

An abstract graphic design featuring two overlapping red rectangles. The top rectangle is horizontal and the bottom one is vertical, creating a cross-like shape. The title 'Den Lilla Världen' is printed in white serif font across the top rectangle.

Den Lilla Världen

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DEN LILLA VÄRLDEN

(The Little World)

Any happening that occurs in the small retreat of our inner reality will inevitably come into conflict with the exterior reality. Such elements as corners, lights, objects, photographs and colour combinations for example derive from our collected and stored memories pertained from physical and non physical experiences. What ever these experiences may be they eventually transform themselves into images: 'the property of a naïve consciousness'¹. The image of the memory can be discovered in our inhabited rooms. More over, these images I believe manifest in one's actions and preferences in deciding what one surrounds him/herself with. We seek a certain comfort and tickling sensations out of spaces that are loaded with various associations.

Internalising the decoration of a space has something of a rather child-like quality. The child ambles, digs, moves, hides or glares at things with new curiosity and bewilderment treasuring the images together with its mystery.

When we return to the adult world of analysis and rational consciousness this intuitive and naïve memory-archive becomes scattered and fragmented. It feels as though one commenced a film in the middle of the plot. But then, is it important finally to link the associative memories concretely with the object from one's interior? Can such a story be also detected or interpreted from another person without direct explanation? Since the memory is malleable the image that is projected into the room can open incredible passages to stories about the inhabitant or the visitor of this space. Through this investigation we allow fantasy to mingle with reality of commonly known objects and materials, breathing a new life into them. In the end the interior we observe becomes more than what it basically and

1. Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space* (Beacon Press 1994), pg. xix

and pragmatically represents. It becomes a landscape of our feelings.

I would like to tell you beforehand that I absolutely have no intentions to clarify the process of understanding the memory of a space and what they mean to us in poetical terms. That task has already been fulfilled by Bachelard. I will take you by the hand and linger you through corridors and open doors that reveal stage-like rooms created by other observant people. We shall observe the spectacles one by one, leave the room, stroll through other corridors, peak through curtains and finally leave to let you retreat to your own little world again.

– CORRIDOR –

And so we enter. I do not mean to sound dismissive, but at this stage there seems to be no use in pondering too much on the circumstances of our arrival in this house. I consider an introduction is an invitation so I take for granted that you wiped your shoes on the doormat and agreed to walk around for a little while.

The air is a bit chilly but it's exactly that kind of cold that demands a brief moment of adjustment to finally merge with your body temperature. The floor is tiled with white/gray marble stones that stretch out from the corridor into a long, narrow hallway surrounded by numerous doors on either side. The walls are tall and painted in off-white releasing a damp, moist feeling when you press the palm of your hand onto the wall. The intense light-cadmium red ceiling that hovers over our heads is impossible to ignore though, determine and directing the passage we will follow. Next to every door there is a tall lamp shining a dimly, yellowish light. You hang your coat on one of the empty dark-wooden coat hangers on your left. You stand still

for a moment seemingly in search for details or creating a visual overview of the corridor. What caught your attention you keep to yourself and decide not to formulate; how can we be certain if we are seeing the same image of the space anyway? We walk.

– #1 –

PROLOGUE

As we go down the hallway we stop after passing a set of doors. On the right we face door No. 1. Here I would kindly ask you to take off your shoes; this is a Swedish apartment we are about to enter, therefore it is considered hospitable to leave your shoes outside and continue on your socks.

We enter the apartment of Helena Ekdahl, the grandmother of Fanny and Alexander in the eponymous film of Ingmar Bergman. We're witnessing the Prologue scene, the moment before the family Ekdahl gathers for Christmas dinner.

We find Alexander walking through the room calling out names: 'Fanny! Mother!...Siri! Maj!...Granny!'. There is no reply. We're entering a room-en-suite in which Alexander abruptly hides under a table, leaning his head against the seat of the chair 'and clasps his hands as though he were praying'².

Under the table we perceive an overwhelming, stage-like view. The rooms are theatrical, over-decorated in Victorian style filled with colourful schemes such as olive-green and Bordeaux velvet curtains and furniture, dark brown carpets, palm plants, a white half-naked female statue and a crystal chandelier hanging from the ceiling. There is hardly a single free space to be found since every corner, every bit of floor or wall is ornamented by some object or decoration. The room suggests a sense of seduction and romance as one's eyes

2. Törnqvist, Egil. *'Between Stage and Screen Ingmar Bergman Directs'*, Amsterdam University Press (April 19, 2007), pg. 180

caress the texture of the velvet curtains and furniture, the fine crocheted details in the tablecloths and the smooth 'skin' of the female statue. On the other hand, the rooms also posit pompousness, authority and suggest caution as we lack an overview of corners and shadows. Before you know, a dark shadow will appear out of little cracks and corners of this stage. The opening of the spectacle starts with a bright light on top of the female statue, activating her as the actress of the performance. The light elicits her pose to be sunbathing in the beams of the sunlight. The strong contours of her shadow, lying on top of a landscape painting, are bold and flat evoking a silent liveliness. This moment briefly reminds me of a photograph from Jeff Wall titled 'The Destroyed Room'. Both statues are quiet, serene but with enormous, somehow, threatening power: she will dictate the intimate room.

The crystal chandelier gently rocks from left to right. The glistening of singular crystals provide a prove of motion through some unknown factor. It may be wind, but the subtlety of its movement is gracious and striking.

An unknown presence has found a passage into the enclosed space of the Ekdahl apartment. Alexander fixates his gaze to the supernatural situation of the female statue lifting her hand towards her chest. The space deploys and appears to move making 'us hover between awareness of being and loss of being...the entire reality becomes spectral'³. The mystical spectacle follows its own law and we as viewers accept its reality in silence. Who or what directs this happening would be inappropriate to ask. As in theatre, one needs to accept it as a reality in order to understand its essence and live in it; to watch it with the excitement of a child. This perused, thorough observation is demanded, not necessarily only because of the detailed décor but because of its changeability that is silent and playful. The viewer (and so we in this situation still under the table)

3. Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space* (Beacon Press 1994), pg. 58

observes through the ‘eyes of the child’. In this I do not mean to say merely through the child’s mind and fantasy. I believe Bergman introduces a susceptible perception of a space; we accept the space without predetermined definition. Such new and unique experiences evoke a feeling of wholeness, this acceptance of the imagination that is an experience that cannot be (and rather shouldn’t be) fully analyzed and made comprehensible .

“I never saw this strange dwelling again. Indeed, as I see it now, the way it appeared to my child’s eye, it is not a building, but is quite dissolved and distributed inside me: here one room, there another, and here a bit of corridor which, however, does not connect the two rooms, but is conserved in me in fragmentary form. Thus the whole thing is scattered about inside me, the rooms, the stairs that descended with such ceremonious slowness, others, narrow cages that mounted in a spiral movement, in the darkness of which we advanced like the blood in our veins.”⁴

–Rainer Maria Rilke

Sitting under the table evokes a feeling of comfort and security, not necessarily only for life-threatening situations, but also as an image that feels oddly familiar. I’m not sure if you share such a similar memory but I remember that when I was a small child I used to sit under the tea table of my grandparents that was situated in the living room. The table was slight and thin with four outward, curving legs that each were connected by a branch that would join in the middle of the table. Here I would sit on the floor leaning my arms on these branches imaging it as my throne. From this position I could view the sitting area and observe my family converse.

3. Bachelard, Gaston. *‘The Poetics of Space’* (Beacon Press 1994), pg. 58

4. Rilke, Rainer Maria. *‘Notebook of Malte Laurids Brigge’* (Penguin Classics 2009), pg. 33

The prologue will soon come to its end. Since there is a short interval between the acts I am unsure what will happen to the scene and our position when the room will fade out and disappear. In this case let us carefully move out from under the table so not to bump your head (we lack some practice in flexibility for such circumstances). Also, do not forget to put on your shoes again before we leave. Before you know they might disappear together with the scene.

–HALLWAY–
a short interlude

“Have not you yourselves sensed a difference in the light that suffuses such a room, a rare tranquility not found in ordinary light? Have you never felt a sort of fear in the face of the ageless, a fear that in that room you might lose all consciousness of the passage of time, that untold years might pass and upon emerging you should find you had grown old and gray?”⁵

– Junichiro Tanizaki

5. Tanizaki, Junichiro. *In Praise of Shadows*, (Vintage Classics 2004), pg. 35

– #2 –

‘I THREW MY ARMS ABOUT THOSE
SHOULDERS’

As we stepped out into the hallway we face door No. 2. The door does not create a single sound or squeak when opened, no sign of friction of overuse or age. Dead silence.

We’ve entered now an ‘idea’ of a room described in Joseph Brodsky’s poem “I threw my arms about those shoulders”⁶. I say ‘idea’ since it can only be an interpretation of a space created with your specific imagination.

The poem is a recollection of an event that took place; a goodbye between two people that have shared a life together. Even though the ‘I’ does not necessarily have to indicate directly to the writer and narrator of a text let us treat the ‘I’ person as Brodsky for the sake of simplicity to connect a person to a room. The eyes of the reader are directed like a spectator of a film; one could imagine the positions of the camera. I escort you further into the room allowing the poem to guide and furnish the space.

6. Brodsky, Joseph. *I threw my arms about those shoulders*. <<http://allpoetry.com/I-threw-my-arms-about-those-shoulders>>, 23.04.15

*I threw my arms about those shoulders, glancing
At what emerged behind that back,
And saw a chair pushed slightly forward,
Merging now with the lighted wall.
The lamp glared too bright to show
The shabby furniture to some advantage,
And that is why sofa of brown leather
Shone a sort of yellow in a corner.
The table looked bare, the parquet glossy,
The stove quite dark, and in a dusty frame
A landscape did not stir. Only the sideboard
Seemed to me to have some animation.
But a moth flitted round the room,
Causing my arrested glance to shift;
And if at any time a ghost had lived here,
He now was gone, abandoning the house.*

– Joseph Brodsky

Hold on tight. You're here looking at the past, which at the same time is the predicted future of an ending relationship. One can note that the word 'love' has not been used once. The feelings and emotions that are evoked are coded in the interior. The sentence "... glancing, what emerged behind that back" prepares us for an upcoming spectacle, a mysterious, unexpected shadow that emanates from the view. Brodsky describes the state of ordinary house-objects as if they once contained a life, an intimate story, but have lost their significance and vivacity over time. Bachelard explains that "if a house is a living value, it must integrate an element of unreality. All values must remain vulnerable, and those that do not are dead."⁷ I read this 'unreality' as the need for phantasmagorical, poignant entities 'living'

7. Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space* (Beacon Press 1994), pg. 59

in one's house (in literature also sometimes described as pathetic fallacy). A soul is given to the objects that have become dear to us furnishing the space we feel comfortable to retreat to. This "element of unreality" cannot exist when the space is being deserted. It requires a body to dwell in and imagination to activate the surroundings. In the situation of the poem the light and furniture are exposing a life on the verge of death, carrying its last breath for the imagination. The chair, we can conclude, has been previously "pushed slightly forward" indicating its usage in the past. However, the chair fuses with the light of the wall losing its contours and silhouette. I imagine an evenly spread, dim light that cannot be traced from its original direction. Due to this, a shadow cannot be made prominent, no time detected; a frozen object it became.

The light described by Brodsky "glared too bright"⁸ to accentuate any good qualities of the old and worn-out furniture. Maybe this particular furniture, like the "sofa of brown leather" might contain a clue of the intimate life shared between these two people, but alas, not even the light can bring this to light.

Henceforth, does darkness not also reveal the emotional depth of an object, the secret story treasured within them? We can guess that this space once has been the little world created by him and the other person.

Furthermore, a picture of a landscape hung in a "dusty frame" symbolizes this ending relationship. It signifies the loss of perspective, animation and sharing a wide-view. It feels that this landscape hasn't been looked at for a long time now. This landscape hasn't been taking part in their everyday life and has lost its character of nearness⁹. Only the sideboard appears to carry some traces of vivacity. It is an object that contains and saves other useful objects and keepsakes that are likely important to the narrator. However, it only 'seemed'. He is skeptical about its current importance.

8. Side note: the light Brodsky describes more specifically indicated to a rather weak light bulb that is changeable and irregular in its light intensity. It does not flicker drastically but the beam is not consistent.

9. Heidegger, Martin. *'Being and Time'* (State University of New York Press 2007), pg. 95

As you stand there in your embrace letting your eyes rest on various elements in the room from top to bottom, left to right, your glance moves to a moth flitting “round the room”. A moth is often used in literature as a symbol of death and other associations of the underworld. Even though it is the only ‘real’ living being and body amongst the mentioned objects, it still is an animal that does not have a long life expansion.

The moth leads us to the thought of a ghost, a wandering soul without a physical shell. As in the apartment of the family Ekdahl both Alexander and Brodsky elicit the notion of supernatural presence inhabiting their space. The difference between the two evidently is that in the poem this mystical presence remains only an assumption, as “he now was gone, abandoning the house”. The word “if” keeps a little door open; once phantasy and projection of his inner-world were part of the room. Now it is apparent that this home will remain as a memory; the scene is over and we will leave this space as quietly as an apparition.

–INTERLUDE –

As we attempt to sneak out of the room another door becomes apparent. Its presence is neutral. It is just another flat, plain, white painted door. We probably overlooked it when we entered from the hallway. Most probably.

It is closed. Not locked but simply closed. I usually get a strange, tickling sensation when I see a second or third door leading from the room I’m occupying at that very moment. When a door is closed someone closed it; he or she closed, presumably, the door behind himself or herself.

In my opinion, closing the door behind one's self is less of a careless action than leaving the open or slightly ajar. Or so I like to believe.

I grew up part of my life in a house with rooms connected by various doors. My parents closed or blocked some of these doors from one side (never hiding the fact that there is a door!). I understand that it makes my mother feel a little uncomfortable that people can enter from two or three different sides. Also, imagine leaving all these doors slightly ajar? A very generous gesture, but how very exposed! Henceforth, I'm acquainted with the architecture of my parental house by now but still I somehow wonder how a room looks like from the perspective of these unused doors? Were they closed from behind or in front last time they were used?

Excuse me for rambling, I suppose I should open the door now. As I push the handle down with my right hand I feel a sharp click. This one is not blocked, at least.

A sting of white attacks our eyes. They need a second to adjust to the light-intake. White blurs the contours and it hides depth.

Finally we see a small rectangular room. A bedroom it seems. There is a single bed with white bedding on one side. Next to the bed (opposite wall) there is a small, lose bathtub located. Between them, a window covered by some dim-yellow paper or cardboard. On the other side of the room we see a white stool, a small ladder next to a little table-plate attached to the wall carrying a black box. In front of us we see a build-in closet with eleven doors painted in a kind of beige, off-white colour. This is one of the rooms created by Gregor Schneider for 'Totes Haus u r' (Venice 2001), a recreation of his house on the Unterheydener Strasse in Rheydt. The set-up for this room is clinical and dictated and so become we. There is no place to hide and at the same time we feel hidden, secluded, nowhere to be found.

Schneider created a prison-like environment without distractions and exchanges of input and output. It feels at the moment that no outside world exists. We can only dream about it.

Preludes III

(The Wasteland)

*You tossed a blanket from the bed,
You lay upon your back, and waited;
You dozed, and watched the night revealing
The thousand sordid images
Of which your soul was constituted;
They flickered against the ceiling.
And when all the world came back
And the light crept between the shutters
And you heard the sparrows in the gutters,
You had such a vision of the street
As the street hardly understands;
Sitting along the bed's edge, where
You curled the papers from your hair,
Or clasped the yellow soles of feet
In the palms of both soiled hands.¹⁰*

– T.S. Eliot

10. Eliot, T.S. *'The Waste Land and other poems'*
Signet Classic 1998, pg. 13

What a horrid bedroom! It is as if one dangles in some sort of twilight zone. No sign of an exterior world – no view, no landscape (not even in a dusty frame). There is only proof of some in-door reality but nothing to test or weigh its reliability with. A permanent entrapment in Gregor Schneider's little world we have entered. It inspires a staged inner-prison literally taken from the house in Rheydt where he's locked himself in for many years. Somehow it doesn't seem real or say authentic. Or maybe the living conditions in his house seem psychologically unrealistic. The perfectly made-up bed next to this tiny bathtub makes me shiver. Both items ask for seclusion and a place for retreat, for intimacy. One makes and takes time to fulfill this action: both sleeping and bathing. Now these two retreats joined together. It awakes a state of weariness. In both situations one is left in solitude, to take care of one's self, to rest and to clear from the exterior world. But when the 'outside' has been taken away one risks falling into an everlasting state of somnolence. One's inner world receives no input to react upon, at any rate, not in the long run.

The enormous closet seems rather ironic. What can Schneider have possibly been storing in such a small and empty room that needed to be hidden? Let us open some of these cupboard doors.

Won't you look at that! It's a build-in kitchen! Glasses, cups, plates, a sink, a gas-lamp, a water cooker, etcetera. I'm thinking a bottle of wine would be very much appreciated at this instance, but looking at the wine-stained glasses he came to the same conclusion as well before us. The cupboard door underneath reveals a little gate with a red glossy parquetté floor. Thank heavens, there is light at the end of the tunnel. It is narrow but big enough to crawl through. Time to escape and seek for a place of comfort.

LA CHAMBRE ROUGE

The nearer we get to the other room, the warmer it becomes. The red floor of the passage merges with the red parquet of the approaching space. The glossy parquet becomes matt, a tangible texture. As we crawl out we perceive a scene in a living room: 'La Chambre Rouge', a painting by Felix Vallotton from 1898. The overwhelming warmth of the red beseeches for sensitivity and tenderness. Your gaze quite quickly attempts to fixate on the man and woman standing between the door entrance of the living room and a dark, indefinable room. It is difficult to uncover what is happening between them. They are hiding in the shadow of a backroom that we can only guess of what it is. Are they a couple? In that case maybe, is it a bedroom of either one of them? Do they share a secret past that is not meant for the open public? Whose house is it, the man's or the woman's? Let us get a closer look at the view and the lighted interior.

Mind you, we will not literally step closer into the room. We will remain distant observers, like Vallotton himself is often described as, and will not mingle in the happening.

We are observing a silent spectacle like in a theatre play. In a certain way we are finding ourselves in a similar position as in the scene of 'Fanny och Alexander'. We, as the spectator, are placed at a significant distance allowing us to receive an overview of the spectacle; close enough to observe details but not high enough to completely remain at distance from the situation. It is a matter of sitting on the authoritarian seat or that of the servant. When one sits high, one hovers above the situation, not taking part in the scene.

When the angle of perception is viewing downwards it makes everything seem smaller, less heavy possibly and significant. Relating to the position of a king ruling his kingdom. He's important for the well being of his people and land but does not give too much notice to details and peruse signs and symbols.

From below everything becomes overwhelming, so impressive. One looks up, which also means to admire: 'to look up to some one'. Nevertheless, it does not mean one partakes in the situation. Being lower and smaller allows the viewer the possibility to hide. Hiding or shielding behind something was Alexander's position. The table worked literally as a shielding shell in which Alexander could observe the room in all protectiveness. The scene that took place came from a 'higher order', a supernatural, holy medium speaking down to us mortals.

Hence, Vallotton decides to place the viewer at eye level. Where exactly we are situated (meaning, how far away and in what vertical position (standing or sitting)) we can only estimate, guess. Our view reaches over the red chair that is standing closest to us indicating we are probably standing. This position makes it evidently easier to place one's self in the room. This eye-leveled position can be taken as an invitation by Vallotton to enter the scene. But attention! Do not get too close. It is not fully our place to interfere with the scene. In this position we take care to take responsibility of our actions. Because well, we remain intruders in the end. An excellent example of observational displacement and variations in camera angles is in Alain Resnais's film 'Last Year in Marienbad'. Besides the fact that the viewer is continuously being thrown from one perspective of experience to the other, dwelling through one baroque corridor after the other hotel room or French garden, the viewer is an important factor for the film. The camera guides your eyes to find clues to the riddle: what actually happened between the couple last year in

Marienbad? Who is telling the truth? What happened that previous year that still affects the characters? The viewer is taken along through this labyrinth and is left to form their own theories.

In Vallotton's painting we are left in a similar situation. Along the way our glances slide through the interior of made-up scenarios of the scene by means of details and clues we are given for interpretation. In this sanctuary space we observe some small items on the table. When we focus our vision we distinguish an umbrella, handkerchief, gloves and a purse. These belongings most probably belong to the woman standing in the doorway. The objects indicate that she came for a visit. They seem to be accessories brought from outside, used for going outdoors. Therefore, they become props for the scene handing out a clue to what the woman's position in this room might be; she came with the intention to stay for a brief moment. Only the handkerchief could have had an impact to the space they inhabit. It looks crumbled up instead of neatly folded and tidied. Why did she take it out with the rest of the other items? One normally does not carry a handkerchief in one's hand out on the street like a purse or an umbrella. She might have taken it out while she was already inside sitting on the red chair closest to her belongings. It might be an indicator of some turmoil that happened before the depiction of the tableau. This light blue handkerchief stands out on the red table as a fragile, innocent, unarmed object. Its existence is not denied.

As explained in Christoph Becker's essay 'Diskrete Blicke', the interiors and compositions in Vallotton's paintings are theatre stages of human comedies of misunderstandings and confusions, of desires and unfulfilled hopes¹¹. Are we observing a situation that was unprepared, not actually allowed to happen? The tremendous reoccurrence of reds (traditionally) stand for sensuality. Red is also the colour of lust, "blood, of life but also of sacrifice, of death"¹².

11. Becker, Christoph. 'Felix Vallotton: *Diskrete Blicke*' (Scheidegger&Spiess, 2007). Pg. 19
12. Törnqvist, Egil. 'Between Stage and Screen Ingmar Bergman Directs,' Amsterdam University Press (April 19, 2007) pg. 146

At this instance I am thinking about something Bergman once said about his usage of red decors in 'Cries and Whispers'. He said, "ever since my childhood I have pictured the inside of the soul as a moist membrane in shades of red"¹³. This esoteric notion might seem a tad far off but I can identify with the closed-off imagery that pokes my imagination. I imagine a small space within the body like an organ. A red room that one carries within that is vital for living. Call it the organ of secret desires, for sensuality, lust and human intimacy. Now imagine this room as this organ. How are this woman and man positioned to this organ? They stand askew from this area. They do not allow to expose themselves to such endeavours of devotion. Their feelings are entrapped in the world of shadows. No concrete indication are bared of what their position and intentions are towards another by standing in between these two rooms. He might want to comfort her in his little red-shaded world. She looks down, almost dissolved in the dark, unsure if she can allow herself to make such a step.

I hope I didn't lose you already with the talk about red membranes! I notice your cheeks have turned red. A bit like the interior. I'm not sure whether they have turned red because of confusion, temperature or of embarrassment intruding their intimate space and speculating about their intentions. It is definitely not because of the red wine we did not find in Gregor Schneider's cabinet...

Did you also wonder about this painting or mirror above the mantelpiece with curtains? A stage within a stage. If it is a mirror, is it reflecting something that is behind us? If that were so, it would expose a backstage. This would allow us viewers to become aware again of Vallotton's impresario: the stage, the light arrangement, the interior becoming theatre props again, curtains becoming theatre-curtains, we becoming the audience.

13. Törnqvist, Egil. 'Between Stage and Screen Ingmar Bergman Directs', Amsterdam University Press (April 19, 2007) pg. 149

Even if this is a painting the perspective and depth indicate a space from another dimension. The image is a depiction of another reality. Another framed space like the one we perceive. A vague figure shows its back to us. It appears to be walking away from the spectacle.

You turn around.

– EPILOGUE –

The red ceiling curves and interrupts, bumping into new directions, however, never fully diverging. The musty scent returns, relating to the bleak tiles of the hallway. Curious how one can so abruptly exit a space by simply turning one's back to an event. The 'Chambre Rouge' has disappeared immediately as you turned your head in hope to find the original figure from the 'mirror reflection' (if it ever was one).

Never mind it all, let's have a drink! I found two glasses of wine in a small white cupboard while your mind was occupied with deciphering Valloton's interior. To be honest my neck feels rather tense and my legs a bit stiff. I would suggest, with your permission, to take a stroll through the hallway for just a little longer together.

The hallway is incredibly long. The pathway is surprisingly clean and clear. Not always straight, with an occasional turn to the left or to the right or becoming slightly wider or narrow. I suppose that the main path in our little world or even the larger world is not the destiny full of hazardous, risky and comforting terrains. It's the rooms behind the doors that branch out of this linear path. Aren't all our paths in some sense similar as our simple basis or morals and desires?

The rooms contain an inner-interior shaping one's sensitivity for details, interests and shape one's movement in life. Big or small movements: they are both vital.

And then, everything changes its position and is changeable. Even an untouched room deprived of a human existence will gradually be coated by a layer of dust or maybe receive a visit by a ghost. Or by Gregor Scheider. He will dig out the dust in a room for certain.

Alexander's grandmother reads at the end of the film the preface of August Strindberg's "A Dream Play" which explains that, "Anything can happen; everything is possible and probable. Time and space do not exist. Working with some insignificant real events as a background, the imagination spins out its threads of thoughts and weaves them into new patterns—a mixture of memories, experiences, spontaneous ideas, impossibilities and improvisations. The characters split, double, multiply, dissolve, condense, float apart, coalesce. But one mind stands over and above them all, the mind of the dreamer; and for him there are no secrets, no inconsistencies, no scruples, no laws."¹⁴

No fully realized equation or formula exist in the causation of the dream-space. Where such emotional attractions for object, light and colour preferences derive from can only be speculated. Bachelard is convinced that most of our gestures and attractions originate from our parental home as he says: "...the house we were born in has engraved within us the hierarchy of the various functions of inhabiting."¹⁵ Ingmar Bergman strived to recreate his grandmother's house for the set of Helena Ekdahl's apartment as accurately as possible (even though his memory of this space goes back until the age of ten). This action is merely a personal desire of Bergman's, eager to revisit his younger self to rediscover the sensitivity for this place and emotional attachment.

14. Rush, David. *"A Student Guide to Play Analysis"* (Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data Rush) Pg. 219

15. Bachelard, Gaston. *'The Poetics of Space'* (Beacon Press 1994), pg. 59

We've walked quite a bit now. I can't really determine whether the continuous repetition of the passing doors comfort me because of its familiarity or is slowly suffocating me. Your glass of wine I see has reached its end. You look into the empty content of your glass calmly and fixatedly. You seem to have found an interest in the distorted, circular movement the bottom of the glass creates every time your feet appear in front of this irregular lens. You lift the glass to the height of your eyes creating a semi-circular space with an arch made by the glasses's rim. You take away the glass. The hallway ended now with what appears to look like an alcove. A yellow-mustard velvet coloured curtain is hanging as a frame around the alcove attached with pins on the top creating round drapings. Inside are two white, plastic chairs and the Elephant table of Adolph Loos with a slightly too small crocheted tablecloth. A sloppily attached cord-lamp hangs from the ceiling. As we move closer we discover all sorts of loose and attached cables coming out of the ceiling and walls entangled, leading to an electricity cabinet hanging on the wall. It looks like my uncle has been asked to fix the electricity connection of the hallway...

In the silence of the hallway you hear laughter, talk and Kammermusik deriving from behind a wall. Since we are secluded in a bend of the hallway the noises subtly echo within the frame of our scene. You turn one of your ears toward the round wall and detect by approaching that the sound comes from behind us. After a minute of riddling the event of the turmoil of voices we figure out that this is the prologue scene from 'Fanny och Alexander'. In some way we've returned to the first room (just only from the other side). You lay your right ear against the thin wall and try to catch the conversation. The noise suddenly dies out. Probably Gustav Adolph Ekdahl (one of Fanny and Alexander's uncles) has stood up, announcing a speech:

“My dear, dear friends. I am more moved then I can say...

My wisdom is simple. There are those who despise it, but I don't give a damn—Forgive me, Mama. I noticed you raised your right eyebrow. You think your son is talking too much. Don't worry. I will be brief.

We Ekdahls have not come into the world to see through it, never think that. We are not equipped for such excursions. We might just as well ignore the big things. We must live in the little, the little world. We shall be content with that and cultivate it and make the best of it. Suddenly, death strikes, suddenly the abyss opens, suddenly the storm howls and disaster is upon us - all that we know. But let us not think of all that unpleasantness. We love what we can understand. We Ekdahls like our subterfuges.

...

Therefore, let us be happy while we're happy, let's be kind, generous, affectionate, and good. Therefore it is necessary, and not in the least shameful, to take pleasure in the little world, good food, gentle smiles, fruit trees in bloom, waltzes. And now, my dearest friends, my dearest brothers and sisters, I'm done talking and you can take it for what you like - the effusions of an uncouth restaurant-owner or the pitiful babbling of an old man. It doesn't matter to me, I don't care one way or the other.”¹⁶

16. Criterion Collection.
*'Fanny and Alexander— the
Television Version'*(DVD),
English subtitles.

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