories make privacy dependent on negotiation and unequal control gives the owner and tenants different possibilities for change. Moriyama thus identifies in-between space as an integral part of dwelling.

Future research should proceed along two connected paths. First, comparative architectural analysis should apply the same epistemes to contrasting cases and examine whether the mechanisms recur, combine or disappear under different typological, climatic and social conditions. Recurring combinations then may be drafted as spatial logics. Second, empirical research with residents should establish which relational capacities are available and used, by whom, under what constraints, with what consequences. Strategies of individualization can be formulated only by critically bringing these spatial logics together with empirically supported relational capacities.

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