An issue that has been close to my heart for a while now is the quality of space within our Nursing homes. I have had Great Grandparents that have lived in them and Grandparents who fear to go to them. For my Thesis I wanted to research and analyze if the quality of space; particularly lighting, space (void), and material, could have an impact on the quality of life and perception of a Nursing home. To this end, I wanted to understand how the results of my research might redefine the typology and requirements needed programmatically in a Nursing Home facility.

Through my research into space quality I came by an abstract understanding of experiential space. I struggled with this idea for a long time because just about every space ever made can be considered experiential; so, I did my best to further refine the definition to something that could be of more help in my investigation. Readings by Juhani Pallasmaa, and Gaston Bachelard led me to the Theory of Phenomenology and I became very curious as to how this way of thinking, this philosophy, may help me define a process of design that would help me to reach my initial goals into the quality of space in Nursing Homes.

The definition of Phenomenology I have found to be most helpful so far is that from Stanford's Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "The central structure of an experience is its intentionality, its being directed toward something, as it is an experience of or about some object. An experience is directed toward an object by virtue of its content or meaning together with appropriate enabling conditions." (Smith, 2013)

The phrase that speaks the most to me from this definition is "the central structure of an experience is its intentionality". Translating this into Architecture, my understanding of this would be that one can create a structured process of design by thinking about the intentions between space and the emotional atmosphere to create a built environment that contains a measurable experience or intention.

Through numerous case studies; such as Peter Zumthor's Therme Vals and Kolumba Museum, and Manuel Ocana's Santa Rita Geriatric Center, I concluded that material, space, and quality of light are incredibly important to Phenomenology and creating a memorable experience. On top of this, further research into the needs and expectations of residents in nursing homes helped me to understand the wants and needs they require: through this investigation I have found green spaces and access to nature and the community to be of extreme importance.