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THE SEX OF ARCHITECTURE

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Acknowledgments

The essays in this book have been developed from selected papers delivered at a conference entitled “Inherited Ideologies: A Re-Examination,” held at the University of Pennsylvania on March 31 and April 1, 1995, and attended by more than four hundred people from all over the East Coast and as far away as California, Canada, and Australia. The spirit of that conference was a conversational one: a dialogue among women theorists, historians, educators, and practitioners concerned with critical issues in architecture and the related fields of urban design and landscape architecture. While not a feminist conference *per se*, many of the papers presented there were informed by a gendered perspective – a perspective that eventually determined the contents of this book.

So far as we know, “Inherited Ideologies” was the first all-women academic assembly on architecture in the United States, and credit for bringing together its remarkably diverse participants is due to the program organizers – Diana Agrest, Diana Balmori, Jennifer Bloomer, Lynne Breslin, Zeynep Çelik, Patricia Conway (conference chair), Mildred Friedman, Susana Torre, and Leslie Kanes Weisman – who had been meeting regularly in New York City since 1992 as part of a larger group of professional women. When Penn’s newly formed Annenberg Public Policy Center announced a year-long series of university-wide conferences on “Women in the Public Sphere” (1994–95), Conway, then dean of Penn’s Graduate School of Fine Arts, conjoined the planning for her school’s conference with the emerging interests of the women with whom she had been meeting in New York. Out of this collaboration, the program organizers enlisted the participation of women colleagues around the country who were doing work that, broadly construed, related to the themes of public place and private space around which the Graduate School of Fine Arts “Inherited Ideologies” conference was being developed.

All of the foregoing is by way of saying that to properly acknowledge the efforts that have gone into the making of this book, we must first thank the Hon. Walter H. Annenberg, a part of whose extraordinary gift to the University of Pennsylvania helped to fund the “Inherited Ideologies” conference; and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, dean of Penn’s Annenberg School for Communication and director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center, whose leadership mobilized an entire university around an issue, “Women in the Public Sphere,” that, heretofore, had received insufficient attention. In addition, we are grate-

ful to those women who, while choosing to remain anonymous, have made important contributions to the success of these endeavors. For their unflagging energies in compiling and processing the contents of this book, Joshua Gesell, Eva Gibson, and Margaret Braver deserve special mention. We are also indebted to Diana Murphy, Senior Editor at Harry N. Abrams, Inc., who guided the progress from wide-ranging conference proceedings to a more topical collection of essays. Finally, our deepest appreciation goes to the authors, whose provocative essays collectively express the power and diversity of women's views on architecture today.

Diana Agrest

Patricia Conway

Leslie Kanes Weisman

Foreword

Today women are playing more important roles in the production of architecture than at any time in this country's history. A growing number are succeeding in smaller, critical practices that tend to lead the larger, more commercial firms toward the cutting edge of design; they are entering – and winning – their fair share of public-sector competitions, traditionally the first step toward a distinguished career in architectural design.

At the same time, women continue to encounter obstacles created by gender prejudice at defining moments in their careers. For the last two decades, they have constituted nearly half the enrollment in this country's most prestigious architecture programs – programs from which they are consistently graduated at the tops of their classes. Yet in 1995, only 8.9 percent of registered architects and 8.7 percent of tenured architecture faculty in the United States were women.

Almost no women are recognized as name partners in large commercial firms, nor has any woman in this country ever been commissioned to design a nationally significant building on the scale of, say, Ada Karmi-Melamede's Supreme Court in Jerusalem or Gae Aulenti's Musée d'Orsay in Paris. Moreover, the number of women holding top administrative positions and named chairs in American university architecture programs remains shockingly low; and since the retirement of Ada Louise Huxtable from the *New York Times*, no woman has had a commanding voice as architecture critic for a major city newspaper or weekly newsmagazine. It comes as no surprise, then, that although at least two women have received the RIBA Gold Medal in Great Britain, no woman has been awarded either of this country's highest architectural honors: the AIA Gold Medal or the Pritzker Prize.

Nevertheless, it is critical practice and competition entries that exert the most powerful pull on the discourse of architecture, and in this discourse women have a remarkably strong presence. Writing as theorists, critics, historians, educators, and practitioners, women are at the forefront of the debate in architecture today – a debate that is reshaping the way we think about our built environment at the millennium. Inevitably one of the most controversial issues to surface in this debate is gender: a seemingly circular discourse that begs, yet refuses, closure.

P.C.

Introduction

Sex. The word is layered with meaning and provocation. Embedded within it are the corporeal and the carnal, sensuality and desire, male and female, human reproduction. The inscription of the sexualized body is a central and recurrent theme in Western architecture, but that body is neither innocent nor androgynous. It is a reification of the male longing to appropriate an exclusively female privilege: maternity. Thus the insistence, in ancient and contemporary discourse, that male architects “give birth” to their buildings. Implicated in man’s inevitable state of childlessness, which gives rise to an obsession with “reproducing himself,” is the systematic erasure of woman and her contributions.

If sex condenses the notions of body and power that have permeated architectural criticism since the Renaissance revival of Classicism, an analysis of gender in modern architectural criticism reveals a social system that has historically functioned to contain, control, or exclude women. It is from these perspectives that the twenty-four authors in this book, all of whom are women, more closely reexamine some long-suspect “truths”: that man builds and woman inhabits; that man is outside and woman is inside; that man is public and woman is private; that nature, in both its kindest and its cruelest aspects, is female and culture, the ultimate triumph over nature, is male. These and other gender-based assumptions – in particular those associating men with economic production, wage earning, and the city, and women with consumption, non-wage earning domestic labor, and the home – are the subjects of many of the essays in this volume.

Perhaps a reexamination of such “truths” might begin with the concept of “otherness” originated by Simone de Beauvoir more than fifty years ago and here explored philosophically by Mary McLeod in her critique of Foucault. Esther da Costa Meyer considers the same concept, but from a psychoanalytic point of view, in her investigation of agoraphobia, that puzzling disorder afflicting primarily women, to which Laretta Vinciarelli responds with some sociological observations. Indeed, almost all of the essays in this book identify, explicitly or implicitly, the female as “other,” and it is from this marginalized position that women writing on architecture today are exploring history, the uses of public space, consumerism, and the role of domesticity in search of “ways into” architecture, often through alternative forms of practice and education. We are now in an era where discourse is as important as design, often more

important, and a number of authors address their subjects from this perspective. Catherine Ingraham, for example, confronts the prevailing and clearly gendered bias in favor of images over words, a view with which Diane Lewis emphatically disagrees; and Jennifer Bloomer writes with nostalgic longing about domestic space in order to examine important architectural questions of matter, materiality, and gravity in the age of non-physical, electronic communication.

Throughout many of these essays there runs a current of struggle: the struggle for active participation in the modern project. Nowhere is that struggle made more vivid than in those essays dealing with the city. M. Christine Boyer's proposition of the *femme fatale* as urban allegory in film noir is particularly intriguing in this regard, as is Margaret Crawford's extension of the argument to include the genre of the hard-boiled detective novel. It is through the Greek play that Ann Bergren takes us back to an ancient text, Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae*, wherein women rebel against the Classical architecture of the house and the city. Looking at a more recent past, Diana Agrest critically reexamines modernist urbanism and scientific discourse to explain the absence of nature from urban discourse over the last fifty years. Still on the subject of nature, Diana Balmori gives us a narrative that reveals another missing character, Culture.

War, occupation, and violence, including the violence of poverty and the breakdown of traditional cultural values – which afflicts millions of women no longer protected by traditional social structures – are also recurring themes. Just as Zeynep Çelik's essay on colonial Algiers traces the subversion of male/public versus female/private spaces in a war for independence, so Susana Torre chronicles the transformation of the main square in Buenos Aires by mothers in their struggle to account for thousands of people who "disappeared" during Argentina's repressive military dictatorship. Beatriz Colomina documents the invasion of Eileen Gray's private space, the home she designed for herself at Roquebrune-Cap Martin, by Le Corbusier's essentially public act of painting murals on her walls – an act because of which many historians later credited Le Corbusier with the design of Gray's house. Sylvia Lavin replies to Colomina's thesis by analyzing Gray's house and the *cabanon* Le Corbusier built to overlook it in terms of primitive hut-making and the desire for escape.

The concept of "home" is explored in a very different way by Joan Ockman, to whose critique of the redomestication of American women following World War II Denise Scott Brown replies with a discussion of the architectural strategies that accompanied women's newly defined roles of consumption. Alice T. Friedman analyzes the formative role of women as clients for certain "signature" houses designed by "star" (male) architects, while

Ghislaine Hermanuz focuses on women as shapers of the domestic program within the political framework of race and class.

Other authors discuss the uses of architecture and discourse to confront bigotry and prejudice, marginality and powerlessness. Lynne Breslin, for example, analyzes exhibitions on anti-Semitism and racism to illustrate how the museum can be designed to serve as an instrument of public education and personal transformation, while Diane Favro summarizes the history of American women as chroniclers of the profession from which they were largely excluded. Marion Weiss documents a project – the Women’s Memorial and Education Center at Arlington National Cemetery – that is both about the recognition of women’s achievements and symptomatic of it. Leslie Kanes Weisman describes a feminist vision of architectural education and practice dedicated to fostering human equity and environmental wholeness, and Sharon E. Sutton replies to Weisman by counting the personal and professional costs of teaching and practice in service of social justice.

A word about the structure of this book. The pairing of certain essays with responses not only echoes the dialogue format of the “Inherited Ideologies” conference but also helps to illuminate common themes running through a remarkably diverse body of work. Yet it is also possible to make these connections in different ways. For example, Bergren’s essay can as usefully be read with Ockman and Friedman on domesticity as with Boyer, Crawford, and Çelik on the city, or with Ingraham and McLeod on discourse; Agrest also can be read with Ingraham and McLeod as well as with Balmori on nature, or with other essays on the city; and so on. For this reason, no attempt has been made to group texts in rigid categories. Rather, readers are encouraged to construct their own sequences, to explore the multiple ways of reading this book that will continually shift its meanings.

D.A., P.C., L.K.W.

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present. The author then goes on to discuss the various factors which have shaped the development of the United States, including the influence of the British, the Spanish, and the French. He also discusses the role of the American people in the creation of the nation. The second part of the paper is a detailed account of the life of George Washington, the first President of the United States. The author describes Washington's early life, his military career, and his role in the founding of the nation. He also discusses Washington's personality and his relationship with the people. The third part of the paper is a discussion of the American Revolution. The author describes the causes of the revolution, the course of the war, and the results. He also discusses the impact of the revolution on the United States and the world. The fourth part of the paper is a discussion of the American Constitution. The author describes the process of its creation and its importance to the United States. He also discusses the various amendments to the Constitution and their impact. The fifth part of the paper is a discussion of the American Civil War. The author describes the causes of the war, the course of the war, and the results. He also discusses the impact of the war on the United States and the world. The sixth part of the paper is a discussion of the American Reconstruction. The author describes the process of Reconstruction and its importance to the United States. He also discusses the various Reconstruction acts and their impact. The seventh part of the paper is a discussion of the American Gilded Age. The author describes the various factors which led to the Gilded Age, including the rise of big business and the corruption of politics. He also discusses the impact of the Gilded Age on the United States and the world. The eighth part of the paper is a discussion of the American Progressive Era. The author describes the various factors which led to the Progressive Era, including the rise of the middle class and the reform of politics. He also discusses the impact of the Progressive Era on the United States and the world. The ninth part of the paper is a discussion of the American New Deal. The author describes the various factors which led to the New Deal, including the Great Depression and the rise of Franklin D. Roosevelt. He also discusses the impact of the New Deal on the United States and the world. The tenth part of the paper is a discussion of the American Cold War. The author describes the various factors which led to the Cold War, including the rise of the Soviet Union and the fear of nuclear war. He also discusses the impact of the Cold War on the United States and the world. The eleventh part of the paper is a discussion of the American Vietnam War. The author describes the various factors which led to the Vietnam War, including the fear of communism and the desire for power. He also discusses the impact of the Vietnam War on the United States and the world. The twelfth part of the paper is a discussion of the American Watergate scandal. The author describes the various factors which led to the Watergate scandal, including the desire for power and the corruption of politics. He also discusses the impact of the Watergate scandal on the United States and the world. The thirteenth part of the paper is a discussion of the American AIDS crisis. The author describes the various factors which led to the AIDS crisis, including the lack of knowledge and the fear of death. He also discusses the impact of the AIDS crisis on the United States and the world. The fourteenth part of the paper is a discussion of the American Gulf War. The author describes the various factors which led to the Gulf War, including the desire for power and the fear of terrorism. He also discusses the impact of the Gulf War on the United States and the world. The fifteenth part of the paper is a discussion of the American 9/11 attacks. The author describes the various factors which led to the 9/11 attacks, including the desire for power and the fear of death. He also discusses the impact of the 9/11 attacks on the United States and the world. The sixteenth part of the paper is a discussion of the American Iraq War. The author describes the various factors which led to the Iraq War, including the desire for power and the fear of terrorism. He also discusses the impact of the Iraq War on the United States and the world. The seventeenth part of the paper is a discussion of the American financial crisis. The author describes the various factors which led to the financial crisis, including the greed of the financial industry and the lack of regulation. He also discusses the impact of the financial crisis on the United States and the world. The eighteenth part of the paper is a discussion of the American Arab Spring. The author describes the various factors which led to the Arab Spring, including the desire for democracy and the fear of oppression. He also discusses the impact of the Arab Spring on the United States and the world. The nineteenth part of the paper is a discussion of the American Syrian Civil War. The author describes the various factors which led to the Syrian Civil War, including the desire for power and the fear of death. He also discusses the impact of the Syrian Civil War on the United States and the world. The twentieth part of the paper is a discussion of the American COVID-19 pandemic. The author describes the various factors which led to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the lack of knowledge and the fear of death. He also discusses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the United States and the world.

“Other” Spaces and “Others”

MARY McLEOD

One of the primary preoccupations of contemporary architectural theory is the concept of “other” or “otherness.” Members of the so-called neo-avant garde – architects and critics frequently affiliated with publications such as *ANY* and *Assemblage* and with architecture schools such as Princeton, Columbia, Sci Arc, and the Architectural Association – advocate the creation of a *new* architecture that is somehow totally “other.” While these individuals repeatedly decry utopianism and the morality of form, they promote novelty and marginality as instruments of political subversion and cultural transgression. The spoken and unspoken assumption is that “different” is good, that “otherness” is automatically an improvement over the status quo.

This tendency is most clearly evident among so-called deconstructivist architects and critics, who advocate strategies such as disruption, violation, and break as a means of dismantling architectural forms and creating a new architecture that is somehow “other.” Previously, I have raised questions about the limits of linguistic analogies inherent in deconstructivist theory and its equation of formal change with political change.¹ In this paper I would like to turn instead to another strain in contemporary architectural theory that also emphasizes, indeed validates, “otherness.” This alternative view is articulated by a diverse group of architects and theorists, such as Anthony Vidler, Aaron Betsky, Catherine Ingraham, and Stanley Allen, who have been influenced by Michel Foucault’s notion of “heterotopia.”² They also often endorse deconstructivist architecture (and what might be considered historical precedents, such as Piranesi’s *Carceri* or *Campo Marzio*), but they

embrace its colliding, fragmentated forms as embodiments of Foucault's more politicized concept of heterotopia, or "other" spaces.³ Here the notion of "other" refers to that which is both formally and socially "other." Difference is a function of different locations and distributions of power, as well as of formal or textual inversion. "Other" therefore encompasses physical and social arenas outside of or marginal to our daily life.

Foucault gives his most complete discussion of heterotopia in his essay "Des Espaces autres," a lecture he delivered at a French architectural research institute in 1967 and which was not published in English until 1985.⁴ Since it was written as a lecture, it lacks Foucault's usual rigor; his argument seems loose, almost conflicted at times, as if he were groping for examples. But it is also his most comprehensive discussion of physical space,⁵ and its very looseness may be one of the reasons for its influence in recent architectural discourse.

In this essay Foucault distinguishes heterotopias from imaginary spaces – utopias – and from everyday landscapes. He proposes that certain unusual, or out-of-the-ordinary, places – the museum, the prison, the hospital, the cemetery, the theater, the church, the carnival, the vacation village, the barracks, the brothel, the place of sexual initiation, the colony – provide our most acute perceptions of the social order (figs. 1–6). These perceptions might derive either from a quality of disorder and multiplicity, as in the brothel, or from a kind of compensation, a laboratory-like perfection, as in the colony, which exposes the messy, ill-constructed nature of everyday reality. Many of the spaces cited, such as the prison or asylum, are exactly the arenas that Foucault condemns in his institutional studies for their insidious control and policing of the body. In this essay, however, his tone is neutral or even laudatory of those "other" spaces. Foucault suggests that these heterotopic environments, by breaking with the banality of everyday existence and by granting us insight into our condition, are both privileged and politically charged. He asserts that they "suspend, neutralize, or invert the set of relationships" that they designate.⁶

What are explicitly omitted from his list of "other" spaces, however, are the residence, the workplace, the street, the shopping center, and the more mundane areas of everyday leisure, such as playgrounds, parks,

FIG. 1

Thomas Wright. Kirkdale House
of Correction, near Liverpool.
1821–22



MCLEOD

FIG. 2

Libéral Bruand. Hôtel des
Invalides (a hostel for wounded
soldiers), Paris. 1670–77



FIG. 3

Charles Garnier. Opéra, Paris.
1861–75

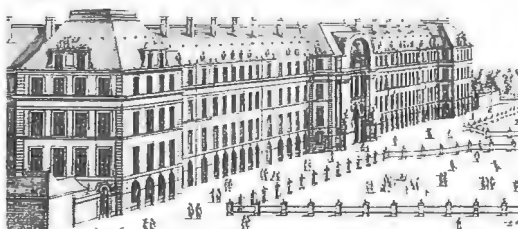




FIG. 4

E. Angelou. Prostitute in a French brothel during the Belle Époque. Stereoscopic photograph, ca. 1900



FIG. 5

John James Burnett (for Imperial War Graves Commission). British Military Cemetery, Jerusalem. 1919–27



FIG. 6

Albert Laprade. Central axis of Parc Lyautey (now Parc de la Ligue Arabe), Casablanca. 1915. Foucault writes of heterotopias: “On the one hand they perform the task of creating a space of illusion that reveals how all of real space is more illusory, all the locations within which life is fragmented. On the other, they have the function of forming another place, as perfect, meticulous, and well-arranged as ours is disordered, ill-conceived, and in a sketchy state. . . . Brothels and colonies, here are two extreme types of heterotopia”



FIG. 7

Mom's house, Wheaton, Maryland.
1951. For Foucault, the house is
an "arrangement of rest" and thus
not a heterotopia

sporting fields, restaurants, and so on (fig. 7). (Cinemas, paradoxically, are both excluded and included as heterotopias.) Indeed, in his emphasis on isolated institutions – monuments, asylums, or pleasure houses – he forsakes all the messy, in-between urban spaces that might be considered literally heterotopic. For most American architecture critics, the political ambiguity and two-sided nature of Foucault's notion of heterotopia (its diversity or its extreme control) has been ignored. Following Foucault's brief commentary in *The Order of Things*, they interpret the concept simply as incongruous juxtaposition – exemplified by Borges's Chinese encyclopedia or Lautréamont's pairing of the umbrella and the operating table⁷ – all too frequently equating Foucault's notion of "otherness" with Derrida's concept of *différance*. With a kind of postmodern ease, critics have often created, themselves, a heterotopic tableau of theories seeking to undermine order.⁸

Foucault's conception of "other" stands apart from Lacanian and Derridean models in that it suggests actual places, in actual moments in time. It acknowledges that power is not simply an issue of language. And this insistence on seeing institutions and practices in political and social terms has been welcomed by many feminist theorists. Yet one of the most striking aspects of Foucault's notion of heterotopia is how the idea of "other," in its emphasis on rupture, seems to exclude the traditional arenas of women and children – two of the groups that most rightly deserve (if by now one can abide the term's universalizing effect) the label "other." Women are admitted in his discussion primarily as sex objects – in the brothel, in the motel rented by the hour. (And what might be even harder for most working mothers to accept with a straight face is his exclusion of the house as a heterotopia on the grounds that it is a "place of rest.") Foucault seems to have an unconscious disdain for sites of everyday life such as the home, the public park, and the department store that have been provinces where women have found not only oppression but also some degree of comfort, security, autonomy, and even freedom. In fact, Foucault and some of his architecture-critic followers (most notably, Mike Davis) display an almost callous disregard for the needs of the less powerful – older people, the handicapped, the sick – who are more likely to seek security, comfort, and the pleasures of

everyday life than to pursue the thrills of transgression and break. In applauding the rest home, for instance, as a microcosm of insight, Foucault never considers it from the eyes of the resident. Knowledge *is* the privilege of the powerful.

Another major, and all too obvious, problem is the exclusion of minorities, the third world, and, indeed, most non-Western culture from Foucault's discussions of "other" and, by extension, from criticism written by his architect-followers. One of the most paradoxical aspects of Foucault's notion of heterotopia is his example of the colony. Although since World War II the concept of "other" has had a powerful influence on third-world political and cultural theorists (from Frantz Fanon to Edward Said⁹), Foucault himself never attempts to see the colony through the eyes of the colonized, just as in his earlier institutional studies he avoids the prisoner's viewpoint in his rejection of a certain experiential analysis. In poststructuralist philosophy and literary criticism, a major claim for political validity is the notion of dismantling European logocentricism. Yet despite this embrace of the "other" in some of its theoretical sources, contemporary theory in architecture, echoing the unconscious biases of Foucault, appears to posit a notion of the "other" that is solely a question of Western dismantling of Western conventions for a Western audience. In other words, "others" are "the other" of a white Western male cultural elite. Instead of asking what is the avant-garde's desire for "other," architects and theorists might better ask what are the desires of those multiple "others" – actual, flesh-and-blood "others"? Difference is experienced differently, at different times, in different cultures, by different people. The point is not just to recognize difference, but all kinds of difference.

Thus far, this argument about the exclusion of "others" in the concept of the "other" has been limited to theoretical propositions that have at best – perhaps fortunately – only marginal relation to the architecture admired by advocates of heterotopia (above all, the designs of Frank Gehry, Bernard Tschumi, Peter Eisenman, and Daniel Libeskind¹⁰). And by no means is the negative tone of these remarks meant to disparage the incredible aesthetic energy and invention of many of these designs. What is disturbing is the link between theory and the architectural

culture surrounding this theory. In the United States the focus on transgression in contemporary architecture circles seems to have contributed to a whole atmosphere of machismo and exclusion. One is reminded how often avant-gardism is a more polite label for the concerns of angry young men, sometimes graying young men. All too frequently lecture series and symposia have at best a token representation of women – and no African-American or non-Western architects except perhaps from Japan. One of the most telling examples was the first Anyone conference, staged at the Getty Center at immense expense. A conference supposedly about the multiplicity, diversity, and fluidity of identity had, in a list of some twenty-five speakers, only two women; the rest were American (white), European (white), and Japanese men.¹¹ In fairness, it should be noted that this exclusionary attitude is not the sole province of the deconstructivist architects or poststructuralist theorists. American and European postmodernists and proponents of regionalism are equally blind to the issues of the non-Western world. Most recently, the same charge might be brought against the “Deleuzian de-form” nexus, despite its rhetoric of continuity and inclusion.¹²

These blatant social exclusions, under the mantle of a discourse that celebrates the “other” and “difference,” raise the issue of whether contemporary theorists and deconstructivist architects have focused too exclusively on formal subversion and negation as a mode of practice. Undoubtedly, the difficult political climate of the past fifteen years and the economic recession of the late 1980s and early 1990s have contributed to the profession’s hermeticism (namely, its rejection of constructive political strategies and institutional engagement), but the consequences of this retreat are now all too clear. Are there other formal and social options – options beyond transgression and nostalgia, deconstructivism and historicist postmodernism – that might embrace the desires and needs of those outside the avant-garde?

The seduction and power of the work of Foucault and Derrida, and their very dominance in American academic intellectual life, may have encouraged architects and theorists to leave unexplored another position linking space and power: the notion of “everyday life” developed by

Henri Lefebvre from the 1930s through the 1970s (a peculiar synthesis of Surrealist and Marxist ideas), and which Michel de Certeau gave a somewhat more particularist, and less Marxist, cast shortly thereafter.¹³ Both theorists not only analyze the tyranny and controls that have imposed themselves on “everyday” life; they also explore the freedoms, joys, and diversity – what de Certeau describes as “the network of antidiscipline” – within everyday life. In other words, their concern is not simply to depict the power of disciplinary technology, but also to reveal how society resists being reduced to it – not just in the unusual or removed places but in the most ordinary as well. And here they place an emphasis on consumption, without seeing it as solely a negative force, as some leftists have, but also as an arena of freedom, choice, creativity, and invention.

De Certeau, who dedicated his seminal work *The Practice of Everyday Life* to the “ordinary man,” is strangely silent on the issue of women (except for one female *flâneur* in his chapter “Walking the City”). Lefebvre, however, despite moments of infuriating sexism and disturbingly essentialist rhetoric, seems to have an acute understanding of the role of the everyday in woman’s experience and how consumption has been both her demon and liberator, offering her an arena of action that grants her entry into and power in the public sphere. This argument has been further developed by a number of contemporary feminist theorists, including Janet Wolff, Elizabeth Wilson, Anne Friedberg, and Kristen Ross.¹⁴ What these critics share, despite their many differences, is an emphasis on pleasure, the intensification of sensory impressions, and the positive excesses of consumption as experiences that counter the webs of control and monotony in daily life. Here “other” refers not only to what is outside everyday life – the events characterized by rupture, schism, difference – but also to what is contained, and *potentially* contained, within it. In short, their emphasis is populist, not avant-garde. They articulate a desire to bring experience and enrichment to many, not simply to jolt those few who have the textual or architectural sophistication to comprehend that a new formal break has been initiated. Certainly, these two goals need not be mutually exclusive.

1. Mary McLeod, "Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era: From Postmodernism to Deconstructivism," *Assemblage* 8 (February 1989), 23–55.
2. See Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992); Aaron Betsky, *Violated Perfection: Architecture and the Fragmentation of the Modern* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990); Catherine Ingraham, "Utopia/Heterotopia," course description of class given at Columbia University in 1989, and "Deconstruction 111," in Andreas Papadakis, ed., *Architectural Design* (London: Academy Editions, 1994); and Stanley Allen, "Piranesi's Campo Marzio: An Experimental Design," *Assemblage* 10 (December 1989), 71–109. Other individuals who have been influenced by Foucault's notion of heterotopia include architects Diana Agrest and Demetri Porphyrios, and geographer Edward Soja. See Diana Agrest, "The City as the Place of Representation," *Design Quarterly* 113–14 (1980), reprinted in *Architecture from Without* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), 109–27; Demetri Porphyrios, *Sources of Modern Eclecticism: Studies of Alvar Aalto* (London: Academy Editions, 1982); and Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989). Although Vidler does not specifically mention the notion of heterotopia in his book *The Architectural Uncanny*, he cites Foucault on numerous occasions and adopts David Carroll's notion of "paraesthetics," which is indebted to Foucault. See David Carroll, *Paraesthetics: Foucault, Lyotard, Derrida* (New York: Methuen, 1987). In several publications, Manfredo Tafuri also alludes sympathetically to Foucault's notion of heterotopia, and Tafuri's interpretation of Piranesi's work as encapsulating the crisis of capitalism reveals certain parallels with Foucault's claims for heterotopic environments. See especially Manfredo Tafuri, "'The Wicked Architect': G. B. Piranesi, Heterotopia, and the Voyage," in *The Sphere and the Labyrinth: Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s*, trans. Pellegrino d'Acierno and Robert Connolly (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987). The complexity of Tafuri's project of ideological demystification and its multiplicity of intellectual sources, however, separate Tafuri's interest in Foucault from the instrumental applications of many architecture critics.
3. For most architecture critics who are adherents of Foucault's heterotopia, this does not preclude an endorsement of Derridean precepts. The Italian philosopher Gianni Vattimo also uses the notion of heterotopia, though in a different manner from Foucault. For Vattimo heterotopia alludes to the plurality of

norms that distinguishes late-modern art (since the 1960s) from modern art. See Gianni Vattimo, "From Utopia to Heterotopia," in *Transparent Society*, trans. David Webb (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 62–75. The writings of Vattimo have been influential in European architectural debate, but they have had little impact on American architectural theory.

4. Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias," in Joan Ockman, ed., *Architecture Culture 1943–1968: A Documentary Anthology* (New York: Rizzoli, 1993), 420–26. The paper was first delivered at the Centre d'études architecturales, Paris, in March 1967. A brief account of its publishing history is given in Ockman, 419.
5. Despite Foucault's interest in institutions and his insistent use of spatial metaphors, discussions of physical urban space such as cities, streets, and parks are rare in his work. The philosopher Henri Lefebvre charged, probably legitimately, that Foucault was more concerned with a metaphorical notion of space – "mental space" – than with lived space, "the space of people who deal with material things." See Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1991; original French ed., 1974), 3–4. Besides his paper "Des Espaces autres," Foucault's most concrete discussions of physical space can be found in interviews, which occurred in the last decade of his life. See, for instance, "Questions on Geography" (1976) and "The Eye of Power" (1977), in Colin Gordon, ed., *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–77* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980); "Space, Knowledge, and Power" (1982), in Paul Rabinow, ed., *Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984); and, especially, "An Ethics of Pleasure," in Sylvère Lotringer, ed., *Foucault Live (Interviews, 1966–84)* (New York: Semiotext[e], 1989), 257–77. In the last interview, Foucault distinguishes architects from doctors, priests, psychiatrists, and prison wardens, claiming that the architect does not exercise (or serve as a vehicle of) as much power as the other professionals. Again Foucault's own class status and power emerge when he states, "After all, the architect has no power over me. If I want to tear down or change a house he built for me, put up new partitions, add a chimney, the architect has no control" (267). Surely, few occupants of public housing projects or nursing homes could or would make the same statement.
6. Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 421–22.
7. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of Human Sciences* (New

York: Vintage Books, 1970), xv–xx. Foucault does not cite the poet le Comte de Lautréamont (pseud. of Isidore Ducasse) by name but rather alludes to the novelist Raymond Roussel, a favorite of the Surrealists. For examples of architects' use of Foucault's Preface to *The Order of Things*, see Porphyrios, 1–4; Allen, 77; and Georges Teyssot, "Heterotopias and the History of Spaces," *A+U* (October 1980), 80–100.

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8. This is especially notable in Ingraham's and Allen's work. My objective, however, is not to expound on the distinctions between Foucault's and Derrida's versions of poststructuralism in terms of architecture. Nor is this the opportunity to expand on the philosophical differences raised by the meanings of the word *other*, namely the differences between Sartre's reworking of a Hegelian other in existentialism and Lacan's notions of split subjectivity and linguistic drift. Though certainly significant in philosophical and literary discourse, these distinctions, for better or worse, are typically blurred in architectural theory. For a concise historical account of "the problem of other," see Vincent Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*, trans. L. Scott-Fox and J. M. Harding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), and Elizabeth Grosz, *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1989), 1–38. For a discussion of the notion of the "other" and its relation to gender and colonial/postcolonial theory in the context of architecture, see Zeynep Çelik and Leila Kinney, "Ethnography and Exhibitionism at the Expositions Universelles," *Assemblage* 13 (December 1990), esp. 54–56.
9. Recently, postcolonial critics such as Homi K. Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak have challenged the manichaeism or binary logic implicit in Fanon's and Said's understanding of colonial identity. See especially Homi K. Bhabha's essay "The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism," in Homi K. Bhabha, ed., *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994) for a critique of phenomenology's opposition between subject and object – and its extension into the discourse of colonialism as a rigid division between colonizer and colonized.
10. Certainly, La Villette and the Wexner Center, the two iconic built projects most cited by poststructuralist architectural theorists, are enjoyed by women and children as much as men, with the possible exception of the predominantly female staff at the Wexner, who are squeezed into extremely tight quarters.
11. One of the women, Maria Nordman, limited her remarks to a request that the

windows be opened to let in light and that the method of seating be decentralized. She chose to sit in the audience during her presentation. See the conference publication, *Anyone* (New York: Rizzoli, 1991), 198–99. A third woman, Cynthia Davidson, the editor of *Anyone*, might arguably be included, although this publication does not include a short biographical statement for her, as it does for the speakers. Subsequent *ANY* events have included more women, perhaps in response to public outrage, although minority architects have yet to be involved. Perhaps even more scandalous is the track record of the evening lecture series at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation, an institution that prides itself on being avant-garde. Not once in the past six years has the semester series included more than two women speakers (most have featured only one), and there have been no African-American speakers.

M c L E O D

12. It can be argued that decidedly masculine assumptions underlie this new current in architectural theory, which seems to have its greatest energy in New York and almost exclusively among men. While Deleuze and Guattari reject the bipolarity latent in much Derridean thought, their “becoming – animal, becoming – women” suggests their (*male*) desire. As in Foucault's work, what is neglected in their exhilarating vision of fluidity and flow (for instance, domesticity, children, the elderly) is telling, and strikingly reminiscent of the machismo of some of the male leaders of the New Left in the 1960s.
13. The notion of “everyday life” can be frustratingly amorphous, and Lefebvre's intensely dialectical approach, combined with his rejection of traditional philosophical rationalism (“truth without reality”), makes the concept all the more difficult to decipher. Lefebvre's description of “everyday life” might best be understood as embracing a series of paradoxes. While the “object of philosophy,” it is inherently non-philosophical; while conveying an image of stability and immutability, it is transitory and uncertain; while unbearable in its monotony and routine, it is festival and play. In brief, everyday life is “real life,” the “here and now,” not abstract truth. Lefebvre's description of everyday life as “sustenance, clothing, furniture, homes, neighborhoods, environment” – “material life” but with a “dramatic attitude” and “lyrical tone” – contrasts sharply with Foucault's concept of heterotopias as isolated and removed spaces. See Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World* (New Brunswick, N.J., and London: Transaction Publishers, 1984); Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*,

trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1991); Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); and Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

14. See Janet Wolff, *Feminine Sentences: Essays on Women and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), esp. 34–50; Elizabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (Berkeley: University of California, 1993); Kristen Ross, Introduction, *The Ladies' Paradise* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), and *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995). Of the critics cited here, Ross is the most indebted to Lefebvre, and, like Lefebvre, she stresses consumption's double-sided nature. For an insightful discussion of consumption and women's role with regard to architecture, see Leila Whitemore, "Women and the Architecture of Fashion in 19th-Century Paris," *a/i/c*, "Public Space" 5 (1994–95), 14–25.

Missing Objects

CATHERINE INGRAHAM

Recently¹ I was trying to untangle the famous aphorism “A picture is worth a thousand words.” The more I tried to penetrate this equation, the more peculiar it became. We know, generally, the circumstances under which this phrase is uttered, circumstances where a certain crisis has arisen between two values, the value of the word and the value of the picture (to which I want to append everything grasped visually, although this poses problems). Although the import of the aphorism is that it takes many, many words to achieve what a picture can achieve all by itself, and all at once, the number 1000 is low when it comes to words. One thousand words represents about three pages of written text, about six minutes of continuously spoken language, about ten minutes of conversation. One thousand pictures = a million words, or one one-thousandth of a picture = one word, would be a more accurate way of stating the force of this aphorism. The issue of value and worth, so slyly persuasive in this equation, is related, then, not to some carefully weighed economy of words and images but to a tacit politics of expenditure that counts words as cheap and insubstantial and, therefore, proliferative, and images as substantial and dear and, therefore, unique.

I am belaboring this aphorism because I am interested in the equation between words and images, words and things, words and objects (fig. 1). At the same time, I recognize the ugliness and difficulty of words compared to things – how small and petty words are, how promiscuous and entangling. This ugliness is part of what aesthetically magnetizes me about words – that is, I am attracted by the possibility of writing them grossly at the scale of buildings much as, say, Barbara Kruger or Robert Venturi have done, taking them at face value, so to

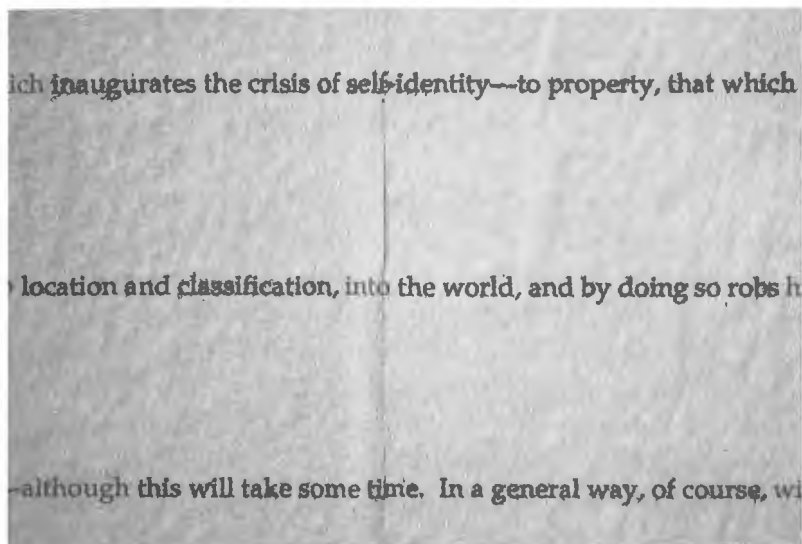


FIG. 1

One Text = One Wall, installation in *Architexturally Speaking*, Gallery 400, Chicago, 1992. The project was, in theory, very simple: to cover one wall (8 ft. 3 in. high x 15 ft. 5 in. long) with one (10-point) text that could be read from left to right as if the wall had become the book. It turned out to be extraordinarily difficult to mount one 15-foot line of 10-point text on a wall, much less cover the entire wall. Ordinary photographic and computer graphic technologies had not

envisioned, for obvious reasons, this precise task. In the end, I used a tiling program that took three days of continuous day and night operation to produce three hundred pages of text because each time one page was produced the computer had to reread the entire book. The text was an early version of my book manuscript, "Architecture and the Burdens of Linearity," which is, in part, about the issues of line and surface raised by the project

speak; and yet, simultaneously, I am struck by their formal irrelevance to the world of built objects. The smallness of words – their relative cheapness, proliferative character, and lack of materiality – is their point, almost.

Taking this aphorism, “A picture is worth a thousand words,” at face value is an oblique way of looking at a far more difficult set of problems having to do not only with the particular kind of architectural practice that might lead us to question the economy between words and things, but also with a strange, ongoing lament in architecture about words and objects, and, lastly, with the realm of invention. Invention was a key word in the proposal Francesca Hughes recently made to those writers invited to contribute to a book she was editing on women in architectural practice.² The proposal was that women had more cause to *invent* an architectural practice because they hold an ambiguous position with respect to architecture; they are both outside and inside architecture. Hughes suggested that this “architecture” be rendered “Architecture” with a capital *A* to indicate the entire culture of architecture – the profession, the discipline, the building. She wanted to underscore the idea that “invention” was not utopic in the sense that it pointed to some more idealized state of female practice with respect to architecture. I agree with her, but I have an aversion to a capitalized architecture since it is lower case architecture that signifies for me the massive plurality of architectural meaning. And “a” is a letter that cannot be capitalized with impunity; we have been warned, persuasively I think, against the “kingdom of the a, the silent tomb, the pyramid.”³

But let me return for a moment to the aphorism “A picture is worth a thousand words.” The spirit of the aphorism recognizes the mediating function of words and the apparently unmediated meaning of the image. The attempt of words to represent pictures or images or objects, according to this aphorism, not only happens outside the image or object (as a kind of excess of clothing around the image or object) but also results in a proliferation of multiplicities (1000) that is offensive to the apparent singularity of meaning that is the image or object. The themes that we might locate here – the mediation of meaning, competition between outside and inside, the ever-present problem of representation, systems of value, the frame and its economy, multiplicity and singularity, the

politics of meaning – are some of the themes of my architectural practice, and I think they belong to everyone practicing a critical architecture today. The material implications of these themes, that is, what can be built from them, are not as elusive as both theorists and practitioners make them out to be. Materiality is relatively easy; it lays in wait for metaphysics and philosophy at every turn.

Taking an aphorism at face value is tactically adiaphoristic; it breaks into the formal closure of the aphorism. But taking something at face value is also a material moment, in the sense that it deals with the formal and material propositions of something – the dimensions, quantities, literalness of that thing (in this case, language). The sense in which language is revealed to have a surface meaning that casts doubt on its deeper purposes is peculiar since language is nothing but surface to begin with, although we know from Jacques Lacan that the “nothing” in the “nothing but surface” must also be taken into account. The formulation “nothing but surface” refers, as Jean-Luc Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe have written, to Lacan’s “rejection of any mythical notion of the unconscious as the seat of instincts, a rejection of any sort of depth psychology. The subject – that is, the subject revealed by psychoanalysis – is to be understood simply as an effect of the signifier, a subject of the letter.”⁴ The reason why the “nothing” must be taken into account is that it is, of course, too glib to say everything is nothing but surface since the very enunciation of this principle is, itself, calling on a forgotten substance or a forgotten depth, a refused depth.

The matter of depth and surface invariably leads to an irritating but instructive contortionism in our thinking. For one thing, once things are recognized as surfaces, things surface and we get a look at what lies deeply within. Certainly a great deal of contemporary architectural theory has been interested in the relation and identity between two surface practices, language and architecture, but the comparison between the surface of writing and architecture can only be held together for a split second.

Let me quickly review the grammatology of this situation – quickly not because it is irrelevant but because Jacques Derrida’s work is by now known to most people. But there is one small, prior remark I want to make. The fact that one thing leads to another in philosophy or any kind

of work, such that everything is formed on already existing forms (either as the sort of extensive cross-referencing – the hypertext – of philosophy, or the use of precedent in architecture), is a fact that architecture finds both appealing and appalling throughout its own history. Whenever I return to Derrida in the middle of a discussion about architecture, I am reminded of how completely thought and action must already be structured in order to operate. Derrida's insights on the matter of structuring and structurality speak precisely to this point, and architectural theory was right, I think, to have found a (troubled and temporary) home inside poststructural philosophy.

On our way back to the aphorism, then, through Derrida. It is not enough to say that words are the “other” of the image, or vice versa. One must further divide words into the spoken and the written. Written language is the “image” of speech:

“Has it ever been doubted that writing is the clothing of speech? . . . One already suspects that if writing is ‘image’ and exterior ‘figuration,’ this representation is not innocent. The outside bears with the inside a relationship that is, as usual, anything but simple exteriority. The meaning of the outside was always present within the inside, imprisoned outside the outside, and vice versa. Thus a science of language must recover the *natural* – that is, the simple and original – relationships between speech and writing, that is, between an inside and an outside.”⁵

The clothing of speech by writing, the clothing that makes a word an image, produces a perplexing shift between what we have always held to be exteriority (images, objects, writing) and what we have always held to be interiority (speech). To extract one more turn from this most salient of passages on writing: Derrida speaks of our attempt to recover the “natural” relationship between inside and outside, a “natural” relationship that would have been “inverted by the original sin of writing.” The mythology of an “original speech” that was later sullied by writing, by civilization, by genealogical anxiety, is the mythology and theology of the Garden of Eden itself, which was, above all, a place where inside and outside were fixed. Derrida goes on to say:

“Malebranche explained original sin as inattention, the temptation of ease and idleness, by that *nothing* that was Adam’s distraction, alone culpable before the innocence of the divine word: the latter exerted no force, no efficacy, since *nothing* had taken place. Here too, one gave in to ease, which is curiously, but as usual, on the side of technical artifice and not within the bent of the natural movement thus thwarted or deviated.”⁶

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Adam’s distraction, then, creates a slippery surface upon which the imperatives of the divine (of origin, of the clarity of boundary that is the garden, of original speech) cannot get a grip. And this distraction is a kind of technique for evading the theology and authority of the “natural.” The surface, where nothing happens, becomes a place where traditional deep oppositions such as inside/outside, original/copy, object/word, are in a kind of suspension.

There is another piece to this, mainly the presence of Eve. What is Eve doing? Eve is either complicitous in the politics of distraction or not. Perhaps she has easily given up on the natural and is busy conspiring with the serpent to take advantage of Adam’s distraction – to get a ticket out of the garden, so to speak, on the back of Adam’s nothingness. Or perhaps she already inhabits the “nothing but surface” condition of the cosmos and makes use of specific surfaces, like the red of the apple, to ease out from under divine scrutiny. The problem of Eve is, in a sense, the problem of how to account for the persistence of an opposition (between writing and architecture) in the face of multiple and clever arguments to the contrary. Why is it so difficult for us to hold to the surface and see the alliance between surfaces? Eve, or rather Eve’s gender, puts some kind of wedge into the equation.

The spirit of Hughes’s use of the word “invention” is that women invent a way into architecture by inventing different kinds of practice: small practices, hybrid practices, practices in theory. The one architectural practice that resists, or proves difficult for, this type of invention is building buildings. Either invented practices are too small, too hybrid, too theoretical to attract major building commissions, or the very form of a (so-called) invented practice has a puzzling and problematic relationship to buildings. While it would be a kind of theoretical folly to

pursue the history of the architectural object, the building, with respect to some generalized gender condition called “woman,” there are a number of mythologies, theories, and histories that situate women with respect to objects. Generally these mythologies provide conflicting accounts of women and objects. Some suggest that women are acquisitive of objects, and themselves objects to be acquired; others that women are expert purveyors of words, but have an imperfect or weak relationship to objects. Words are cheap, objects are dear, except where the woman herself is an object, in which case objects are cheap, too. Women acquire objects but they produce words. One thinks, as always, of Penelope (the shroud and the suitors), Helen and Paris (“the face . . .”), Scheherazade and her endless tale, certain African societies that equate women with semi-precious objects, the relation of women to jewelry and money, property ownership histories, domestic engineering and Taylorism, Melanie Klein and other object theorists, Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, and contemporary feminist theories of female identity; one thinks also of the adjectives that have traditionally described women’s speech/objects/properties such as babble/bauble and chatter/chattel. As we might discover in different ways from the preceding list, and as we already know from the spin of the aphorism “A picture is worth a thousand words,” the opposition between words and things, or words and objects, is difficult to uphold and, more specifically, difficult to genderize.

But it is possible to say that whenever we find a surfeit of stereotypes and exclusions, in this case women from the practice of building, we might suspect that there is some kind of identification crisis under way. How does the (other) saying go? “Necessity is the mother of invention.” Invention is mothered forth in response to a lack – the same lack as always – the lack of an object. Architecture is not, contrary to its reputation, an object profession, but it fetishizes the object with impunity; very few architects actually build, in a physical way, the buildings they design (fig. 2). It is a profession of object thinkers who grapple with the living condition of the object as a condition that is other to itself (one of the conditions for fetishization). The carpenter or electrician, the trade person who actually carries out the instructions specified by the architect, is a different order of being from the architect and this is testified

to by the massive legal, cultural, and material conflict between these two worlds. What the architect has, among other things, is a knowledge of materials, and this knowledge is in perpetual negotiation with the actual material practices that the architect must marshal to his/her cause. Without exploring all the multiple dimensions of how architects identify with the construction of the buildings to which they never, literally, put a hand, one can say that the sense of object-loss or object-lament is a very long and deep strand in architectural history. I want only to touch on this history obliquely by means of another history, the mythical history of the American West.

Jane Tompkins writes of how, in the film genre of the western, a certain concept of the masculine is aligned with the need to become as total, as dense, as present as an object. She quotes Peter Schewenger: "To become a man . . . must be finally to attain the solidity and self-containment of an object."⁷ And she quotes Octavio Paz, whose definition of "macho" is a "hermetic being, closed up in himself." "The interdiction masculinity places on speech," Tompkins says, "arises from the desire for complete objectivization. And this means being conscious of nothing, not knowing that one has a self . . . nature is what [the hero] aspires to emulate: perfect being-in-itself."⁸

The western is, of course, a parable of American identity that bears specifically on the settling of the West and the relationship of men and women to that settlement. In this parable, women are the protectors of proper speech, which is the speech of the schoolteacher and the society woman imported from the East. The identification of women with proper speech is synonymous with the proprietorial role women played in the West as those who "settled" a mobile population into proper houses, schools, towns with libraries, and so forth.⁹

But the house itself, the building and ownership of the house, belongs to the other side of the parable, the man's side. Owning property, which was, of course, part of what the settlement of the West involved, was related in some intimate way to the male identification with land as object. Turning the West into real estate, and subsequently towns and cities, required both the "silent" identity with objects (the image) and the "talkative" identity of social propriety (the word).

FIG. 2

Robert Longo. *Pressure*. 1982–83.
Two parts: painted wood with lacquer finish, and charcoal, graphite, and ink on paper, overall 8 ft. 6 3/8 in. x 7 ft. 6 in. x 36 1/2 in. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the Louis and Bessie Adler Foundation, Inc., Seymour M. Klein, President



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FIG. 3

Mies van der Rohe + object



Architecture's identification crisis, at least in part, also belongs to a version of this parable. The sense in which the discipline of architecture stands back from the object, and simultaneously desires the object (fig. 3), guarantees the anxiety associated with the admission of women into its ranks. For mastery over the object, becoming one with the object, is not possible in architecture (in fact, it is possible nowhere), and women, in spite of their conflicting history, have traditionally almost always stood for the failure of that mastery. To invite women in is simultaneously to invite in the idea that the route, however mistaken, to (masculine) identity through architecture and the object will be foreclosed; the *owning* of identity through the *owning* of objects is also foreclosed. The architecture of the American West – which is the scene of Tompkins's observations – is a landscape of solid monumental forms (buttes, mesas) seen against a horizon. In his search for perfect objecthood and the hermeticism of *machismo*, and ultimately property, the western hero tries to assimilate himself to this landscape totally. But this architecture – and now we see it is a mistake to call it architecture – is *nothing like* the architecture of the architect. The architecture of architects is hollow inside, not dense, not solid. So if this parable of American (and to some extent, European) masculinity, the western hero, falls short of becoming one with the densely formed landscape, how much more will a voided architecture fail to deliver its object-promises?

It seems, then, that, women are on the surface of things; certainly they are nothing to the discipline of architecture. But it also seems as if women invert something by being nothing, not because of some hidden or gender-specific power, but because of this strange condition of architecture as also being on the surface. There is an isomorphism between the surface and face practices of women (their words and appearances) and the practice of architecture.

But it is, of course, foolish to isolate some generalized (object) position for women or men. I have entertained this opposition only for its suggestive power. How else can we explain the strangeness of historical relations between men and women and architecture? Jacqueline Rose, in the introduction to Lacan's book *Feminine Sexuality*, reminds us of how generalizing the categories of "male" and "female" is fatal to the project of understanding the difficulty of sexuality:

"Sexuality belongs in this area of instability [the arbitrary nature of language] played out in the register of demand and desire, each sex coming to stand, mythically and exclusively, for that which could satisfy and complete the other. It is when the categories 'male' and 'female' are seen to represent an absolute and complementary division that they fall prey to a mystification in which the difficulty of sexuality instantly disappears. . . . Lacan therefore argued that psychoanalysis should not try to produce 'male' and 'female' as complementary entities, sure of each other and of their own identity, but should expose the fantasy on which this notion rests."¹⁰

Instead of speaking of "women" we should speak of the unstable and shifting equations produced by the conjunction of architecture + female + male + architecture, or architecture + word + object + architecture; and we would have to specify which part of architecture we meant, and so on. This would be the project that would discover what the ambiguity of outside/inside and invention might mean for women in architecture.

1. "Recently" now refers to two years ago, when I was writing an article on John Hejduk for a Canadian Centre for Architecture symposium in Montreal. This (present) essay has been difficult to put to rest because many of the issues I am writing about here intersect with larger unresolved problems. Also, uncharacteristically for me, this essay will be appearing in three different forms in three different places. All of these versions start with the same "Recently . . ." sentence, but then subtly begin to diverge from each other as I keep trying to straighten things out. For the other versions, see Francesca Hughes, ed., *Reconstructing Her Practice* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996), and my book manuscript, "Architecture and the Burdens of Linearity," currently under review by Yale University Press.
2. Private correspondence with Hughes.
3. I am thinking of that amazing passage in "Différance," where Derrida speaks of the complication of the "a" insinuated into the word "différence." See Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).
4. Jean-Luc Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *The Title of the Letter: A Reading of Lacan*, trans. François Raffoul and David Pettigrew (Albany: State University

of New York Press, 1992), x.

5. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 35 (his emphasis).

6. Ibid. (his emphasis).

7. Jane Tompkins, *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 56.

8. Ibid.

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9. The prostitute, who preceded the “proper woman,” is not usually depicted as antithetical to the female project of settlement. Her house is lavishly and permanently furnished, and she “entertains.” Men have to get clean of the land before they go to this house, and their manners matter. But, strictly speaking, the prostitute is a woman who wanders and, in this, she resembles the man who wanders.

10. Jacqueline Rose, introduction to Jacques Lacan, *Feminine Sexuality* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), 33.

Present Tense: Reply to Catherine Ingraham

DIANE LEWIS

For the furies, muses, and goddesses who came to speak in Lou Kahn's city

ANTIGONE, THE FIRST FEMALE HERO,
ENTRAPPED IN A LEGALISTIC AND LITERAL ERA, ASKS:
"OH, GOD, WHO WILL BE MY ALLY
WHEN PIETY IS MY CRIME?"¹
THE PIETY I CHOOSE TO REPRESENT HERE
IS THE PIETY OF ARCHITECTURE AS A DISCIPLINE.

Writing as practice is neither literature nor discipline. It is not the same as the language of architecture, an abstract language of dots and lines and voids into which is imbedded desire, structure, concept, and imagination of the universe, *if* it is studied carefully enough to carry such meaning. Contrary to Jennifer Bloomer's contention that the wall could never carry desire (see her essay in this volume, p. 161), I posit that any and every condition with which the imagination can confront the wall can be imbedded into the notation and the construction of the wall *if* the language of architecture is read, drawn, and understood as a poetic discipline.

THE RELATION OF ARCHITECTURE TO LITERATURE
THE LITERATURE OF ARCHITECTURE
ARCHITECTURE AS THE LITERATURE OF CIVILIZATION
ARCHITECTURAL LANGUAGE AS A LITERATURE OF ITS OWN
THE DISCIPLINE OF THE PLAN AND THE SECTION

This highly structural, historic and poetic set of relations is the antithesis of the postmodern position posited in Catherine Ingraham's essay, which analyzes the implications of what she calls an aphorism, "A picture is worth a thousand words."

"A picture is worth a thousand words" is a quotation, printed on March 10, 1927, by Fred Barnard, the famous New York critic and poet, in his magazine, *The Printers Ink*, where he goes on to say that he was inspired by the original and very ancient Chinese proverb, "One *look* is worth a thousand words" (my emphasis). So we see that "A picture is worth a thousand words" is not an aphorism but a quote – a quote with a particular history and a specific source. A typical malaise of postmodernism and deconstructivism is the erasure of the source, the erasure of attribution, in order to construct a history of anonymous collective acts, as opposed to a history of ideas attributed to their makers. Ingraham implies that the "aphorism" carries a value commonly acknowledged by a collective, anonymous objectivity: the value of images over ideas, built works over written concepts, male acts over female processes. The value implied by the "aphorism" is then analyzed for a polemical purpose, while the meaning or root of the "aphorism" (quote) is ignored.

I prefer an existential and literary approach learned from Sartre who, on the subject of history, explained that the interest is not to know its objective, but to give it one. Quite the contrary from Ingraham, I relish the exclusivity of experience within the domain of language; the invisible boundaries between the expression that different languages provide; the erotic sense of the untranslatable states of the exquisite difference between disciplines. Such is the "rub" to which Hamlet refers, a boundary between sleeping and waking, dreams and existence, the physical and the imaginary. The conscious discomfort and knowledge of this is the threshold of the modern. The "rub" of Hamlet became the *frottage* of Surrealism. I am interested in upholding and exploring the boundaries. The presence of the mind is confirmed in the ability to suspend or sustain the knowledge of the existence of contradictory realms, exclusive but simultaneous. Such a faculty is necessary to be an architect, and to make architecture.

My interest in the quote lies in the fact that it deals with the limits

of language and must be studied in those terms. "A picture is worth a thousand words" even questions the difference between the nature of the history of images and the history of words. Challenging the limits of these families of histories, I will employ it to address the diverse disciplines and the conditions that confront the boundary between word and image in philosophy, architecture, art, propaganda, and my own history.

Philosophy

LEWIS

"A picture is worth a thousand words" is the quotidian way of expressing a great philosophic recognition best stated in this century by Ludwig Wittgenstein in his discussions of the limits of language. When he says, "What can be shown cannot be said. What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence," it is clear that he means that the language of the image, the seen, imparts and contains different knowledge than the written or spoken word.

Architecture

The silent language of architecture speaks about the structure of civilization and the forces of gravity; its letter and words are best described in the seminal tract that Frank Lloyd Wright acknowledged to be his inspiration:

"Architecture began like any other form of writing. It was first of all an alphabet. A stone was set upright and it was a letter, and each letter was a hieroglyph, and on each hieroglyph a group of ideas rested like the capital on a column. . . . later on they formed words. . . . the Celtic dolmen and cromlech, the Etruscan tumulus, the Hebrew glagal are words. . . . Finally they wrote books. . . . architecture evolved along with the human mind; while Daedalus who is force, measured, and Orpheus who is intelligence, sang, the pillar which is a letter, the arcade which is a syllable, the pyramid which is a word, simultaneously set in motion both by a law of geometry and a law of poetry, formed groups, they combined and amalgamated, they rose and fell, they were juxtaposed on the ground and superimposed on the sky, until at the dictate of the general idea of an epoch, they had written those marvelous books which are also marvelous buildings: the Pagoda of Eklinga, the Ramesseum of

Egypt, the Temple of Solomon. . . . the Temple of Solomon was not merely the binding of the sacred book, but the sacred book itself."

– Victor Hugo, "Ceci Tuera Cela"
(This Will Kill That)¹

LEWIS

When Hugo wrote these words, he desired that the name of the great cathedral become a title binding a book to demonstrate his point. He mourns the change in the position of architecture in history as a result of the invention of the printing press. Architecture – the literature of civilization, a physically inscribed tectonic manifestation of oral tradition – was usurped by the imaginary space of the book. Hugo proposed that the next great architecture would arise from a new literary spatiality.

When Wright was asked about the crisis of the machine age and the subject of "modern" architecture, he argued that the book had replaced the cathedral, that the threat of the machine age had been the printing press, and he quoted Hugo's words, "this will kill that." Because the obvious root of Wright's spatially explosive free plan was the continuation of bare structural and mythic elements of classical thought, it innately held a concern for the historical memory of the power and purpose of architectural structure and space, for democratic ideals of freedom in the classical tradition, and for the survival of the individual and the imagination. *Plan libre* was the name the Europeans gave to Wright's structural concept, which was his spatial manifestation of an American ethical ideal, born constitutional, a set of principles.

In French, *histoire* means both "history" and "story," and the English dictionary reveals a shift between these two meanings, from an account of events both real and imaginary (first definition) to, later, an account of only those events deemed real. It is with the shift of boundaries between real and imaginary that the nature of history is redefined, and with it the limits of the concrete manifestation of its individual and collective acts: architecture.

Each city is a volume of civilization, a physical record of the decisions of individuals, imbedments of their thoughts and acts over centuries. The historic transition of an architectural work from collective attribution to

individual authorship is a critical issue to *any* position on urbanism from the nineteenth century through the present. In a postmonarchial civilization new programs for architecture had to be derived: the church, the piazza, and the palace were no longer the only work for the architect. New institutions, organs of a new civic corporeality and evolved social contract, had become necessary. Thus the pursuit of this century was not utopian design formalism, attributed to the modern movement by Philip Johnson and his followers to deride that movement as a failure, but the new potentials for a fusion of structure and program implicit in the democratic spatiality of the free plan.

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ARTICULATION OF STRUCTURAL FROM NON-STRUCTURAL
ARTICULATION OF EARTH AS OPPOSED TO GROUND ZERO
ORDER OF GRID AS DISTINCT FROM THE RANDOM
SPATIAL THEORY

ICONOGRAPHY OF AUTONOMOUS PROGRAMMATIC ELEMENTS
EXPRESSION OF GRAVITY EQUIVALENCE IN PLAN AND SECTION

... are some of the objective breakthroughs in twentieth-century architectural language which have borne the subjective nuance of the individual imagination. The discipline of architecture is within this language, a text of space and structure expressed in the binary opposition of architectural notation, articulate of the most subtle qualities and dimensionalities.

In a time when science is equated with objectivity, the nuance of the literary is devalued; technocratic language is employed to represent anonymous collective objectivity. There is a confusion about the value of subjectivity and the responsibility of authorship to the discipline and the poetics of architecture.

The "modern" space, in the strict meaning of the word as "definitive of its time," is and was always literary in the richness of the imagination of its inhabitation at every scale and in every state of its existence. One draws a plan as one writes a story: each detail is remarked, each event is set in a time passage, a spatial frame. The *plan libre* and the *nouveau roman* were the foundation for a new vision of locations and relationships

for facts and circumstances to become ideal. Thus Hugo's prophecy has been realized in the innovations in literary and architectural language of the twentieth century.

Art

"My dear friend,

The real danger you point out to me, one cannot take for a condition of the mind. Whenever we meddle with the differences between words and things, between the mind and our body and our ideas, the differences become even greater. But in order to see them we have got to be there. . . . To deny them would be to deny the mind."

– René Magritte⁴

Propaganda

Again, Magritte: "*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*" (This is not a pipe; fig. 1).

THE POSTMODERN MOTIVE
SEPARATES LANGUAGE AND IMAGE
SEPARATES MIND AND BODY
DE-CORPORALIZES ARCHITECTURE
THE SINGLE LINE
ELIMINATION OF THICKNESS
UNINHABITED TERRAIN
HISTORIC VS. MODERN
HITCHCOCK AND JOHNSON'S *INTERNATIONAL STYLE* CREDO
SETS UP A FALSE OPPOSITION WITHIN WHICH
AMERICAN ARCHITECTURAL CRITIQUE IS STILL IMPRISONED
ASSUMING A DISCONTINUITY OF TIME
A EUPHEMISM MASKING AS OPPOSITION OF
COLLECTIVE VS. INDIVIDUAL
IN GUISES OF
VERNACULAR VS. AUTHORED
AN AMERICAN VERSION OF *DER VOLK*
COMMERCIAL BECOMES EQUIVALENT TO PUBLIC
PUBLIC BECOMES POPULAR



LEWIS

Ceci n'est pas une pipe.

FIG. 1

René Magritte. *The Treachery of Images*. 1929. Oil on canvas, 23 5/8 x 31 7/8 in. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, purchased with funds provided by the Mr. and Mrs. William Preston Harrison Collection



Pipe Courty's.

FIG. 2

Le Corbusier. From *L'Art décoratif d'aujourd'hui*, 1925

USURPATION
LE FOLKLORE

USURPATION OF THE CIVIC
 DECONSTRUCTIVISM IS THE DESTRUCTION
 OF THE MEMORY OF
 IMBEDMENT OF CONTENT IN ARCHITECTURAL NOTATION
 THE ERASURE OF THE VALUATION OF INDIVIDUAL SPIRIT
 IN COLLECTIVE LANGUAGE
 THE SUPPRESSION OF EROS IN THE ART OF ARCHITECTURE
 NOT A FEMINIST ISSUE ONLY
 AN EROTICIST ISSUE
 THE STRUGGLE FOR THE POSITION OF THE INDIVIDUAL
 ARTIST IN HISTORY
 RIMBAUD AGAINST *LEARNING FROM LAS VEGAS*

My History

In 1976 my aunt and guardian, Ann Heller, cousin of Joseph, graduate of Barnard in the 1920s, dedicated to women's education, spent her final days in a series of very directed conversations with me. She prefaced the last with a discussion of "A picture is worth a thousand words." She informed me that the pictorial days of *Life* and *Look* were past, and that she recognized the creeping presence of the kind of separation of fact from image that she had witnessed during the Nazi era. Debilitation of language was the purpose: both the language of words and the poetry of images; and in such erosion was a great threat to freedom. For, ultimately, your freedom is in the quality of your language.

1. Sophocles, *Antigone*, trans. Kenneth McLeish (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979).
2. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961).
3. Victor Hugo, *Notre Dame of Paris*, trans. John Sturrock (London: Penguin Books, 1978), 189.
4. René Magritte, letter to Camille Goemans, September 27, 1928, in *Magritte/Torczyner: Letters Between Friends*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994).

The Return of the Repressed: Nature

DIANA AGREST

“As nature came to seem more like a machine, did not the machine come to seem more natural?”

– Sandra Harding¹

This essay originated with the China Basin project, a theoretical urban proposal for San Francisco developed with my office for the exhibition *Visionary San Francisco*, held at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 1990. We were given a text from which to work, a detective story à la Hammett, in which the China Basin area in San Francisco was the cause for intrigue and murder. This area became the site for the project. While the project was an instinctive response to the question of the American city and urbanism today, its retrospective reading led me to focus on the question of nature. Although the project preceded the text, I have reversed the order of their presentation here, thus providing a framework for the understanding of the project rather than presenting the project as an application of it.

For more than fifty years the question of nature has been conspicuously absent from urbanistic discourse. This symptomatic absence has generated the critical examination of ideology that this text represents. This work explores the conditions that articulate and structure the notions of nature, architecture, and gender in the ideology of modernist urbanism.

The American city, a city that regulates (suppresses or generates) enjoyment through the presence of object buildings, plays a key role in the unraveling of this complex articulation, indicating the repetition of a symptom that goes back to the original (American) urban scene/sin: the

violation of nature by the machine; a confrontation where, in the struggle between the machine and the forces of nature, woman is suppressed.

Nature has been a referent for Western architectural discourse from Vitruvius through the Renaissance, when beauty, the most important property of buildings, was supposed to result from the re-presentation of nature. Only in the nineteenth century, with Durand's critique of architecture as representation, was there a break with this tradition.² It is in the twentieth century, in Le Corbusier's *Ville Contemporaine*,³ *Plan Voisin*, and *Ville Radieuse*,⁴ that nature reappears in the urban discourse, not as part of an architectural metaphoric operation but as an element in an urbanistic metonymic construct. It is not only in the European urbanistic discourse that we find clues to the absence of nature, but also in the American ideological construction of the relationship between nature and city and its articulation with the process of urbanization. The current absence of nature from urban discourse is related precisely to the suppressed relationship between European urbanistic discourse and the American city. The American city – that place where urban development directly coincides with the westward displacement of the frontier, where a rational order was applied to virgin land – presents the most pertinent example of the relationship between nature and the city in twentieth-century urbanism as ideology and its articulation with the real.⁵

The development of the American city can be explained through the opposition between nature and culture, between wilderness and the city. In this equation city, considered as evil, as the place of sin, was assigned a negative "sign" or value, while nature was equated with God and embodied everything that was positive. "By the time Emerson wrote *Nature* in 1836, the terms God and Nature could be used interchangeably." Ideas of God's nature and God in nature became hopelessly entangled.⁶ The moral and aesthetic qualities with which nature was imbued were considered far superior to economic and urban forces and the potential for development those forces represented. The pastoral ideal was a distinctly American theory of society and an all-embracing ideology; America was seen by Europeans as a place that, as virgin land, offered the possibility of a new beginning for already developed Europe.⁷ However, when

the frontier began to be pushed westward and wilderness was to be conquered, the city, by necessity, was assigned a positive value since towns were necessary in order to facilitate the development of the land; nature, which came to represent the danger of the unknown, became the negative "sign."⁸ This conflict between city and country is already present in Jefferson's *Notes on Virginia*, in which he recognizes both the great political and economic potential of the machine and the fact that it will alter rural life.⁹

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The machine, a product of and vehicle for the scientific revolution, made industrialization possible in a manner apparently consistent with the democratic project; at the same time, it both became and symbolized a threat to the pastoral ideal. The greatest manifestation of this conflict appears in the form of the locomotive, the machine that disturbs the peaceful rural idyll, as Hawthorne so vividly describes in *Sleepy Hollow*, his reaction to the process of urbanization.¹⁰ The locomotive that slashes and scars the virgin land is the machine that makes possible the westward conquest of the wilderness, paradoxically destroying what it wants to discover (fig. 1). The more nature was conquered and exploited, the more a growing consciousness of its value as wilderness developed in anticipation of its ultimate destruction. Suddenly Americans came to the realization that as opposed to Europeans' historical past, their true past was nature itself. Extraordinary views of nature afforded by the new accessibility to the wilderness became equated with the beautiful and the sublime as defined by European Romantics;¹¹ and in the arts, it was in painting that the sublime in nature was most powerfully manifested. Nature was equated with God, and painters who could portray nature as God's work were close to being emissaries of God on earth. But paradoxically, "the new significance of nature and the development of landscape painting coincided with the relentless destruction of the wilderness into the early 19th century."¹² Thomas Cole represented this paradox in his series of paintings *The Course of Empire – Savage State, Pastoral State, Consummation, Destruction, and Desolation* (fig. 2).¹³ However, the locomotive crossing the virgin land "was like nothing seen before," and in order to reconcile the power of the machine with the



FIG. 1

Frederic Edwin Church. *Twilight in the Wilderness*. 1860. Oil on canvas, 40 x 64 in. The Cleveland Museum of Art. Mr. and Mrs. William H. Marlatt Fund, 65.233

FIG. 2

Thomas Cole. *The Course of Empire - Pastoral State*. 1836. Oil on canvas, 39 1/4 x 63 1/4 in. The New York Historical Society

beauty and peacefulness of the rural countryside, a discourse in which the power of the machine could be praised – a technological sublime – had to be developed.¹⁴

The mid-nineteenth century ideology of science, in which the entire universe was seen as a mechanism and the machine was viewed as part of this natural universe, provided the mediation that made the machine acceptable. However, this philosophy, while neutralizing the contradiction of accepting the machine as a positive force, facilitated the destruction of the very landscape that represented the ideal of pastoralism.¹⁵

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The ideological displacements that make possible the notion of the machine as mediator in the opposition between nature and city cannot be properly understood without introducing the problematic question of nature and science, in particular as it relates to scientific discourse, considered by philosophers as the “mirror” of nature. But for the ideology of that discourse to be understood in its many implications, another term needs to be added: that of gender, as it relates to both nature and to science.

In exploring the relationship between nature and science it is important to recognize the equivalence between nature and woman that, historically, scientific discourse has developed. Nature, gendered female, has been seen in philosophy and throughout the history of science as either an organism or a mechanism.¹⁶ According to the first view, nature was feminine and passive while husbandry, the active exploitation of nature, was masculine. Thus, the male was made essential to the cultivation of nature’s latent fertility, just as in procreation, where the egg was seen as passive and the sperm as active, making the male “essential” to the process.¹⁷ This equivalence between nature and female is key to understanding the struggle for power and the engendering of the parties in that struggle, where power is gendered male, making possible the displacement of the double image of woman/nature. Nature is seen as a virgin nymph or fertile and nurturing mother “in loving service of mankind,” or as “a wild willful creature generating chaotic states that needs to be controlled,” and, even worse, the bearer of “plagues, famines, and tempests.”¹⁸ Nature, identified with the female sex, was to be enslaved, inquisitioned, dissected, and exploited – an identification that



FIG. 3

Hans Baldung Grien. *The Witches*.
1510. Woodcut. Bildarchiv
Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin

justifies the search for power over nature and over woman. Woman was seen as a virgin if subjected to male desires, as a witch if rebellious; adored as a virgin, burned as a witch (fig. 3). (Witches, symbolizing the violence of nature, were believed to control natural forces like storms, illness, and death. In addition, the fact that “women also seemed closer to nature than men and imbued with a far greater sexual passion” became one of the major arguments in the witch trials of the sixteenth century.¹⁹)

After the scientific revolution of the sixteenth century, the mechanistic view of the universe secured domination over the female attributes of nature. The virgin earth was subdued by the machine for the exploitation of the goods of the earth in a race where industrialization and technological progress, backed by an ever-more rationalized view of the world, made the development of capitalism possible.²⁰ The process that privileged the mechanistic over the organic was also needed to control, dominate, and violate nature as female while excluding woman from socially and economically dominant ideology and practices. This approach to nature was based on a double system: one factual as it related to scientific laws; and one symbolic as machines transcended their own specific primary functions to give rise to a world of metaphoric and analogical relationships, ranging from the body to the entire universe.²¹

From a general opposition of nature/culture, other dichotomies more specific to architecture develop: nature/city and nature/architecture. Nature/city was already present – through the oppositional relationship between nature and machine – at the conquest of the American wilderness and concomitant development of the agrarian countryside. Throughout this process the mechanistic view of nature prevailed in consonance with the scientific revolution, and it continued to prevail on both sides of the Atlantic, certainly until Le Corbusier’s *Ville Contemporaine* of 1922.

The locomotive, the machine that traversed the yet undeveloped land, generated another phenomenon: the appropriation and subdivision of land for towns and cities (figs. 4–6). The formal instrument that shaped this appropriation is Jefferson’s one-mile grid, which also became an urban footprint regardless of topographical conditions, transcending the

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FIG. 4

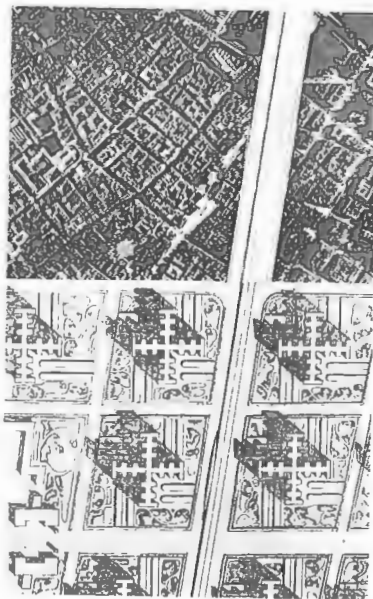
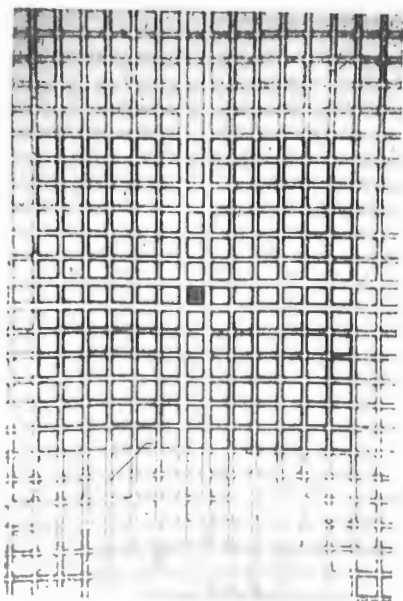
Plan of Chicago, Illinois. 1834



FIG. 5

View of Oklahoma City, Indian Territory. 1890





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FIG. 6
Plan of the Far West, Missouri.
ca. 1836

FIG. 7
Le Corbusier. The historical city
and the modern city. From *The*
City of Tomorrow, 1929

opposition between country and city. Grids were drawn over the natural terrain as if on a blank piece of paper: cities without history. The grid as a spatially open-ended, nonhierarchical system of circulation networks anticipated what communications would produce later in a non-physical, spatial way. The gridding of America should be seen as the creation of the real modern city – an abstract Cartesian grid with no past traced on virgin land, a condition claimed by Le Corbusier in his *Plan Voisin* of 1922, specifically, and in early modernist urban design in general (fig. 7).

While modern cities were being built in America, modern examples of urban theory such as Le Corbusier's *Ville Contemporaine*, *Plan Voisin*, and *Ville Radieuse* were being developed in Europe.²² It is in these early twentieth-century projects that nature appears as a major element in urban discourse. *Ville Radieuse* offers an excellent compendium of urbanistic ideology: "I go where order is coming out of endless dialogue between man and nature, out of the struggle for life, out of the enjoyment of leisure under the open sky, in the passing of the seasons, the song of the sea. . . . The idea of the Radiant City was born over a period of years from observation of the laws of nature."²³

It is worth looking into the apparent paradox in Le Corbusier's urbanism, where nature has an essential role in his critique of the conditions of the historical city and in his development of an urbanism and an architecture whose avowed referent is the machine. To better understand this we must examine not only his writings but also his projects. Le Corbusier's critique of the historical city is based on establishing the opposition between historic city/nature, which could be translated formally into fabric/nature as stated in his critique of "the corridor street" in *Précisions*.²⁴ The green plane, as a metonymic presentation of nature, provides the formal background for the modernist notion of the city of object buildings as an alternative to the historical city of fabric. In the *Ville Contemporaine*, a paradigmatic example of modern urbanism, the American city's "gridded nature" is metaphorically (and unconsciously) transformed into an abstract gridded green plane dedicated to the movement of cars, while buildings (on pilotis) and pedestrians are lifted from the ground.²⁵ Nature becomes an element in the machinery of circula-

tion, or part of the modernist *visual field*. This field is not an organic entity but an artificial construct formally organized as an abstract horizontal plane where geometry imposes order and formal control. "In order to save himself from . . . chaos . . . man has projected the laws of nature into a system that is a manifestation of the human spirit itself: geometry."²⁶ While the incorporation of nature as an element of the modernist city was essential in generating the opposition between fabric and object, in its application this opposition becomes autonomous of nature, which, as if by legerdemain, disappears. Nature is first suppressed, via a metaphorical manoeuvre representing it as a "green plane," as part of the urban machine; it is then relegated to a background, finally to be expelled by the economic-political forces of capitalism in a globalized market economy based on the exploitation and destruction of nature.

In modernist urbanism, where the city becomes the subject of architecture as a reaction to the historical city, the general opposition between nature and culture is transformed into the more specific opposition between nature and architecture. This new opposition is further articulated in the form of fabric/object, entering the architectural urban discourse as the historical city-of-fabric versus the modern city-of-objects on a green plane, thus generating a new morphology. In its subsequent application, however, what remains of this morphology is just the object, while the green plane – nature, which was the essential condition for the emergence of this opposition and morphology – curiously disappears. Nature then reappears in the discourse of modernist architecture and urbanism in a manner consistent with the mechanicism of the scientific ideology that is at its base, represented in the imaginary of modernist urbanism as an artificial construct or as mechanized nature: in the *Ville Radieuse* sun, air, and light, absent from the historical city, reappear managed and controlled by the machine (that is, "exact air" and "artificial building site"). "To build houses you must have sites. Are they natural sites? Not at all: they are immediately *artificialized*. This means that the natural ground is limited to but one function: withstand the strains, the weight of the structure (law of gravity). Once this is done we say 'goodbye' to the natural site, for it is the *enemy of man*. A home on the ground (beaten

earth) is frightfully unhealthful; you no longer find it anywhere but in artificial sites.”²⁷ The countryside is now “gay, clean, and alive,” always placed in the context of the machine age. It is the artificial architectural order of modernism that regulates the relations between nature, city, and technology. The ideology of modernist architecture and urbanism is still based on the mechanistic scientific ideology, taking the form of *machinism*, an ideology that implicitly sanctions the repression/suppression of woman. Le Corbusier writes, once more in *Radiant City*, this time on “Laws”:

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“The laws of nature and the laws of men.
We live in the presence of three spheres:
Our dictator, the sun
The globe on which we live out our destinies: the earth
And a companion forever whirling around us: the moon
....
Woman, that power in conjunction with which we work,
is ruled by this lunar month.
We the men are ruled by the solar year.”²⁸

The urban realm thus discloses the historical role of the alignment of nature and gender, an identification that is once again key to the struggle for power and the engendering of power. The conception of the world as a machine in a fetishistic architecture that is the result of the application of the principles of modernist urbanism allows the double domination (or negation) of nature and woman.

INSCRIPTION OF NATURE: THE CHINA BASIN PROJECT

The city as object of desire is transformed into the city as the place where the forces of desire are set free. The China Basin project, much like Donna Haraway’s cyborg, is “about transgressed boundaries, potent fusions and dangerous possibilities.”²⁹ This project is a provocation. It is, to paraphrase Haraway, a fiction mapping our urban, social, and ideological

reality, resolutely committed to partiality, irony, and perversity. It is antagonistic, utopian, and completely without innocence.³⁰ The project serves as a unique opportunity to examine some of the pressing questions concerning the place, role, and form of urban development and questions about nature in urbanistic discourse at this moment in time (figs. 8–13).

The China Basin is a 300-acre site sloping down from the Embarcadero Freeway toward San Francisco Bay. The scheme assumes the creation of a new natural urban datum plane related to that of the existing freeway, which in turn is rendered obsolete and transformed into a residential structure. The freeway both defines one edge of the site and indicates the highest point above sea level. The China Basin Canal bounds the northwestern edge of the site, and San Francisco Bay lies to the east. An undulating blanket of nature covers the site and is punctuated by curvilinear public spaces varying in function and depth.

In the China Basin project, the smooth surface of nature replaces the striated fabric of the city in the form of various street grids; the fabric in turn is buried under the site: a seamless continuity of activity flows under the smooth surface of nature, a continuous flux without delimitation. This project addresses and encourages active production rather than the passive consumption that characterizes most urban developments, a condition manifested in the proposed program.

Zones of programmatic superimposition and interrelation radiating out of each “courtyard” are created, thus defining a *public place*. The boundaries determining various programs are left in suspense, undetermined, creating areas of programmatic instability, dissolving the barriers of institutionalized practice and reflecting the chance process of urban change over time. Intermediate levels provide most of the routes of movement. An intricate machine comprised of rotating, interlocking reels and platforms allows pedestrians to travel from one place to another in horizontal, vertical, and diagonal movement. At other levels, more traditional communication routes are present as well. This project proposes to explore the possibilities of using other geometries than Euclidean, which is at the core of the Cartesian grids of both the American city and early twentieth-century urbanism.

FIG. 8

View of San Francisco showing
the China Basin area and the
Mission District grid, ca. 1860



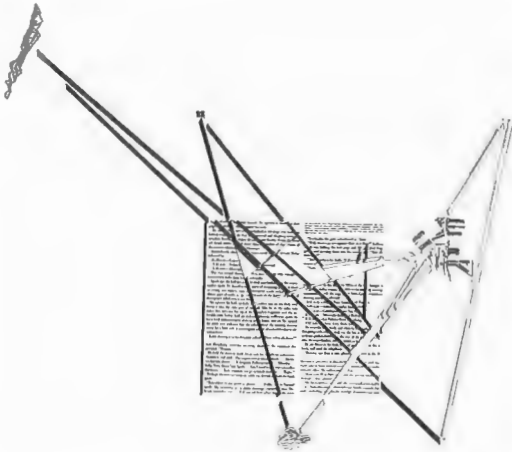
FIG. 9

Mapping San Francisco: reading
the city through a mystery (story),
a different city is revealed

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FIG. 10

China Basin, site plan



Programs

1. AMPHITHEATER 2. GENETIC RESEARCH CENTER Here, a place for the Genome

Projects: the body as machine is scrutinized on the most scientific and analytic

levels. 3. MUSEUM OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY 4. OLYMPIC TRAINING CENTER

The Olympic Training Center is organized in linear fashion for swimming, running, jumping, skating, and so on. The machines for exercising the body further elaborate the relationship between body and machine. 5. RADIO TOWER 6. WORKSHOP

The workshop is a center for production. Space is available for individual or group work in disciplines ranging from the fine arts and literature to cooking and computer animation. Spaces are oriented radially, with the most concrete of physical activities – those requiring the most space – occurring closest to the center. Moving outward, the space becomes more limited and the activities more abstract and conceptual. Sectionally, each discipline occupies an L-shaped space. The individual spaces are stacked vertically while the horizontal space is maintained as a communal area for the exchange of ideas within a discipline. Acting as a two-way panoptic device, the workshops accommodate visual interaction between different disciplines. 7. SEAT-IN SCREENING The screening studio is a dual “seat-in” open-air film theater with screens oriented back to back. The occupants are protected from the elements and audio linkup is provided at each seat. The studio is intended to present sporting events and those films not shown in the popular commercial cinema, including experimental films, documentaries, foreign films, and low-budget films.

8. MARKETPLACE The marketplace is a mega-automat, where a structure rotates within a series of walkways. The structure itself is composed of four levels where the exchange of merchandise may occur. The consumer travels exclusively along the peripheral walkways, while the central structure rotates around its own axis, thereby making products accessible to the public. Adjacent to the marketplace are agricultural fields and workshops, where items are collected and produced for sale. Only those items produced on the China Basin site would be sold at the marketplace.

9. AQUARIUM AND OCEANOGRAPHIC RESEARCH CENTER A semi-circular wall with a diameter of 500 feet defines the entire site of the aquarium and oceanographic research center, which is composed of three major elements: a primary research tank connected to the China Basin Canal, an elevated aquarium tank, and, adjacent to the primary tank, a three-dimensional grid of pathways giving access to research floor space. 10. BATHS The notion of *dépense* underlies the program, and the plea-

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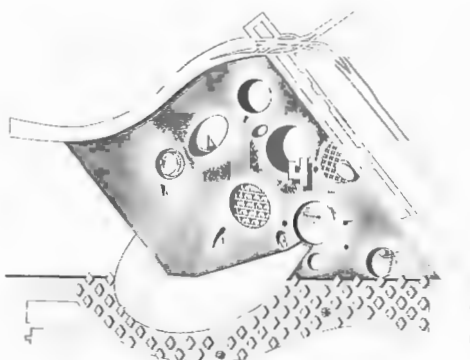


FIG. 11

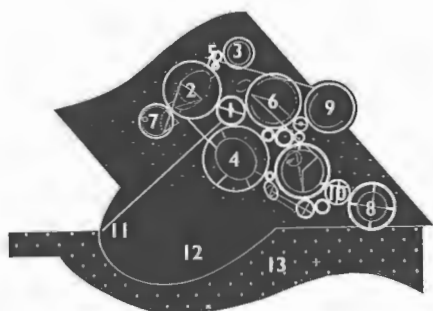
China Basin, plans at highest level and circulation level showing the public places and the blanket of green

FIG. 12

China Basin, section showing circulation level and open public spaces

FIG. 13

China Basin, view of model



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sure of free bodies can express itself. The baths symbolize the intentions of the project as a whole. In this natural forum for the discourse on the body, the public is encouraged to develop a new vision for the twenty-first century. 11. BASEBALL FIELD
12. FIELDS Here, activities of agricultural experimentation take place, generating products that may be obtained at the market. 13. FIELD OF SOLAR COLLECTORS

THE FORCES OF INSCRIPTION

The city as object of desire is transformed into the city as the place where the forces of desire are set free (fig. 14).

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Nature and machine join in the creation of collective territories. Residues of the forces that traverse the subject – the memories, the emotions, the rationalizations, the history, the stories, the assumed knowledge – are fixed by lines, by marks that project the forces of desire: “the survival of an experience.”

In a movement that flows through earth and body, reaching through the gaze and into the depth of the universe, in the framing of infinitude, in the folding, collapsing of the sky onto the earth, through edges, borders, the borders of the body. Orifices and borders that are the makings of a body.

Border, edge, frame; the capturing and losing focus in an oscillating movement between the recognizable and the unknown.

Window, border, frame protecting the interiority of the subject from the collective outside while allowing the eye as shifter to bridge both worlds, as the mirror reflects the gaze back (to us).

A seamless continuity of activity (of program) flows under the smooth surface of nature. A continuous flux without delimitation.

The natural machine, the point where nature, body, and the machine intersect, placing the subject and object on the same plane.

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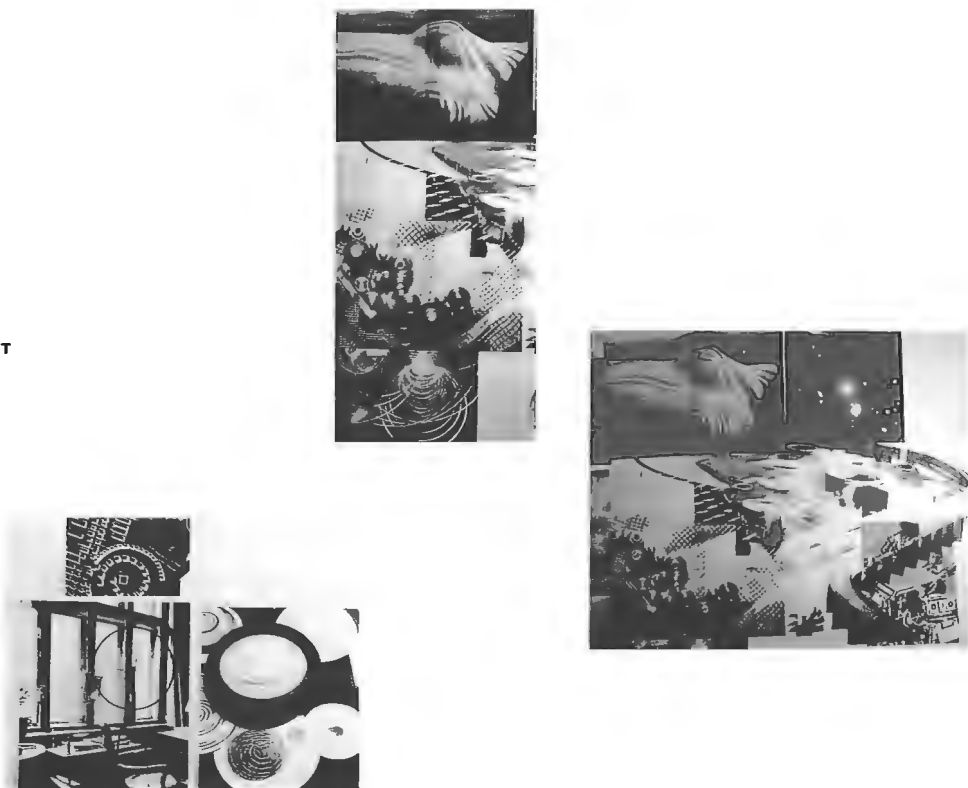


FIG. 14

Diana Agrest. *The Forces of
Inscription*. 1992. Photomontage

The traces of a body of woman which embodies desire, which is itself and the other.

Woman as gender constructing a new nature. It displaces the city to another place, which does not depend on the fetishistic object-building to achieve an "urban pleasure."

AGREST

1. Sandra Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), 116.
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4. Le Corbusier, *Radiant City* (New York: The Orion Press, 1964).
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6. Barbara Novak, *Nature and Culture, American Landscape and Painting 1825–1875* (New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1980), 3.
7. Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden* (London, Oxford, and New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 4, 99.
8. Reps.
9. Marx, 88.
10. Ibid., 15.
11. Ibid., 96; Novak, 5.
12. Novak, 4.
13. Ibid., 10.
14. Marx, 195, 206.
15. Ibid., 162, 165; Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989), 194, 227–29.
16. Merchant, 2–5, 20, 99, 214.
17. Ibid., 149–163.
18. Ibid., 2, 20, 127.
19. Ibid., 130–32.
20. Ibid., 2, 192.
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22. Le Corbusier, *Radiant City* and *Urbanisme*.

23. Le Corbusier, *Radiant City*, 85.
24. Le Corbusier, *Précisions* (Paris: Editions Vincent, Fréal & Cie., 1964).
25. Ibid.
26. Le Corbusier, *Radiant City*, 83.
27. Ibid., 55 (my emphasis).
28. Ibid., 76.
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30. Ibid., 151.

AGREST

The Case of the Death of Nature: A Mystery

DIANA BALMORI

Nature is dead. Murdered, in fact. Or so I was told. I was assigned to the case – it'll be a year this August – much to my chagrin. I didn't have a choice about it either. If I wanted to go on working I had to tackle it. All I was told was that Nature was killed or that she disappeared somewhere around July 1989. Causes unknown; attackers (if any) also unknown.

It was a very hot July when I started, hardly a propitious time to begin an investigation. I escaped the office – the air conditioning was on the fritz – and brought a few books to the house that could tell me something about Nature's life as a way of getting started. I got a cool breeze going by opening the door to the porch and the window to the garden and immersed myself in Raymond Williams's *Keywords* and C. S. Lewis's *Studies in Words*, both of which devoted great attention to our subject. These biographies gave me a sense of the complicated life Nature had led and of her many career changes over time.

The bios and some conversations I had soon after with some of her friends did seem to point to a particularly close tie between Nature and women. This picture was reinforced by many rumors about her troubled relationship with Culture, her male companion and lover, shortly before her demise. They were often seen arguing in public.

Her special relationship with women was based, I suppose, on the fact that she, herself, was female. But others speculated that it had to do with the group she was a part of, a women's group that met informally to discuss diverse topics. I spent some time investigating one particular session to get the flavor of these gatherings and of the participants. This session discussed the Roman physician Celsus: he had stated that

woman's nature was based on the good functioning of her reproductive organs and that a woman at the peak of her powers is equivalent to a male child, an old man, or a "castrato," a eunuch.¹ They discussed the fact that Celsus had saved all his praise of women's physiology for the womb – using the epithet *mirabilis* for it ("*ante omnia natura mirabilis*") and had adjudicated the womb to Nature. They noted, too, Nature's name shared a common root with *natus* (birth).

The group also discussed how the Greeks and Romans had called female genitalia "natural parts" but had not applied that term to male genitalia.² Then they also brought out other words that the Greeks and Romans had used as euphemisms for female genitalia, words such as garden, meadow, field, farm, furrow,³ which, as Nature herself pointed out at that meeting, were her bailiwick.

A look at the list of women who had been present at the meeting told me immediately that she was running around with a rather wild pack; these women were not the kind that appear on newspaper society pages. Many of them had been in skirmishes with the law, others had been ostracized for crossing moral lines (codes of morality for women always being much stricter than those for men, as several pointed out to me in the interviews). Of course, once Nature was identified with this group, it affected her reputation and she kept being portrayed as a weak victim, always in some rural setting, and often with these female acolytes. Meanwhile, Culture, her companion, got good press: he was always seen in the company of captains of industry, usually against the background of gleaming machines and cities. I heard it often, this bit about Nature's special relationship to women and Culture's to those who made things happen in the world, so often that it seemed more and more like a stereotype. Maybe it had sprung up in Nature's early days and nobody had bothered to adjust the picture. Of course, early days can mark out a course in a person's life or in a person's makeup. Maybe the way she started out branded her so that she fell into marginalized groups for company from then on.

But a lot of this stuff about her just didn't ring true. I'm reading through my old notes now and I see a major gathering of artists with her – this was years earlier – where she was honored by both male and

female artists from all over the world. They had declared her to be the model they sought to imitate – in fact *bad to* imitate, if they were to amount to anything as artists. But that had been many years ago and now, in talking to contemporary artists about her in private, they told me that they were through with her, that she certainly was not their model any more. Some artists said outright that it was all Culture now and that in fact he may well have had a hand in her disappearance.

I looked for witnesses to the alleged murder, someone who actually knew or had some confirmation of her death. I found two: Carolyn Merchant in *The Death of Nature* and Bill McKibben in *The End of Nature* were both emphatic about her death, though neither had actually witnessed it. They both presented convincing evidence of plans to harm Nature. But it was clear, too, that each one had known only one aspect of her – her life's geography in one case, her relation to gender issues in the other – and couldn't tell me much about other parts of her complex life. They had known her while she was mucking around in ecology and trying to sell something called ecosystems to municipalities, without much success. At town meetings, people kept telling her to stick to trees, rocks, and rivers: that was her stuff. At any rate, my notes say that she managed to get a resolution passed in some municipalities, putting towns under her jurisdiction, though not without some strong holdouts everywhere she went, the opposition coming from those who said towns were Culture's domain.

"Talk to Culture," my notebook says in early September. I tried several times but could never get beyond one of his agents. He was much too busy, I guess, with his various multinational ventures to give an unknown gumshoe like me the time of day. Notes from these interviews say Culture had been setting up some joint ventures with Nature just before she disappeared. When I asked what kind of joint ventures, and how come Nature had not been given credit for any that I knew of, the agent excused himself to take an international call.

Note from February 6th: "Culture, when did this liaison with Nature start?" From that date on, this became a central question in the investigation. Clearly I had to look at it more closely. Some people who knew her – I couldn't tell how well – said it was a late affair and that Nature

had been at her best before he showed up; that she had been a creature of spontaneous unmediated responses, a pure-hearted, innocent, playful, and delightful creature; that even of late, when she left for her ranch in the Sierras, a rather primitive outpost she was very fond of, she reverted to her old self and was in peak form. When I tried to get a fix on when he'd made his appearance, a most surprising piece of information came to light: I got different time periods from each of the respondents. When I double-checked their answers, it became clear that Nature and Culture must have known each other since childhood and must have actually grown up together (if, that is, we can trust my respondents' accounts: I still can't quite make heads or tails of the many different dates given to me). At some time in adulthood they had become lovers and they had also spent long periods as enemies. They had been everything to each other, it was clear, at one time or another. They had been less than everything to each other, too; there were many tales out of school about each one's dalliances. At any rate, Nature and he had had a big row at a public restaurant. Nature stomped out, and this had been the last Culture had seen of her. Poof – disappeared without a trace July 26, 1989 – that's what Culture's agent told me. If nobody had gone out to look for her sooner, it was because she had complained of wanting to be left alone. Culture maintained he hadn't seen her since that night.

Ah, yes. In my notes for October – I'm backtracking here – there were some jottings about her being seen in Indonesia as part of a rice symposium, an unlikely venture it seemed at first, but as I was reviewing my notes – cryptic as they were – something caught my eye. Through the centuries rice diseases were regularly overcome by crossings with the many wild varieties of rice. Nature's outfit in Southeast Asia was demonstrating the value of biodiversity, at least within one species, and this had become a new trump card. While there, she visited rice plantations (she was with Culture on that trip) and spoke out publicly in favor of terracing the rice paddies on the sides of hills, saying that terraces did what was needed to slow the flow of water while handling a lot of water without problems of erosion. She praised the Southeast Asians' use of the terrace on convex slopes and said they had understood what

she had done in the landscape of New England with hammocks (low mounds) and hollows – free form terraces – where the eroded soil went to fill hollows. They had understood, too, how she controlled erosion in streams by the sequence of pool (an area of deep still water which slows water flow), riffle (an area of fast running shallow broken water), pool.

More facts. But where did they fit? After spending three days alternately walking around my desk and tidying it up, I decided I needed help to see if I could make sense of all this (it always helps to have a friend look at the same thing you're looking at). So I went to see my friend H. B. After he'd heard me out, he said, "The trick in these things is to find the relevant piece to analyze. Where can you track her behavior? Is there any way you can get an overall sense of what she was doing in a discrete chunk of time?"

It seemed worth a try, so I started to organize the data on the basis of those activities of Nature that had come to light rather recently and seemed to be outside the activities she had been usually associated with. Like the Indonesian rice fields, this strategy brought up some unexpected places and topics, which, if anything, made things more confusing and difficult rather than simpler or clearer.

Going back to some August notes (I'm skipping again) I found "mosaic": take a landscape with patches of different elements – rocks, woods, roads, ponds, houses; Nature was reported to have said something about finding the system's boundary and measuring the input and output flow across that boundary and then, by altering the input into any one piece of the mosaic, affecting the whole of it. The mosaic could have many and varied pieces: some natural, some cultural; the mix was possible.⁴ Bingo! That was the track I'd been looking for.

It's April and I'm stuck again. No progress. I know where to go, but not how. Late call to a Seattle friend, C. S. She suggested putting down the data I now thought relevant and moving each piece around to see if it clicked with any other. It did.

Moving into late May. Morning fog, and the sun hitting hard in the afternoon. No obvious progress, but it feels closer. Then anxiety sets in; I have a clear sense now of how serious the plot against Nature had

been and, if it has not already succeeded, how serious it continues to be. It was early June when, through tips, questioning, and some lucky guesses, I traced her disappearance to an underground group who admitted kidnapping her for a few months and barricading themselves with her in some rugged hills in northern California. They had notified police as to how they would keep Nature there, intact: a royal prison with electrified barbed wire where not a blade of grass, rock, or tree would be interfered with. With this admission, I knew that I had enough to charge them with intent to kill. They were – the whole group of them – however, hardly the answer to the question, since in fact she had escaped; nobody knew how or where to. Her jailers had been the first to be surprised. After long interrogation, it became quite clear that they had no idea where she was; and that they had little, if any, understanding of her. They had, as most others, fallen for the cliché: romanticized her, and tried to make her fit their expectations.

Weekend of July Fourth: everybody out of town. On the phone with D. P., who's working on a grant proposal this weekend. I told him I was writing about the investigation, putting what I knew down on paper as a way of clarifying it for myself, and that just as I thought I had arrived at a solution and found the culprits, I discovered they were guilty only of intent and that Nature was, in fact, still alive. My so-called solution had vanished.

I decided to catch Culture off guard and appeared at his place unannounced. I saw the car in the garage when I pulled up. Somebody was home. I rang the doorbell. Silence. The door was slightly ajar. I pushed it open and called out, "Hello. Anybody home?" More silence. I could hear birds singing in the background, that's how silent it was. I looked out toward the yard and saw on the veranda a table with a large dish of fresh oysters on ice, still unopened. I smelled the smoke of a charcoal grill somewhere. There was a strong scent of eucalyptus out there, too, and of dry heat. Then a splash. I followed the sound and saw a long lap pool running into the dry landscape and a figure swimming away. It was not quite visible. I stood at the end of the pool to make myself seen and called out again. It was dusk, and some dark

clouds swallowed up the oranges and reds of the sunset. It was strange, this place so full of the marks of habitation and still so empty. I sat on the edge of the deck and waited.

Perhaps it was the lack of light, or my own letting go in the peacefulness of the place – sunset has always been my favorite hour – but I did not see the figure till it was by me. It was Nature's face, I thought, but dressed as a man. Or was it Culture with the mien and hands of Nature? I said nothing, just looked.

The charade was over. My companion knew it and didn't even attempt an explanation. The gendering, the interplay of conqueror and victim, had all been real – yet they were never separate, just contained in the same being. Virginia Woolf had caught a whiff of it when inventing Orlando, male in one era, female in another, a succession of roles and a multitude of careers.⁵ It had been useful to one group or another to depict the separateness, to present it as if they were apart from the rest of us. But they were not.

BALMORI

We sat in silence for a while and later, when invited, I shared the meal. Oysters, grilled tuna, corn, fresh fruit. The image of the mosaic floated through from the corn, grilled fish, oysters, and fruit to rocks, woods, paved roads, a lake, and houses. As I sat there, I had the clear sensation of being by myself. My companion was silent and absorbed in the food. Had I not been so aware of the changing features of everything on the table and of the face, gestures, eyes of my companion, I would have said I was alone contemplating my own nature.

I turned in my report on July 15, 1995. In my notebook, I wrote: Nature found. With Culture. Nature was Culture's idea. Culture, when it wants to convince anybody that it is really right, just says that it's Nature.

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2. C. S. Lewis, *Studies in Words* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1960, reprinted 1990).
3. Von Staden.
4. F. H. Bormann and G. E. Likens, "Catastrophic Disturbance and the Steady State in the Northern Hardwood Forest," *American Scientist* 67 (1979), 660–69, and *Pattern and Process in a Forested Ecosystem* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1981).
5. Virginia Woolf, *Orlando, a Biography* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992).

B A L M O R I

Female Fetish Urban Form

ANN BERGREN

Female, fetish, and urban form are mutually fashioned in a fifth-century Greek comedy by Aristophanes called the *Ecclesiazusae*, which means “the women who take over the *ecclesia*,” the male-only legislative assembly of Athens. The play shows a group of women successfully mounting a rebellion against the Classical architecture of the house and the city. Through their revolution, the play addresses questions left unspoken in canonical architectural history and theory: What will a woman build, if left to her own devices? In the construction of Western culture, why must we restrict her so severely? In her urban form, answers the play, the female will build the “death of the fetish.”

The play opens in the predawn darkness as the leader of the plot, Praxagora, invokes a ceramic lamp, explaining why it is the right sign by which to signal the other women to assemble (fig. 1).

“O shining eye of the wheel-driven lamp,
among clever men a discovery most noble and fair –
we shall disclose both your birth and your honors:
driven by the wheel and born from the potter’s thrust
you hold in your nostrils the shining honors of the sun –
rouse up the agreed-upon signs of light.
For by you alone do we fittingly reveal our signs, since
indeed in our bedrooms as we make our heroic trial
of the tropes of Aphrodite you stand near beside and
no one bars from the house your eye as superintendent
of our bodies curved with heads thrown back.

BERGREN



FIG. 1

Attic ceramic lamp with burning
flame, from the time of Socrates,
425-400 B.C.

Alone into the unspeakable recesses of our thighs
 you shine as you singe off the flowering hair.
 And with us as we furtively open the full storehouses
 of grain and flowing wine you stand beside.
 And although you do these things with us, you don't babble to those
 who are near.
 Because of all these things, you will be a witness of our present plans as
 well,
 as many as were ratified by my woman friends at the ritual of the Skira."¹

BERGREN

This lamp is crucial to understanding the architectural meaning of the play, for it will illuminate the ideal, institutionalized relation in Greek thought between architecture and the female body. In being a molded clay vessel and an instrument of depilation, the lamp will show, indeed, why and how architecture in its Classical foundation is precisely a matter, both for men and for women, of forming the female body. As a work of the potter's wheel, the lamp evokes the fundamental analogy, figured in the myth of Pandora, between the female body, the ceramic jar, and the *oikos* or "household." This analogy is an ideological construction, designed to mold women who will mold themselves according to the architecture of father-rule.² A salient instance of this self-formation is the Greek woman's depilation of her pubic hair. As tool of such auto-architecture, the lamp displays women who have graduated with honors, so to speak, from male-designed architectural school: women who act as properly male-formed architects by using their architectural power first and foremost to fashion themselves, so that the man will least fear and take most pleasure in the female *sexe*. By giving us this glimpse of how the architecture of the *oikos* normally regulates the female, Praxagora's apostrophe of the lamp also predicts, in effect, how the women will rebel against it. Indeed, this is perhaps the most ironically valuable and disturbing implication of the play's architectural meaning: that the women's strategies for resisting male constructions are themselves built into the original structure of household and city alike. With this prefabrication in mind, let us examine more closely the function of the lamp as ceramic jar and instrument of depilation.

Tracing the implications of the lamp as "driven by the wheel and born from the potter's thrust" takes us outside the play to two other texts: first, the myth of Pandora, which establishes the analogy between the female body, the ceramic jar, and the form of the *oikos*; and second, the *Oeconomicus* by Xenophon, which details the ways in which the household works as the woman's architectural school. Pandora, the first female and founding model of all the rest, is molded by Hephaestus, male god of craft, out of earth and water. Although a jar, she is also a building, with lips as door. In the words of the myth, "there in the unbreakable halls hope alone was remaining inside under the lips of the jar, and it did not fly out from the door."⁴ So Pandora as ceramic container is thus a body and (as) a house. This identification of body and house is embedded in the Greek language itself, in which the word for "own" (*oikeios*) is an adjectival form of the word for "house" (*oikos*). Your "own" thing is the thing of your house and your house is your "ownership" – your "ownness" itself – an identification that will be crucial to Praxagora's urban form, when her operation upon the *oikos* demolishes the distinction between own and other's.

The analogy posed by the myth of Pandora is not a simple assimilation of separate and equal male-molded containers. Within their relation of mutual likeness is the hierarchy of original over copy and container over contained with the jar as mediator. The female is modeled upon the jar, being herself ceramic and male-molded only in metaphor, and she is subordinated to the house that encloses her, molding her as an image of itself, a domestic container like the jar.⁵ What the woman (as contained by the house) is supposed to contain is the female's architectural power, that capacity the Greeks call *mêtis*.⁶ This tricky power of reversal and transformation is cast as originally female in the myth of the goddess Metis, whom Zeus marries and swallows, when she becomes pregnant. Zeus himself then gives birth through his head to their child, the goddess Athena, who teaches women to weave, weaving, along with such transformations as making bread from grain and children from seed, being a signal manifestation of the female's *mêtis*. If the architect-

ture of the *oikos* works, the female will imitate it. She will confine her shape-shifting to the edification of her husband, limiting her plastic production to the weaving of his walls and her sexual reproduction to the bearing of his legitimate children. Such is the lesson we learn from Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, a text in which a husband tells Socrates how he taught his bride, who comes to him knowing nothing except how to weave, everything else she needs to know.

His first lesson is the coincident aetiology of marriage and architecture itself.⁷ Not simply to produce children or to care for the aged, the *zeugos* or "joining" that is marriage derives from what makes humans different from animals: the need for shelter instead of living in the open air. Humans need the joint that divides – or the division that joins – inside and outside, and with it, the divisive joint of female and male. But in order to have something to bring inside the shelter, so the husband reasons, the man must go out to work in the open air, while the woman remains inside, devoting her *mêtis* to transforming what he brings in – sperm into children, grain into bread, and wool into woven cloth – acting, in this role, like a "general bee" (*hégemôn melissa*, compare "hegemony") who "weaves the cells" of her domestic hive. All the physical and psychological differences between male and female were created by "the god himself," master architect of this marital "joint," to fit the sexes for this basic spatial division.

The sexual spaces of marriage, however, are far from "separate, but equal." For it is the male outside who functions as architect, teacher, and model of the female and the *oikos* inside. And, paradoxically, the male's design to maintain the female's architectural difference – indeed, to maintain female as architectural difference – does not make her different.⁸ Rather, in anticipation of the function of the psychoanalytic fetish, the male design of female difference makes her a parodic imitation of himself.

Female as Parodic Male

The husband constructs the woman's realm – from the innermost recesses of her mind and body to the organization of the *oikos* itself – as a micro-

cosm of the roles, institutions, and ideals of the exterior, male world. Like the job of architects working in the office of a star, it is the wife's duty to devote her architectural talent to realizing her husband's design.

The consummate architectural virtue that the wife must emulate in the *oikos*, in her body, and in her deepest beliefs, is order – expressed in Greek by two words, *taxis* (cognate with “tactic” and “syntax”) and *kosmos* (cognate, ironically, with “cosmetic”). To teach his wife the powers of order, the husband uses examples from the male world: a chorus in drama (as in the Shakespearean theater, all actors in Athens were male), a deployed army, and a Phoenician ship.¹⁰ Within the *oikos* such order is crucial to the household's chief purpose: maximum economic profit. For it is *kosmos* that maximizes both spatial efficiency, human productivity, and that coincidence of aesthetic and moral value in which the Greeks located beauty. With the greatest number of objects most easily accessible in the smallest amount of space, not only can the wife give her husband whatever he asks for instantly, but “place” itself becomes a working person, since “the place itself,” the husband explains, “will miss the thing that is not there.”¹¹ Climaxing this panegyric – the first in Western culture – of the economic dividends and aesthetic power of Classical order, the husband claims that *kosmos* can create beauty out of the most ordinarily ugly things – even cooking pots, another of the female jars. Countering the traditional Greek liaison of the ugly and the impure, he declares, “each group appears as a chorus of implements, even the space in the middle appears beautiful, because each thing lies outside it. Just as a circular chorus is not only a beautiful sight itself, but the space in the middle of it also appears beautiful and pure.”¹² It is as a microcosm of such *kosmos* that the husband has designed the domestic world, dividing the men's quarters from women's by a bolted door and separating the rest of the household goods “according to tribes.”¹³ This is the architectural order that the wife maintains by playing the male roles of “law guardian, garrison commander, and legislative council” with her servants inside the house (fig. 2).¹⁴

But maintaining this order in the *oikos* alone is not enough. In the grand finale to her architectural schooling, the husband explains how and why the wife must mold her mind and body.¹⁵ This part of his



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FIG. 2

Marlene Dietrich in a tuxedo on
the set of *Morocco*, 1930

teaching begins with Socrates exclaiming that the wife indeed has achieved a “male mind,” and when the husband offers to recount another instance of her immediate obedience, Socrates eagerly accepts, preferring, he says, the virtue of a living woman to the beautiful likeness painted by Zeuxis. This preference for philosophical truth over material artifice turns into the wall that the *oikos* tries to build between the pure and natural beauty of male *kosmos* and women who imitate it, on one hand, and female cosmetic deception, on the other. For once, when the husband caught his wife with white lead and rouge on her face and wearing high heels, he was able to correct her instantly by explaining that just as she would not like him to present counterfeit money, fake gold, or fading purple instead of the real thing, or a body smeared with vermilion and flesh color under the eyes instead of ruddy from natural exercise, so she must present him with a pure body, free of cosmetic deceit. And when she asks how she might make her body as beautiful as possible, the husband recommends exercise through assiduous pursuit of household duties, especially those specialities of *mêtis*, weaving and breadbaking, adding that her visual appearance is stimulating whenever she defeats the maid (her ever-present sexual rival) by being more pure and properly dressed. This doctrine of the auto-architecture necessary to win the man’s sexual approval returns us to the play and to Praxagora’s invocation of the lamp as tool of pubic depilation.

Depilation as Female Auto-Architecture

In requiring women to depilate their genital hair, the architecture of father-rule reaches into the female body’s “unspeakable recesses,” as Praxagora puts it, using a Greek word (*muchos*) that refers to the innermost part of a landscape or house (fig. 3). Inside these “unspeakable recesses” is the female’s pubic hair. Here is the sight and the site that provokes the fetish, the pseudo-phallic prosthesis that worships by mutilating the female genital, simultaneously denying and affirming her castration, her “sameness” with men.¹⁵ And here the woman’s architectural power is born. For it is on the model of the matted pubic hair that covers her lack of a penis that the female invented weaving, according to

FIG. 3

Illustration on a cylix by
Panactius of a woman singeing off
her pubic hair with a lamp



FIG. 4

Modern styles of depilation. From
Wendy Cooper, *Hair: Sex, Society,
Symbolism* (New York: Stein and
Day, 1971)



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Freud; it is weaving, according to Semper, that is the origin of architecture as vertical space enclosure; and it is cutting, together with weaving, we may add, that constitutes the primary architectural act, the “detail.”¹⁶

In the detail of pubic depilation, the twin strategies of the fetish and the father-ruled house coincide. Each has the same mission: to form the female by cutting her sexuality short.¹⁷ Without such “cosmetic surgery,” the female sexuality knows no natural bounds. For in the oppositional categories of Greek thought, the male is dry and limited and the female is unlimited and wet, the two categories being closely connected architecturally. As Aristotle puts it, “the wet is that which is not bounded [*a+oriston*, compare ‘horizon’] by any boundary of its own [*oikeios*, ‘own’] while being easily bounded [*eu+oriston*] and the dry is easily bound by its own boundary [*eu+oriston*], but with difficulty bounded [*dis+oriston*].”¹⁸ Because the female’s wetness – the sign, like the male’s erection, of her sexual capacity – knows no intrinsic limit, it must be bound by a formative force outside itself, the institution of father-ruled marriage and its material embodiment in the *oikos*. The trimming of her pubic hair signals the woman’s willingness to draw this horizon, to conform herself to Classical *kosmos*. As she weaves the walls that mold the *oikos* and the clothes that veil her body, so the woman trims her genital hair into a particular schema that is epitome of order, the inverted delta, one of the two types of triangles described by Plato in the *Timaeus* as the elementary geometrical forms of the cosmos itself (fig. 4).¹⁹

At every level of her architectural formation, the female is indoctrinated with a single architectural ideal: to devote her *mētis* exclusively to making herself – her mind, her body, and her house – a parodic imitation of male design and desire. Her architectural imperative is thus to fetishize herself. Ironically, this indoctrination programs the methods and forms of the architectural rebellion staged in the rest of Aristophanes’ play. In both her plot to take over the government and in her new urban form, Praxagora combines two basic operations, sectional inversion and extension in plan, that for all their revolutionary ingenuity are, nevertheless, applications of her training to emulate the male. Sectionally, she maintains traditional hierarchy but inverts gender, putting the woman on top, where, true to the self-fetishizing imperative, she can “play the

man." In plan, Praxagora extends the household horizontally, turning the *polis* into one big *oikos*, where women will continue to perform their parodic male role. Let us look at the details of her plot and plan.

Praxagora's plot has two phases, first visual and then verbal, and in both the women work as masked men. In order to infiltrate the *ecclesia*, the male-only legislative assembly, and vote in a new regime, the women disguise themselves as men in a glossary of typical fetishes: they put on their husbands' platformed shoes, cloaks, and walking sticks, they suntan their skin, and, in an inversion and displacement upward of pubic depilation, they stop shaving their underarm hair and sew beards on their faces (fig. 5). Dressed up like a man, Praxagora now wins the votes of the male assembly by imitating male speech about women (how often do we all do this?), for she cites women's traditional role – that is, what men traditionally say about women – as the grounds for her proposed gynocracy.

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Once the *ecclesia*, packed by the disguised women, votes in Praxagora's new regime, Athens becomes, in effect, a naked female body (in Greek thought, as in many cultures, the earth is understood as female) stripped of all fetishes, all the pseudo-phallic supports of the father-ruled *polis*: private property, marriage, political and judicial institutions, along with the oppositions and hierarchies upon which they stand. Political power is inverted: men stay home while women go out to rule and work, producing and distributing food and clothing as they used to inside the *oikos*. Economic power is extended: all land is held in common and all material goods are donated to a common store, obliterating the difference between own and other's. Women, children, and men, too, become common property, erasing the distinction between legitimate and bastard. The parental function is spread out over the space of each generation with all men of a given age becoming "fathers" and all women, "mothers." Equal access to sexual pleasure is guaranteed by upending aesthetic value: in order to enjoy someone young and beautiful, if you are young and beautiful, you must satisfy someone old and ugly first.

This defetishized social structure – this expansion of the *oikos* to coincide with the *polis* so that the city is one big household for all – is accomplished by Praxagora through architectural procedures that the woman learns at home. Just as women have been taught to devote their

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FIG. 5

René Magritte. *The Rape*. 1934.
Oil on canvas, 28 1/2 x 21 in.
The Menil Collection, Houston

FIG. 6

Female putting the Devil to flight
by exposing her genitals.
Illustration by Charles Eisen, ca.
1750, in La Fontaine, *Fables*



mêtis to weaving the walls of the *oikos*, so also, like Penelope, have they learned how to unweave them, when the situation demands. Praxagora's urban plan of (re)constructing the city through demolition is just such a constructive undoing. In her own words, "I declare I will make the city one household by uniting-through-breaking [*syn* 'together' + *rhéggumi*, 'break'] all things into one, so that as a result everyone walks toward one another."²⁰ And if women are taught to maintain the program of indoor, domestic space, Praxagora knows how to (re)program an outdoors – now wholly domestic – to serve the previously indoor, private function of the male-only symposium: she turns the law courts and stoas into dining rooms, the orator's platform into a pedestal for wine-mixing bowls and water jugs, and from the urns of lots that used to designate judicial assignments, that definitive attribute of direct democracy, each man now draws the letter of his table at the common outdoor dinner.

So to the question, "What will a woman build, if left to her own devices?" the play answers, "She will build as we have taught her." She will turn the city into one big house with herself in power and her sexuality uncontained. She will expose the land as a female genital stripped of every pseudo-phallic stand-in (fig. 6). Female urban form means the end of the "phallus" as architect of all those oppositions – inside versus outside, own versus other's, legitimate versus bastard – and all those hierarchies – male over female, youth over age, beauty over ugliness – all those oppositions and hierarchies upon which Classical value and meaning depend. Female urban form means the death of architecture as phallic differentiation.

What is one to see in this vision of the unadorned, unconfined, uncovered, unfetishized female genital? I conclude with what may be thought of as two "genders" of response. The first is Aristophanes' own, coming in the scene that follows Praxagora's description of her new regime. The scene purports to show how the new law giving sexual preference to the old and ugly affects a beautiful young man. The female is still assimilated to the man-made containers of ceramic jar and house, but with her openings now free of phallic regulation. In dramatizing what the young man suffers from this unfettered genital, the scene becomes, in effect, a defense of the fetish and a demand for its return.

Attempting to avail herself of the new sexual order, an ugly old hag competes with a beautiful young girl for the young man's sexual service, each woman stationing herself in an orifice of the house, one at the window and the other at the door, to hurl abuse at the other. The young man, too, insults the hag. Loaded down, as she is, with white lead and rouge on her face, he likens her to a certain type of ceramic jar, the *lekuthos*, a one-handled jug with narrow neck and deep mouth used for athlete's oil, unguents, makeup, and as an offering for the dead. He charges that her lover is that master pot-painter Death himself, who makes such a *lekuthos* of and for us all. These insults alone do not dissuade the hag. Only as she drags the young man across her threshold, thus inverting the roles of regular marriage, is she finally put to flight, when the young girl warns of incest: "If you establish this law," she cries, "you will fill the entire world with Oedipuses!" But no sooner is the first hag expelled than another arrives, uglier than the first, and then a third arrives, the ugliest of all. Caught in a physical tug-of-war, as each *lekuthos*-like hag tries to drag him into the door of her house, the young man bewails his fate, a synaesthesia of intercourse, castration, and death, and caps it with a vision of compensatory revenge:

"O three-times damned, if I must screw a
 putrid woman the whole night and day, and then,
 whenever I escape from this one, again have to screw
 a Toad²¹ who has a *lekuthos* on her jaws.
 Am I not damned? Indeed, I am deeply damned,
 by Zeus the savior, a man indeed ill-fated,
 who will be shut up inside with such wild beasts.
 But still, if – as is very likely – I suffer something,²²
 as I sail hither into the harbor under these whores²³ as pilots,
 bury me upon the mouth itself of the entrance,
 and this woman above, on top of the grave,²⁴
 tar her down alive, then pour lead
 on her feet in a circle around her ankles,
 and put her on top above me as a substitute²⁵ for a *lekuthos*."

In this phantasmagorical vision, entities bear multiple, simultaneous meanings. Intercourse with the female-as-ceramic-embodiment-of-death means imprisonment in her body-as-a-house and being devoured by her castrating *vagina dentata*. This diabolical confinement of the man inverts Zeus' swallowing of Metis and the *oikos*' confinement of the wife. And just as the wife before tried to emulate a "shipshape" *kosmos*, so the female is now the pilot of the male, himself a ship, sailing into the harbor of her voracious genital mouth, upon which he will be buried – but not without his revenge. For in his final words, he envisions a return of the female as fetish – that "monument" (*Denkmal*), in Freud's terms, "to the horror of castration" feared as punishment for incest – and with the fetish, a return of the "phallus" as architectural support. Tarred alive and welded to his tomb at her feet, those perennial objects of the fetishist's sadistic adoration, female *mētis* stands now wholly immobilized, a reduction of the constricting drive of the *oikos* to its logical absurdity. The female as ceramic Pandora is now the parodic *lekuthos*, a pseudo-phallic memorial upon the grave of male glory.

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Although certainly representative of the dominant view in subsequent Western tradition, prefiguring as it does the Freudian theory of the fetish, Aristophanes' is not the sole response in Classical thought to the unadorned female genital. The mythology of Demeter offers another reaction in the story of Baubo, who herself prefigures the image of Marilyn birthing the world (figs. 7, 8). When her daughter Persephone is raped by Death, Demeter, goddess of marriage, childbirth, and chthonic fertility, suspends her powers and wanders the now sterile earth disguised as an old woman. Arriving at Eleusis, she is received by the queen Baubo, who offers her food and drink. When the mourning goddess refuses this traditional hospitality, Baubo responds by lifting her skirts and exposing her naked genitals. At this sight, the goddess laughs. She eats and drinks, and with her resumption of human social exchange, the fertility of women and the earth returns. In the tropic power of Baubo's display, in its power to turn mourning and sterility to laughter and fertile intercourse, lies the direction toward another female architecture than the one prefabricated by the Classical *oikos*.²⁶

FIG. 7

Figurine of Baubo with torch,
found at Priene. Terra-cotta, 4th
century B.C.

FIG. 8

Marilyn Monroe birthing
the world



1. Aristophanes, *Ecclesiazusae*, ed. with introduction and commentary by Robert Glenn Ussher (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), lines 1–17. All translations from the Greek are my own.
2. In light of this analogy, the Vitruvian ideal of the building as male body appears to be less an original principle than a secondary compensation for the primary correlation between the female and the house.
3. Robert E. Somol, "My Mother, the House," *Princeton Architectural Journal* (1992), 50–71.
4. Hesiod, *Works and Days*, ed. with prolegomena and commentary by Martin Litchfield West (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), lines 96–97.
5. Compare this complex circulation of likeness and hierarchy with the depiction of Pandora on an amphora (British Museum F 147) as a mermaid-like combination of female on the top and *pithos* on the bottom, the *pithos* being a human-sized ceramic pot in which sometimes food and sometimes the bones of the dead were stored. See Otto Lendle, *Die "Pandorasage" bei Hesiod* (Würzburg: Konrad Triltsch, 1957), 80–81, pl. 9. For a similar *mise en abyme* of receptacles in the depiction of the female *chōra* in Plato's *Timaeus*, see Ann Bergren, "Architecture Gender Philosophy," in Richard Burdett, Jeffrey Kipnis, and John Whiteman, eds., *Strategies in Architectural Thinking* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992), 8–46.
6. For *mētis* as the female's architectural power, see Ann Bergren, "The (Re)Marriage of Penelope and Odysseus: Architecture Gender Philosophy," *Assemblage* 21 (1993), 6–23.
7. Xenophon, *The Oeconomicus*, ed. Arthur Henry Nanson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1925), ch. 7, paras. 18–36. For an accurate translation of this text in its entirety, see Leo Strauss, *Xenophon's Socratic Discourse: An Interpretation of the Oeconomicus with a New, Literal Translation of the Oeconomicus by Carnes Lord* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1970).
8. For architecture as *maintenant*, the "now" that "maintains," see Jacques Derrida, "Point de folie – maintenant l'architecture," *AA Files-Folio VIII, La Case Vide*, with English trans. by Kate Linker, 1986, 4–19. The French text is reprinted in *Psyché: Invention de l'autre* (Paris: Galilée, 1987), 477–94.
9. Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, ch. 8, paras. 3–17.
10. Ibid., ch. 8, para. 10.
11. Ibid., ch. 8, para. 20.
12. Ibid., ch. 9, paras. 2–10.

13. Ibid., ch. 9, paras. 14–15.
14. Ibid., ch. 10.
15. Sigmund Freud, "Fetishism," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and gen. ed. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1961), vol. 21, 152–57. Compare Charles Bernheimer, "'Castration' as Fetish," *Paragraph* 14 (1991), 1–9: "The purpose of the fetish is to preserve the fantasy that all humans have a penis – the childhood theory of anatomical sameness – and simultaneously to represent a recognition that women lack this organ."
16. Sigmund Freud, "Femininity," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and gen. ed. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1961), vol. 22, 132: "The effect of penis-envy has a share, further, in the physical vanity of women, since they are bound to value their charms more highly as a late compensation for their original sexual inferiority. Shame, which is considered to be a feminine characteristic *par excellence* but is far more a matter of convention than might be supposed, has as its purpose, we believe, concealment [*verdecken: Decke*, 'cover, ceiling, roof, skin, envelope, coat, pretence, screen'] of genital deficiency. We are not forgetting that at a later time, shame takes on other functions. It seems that women have made few contributions to the discoveries [*Entdeckungen*] and inventions in the history of civilization; there is, however, one technique which they may have invented – that of plaiting and weaving. If that is so, we should be tempted to guess the unconscious motive for the achievement. Nature herself would seem to have given the model which this achievement imitates by causing the growth at maturity of the pubic hair that conceals the genitals. *The step that remained to be taken lay in making the threads adhere to one another* [my emphasis], while on the body they stick into the skin and are only matted together. If you reject this idea as fantastic and regard my belief in the influence of a lack of a penis on the configuration of femininity as an *idée fixe*, I am of course defenceless."

Gottfried Semper, "The Textile Art," *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 254–55: "*The beginning of building coincides with the beginning of textiles*. The wall is that architectural element that formally represents and makes visible *the enclosed space as such*, absolutely, as it were, without reference to secondary concepts. We might recognize the *pen*, bound together from sticks and branches, and the interwoven *fence* as the earliest vertical spatial enclosure that man *invented*. . . . Whether these inventions gradually devel-

oped in this order or another matters little to us here, for it remains certain that the use of the crude weaving that started with the pen – as *à* means to make the ‘home,’ the *inner life* separated from the *outer life*, and as the formal creation of the idea of space – undoubtedly preceded the wall, even the most primitive one constructed out of stone or any other material. The structure that served to support, to secure, to carry this spatial enclosure was a requirement that had nothing directly to do with *space* and the *division of space*. . . . In this connection, it is of the greatest importance to note that wherever these secondary motives are not present, woven fabrics almost everywhere and especially in the southern and warm countries carry out their ancient, original function as conspicuous spatial dividers; even where solid walls become necessary they remain only the inner and unseen structure for the true and legitimate representatives of the spatial idea: namely, the more or less artificially woven and seamed-together, textile walls. . . . In all Germanic languages the word *Wand* (of the same root and same basic meaning as *Gewand*) directly recalls the old origin and type of the *visible* spatial enclosure. Likewise, *Decke*, *Bekleidung*, *Schranke*, *Zaun* (similar to *Saun*), and many other technical expressions are not somewhat late linguistic symbols applied to the building trade, but reliable indications of the textile origin of these building parts.” See also “The Four Elements of Architecture,” *ibid.*, 102–3, and compare “Structural Elements of Assyrian-Chaldean Architecture,” in Wolfgang Herrmann, *Gottfried Semper: In Search of Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: MIT Press, 1984), 205–6: “It is well known that any wild tribe is familiar with the fence or a primitive hurdle as a means of enclosing space. Weaving the fence led to weaving movable walls of bast, reed or willow twigs and later to weaving carpets of thinner animal or vegetable fiber. . . . Using wickerwork for setting apart one’s property and for floor mats and protection against heat and cold far preceded making even the roughest masonry. Wickerwork was the original motif of the wall. It retained this primary significance, actually or ideally, when the light hurdles and matings were later transformed into brick or stone walls. The essence of the wall was wickerwork. Hanging carpets remained the true walls; they were the visible boundaries of a room. The often solid walls behind them were necessary for reasons that had nothing to do with the creation of space; they were needed for protection, for supporting a load, for their permanence, etc. Wherever the need for these secondary functions did not arise, carpets remained the only means for separating space. Even where solid walls became necessary, they were only the invisible structure hidden behind the true representatives of the wall,

the colorful carpets that the walls served to hold and support. It was therefore the covering of the wall that was primarily and essentially of spatial and architectural significance; the wall itself was secondary."

On the relation between the detail and cutting, note the derivation of the term from French *détailler*, "to cut in pieces."

17. Charles Platter, "Depilation in Old Comedy," typescript, 3-4: "The matrix of depilation described by our sources is fundamentally associated with . . . the attempt to control the women of the household whose extravagant sexuality, symbolized by tangled hair, represents a threat to the solid edifice of the family and the social status of the man."
18. Aristotle, *On Coming-to-Be and Passing Away*, trans. Edward Seymour Forster (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955), section 329b31-33. See Ann Carson, "Putting Her in Her Place: Women, Dirt, and Desire," in David M. Halperin, John J. Winkler, and Froma I. Zeitlin, eds., *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 135-69, and Platter, 9: "Thus, the male gender, by virtue of its dryness, lends itself to definition and self-ordering. The female, by contrast, has no mechanism for self-limitation, and like water, spreads out until exhausted - like the sleeping *Bacchae* of Euripides and the sexually voracious women who appear in Old Comedy, or until stopped by some limit imposed from the outside."
19. Plato, *Timaeus*, *Platonis Opera*, ed. John Burnet (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), sections 53c-55c. See F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology: The Timaeus of Plato Translated with Running Commentary* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1937), 210-19.
20. Aristophanes, *Ecclesiazusae*, lines 673-74.
21. Greek, *phrunē*, "toad," nickname of many Athenian courtesans because of their complexion.
22. Euphemism for "die."
23. Literally, "hides, toughened skins."
24. Greek, *sēma*, "grave mound, sign."
25. Greek, *prophasis*, "what is said instead," hence "alleged motive, pretext, excuse."
26. For some implications of the figure of Baubo for architectural theory, see Ann Bergren, "Helen and Baubo: Gender in the 'Irreparable Wound,'" in Andrea Kahn, ed., *Drawing, Building, Text* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1991), 107-26.

Crimes in and of the City: The Femme Fatale as Urban Allegory

M. CHRISTINE BOYER

CROSS: You may *think* you know what you're dealing with, but, believe me, you *don't*.

GITTES: That's what the district attorney used to tell me in Chinatown.

– *Chinatown* (1974)

At least one feminist critic of urban form, Rosalyn Deutsche, has criticized a few white male theorists of the postmodern urban condition for adopting the personae of film noir detectives. Pitting the force of rational detection against the irrational power of money (that is, real estate investors, elite residents, and their allies in municipal governments or special municipal authorities), these theorist/detectives attempt to uncover the violent traces of criminal acts of wealth as they have unfolded in the production of urban space.¹ “Men in space,” another label Deutsche attaches to these theorists,² are far from innocent investigators of treacherous urban terrains risking dangerous encounters with those in power, for they simultaneously perpetrate their own set of crimes against women in the city and cover their own masculine traces with veiled comments and disguised positions. Specifically, these theorists fail to address the role that women traditionally hold in film noir – that of the *femme fatale* (fig. 1). Generally associated with male fears about female sexuality, the *femme fatale* is an ambivalent figure who harbors a threat of enticement, of artifice, of excess, which must be avoided. By hiding the presence of women – making them disappear from, or appear invisible in, sites of the city – theorist detectives desexualize the terrain of the postmodern city. Sue Best, in “Deconstructing Space,” agrees with Deutsche, finding

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FIG. 1

The *femme fatale* harbors an uncanny threat to the men she entices. This secret, never entirely visible, must be controlled even by aggressive, often violent means

that such criminal acts against women subsequently enable these same theorist/detectives to achieve the disembodied state of the rational purposive masculine subject who gives renewed form and shape to – or controls and surveils – urban space that long has been considered by geographers to be indeterminate, characterless, neutral, or feminine.³ These theorists, by not mentioning women in space, implicitly link the dangers of sexual liaison with the dangers of the city.

According to Best, these theorist/detectives “encrypt” the feminine in space by the way they conceptualize it as pure potential matter; yet, subsequently, they appropriate, dominate, and subjugate that space by denying women an appearance in it.⁴ The feminine appears only as a concealed secret; it is a code that must be deciphered. By encrypting the feminine in space, gender becomes an object of misrecognition – or non-recognition – and escapes analysis. Thus the feminization of space is implicit in the way metaphors and concepts carry the imprinting of sexual terms; but, at the same time, it escapes awareness, thereby enabling space to “naturally” receive the so-called feminized characteristics of passivity, inertness, staticness, even speechlessness. As Best writes, “[t]his is all done, as it were, under cover [like a true detective]. These theorists continue to do what man has always done: hog the subject position and thereby masquerade as *the* human. It is as if contemporary male writers are played by the binary system and the violent sexual hierarchies it installs, but even after two decades of feminist scholarship the writers in question *still* proceed as if sexuality has nothing to do with textuality.”⁵

There is, however, a long history to this sexualization of space, conceptualized by and through the body of woman, and it stretches back at least to the time of Plato, when the metaphoric transference of feminine attributes to spatial concepts appears to have been clearly established. Plato wrote that space as a receptacle

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“can always be called the same because it never alters its characteristics. For it continues to receive all things, and never itself takes a permanent impress from any of the things that enter it, it is a kind of neutral plastic material on which changing impressions are stamped by things that enter it, making it appear different at different times. And the things

which pass in and out of it are copies of the eternal realities, whose form they take . . . we must make a *threefold* distinction and thinking of that which becomes [birth], that in which it becomes [womb], and the model which it resembles [father]. We may indeed use the metaphor of birth and compare the receptacle to the mother, the model to the father, and what they produce between them to their offspring.⁶

The metaphoric transference of the female womb onto the spatial receptacle waiting for male impregnation, and of the masculine abstract model onto the disembodied ideal form giver, was clearly delineated by Plato. Best briefly outlines the history of this metaphoric transference in male discourse down to our contemporary “men in space.”⁷ She finds that Edward Soja, for example, exemplifies the detour men take through the matter of woman while simultaneously disavowing the feminization of space. In his *Postmodern Geography*, Soja declares that space has been denied, denigrated, and reduced to static, passive, and inert matter by the theorization of historians who have elevated the active and dynamic position of time – progress, motion – over the production of space. His desire is to activate feminized space by injecting masculine vigor into it. Thus geography would be reconceptualized and revitalized by the modern and/or postmodern urban, public man. As both Deutsche and Best proclaim, remapped postmodern space now becomes the subjected object of a reformulated cartographer’s gaze, which exercises renewed jurisdiction over the urban terrain and establishes fresh alliances with the spectacles of urban violence perpetrated in and against the city and women.

In particular, Deutsche utilizes theorist Mike Davis and his critique of the spatial production of contemporary Los Angeles as exemplary of the gritty tough-guy realism and detached perspective that neo-noir detectives assume. Paradoxically, Deutsche allows that Davis’s ground-level “tactics of lived space” puncture the detective’s voyeuristic gaze. Thus the concerns and conflicts of Los Angeles’s immigrant cultures make an appearance on the urban scene to battle against the evasive and abstract forces of global capital restructuring the space and redefining the uses of the downtown area. Yet Davis remains for Deutsche an exemplary neo-noir detective, ignoring issues of gender, the sexualization of

space, and the embodiment of any and every urban theorist. "By disavowing the question of subjectivity in representations of the city [that is, woman's place] he disengages urban theory and, strangely, noir as well, from any dream machinery whatever."⁸ Instead, the masculine position taken up by the theorist/detective is that of the gazer, and the position of the feminine is that of the gazed upon (image). More precisely, in noir detective stories, the *femme fatale* is characterized as a destabilizing force, for she "resists confinement in – or *as* – space";⁹ she crosses boundaries and thus threatens male subjectivity. The subsequent work of film noir, Deutsche relates, is to suppress her image, thus restoring spatial order and male subjectivity to the center of the picture while ignoring "how the image of the city, like the image of the woman, is mediated by the detective's unconscious fantasies and so – whether lucid or bewildering – is tied up with the mysteries of sexuality."¹⁰

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I read this conflated phrase, "resists confinement in – or *as* – space," to mean that the *femme fatale* escapes categorization; she cannot be pinned down in discrete space nor made accountable to public norms. She escapes the space of disciplinary order and the meticulous gaze of the detective. In short, she embodies the irrational – she spreads disorder and disruption and must not be allowed to appear in the same space as the rational detective lest he be seduced by her powers and deterred from solving the crime. She must be suppressed and made invisible in the space in which the detective appears – whether in cinematic space or in theoretical representations of urban space." Thus Davis transfers these images of feminine deviance onto the spatial uncertainties and dangerous encounters of contemporary Los Angeles. Yet it remains the theorist/detective's role to decipher these anomalies and restore order to his threatened masculine domain. Davis does so by revealing the underlying economic causes and effects of Los Angeles's postmodern spatial violence. But this neo-noir theorist/detective – to make a distinction from Deutsche's argument – is only an analyzer of contemporary conditions and not an activator. He may solve the crime by revealing its causes, but he fails to save the innocent from inevitable economic exploitation and his gaze remains impotent in the restoration of order. A narration of impotency, of failure of agency and the unleashing of vio-

lence in and against both women and the city – these are the messages that neo-noir detective stories unfurl.

This discussion of the urban analyzer/theorist as the neo-noir detective takes place against Davis's metaphorical serial replay of the 1974 movie *Chinatown* by Roman Polanski.¹² In his replay, the theorist/detective discovers that the contemporary 1980s crisis of downtown Los Angeles as an overbuilt high-rise real estate zone began in the same decade in which *Chinatown* was set – the 1930s – when unscrupulous real estate developers were buying up Los Angeles's orange groves at bargain prices. In each case, Los Angeles is a threatened city: either the flow of water or tax revenues is being criminally tampered with to the financial advantage of real estate operators. In the fictional movie, it is a city under siege by a drought and falling prey to villains like Noah Cross, who manipulates the municipal waterworks and thus adds considerably – for the sake of greed and unquenchable desire – to his real estate holdings. He does so by scandalously rerouting water away from a valley of orange groves and subsequently accumulating all the ruined, worthless land at rock-bottom prices.¹³ In the case of contemporary downtown Los Angeles, the city is threatened by the automobile and the spreading highway system that since the 1920s, without cessation, have drawn well-to-do citizens away from the center of the city and into the suburbs. Real estate values in downtown Los Angeles spiraled downward until, as Raymond Chandler wrote, it became a “lost town, shabby town, crook town” where “women with faces of stale beer . . . [and] men with pulled-down hats” resided.¹⁴ After several decades, depressed real estate holdings in the downtown area eventually became ripe for redevelopment, and operators, with the help of municipal authorities, began to subsidize and protect their investments by directing substantial tax revenues away from de-industrialized twilight zones, such as black South Central Los Angeles, and reallocating these monies to low-interest loans for downtown redevelopment, infrastructure, and tax abatement incentives. The same process of de-industrialization and redevelopment took place in many other so-called “soft spots” surrounding the core of central Los Angeles.

I want to argue that the movie *Chinatown* is an allegory and its meaning nowhere explicit, for Chinatown as a place represents the invis-

ible city and is neither knowable nor decipherable. Davis's reference to "Chinatown, Part Two?" can be analyzed not as a simple example of how women are rendered invisible by postmodern theorists of space, but as a layered reading of one text through another, facilitating a metaphorical transference of the *femme fatale* onto figurations of place. I assume that Mike Davis might have been aware – but probably unconsciously so – of this allegorical reading of the postmodern city as the *femme fatale*. Nevertheless, his choice of a neo-noir film entitled *Chinatown* as his metaphorical and serial title invites – allows – a more complex rereading of "men in space," but with a twist of difference. So while not disagreeing with Deutsche, I want to consider how these neo-noir detectives express a desire both to know and not to know, to see yet not to see, the conditions of the postmodern city and, thus, to split what is representable from that which remains invisible.

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The narrations of film noir are generally located in California, and most often in Los Angeles. But it is a California where, by the 1930s and 1940s, the American Dream of the good life, of wealth and abundance was already beginning to fester. California lacked something – a collective sphere or set of public morals – that would keep private drives for money and power in check. It was a catastrophic utopia grounded in false appearances and betrayed hopes – a condition metaphorically represented through the inversion of beautiful landscapes and pleasant suburban bungalows into film noir sets of darkened city streets and isolated environments that close in on the hero and deterministically control his life (fig. 2).¹⁵ Consequently, this allegorical rereading of film noir, and specifically neo-noir *Chinatown*, enables fatal warnings of impending disaster in both the public and private spheres to reappear under new conditions of postmodernity. Whether or not we heed these warnings as we navigate the passage from modernity to postmodernity depends on how we figure the space of cities as the space of liberation. Therefore it is not, as Deutsche assumes, what the film's detective, Jake Gittes, forgets about Los Angeles that seems of central importance as much as it is his failure to see what lies on the surface and, thus, his denial of the subversive message implicit in the articulation of this neo-noir detective story. The rational male gaze of the noir detective or neo-noir cartographer

not only connotes the power to render the feminine invisible in space, but also signifies the impotency of the passive observer who witnesses criminal deeds but cannot act to alter their outcome.

Now why did Davis use *Chinatown* as his central metaphor, and what does it mean that the postmodern city is allegorized as the *femme fatale*? The city is generally represented as a site of great ambiguity – both a source of anxiety and a source of pleasure, a utopic and dystopic place. In *Chinatown*, the irrational cannot be represented nor its ambiguities and anomalies resolved. Thus the detective Jake reveals the loss of his powers of detection and the failures of representation. Chinatown is never represented as a place and appears only at the very end of the film; it remains throughout a referenced but invisible site where the “other” is truly monstrous, where everything and anything can happen. The anxieties of the modern city may have been revealed by the manner in which its space was subjected to the surveilling gaze of the white male voyeur; but the postmodern city is represented by a fragmented look not only evading totalizations but also witnessing the impotent powers and innumerable failures of white male purposive rational cartographers. *Chinatown* represents the city of too much knowledge, of enigmatic and suspended judgments, of distasteful positions and information. Displaced from the modern city of patriarchal dominance, we hear the fatal warnings of film noir in the postmodern city: the loosening of paternal authority, the increasing appearance of crimes against the daughter, the disappearance of spaces of enclosure, and the decline of the public sphere.

The feminine has often been allegorized as modernity through the figure of the prostitute, the commodity; as a motif it has been subjected to oblique and fragmented reference (or devaluation and disfigurement) that, nevertheless, embodies within the allowed interstices all the flux, uncertainty, exoticism, sensuousness, wealth of meaning, and “otherness” that both the modern metropolis and the Orient in the nineteenth century unleashed. Christine Buci-Glucksmann has written that “the feminine constitutes one of the nineteenth century’s ‘original historic forms.’ . . . The feminine becomes the inevitable sign of a new historic regime of seeing and ‘not-seeing,’ of representable and unrepresentable.”¹⁶ As allegory,

the feminine depends on “images, sight, scenes that link the visible and the invisible, life and dream. History presents itself to be seen with all its ambivalence fixed in *tableaux*.”¹⁷ And so the feminine symbolizes all the phantasmagoria and artifice of modernity – images, styles, spectacles, and fictions as well as the destructive tendency of false promises and unfulfilled desires and the melancholic loss of equilibrium and the emptying of experience. The feminine captures the double nature of things: it is both the source of anxieties and the promise of pleasures.

Returning to the history of the detective story, we can begin to examine how film noir attempted in a similar manner to represent the promises of progress and the misgivings over change that modernity inevitably wrought. Edward Dimendberg has pointed out that the noir cycle (1939 to 1959) precisely corresponds to a time of profound spatial transformations in the postwar American city.¹⁸ Massive spatial upheavals were created by the automobile, highway construction, suburban development, and urban redevelopment and these, in turn, produced strong fears that the old centers of cities, long associated with the essence of modernity, were being erased. Having been racked by the machinations of real estate operators, dynamited by urban renewal and evacuated by a middle-class citizenry seeking the safety of the suburbs, the center of the post-World War II city was a site of ruins, threatened with death and decay. The potency of human agency was no longer to be relied upon in a metropolis where vast urban spaces seemed to take on a dominating and crushing power of their own – where alienation and boredom were increasingly apparent and stereotypical preconceptions, such as feminine passivity, might be refuted or sidestepped when a not-so-innocent woman held out a fatal attraction or became the major instigator of crime.¹⁹ One response to this confusion and disorientation was the production of B-rated films, whose very marginality allowed them freedom to express the anxieties and trepidations of postwar American culture. To hint at revolt, to offer a more exhilarating life than bourgeois morality allowed, to wallow in pessimism and misogyny, to depict the urban malaise, to tell the story from the criminal’s point of view – these were some of the themes that B-rated films explored. And many of these films now constitute what is called the film noir cycle.²⁰

One of the major visual tropes of film noir is the image of the city with a still-vital, if problematic, center: densely massed skyscrapers, dark and shadowy canyon streets, the vertical outlines of skylines, the views from on high, crowded and congested thoroughfares. This was the space of modernity through which film noir characters inevitably strolled: a knowable, mappable terrain with identifiable monuments, favorite haunts, and protected retreats. But these were also the very places that urban renewal programs were threatening with extinction. Kevin Lynch, in his well-known study, *The Image of the City* (written in the late 1950s), nostalgically outlined a place of well-defined nodes, pathways, edges, landmarks, and districts, for he, too, sought to restore the smashed and disintegrating face of the postwar city to a youthful portrait of itself.²¹ In film noir these fears of disfiguration and death resurface, becoming the foreboding images of the nocturnal city: a place of darkened shadows that cover a detective's clues and diminish his powers of sight. Marc Vernet claimed that "the space of night is the space in which the detective, who has everything to gain from seeing without being seen, can be seen without seeing, as the darkness conceals the gleaming surface of an eye or a weapon."²² Rather than the urban crowd of the nineteenth-century city, into which a criminal could suddenly disappear without leaving a trace, the nocturnal city became the site where traces of a crime – as well as of class distinctions, noise, dirt, and ugliness – were transfigured and erased, only to reassert themselves in an uncanny play of absence-as-presence, of unknown and nightmarish threats.

Dimendberg posits that "darkness" in the postwar city was a lightly coded word for the traumatic memories of World War II. Disguised as entertainment, the film noir cycle could invert these trepidations (the loss of the center of the city and of one's position within it, as well as the unspeakable traumas of the war) and return them to the spectator in an aestheticized, nostalgic, and pleasurable form.²³ Thus film noir represents a twisted variety of the detective story: a nocturnal city that lacks any visualizable form, where the detective often loses his way and the murderous can get away with their crimes. While its cinematographic techniques exploit the montage process to produce cuts and sections of space, fragments and scraps of evidence, they add to the impact of its



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FIG. 2

California of the 1930s and 1940s lacked something – it was a catastrophic utopia, and hence film noir inverted its arcadian landscape of suburban bungalows and white picket fences into sets of darkened interiors and threatened spaces



FIG. 3

Barry Fitzgerald looking at the panorama of midtown Manhattan at night, in *The Naked City*. "A city has many faces. . . . And this is the face of New York City – when it's asleep"

narrative form as a flow of possibilities of indeterminate meanings and chance encounters, of themes and variations.²⁴

Dimendberg utilizes Ernst Bloch's theory of "non-contemporaneity" or "non-synchronous not of this time" to explore the temporal slippage between the rapidly disappearing city of postwar America and its imaginary reconstruction in film noir. This mix of old and new is yet another name for montage – where anger and pleasure are allowed to work through the material, expressing both a sense of loss and the portentousness of the new, which has yet to be either assimilated or repressed.²⁵ Film noir experiments with "non-contemporaneity" in order to explain the appearance of a multilayered interpenetration and superimposition of spaces. It builds on the ruins and remains of the historical space of the center of the city: left behind in the disappearing city, the film noir hero resides in seedy hotels with torn window shades and exposed light bulbs hanging from the ceiling, while the *femme fatale* hangs out in two-bit motels or rooms rented by the week. Rather than shock the viewer into rearranging the emptied spaces of the bourgeois city into a utopian order of things-to-come, film noir offers a retreat into a privatized space, allowing its hero to achieve a detached position in which he is not responsible for the crimes he produces in and of the city. Thus film noir misreads, distorts, or refuses to understand its own warnings that the moral formulations of postwar democracy and postwar paternalism were becoming a sham.²⁶

Film noir reached its peak in 1950, when fifty-seven films of this type were produced. From this high, the cycle fell to a low of seven in 1958 and 1959. Dimendberg believes this decline had less to do with either a growing taste for realism (or audience boredom with the genre's conventions, as has commonly been assumed) than with the ascendancy of suburban residential areas, the spreading interstate highway system, and the expanding communication networks of radio and television – for this is also the time when non-urban backgrounds and travel accounts begin to manifest themselves in American fiction.²⁷ Since the American detective story depends on a criminal and a private eye/detective observing the movements of a city's inhabitants, it demands a spatially concentrated city center in order to carry out its discourse on criminality and to

impose its legal authority over the urban terrain. A decentralized, fragmenting, and emptying city requires different modes of observation and detection, and relies on different effects of alienation and estrangement.

By repetitiously presenting the detective/private eye hero as a socially detached and uninvolved individual – one who is incapable of establishing relationships with other human beings – film noir denigrated the role of agency. No one was responsible for the crimes that happened in and against the city, nor could the *femme fatale* be stopped. Maybe the detective was guilty for listening to her (probably she was more responsible), but in the standard genre film the lure of money, sex, and death brought inevitable destruction. There are several ways that agency can be denied: by shifting the guilt onto some “other” who resides outside a moral or human order; by failing to awaken from sleep and, thus, maintaining a somnambulant pose in a closed circuit of pleasure; or by becoming addicted to unstoppable drives and unmanageable forces. Myths of the big city are often based on the presence of monsters – alien or man-made – but we are neither connected to nor responsible for them because these monstrous “others” follow laws of their own. In film noir, it is the *femme fatale* who threatens the social order and represents the horror of all that escapes the authority of control.

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The city, in film noir, is a locus of alienation and depravity, a dangerous and transitory place of unexpected happenings and surprise endings, a land of used-car lots and fleabag hotels where the hero is entrapped by, and even complicit with, evil.²⁸ Many noir films open with an aerial shot of dark canyon streets of the city below, depicting a sinister force that will defeat the hero. Jules Dassin's *The Naked City* (1948) opens with a panoramic view of Manhattan, a distant and detached viewpoint that attempts to narrate the crime as a series of objective facts – just one of the thousands of stories that the city could tell in an ordinary day (fig. 3). So the seasoned detective tells the novice: “There’s your city, Halloran. Take a good look. Jean Dexter is dead. The answer must be somewhere down there.”²⁹ As one of its screenwriters, Malvin Wald, commented, “In the *Naked City* it is Manhattan Island and its streets and landmarks that are starred. The social body is, through architectural symbol, laid bare (‘naked’) as a neutral fact neither, so to speak, good nor bad, but

something which, like the human organism itself, can catch a disease (the criminal), and this disease may elude its detectors."³⁰ In such settings there seems to be an evil or neutral determinism at work: the pleasant suburban bungalows and sunshine streets of Hollywood prewar films have turned into claustrophobic interiors, dark alleys, and the empty spaces of city streets.

Dana Polan argues that woman in the 1940s cinema is often presented as "the enframed world of spectacle,"³¹ freed from the bounds of narration and, indeed, able to conflict with narrative form. She disrupts masculine control and inhibits the endeavors of men.³² In Howard Hawks's *The Big Sleep* (1946), for example, woman is defined as trouble: she lies, she is deceitful, she is a drug addict or alcoholic, she abjures traditional female roles, she talks tough, and she kills. But she is also able to integrate the detective into society, for she tames this isolated figure who once walked the mean streets alone, modulating his sadism and violence, and turns him into an ambivalent character, both tender and tough.³³ But here the feminine and the commodity cross paths. The spectacle is the commodity on display, and the act of showing and revealing often becomes more important than the cause and effect of the story line, the narrative message, or the moral engendered. The *femme fatale* may have acquired new roles, but her progress was often arrested as she was frozen into an image, contained within the camera that men still held.³⁴

Interestingly, in *The Big Sleep* not only are the crimes of the daughters those listed above, but they include unpaid gambling debts and being the subjects of pornographic photographs, for which they are blackmailed. Here the camera, usually denoting the power of truth and objective evidence, is transformed into a tool of extortion and sexual fantasy. But the crime, this time, is the relentless commodification of everything and everyone, and the betrayal is the corruption of an economic system that allows women to be reduced to merchandise that can be bought, sold, and traded. Here, too, there is often an inversion. In *The Big Sleep*, originally written in 1939, the captain of industry is a sick and dying man, like the waning power of American industry during the Depression; a man, furthermore, manipulated by his daughters as they also manipulate and are manipulated by his corrupted heirs.

So now let us deal with the demise of agency: the evacuation of the imaginary public sphere in the postwar American city (an invisible city of common values and shared positions), or what Gilles Deleuze referred to as the disappearance of Michel Foucault's "spaces of enclosure" such as the family, the factory, the schools, and, by extension, the centered city, the rule of law and order;³⁵ and the disruptions of narrative closure by the deceptions and artifice of the *femme fatale*. As we have seen, the detective traditionally functions in society as a restorer of social order. It is his job to uncover the evidence, to construct criminal categories of the self (he assumes there can be no private secret not reducible to some number or some characteristic). Yet Joan Copjec has shown³⁶ that in order for film noir fiction to be possible, the set of clues can never be closed: there always remains one more piece of evidence to be extracted from the scene of the crime in order to generate suspense and to enable the retelling of the crime as an adventure story. Thus the space that contains the mystery can never be completely described (it remains partially invisible), never closed, and always breachable by the detective. This imaginary closure, then, is what statistics and detective stories share: the probabilities of a crime, of a social event, of disease. But this relationship between statistics and the detective story assumes a public sphere and the notion of a social collectivity.

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If we assume an ideal public realm, where the rule of sovereign power reigns and the Oedipal patriarch commands obedience and ensures civic order, then the postwar American city can be contrasted with this ideal as a time and place where private interests, needs, and drives arose to erase any sense of collectivity. Here film noir displayed its warning that this ascendancy held dire consequences for society unless some notion of community, of a sutured totality, could be reintroduced. And this is where Copjec places the role of the voice-over in film noir: it reintroduces community, language, speech, thus framing the endless drive that threatens to destroy the public realm. And like Dimendberg analyzing the relationship between film noir and the imaginary centered city, Copjec uses as examples the ascendancy of drive over desire in such anti-urban social policies as suburban expansion, public housing, the federally financed highway systems that destroy the landscape, and regulations

mandating segregation. From the perspective of the drive (not desire) one can neither fathom the “other” – be it the *femme fatale* or the city – nor imagine a collective order. The noir detective, who fails to establish relationships and is portrayed as an isolated character existing in places emptied of all desire, increasingly identifies with the criminal until, ultimately, he drives himself to commit criminal acts. Thus the voice-over, for Copjec, exhibits what never can be told within the unfolding of the narrative: the pleasures of private enjoyment that separate the detective from the community and his recurring acts of private satisfaction that inevitably destroy and erode the public terrain.

Let us return, finally, to the neo-noir film *Chinatown* and neo-noir theorist/detectives of social reality such as Mike Davis. *Chinatown* is an allegory of crimes against the daughter (or the city) and of the impotent powers of detection, for the detective can neither save the daughter nor punish the criminal. *Chinatown* has many film noir attributes, but with a twist: the innocent are killed and the patriarchal crimes of incest, murder, and illegal real estate transactions remain unavenged. Like the crimes against the daughter, contemporary real estate practices in central Los Angeles remain unpunished and the spaces of third-world immigrants, black Americans, and the homeless are continuously exploited. In both the film and in Los Angeles, the detectives acknowledge that the motives behind the crimes remain irrational, beyond explanation and knowledge.

As John Belton explains in his discussion of *Chinatown*, the desire for knowledge that normally motivates the average detective is, in this film, transformed into greedy sexual curiosity:³⁷ “looking” focuses on lurid photographs and presents a critique of the voyeuristic gaze that the cinematic apparatus constructs. Here the sleuth, Jake, whose usual work is to uncover the crimes of sexual liaison, of lovers, of husbands or wives suspected of being unfaithful, cannot read the clues that are right under his own nose. Underscoring the unsavory and pornographic aspects of his nosy work as well as his faulty powers of investigation, Jake’s own nose is severely cut and remains bandaged in most every scene (fig. 4). Across the entire length of the film, both Jake and the spectator lose their ability to investigate images and representations. Along with Gittes, the



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FIG. 4

Jack Nicholson and Faye Dunaway in *Chinatown*. The detective Jake's nose is severely cut and remains bandaged throughout the film, underscoring his nosy business of investigating crimes of passion

spectator misrecognizes what the photographs expose: one photograph is actually *not* evidence of a sexual encounter; another is evidence of a quarrel that remains overlooked as an important clue. The spectator is placed in the position of not being able to decode or trust visual images as they appear on the surface.

Language always plays an important role in detective stories and normally a detective's powers are revealed in the manner in which he demonstrates control over language, especially in his witty repartee. In the opening scenes of *Double Indemnity*, for example, the bantering dialogue and double entendres not only allow the spectator to understand that the amorous relationship between the *femme fatale* and the detective is one of crime and punishment, but also establish the sexual antagonisms to be carried out throughout the film.³⁸ Thus the detective is consistently given the power of language to be used on the side of rationality, while the *femme fatale* resorts to lies and employs language deceitfully. Both the logic of the detective's reasoning and the prowess of his verbal skills enable him to hold in check, or to contain, the disturbing threat of the irrational.³⁹ But in *Chinatown* language fails both the detective and the *femme fatale*. Jake never displays the verbal stylistics that usually demonstrate the hard-boiled detective's power over his suspects; indeed, Jake remains relatively silent throughout the film. Verbal style has been transferred to clothing style, allowing the visual cinematic image to take priority over the dialogue. In addition, under patriarchal control, the woman is rendered speechless, unable to articulate or give verbal form to the atrocities of her existence. Evelyn stutters every time she tries to mention her father, and even her explanation of the crime must be physically, not verbally, wrung from her. Her statement "She's my sister . . . my daughter" is incomprehensible to the audience as well as to the detective. When Jake finally recognizes the father's crimes of incest, murder, and real estate manipulation, he finds that the normal powers of language evade him: he is first struck speechless, then when he tries to help, he guarantees that Evelyn will be harmed.⁴⁰

"In *Chinatown*, language . . . and knowledge no longer meet at the crossroads, functioning together to produce knowledge of the Real,

but rather fall apart in the contemplation of it.”¹¹ The binary opposition of rational powers of detection against irrational forces of criminality dissolves. Hence the rational thinker comes to the realization that knowledge has limits, that he cannot comprehend the unknowable or control the unnatural. So, too, the powers of language that guide Mike Davis – the neo-noir theorist/detective of contemporary Los Angeles – disintegrate in the contemplation of crimes against the city: he, too, is struck speechless or disarmed as he recognizes that powers of agency lie elsewhere. Everything that once made the center of Los Angeles a gritty city – a place of harsh realities and stark existence, a testing ground for the hardiest of noir detectives – has been eradicated, gentrified, or redeveloped into a sterile and barren corporate core. In the end, we arrive at the pessimistic conclusion that crimes against the city/woman are beyond comprehension, for no one is held accountable and no action appears effective to stop the insatiable drives that have destroyed the public terrain. Thus the spectator can barely hear Jake’s final words when he mumbles “to do as little as possible,” repeating the advice he once received when he was assigned as a detective to Chinatown. After all, Chinatown is, allegorically, a place where reason has no force and where violence and the irrational reign – where we choose to squander our energy and wealth by doing as little as possible.

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1. Rosalyn Deutsche, “Chinatown, Part Four? What Jake Forgets about Downtown,” *Assemblage* 20 (April 1993), 32–33. Deutsche is referring directly to the work of Mike Davis, “Chinatown, Part Two? The ‘Internationalization’ of Downtown Los Angeles,” *New Left Review* (July/August 1987), 65–86, and Derek Gregory, “Chinatown, Part Three: Soja and the Missing Spaces of Social Theory,” *Strategies* 3 (1990), 40–104. She is also commenting indirectly on the following works of “men in space”: Mike Davis, *City of Quartz* (London and New York: Verso Press, 1990), Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geography* (London and New York: Verso Press, 1989), and David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1989).
2. Rosalyn Deutsche, “Men in Space,” *Strategies* 3 (1990), 130–37, and “Boys Town,” *Society and Space* 9 (1991), 5–30.

3. For a more extensive argument that agrees with Deutsche's criticism of these noir detectives, see Sue Best, "Deconstructing Space: Anne Graham's *Installation for Walla Mulla Park* and Jeff Gibson's *Screwballs*," *Transition Issue* 42 (1993), 27–41, 66–67.
4. Ibid. Best uses the term "encryptment" to emphasize that theories of social space carry the sexualization of space as a kind of ghost or phantom in the concepts which they use, yet they never directly confront these ghosts.
5. Ibid. Best includes, in addition to Harvey and Soja, Fredric Jameson, Michel de Certeau, Dick Hebride, and Henri Lefebvre.
6. Ibid., 29, and Plato, *Timaeus and Critias*, trans. Desmond Lee (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), 69.
7. Best, 35.
8. Deutsche, "Chinatown, Part Four?" 33.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. As Joan Copjec argues, the detective extracts one more clue – always on the surface of the scene of the crime but undetectable or remaining invisible before his arrival – and this clue allows him to solve the mystery. There must be a gap, "the distance between the evidence and that which the evidence establishes," something that remains not visible in the evidence, the absence of a final clue that would close or solve the mystery. And this absence makes sexual relations impossible, for the missing clue is the woman. "The Phenomenal Nonphenomenal: Private Space in Film Noir," in Joan Copjec, ed., *Shades of NOIR* (New York: Verso Press, 1993), 177–79.
12. See note 1.
13. Jennifer Bloomer has pointed out to me that the conflation of woman/city is directly related to the many images of water that appear in the film. Not only is water the most important agent in the fertility of the semi-arid lands of Los Angeles and its flow directly related to menstruation, but it also involves fantasies of purification, is endowed with healing powers, and, where it is present, it has turned California into a garden paradise.
14. Quoted by Davis, "Chinatown, Part Two?" 68.
15. William Marling, "On the Relation Between American Roman Noir and Film Noir," *Film Literature Quarterly* 21:3 (1993), 178–93.
16. Christine Buci-Glucksmann, "Catastrophic Utopia: The Feminine as Allegory of the Modern," in Catherine Gallagher and Thomas Laqueur, eds., *The Making of the*

Modern Body (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 220–29.

17. Ibid., 227.

18. Paul Kerr, "Out of What Past? Notes on the B Film Noir," *Screen Education* 32–33 (Autumn–Winter 1979–80). Quoted by Edward Dimendberg, "Film Noir and Urban Space" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Cruz, 1992), p. 12.

19. Jon Thompson, *Fiction, Crime and Empire* (Urbana and Carthage: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 36–37, 137–41.

20. Dimendberg, 12.

21. Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1960).

22. Quoted by Dimendberg, 57.

23. Dimendberg, 64.

24. Ibid., 113.

25. Bloch defined non-contemporaneous elements as "a continuing influence of older circumstances and forms of production, however much they may have been crossed through, as well as of older superstructures. The *objectively* non-contemporaneous element is that which is distant from and alien to the present; it thus embraces *declining remnants* and above all an *unrefurbished* past which is not yet 'resolved' in capitalist terms. . . . Home, soil, and nation are such *objectively* raised contradictions of the traditional to the capitalist Now, in which they have been increasingly destroyed and not replaced." See Dimendberg, 112.

26. Dean MacCannell, "Democracy's Turn: On Homeless *Noir*," in Copjec, *Shades of NOIR*, 279–97.

27. Dimendberg, 253.

28. Dana Polan, *Power & Paranoia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 259.

29. Quoted by Dimendberg, 78.

30. Quoted by Dimendberg, 80.

31. Polan, 261.

32. Ibid., 288.

33. Paul Coates, *The Gorgon's Gaze* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 173–76.

34. For comments on *The Big Sleep*, see Ronald R. Thomas, "The Dream of the Empty Camera: Image, Evidence, and Authentic American Style in *American Photographs* and *Farewell, My Lovely*," *Criticism* 31 (Summer 1994), 428, 433.

35. Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," *October* 59 (1992), 3–7.

36. Copjec, "The Phenomenal Nonphenomenal," 167–97.

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37. John Belton, "Language, Oedipus, and *Chinatown*," *MLN* 106 (1991), 933–50.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid., 937.
40. Ibid., 944–45.
41. Ibid., 949.

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Investigating the City – Detective Fiction as Urban Interpretation: Reply to . W. Christine Boyer

MARGARET CRAWFORD

Recent rereadings of *Chinatown*, using the film as a metaphor for the act of urban interpretation, raise important questions about the subject positions that inform contemporary urban criticism.¹ Mike Davis, proposing *Chinatown's* detective, Jake Gittes, as a model for investigating the hidden deals and invisible powers that continue to shape Los Angeles, initiated this discussion. In response, Rosalyn Deutsche has drawn attention to another aspect of the neo-noir genre: the unacknowledged but deeply gendered nature of its representations of urban space. Christine Boyer expands and deepens this critique. Without disagreeing with either Deutsche or Boyer, I would like to offer a slightly different reading of *Chinatown*, examining another distinct genre that also clearly informs *Chinatown*: the hard-boiled detective novel. By focusing exclusively on the noir and neo-noir modes of representation, Davis, Deutsche, and Boyer have ignored both the history and the contemporary discourse of the detective genre. In fact, detective fiction as a popular literary genre has produced a parallel discourse of urban interpretation, developed independently of academic urban studies. Historically linked with both urban reality and the urban imagination, the continuing evolution of the genre offers rich possibilities for rethinking the connections between subjectivity, interpretation, and urban space. Recent detective novels with gay, African-American, and female authors and characters suggest a multiplicity of new positions from which to investigate the city.

It is Walter Benjamin who has drawn attention to the emergence of the detective novel as a uniquely urban literary form,² noting that the process of detection is closely linked to the emergence of a city large enough

to obliterate the individual criminal's traces in its crowded streets. (The detective story first appeared in the early 1840s, with Edgar Allan Poe's *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* and *The Mystery of Marie Roget*.) Benjamin sees the role of the detective as a successor to the amateur *flâneur* as a privileged observer and interpreter of the city. But unlike the *flâneur*, who derives his pleasures by skimming along the visible surfaces of the city, the detective's goal is to penetrate below the surface to discover the meanings hidden in the city's streets. The detective's unique access to these urban secrets allows him, like a psychoanalyst, to go beyond the purely visible to read the city's collective unconscious. Benjamin follows the detective story in the direction of high art. Tracing the influence Poe had on Baudelaire, he notes that Baudelaire eliminates the detective and his function (solving the crime), maintaining only the heightened and emotion-laden atmosphere that Poe evokes in describing the crime.

An equally important aspect of the detective novel, however, is its realistic representation of actual urban crimes. Poe retells these crimes in ways that highlight the cultural and social themes they embody. *The Mystery of Marie Roget*, for example, is based on the 1840 murder of Mary Rogers, a young New York woman. This crime electrified and obsessed the city much as the violent death of Nicole Simpson recently obsessed Los Angeles.³ The story of Mary Rogers became a significant cultural event, a text that brought together discussions of female sexuality, social danger, and public safety in a rapidly changing city beset by social transformation and unparalleled cultural diversity. Like the Simpson case, with its narratives of domestic violence, racism, and celebrity in contemporary Los Angeles, the case of Mary Rogers turned private matters – previously considered outside of the purview of public discourse – into both newsworthy information and everyday conversation.

Thus, from its beginnings, the detective novel had a dual relationship to the city. On one hand, it produced literary interpretations that incorporated the mysteries of the urban condition; on the other, it opened up a popular social discourse by representing current concerns about urban life in an accessible fashion, allowing them to be widely and publicly discussed. Significantly, the figure of the female appears prominently in both discourses, inscribed as real and imaginary.

Published between 1930 and 1950, Raymond Chandler's Los Angeles detective novels embodied both of these discourses, overturning the previous genre tradition of the genteel murder mystery.⁴ By moving the setting from the drawing room to the streets, he created an alternative set of conventions. Instead of individual psychological motives, social and political corruption motivated the plot and characters. A new model of detection appeared in the character of Philip Marlowe, Chandler's classic hard-boiled private investigator. In Chandler's formula, crime is always doubly rooted: in the public sphere of economic and political corruption, and in the private world of family and sexual disturbances. As in Poe's stories, settings and crimes drawn from social reality were described with a hallucinatory intensity. Chandler's novels combined exaggeratedly tough prose ("lost town, shabby town, crook town . . . [with] women with faces of stale beer . . . [and] men with pulled-down hats") with a social landscape laid out with sharply critical realism. This produced a vision of Los Angeles so potent that, fifty years later, it has acquired the status of an official representation of the city. Several recent books devoted to discovering the "real" settings of Chandler's novels testify to the continued blurring between fiction and history.

As Fredric Jameson has pointed out, Chandler's view of Los Angeles is circular.⁵ In Chandler's Los Angeles, already a centerless city where different classes were geographically separate, it was impossible to grasp the social structure as a whole. In this fragmented setting the detective became a privileged figure, moving between rich and poor, and, in the course of investigating a crime, linking the city's separate and isolated parts together. The detective alone could reveal the hidden patterns of the city, the invisible relationships that connect wealth to poverty. Only the detective could comprehend the city as a totality. Chandler's belief that wealth always originated in crime linked crime and corruption as the indissoluble bond between the mansion and the slum. *Farewell, My Lovely* established this familiar pattern, beginning in Florian's, a dive on Central Avenue, the main street of Los Angeles's black district, then moving to an apparently unrelated scene in the Grayle mansion in the exclusive suburb of Pacific Palisades. The plot of the novel operates to connect the two. However, if knowing both sides of town is necessary to

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fully understand the city, their relationship was never equal. The urban slum was always cast as “other,” providing necessary resolution but never existing as a place on its own, only as a counterpoint to the sites of wealth, power, and corruption that truly interested Chandler.

The ability to move comfortably between such disparate locales is the key to the detective’s secret knowledge of the city. But, as Jameson shows, the detective’s ability to mediate between rich and poor depends on his distance from both. Hard-boiled detectives such as Marlowe are never part of society, but float above it, disengaged from time and space. Unlike the families who hire him, Marlowe had no family. Although the mysteries he solved were rooted in the past, he, himself, had no past; and although the meaning of places was central to his detection, he lived a transient life and belonged to no place. His power was based solely in knowledge, founded in observation and description rather than lived experience. His gaze was always one-way; he described, but was never, himself, described. Claiming to know society as a whole, he did not stand for any genuine close-up experience of it.

Marlowe’s unique mobility also gave him access to women from all social classes. Unlike the detective, however, these women were denied mobility – their positions were firmly fixed by their social and urban settings. In contrast to Marlowe – the active, self-created subject – they derived their identities from their fathers and husbands. Women who crossed social boundaries voluntarily, such as the Velma Valento/Mrs. Grayle character in *Farewell, My Lovely*, were punished for their violations. Velma’s dramatic self-transformation from red-haired taxi dancer to blond socialite, clearly transgressive, could only have been achieved through crime. Yet, equally criminal behavior on the part of women who stayed in their place were, in Chandler’s novels, rewarded with the detective’s loyalty. Although, in the course of an investigation, Marlowe invariably uncovered evidence of pervasive public corruption, he never attempted to rectify such social evils. Instead, his resolutions always occurred in the private realm where his loyalties remained, shaped by the mingled impulses of male bonding, chivalry, and sexual desire. This clear separation between public crimes and individual solutions leaves the social order untouched.

Jake Gittes, the protagonist of *Chinatown*, is clearly modeled on Philip Marlowe. He occupies a similar seedy office and his tough and cynical persona masks an equally romantic self-image as a knight errant. *Chinatown*, however, strips the detective of any heroic qualities, revealing the delusions and inadequacies of the hard-boiled role. Jake is able to uncover the film's public crime, the water conspiracy, but incapable of comprehending the private crime of incest. This professional failure is clearly bound up with the gendered subjectivity of the detective's role. Unable to think outside of the accepted categories of petty crimes and sexual peccadilloes that are his stock in trade, Gittes continually misinterprets the nature of the crimes committed in the film. Simultaneously protector/rescuer and seducer/sexual predator, his own ambivalence toward the female protagonists further confuse his perceptions. His incomprehension leads to a double tragedy in which the innocent are killed and the perpetrator of both crimes triumphs. As the movie ends, Jake is handcuffed to a police car, while the police detective reminds him, "After all, it's Chinatown. . . ."

As Boyer notes, Chinatown itself plays an allegorical role in the film, representing the invisible city, neither knowable nor decipherable. Alluded to throughout the film, it becomes actual only as the setting for the final tragedy. In the hard-boiled tradition, the unknowable urban "other" is invariably represented as an ethnic slum. Anything can happen in Chinatown. The role of Chinatown conforms to Chandler's circular image of the city, where corruption connects the white ruling-class with the Asians, African-Americans, or Latinos who also inhabit the city. Deutsche and Boyer demonstrate that women constitute another, equally significant category of "otherness." Thus, Chinatown remains a mystery, a treacherous urban space that hard-boiled perception is incapable of comprehending. If, in *Farewell, My Lovely*, Philip Marlowe can still convincingly link South Central to Pacific Palisades, Jake Gittes is no longer able to do so. Although Los Angeles remains fragmented, the detective's knowledge can no longer bind it together into a single, comprehensible whole. At the same time, public and private acts, rather than existing in separate spheres, as the hard-boiled tradition would have it, are shown to be inextricably linked in urban space. This renders the

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hard-boiled understanding of the city doubly impossible.

If *Chinatown* struck a strong blow at the pretensions of the male investigator of the city, the genre of detective fiction has continued the process. Over the past ten years, detective writing has developed far beyond the nostalgic sensibility of the neo-noir detective, which continually reinvents its own fixed categories of interpretation. Interrogating itself, it has dismantled its own assumptions, producing new models of detection that offer a multiplicity of suggestions for new ways of investigating the city. Several contemporary writers have problematized the hard-boiled male role and its relationship to urban knowledge. Joseph Hansen introduced Dave Brandstetter, the first gay detective. Brandstetter's self-consciousness about his gay identity foregrounds the sexual subjectivity suppressed, or taken for granted, in conventional hard-boiled narratives. His always-present awareness of sexual identity and desire, instead of distorting his ability to solve crimes, as it does for Jake in *Chinatown*, actually sharpens his perceptions. This gives him the ability to go beyond a hard-boiled understanding to penetrate another layer of the city, one usually veiled by deceptive appearances.

If Marlowe, Gittes, and their successors are *on* the streets, many current detectives are *of* the streets. Walter Mosely's detective novels, set in Watts and South Central Los Angeles, completely invert Chandler's view of the city, placing its black residents at the center while leaving whites on the periphery. Refuting the detective's claim of understanding the totality of the city, Mosely delineates the boundaries of urban knowledge, recognizing the impossibility of the detective bridging the gap between the two separate realms of the city. For him, South Central or Chinatown can be understood only from the inside. Unlike Philip Marlowe, Mosely's protagonist, Easy Rawlins, is not a professional detective and is reluctantly forced into investigating. He acquires his knowledge not through questioning or intimidating strangers but through friendship and shared histories within a circumscribed community.

Other fictional sleuths challenge even the rationality of detection itself – the source of the male detective's power and knowledge. Romulus Ledbetter, the homeless protagonist of George Dawes Green's *The Caveman's Valentine*, successfully takes on the role of detective, although

he lives in a cave in Inwood Park and is beset by paranoid delusions. In a further overturning of genre convention, Ledbetter, who as a transient might be expected to resemble the hard-boiled detective in his lack of social attachment, in fact possesses a devoted middle-class family, who figure prominently in his life.

The most profound transformation of the genre, however, has come from the proliferation of female detectives. In current detective fiction, female writers and characters now outnumber males and dominate the field. This extensive sub-genre has generated a multiplicity of new types of detectives. Professional activities are no longer privileged: any woman can assume the role of detective; any social position, from welfare mother to First Lady, can constitute a vantage point from which to solve crimes and interpret the city and the world. Even the professional female detectives most closely tied to conventional formulas differ considerably from their hard-boiled colleagues. Their lives demonstrate the fluid boundaries between private and public and a far more complex and nuanced subjectivity than that of, say, Philip Marlowe. Female investigators such as Kinsey Millhone or V. I. Warshawski are not separate from society or distanced from everyday life. No longer confined to their offices, they appear in both private and professional settings, allowing the reader to become familiar with their pasts, their neighborhoods, their apartments, their eating habits, and even their mother's china. They also embody multiple roles. Inevitably, any attempt on their part to seek totalizing solutions will invariably be complicated by the presence of family, friends, elderly neighbors, pets, ex-husbands, and past and potential lovers. Subjectivity, rather than being an impediment to the detective's understanding of crime and the city, becomes a mode of understanding them.

A recent Los Angeles detective novel, *North of Montana*, by April Smith, blurs the boundaries between the detective's subjectivity and the city even further. As the title suggests, the plot follows the familiar circular social space of the city, connecting the wealthy Santa Monica neighborhood north of Montana Avenue with the Central American barrio – a recent site of urban “otherness.” In the course of an investigation, a female FBI agent, Ana Grey, uncovers her own previously unknown past, discovering that she is part Salvadorian. With part of herself as

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“other,” she occupies a multiple subject position, both inside and outside, detective and object of detection. Like Jake Gittes, she both fails to solve the crime and inadvertently causes the death of an innocent victim. Unlike him, however, she finds hope and redemption – literally on the street in the barrio – that is, in “Chinatown.” This reverses the terms of the relationship between the detective and the city, turning Chandler’s circular motion back on itself. Instead of the detective attempting to heal the city, or more typically, failing to heal the city, the city has healed the detective.

Thanks to Edward Dimendberg and Marco Cenzatti for their invaluable assistance. I am also grateful to Ernest Pascucci for his insight that popular culture often does the work of theory. See “The City Belongs to That Girl,” *ANY* 12 (October 1995).

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1. Mike Davis, “*Chinatown*, Part Two? The ‘Internationalization’ of Downtown Los Angeles,” *New Left Review* (July/August 1987), 65–86, and *City of Quartz* (London and New York: Verso Press, 1990), 17–97; Rosalyn Deutsche, “Chinatown, Part Four? What Jake Forgets about Downtown,” *Assemblage* 20 (April 1993), 32–33. Also see Rosalyn Deutsche, “Boys Town,” *Society and Space* 9 (1991), 5–30.
2. Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (London: New Left Books, 1974), 43.
3. Amy Gilman Srebnick, “The Death of Mary Rogers, the ‘Public Prints’ and the Violence of Representation” (paper presented at American Studies conference, UCLA, May 21, 1993).
4. Ernest Mandel points out that after World War 1, the detective novel moved from the streets to the drawing room. This can be seen in the British country house sub-genre, typified by the work of Agatha Christie as well as in American authors such as Rex Stout and Ellery Queen. Although this genre continued to be popular, after Prohibition American writers turned to urban subjects such as gangsters, organized crime, and corruption. Ernest Mandel, *Delightful Murder: A Social History of the Crime Story* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), 22–39.
5. Fredric Jameson, “On Raymond Chandler,” in *The Poetics of Murder: Detective Fiction and Literary Theory* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 127.

Gendered Spaces in Colonial Algiers

ZEYNEP ÇELİK

The French colonial discourse, developed by a broad base of intellectuals and military and administrative officers, identified the Algerian woman as the key symbol of the country's cultural identity.¹ In a typical formulation, J. Lorrain, writing at the turn of the century, called the entire country "a wise and dangerous mistress," but one who "exudes a climate of caress and torpor," suggesting that control over her mind and body was essential.² This association extended to the city of Algiers as well. Popular literature from the colonial period abounds with gendered descriptions that attribute an excessive sensuality to the city. In the turn-of-the-century travel accounts of Marius Bernard, for example, Algiers is a lascivious woman whose appeal was evident even in her name: "Algiers! Such a musical word, like the murmur of waves against the white sand of the beach; a name as sweet as the rippling of the breeze in the palm trees of the oases! Algiers! So seductive and easy-going, a town to be loved for the deep purity of her sky, the radiant splendor of her turquoise sea, her mysterious smells, the warm breath in which she wraps her visitors like a long caress."³ Similarly, Lucienne Favre, a woman novelist writing in the 1930s, described the Casbah (the precolonial town of al-Jaza'ir) as "the vamp of North Africa," endowed with a "capricious feminine charm" and great "sex appeal."⁴ Heralded by Eugène Delacroix's *Les Femmes d'Alger* – a painting from the first years of the French occupation that, symbolically, entered the privacy of an Algerian home – the artistic discourse reiterated this association. Beginning in the 1930s, Le Corbusier's gendering of Algiers extended this tradition to architecture. Provoking associations between the curved lines of his projects to

modernize the city and the “plasticity” of the bodies of Algerian women, Le Corbusier articulated his enchantment with these women and consistently represented the casbah as a veiled head in his reductive drawings (fig. 1). His choice of words further punctuated the association: the Casbah was “beautiful,” “charming,” and “adorable.”⁵ He also likened the city to a female body: “Algiers drops out of sight,” he noted as he viewed the city from a boat leaving for France, “like a magnificent body, supple-hipped and full-breasted.”⁶ The cover sketch of his *Poésie sur Alger* depicts a unicorn-headed, winged female body – supple-hipped and full-breasted (the city/poem?) – caressed gently by a hand (the architect’s hand) against the skyline of new Algiers, to be designed by Le Corbusier himself.

While metaphors between cities and female figures are quite common, the exaggerated episode of Algiers stands out, calling for closer analysis. In its historic context, the Casbah presents an evocative case study of gendered spaces. It displays distinctly separate realms, sometimes claimed by the women of Algiers as an alternative to men’s public spaces. The gendered spaces of Algiers became truly contested terrains during the colonial era, and their appropriation by the French turned into a major obsession. Focusing on the meanings associated with them and tracing the shifts in the forms of their appropriation, I hope to bring a new perspective to the reading of the colonial city, with references to a specific setting.

The urban fabric of the Casbah, dominated by its short, crooked streets, is a hallmark of the “Islamic city” – a problematic construction by European historians which has recently been subjected to serious revision. Janet Abu-Lughod, the most convincing critic of this concept, has argued, nevertheless, that Islam shaped social, political, and legal institutions, and through them, the cities. She points out that gender segregation was the most important issue here and that, by encouraging it, Islam structured the urban space and divided places and functions.⁷ To put it schematically, in the “traditional Islamic city,” public spaces belonged to men and domestic spaces belonged to women.

Gender-based and separate turfs prevented physical contact between men and women, and enabled visual privacy. The exteriors of the houses of Algiers reflected the semiotic of sexual segregation: the *mushrabiyyas*



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FIG. 1

Le Corbusier. Sketch summarizing the essential elements of his design for Algiers. From Le Corbusier, *Poésie sur Alger*, 1950

were literal screens and the asymmetrical arrangement of entrance doors protected the interior of the home from the gaze of passersby. Regardless of the family's income or the size of the building, the houses of the Casbah closed themselves to the street and turned onto a courtyard surrounded by elaborate arcades. The geographic and topographic conditions of Algiers added another element to the houses of the Casbah: rooftop terraces. In contrast to the interiorized courtyards and relatively contrived rooms of the houses, the terraces opened up to neighbors, to the city, to the sea – to the world. The concern for privacy, so dominant in defining the street facades, disintegrated at roof level. It was this alternative realm that the women of Algiers claimed for themselves – as a place of work, socialization, and recreation; indeed, a much more pleasant place than the restricted streets below (fig. 2). The Casbah thus became divided into two realms: on the top, occupying the expanse of the entire city, were the women; at the bottom were the narrow streets belonging to the men.

The French occupation of Algiers (1830–1962) obscured this unusual dual structure by transforming the entire Casbah into an *espace-contre* (counter space) because it contrasted with the European sections of the city in form and in lifestyles, and because its residents continually challenged and opposed the colonizer (fig. 3).⁸ Yet, in the typical ambivalence of the colonial condition, thrill and fear of the unknown intertwined with fantasy, and the Casbah opened new vistas for the imagination.⁹ The massing and interiority of the Algerian house constituted favorite themes for Orientalist artists who were as much interested in the architectural qualities of the Casbah as in its lifestyles. The rooftop activities of the women, reenacted by painters who turned the top of the Casbah into the sensuous realm of the belly dancer and the ever-reclining odalisque, were depicted with colorful clothes contrasted against the white residential fabric. Interior views of the Algerian house formed another genre, with the stage-set quality of women's *appartements* reinforcing the introverted nature of the domestic realm.¹⁰

The postcard industry that bloomed around the turn of the century duplicated this dual representation of the houses of the Casbah. Exterior views focused on the narrow, winding streets, while interiors were



FIG. 2

Charles Brouty. Sketch of the rooftops of Algiers. From Le Corbusier, *La Ville Radieuse*, 1938

FIG. 3

Aerial view of Algiers, showing the juncture of the Casbah, on the left, and the French city, on the right



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“assembled” as women’s environments (often against the ornate arcades of the courtyard) according to familiar Orientalist formulas.” Colonial cinematography further reinforced this image in feature films varying from Jacques Feyder’s *Atlantide* (1921) and Raymond Bernard’s *Tartarin de Tarascon* (1934) to Julien Duvivier’s *Pépé le Moko* (1937).

Le Corbusier, too, focused on the courtyards and roof terraces. He argued that the narrow streets of the Casbah were mere passageways, yet, a “miracle” occurred when the door of an Arab house opened, revealing a lovely courtyard where coolness, tranquility, and well-being reigned.¹² Furthermore, Arabs had “conquered the view of the sea for every house” by means of roof terraces that “add[ed] on to each other like a magic and gigantic staircase descending to the sea.”¹³

The colonial obsession with the Algerian home grew in proportion to the actual impenetrability of this realm. To Algerians living under French occupation, home carried a special meaning as the place where they found refuge from colonial interventions perpetually confronted in public life. In the words of social historian Djamilia Amrane, home was the “inviolable space” where Algerians recovered their identity.¹⁴ It acted as a buffer against colonialism. Furthermore, it constituted an element in the “language of refusal” created by Algerians, a language that involved their whole way of life, from their behavior patterns to their clothing. As Pierre Bourdieu argued, under the constant gaze of Europeans, Algerian society chose to remain tightly closed upon itself by developing innumerable barriers.¹⁵ The home was a most significant shell for this form of resistance.

In this context, spaces occupied by women (and especially women’s historically self-defined public realms) become loaded with additional meanings. The colonizer’s persistent efforts to appropriate women by incorporating them into modern buildings reveals much about the scope of the role they played in colonial confrontations. Clearly, behind the struggle to appropriate was the desire to control – an issue that emerged predominantly in the designs of the *grands ensembles*, the large housing complexes built for Algerians by the French administration.

From the 1930s on, the French administration regarded housing the Algerians as a major task directly responding to the increase in the

“indigenous” population of Algiers and, consequently, to the overcrowding of the Casbah and the emergence of squatter settlements (the *bidonvilles*). Adhering to colonial policies at large, the goal was two-fold: to improve the living standards of local people and to control their environments – both as social engineering tools to secure the French presence. Attempting to refine French colonial policies in order to ensure the legitimacy and durability of the French empire, Albert Sarraut, the former governor of Indochina and minister of colonies, asserted in 1931 that the “historic reality” of colonialism (characterized until then as “a unilateral and ego-tistical enterprise of personal interest, accomplished by the strongest over the weakest” and as “an act of force,” not of “civilization”) should be corrected. France had to develop a “precise colonial doctrine [relying on] the mirror of its conscience.” It was, indeed, France’s honor to acknowledge the “value of latent races” (*racess attardées*) and to see the colonies not simply as markets, but as “creations of humanity.” Behind this humanistic facade, however, Sarraut presented the most important issue as the “control of local populations,” which would depend on ensuring their loyalty and attachment to the colonizer.¹⁶

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It was in the spirit championed by Sarraut that René Lespès, the foremost scholar of Algiers, explained the political implications of housing in a colonial society. Raising the “material living conditions of our subjects will bring them closer to us,” he argued. This was “humanitarian work, useful work, necessary work.”¹⁷ The president of the Algiers Chamber of Commerce applauded the decision to provide new housing for Algerians because giving them “a taste of hygiene, well-being . . . and a higher degree of civilization” would create a “sentiment of trust in France.”¹⁸ In the years to come, the importance of housing as a pacifying device would continue to be emphasized and a massive construction program would be put in action, escalating in scale from the 1950s to the end of French rule.

Control over the domestic spaces of the colonized society was particularly important in the Algerian context because resistance to the French had persisted ever since the 1830s. Increasingly the French administration believed that Algeria could be captured only from the smallest social unit, the family. Therefore, penetrating the spaces that had

remained inaccessible to the colonizer became a priority. The architects commissioned to design the *grands ensembles* experimented with a wide range of designs, varying from high-density, low-rise settlements to clusters of apartment blocks; from “*Arabisation*” to pure International Style.”¹⁹ Nevertheless, the projects were united by an overriding theme: the attempt to integrate the essential features of the Algerian house; that is, the courtyard and the roof terrace. However, the interpretations varied and often resulted in questionable spaces, which were transformed over time by the residents in response to their needs. Out of approximately forty such projects built in Algiers, two case studies (both from the 1950s) represent intriguing experimentations in French architects’ claims to women’s spaces.

The spectacularly monumental 200 Colonges was designed by Fernand Pouillon, who had established himself in Aix-en-Provence and Marseille and who, by 1953, had become chief architect of the city of Algiers. 200 Colonges sits in the center of a large housing development (called Climat de France, also designed by Pouillon) on a sloped site to the west of the Casbah (fig. 4). The complex provided four thousand dwelling units in blocks planned linearly around communal courts or as single towers. Sizes varied greatly in the search for compositional balance, and site planning required radical interventions to topography.

No other construction in the vicinity matched the dimensions of 200 Colonges, a massive, rectangular block 233 meters long and 38 meters wide, with a vast courtyard and surrounded by a three-story-high colonnade consisting of two hundred square-shaped columns. The practice of turning the private courtyards of “traditional” houses into one communal space to be shared by all residents was quite common in new housing projects in Algiers, and it sparked heated debate among architects. Essentially, Pouillon’s scheme aggrandized the courtyard to the scale of a public square, thereby taking it away from the residents of the building and making it the “agora” of the entire Climat de France development.

With 200 Colonges, Pouillon deliberately turned away from the “charming” effects of his former projects to create a “more profound, more austere plastique.”²⁰ His references were not only to the residential courtyards of Algiers but also to a long and eclectic legacy that included

the towns of Mزاب and the ruins of el-Golea and Timimoum in Algeria; Hellenistic agoras and Roman fora; the Place des Vosges and the Palais Royal in Paris; the Court of the Myrtles and the Court of the Lions in the Alhambra Palace in Granada; and Isfahan's great seventeenth-century square, Maydan-i Shah.²¹

The roof terrace was another major feature of 200 Colonnnes. Pouillon claimed that in his "new Casbah" he would give Algerian women their semi-private space to work and socialize. Placing small domed pavilions at regular intervals on the immense terrace (as washhouses that would double as centers of gathering), he envisioned a replication of the liveliness of the Casbah rooftops, with women socializing and children playing; clothes drying on the lines would add a picturesque touch to his architecture. Pouillon also made the stairs climbing up to the roof particularly narrow in order to emphasize the domestic and semi-private nature of the passageway and as a reminder of the stepped streets of the old town. However, only the women living on the upper floors used the roof terrace. The majority, loaded down with baskets full of laundry, refused to climb the narrow stairs and, despite the inadequacy of the provisions, chose to wash their clothes in their apartments. To dry them they projected rods from their windows, thus contributing involuntarily to the atmosphere of "authenticity" so cherished by Pouillon.

Pouillon's oversweeping approach to architecture and urban design and his radical interventionism vis-à-vis site conditions present a contrast to the architecture of Roland Simounet. With his responsive and imaginative buildings, Simounet gained respectability among the leading architects of the 1950s despite his relative youth and blatant disapproval of the aesthetic sensibilities of Pouillon, the city's *architecte en chef*.²² Simounet was greatly influenced by the work of Le Corbusier, but he was also a careful student of Algerian culture, especially the Algerian vernacular. His architecture was shaped by the lessons he learned from European modernism, by his respect for the site, and by his inquiry into vernacular house forms (including squatter settlements) and the patterns of daily life and ritual.

Djenan el-Hasan is the widely published and discussed housing project that established Simounet's reputation. Located near Climat de



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FIG. 4

Aerial view of Climat de France
with 200 Colonnes, designed by
Fernand Pouillon

FIG. 5

View of Djenan el-Hasan,
designed by Roland Simounet

France, the 210-dwelling units of Djenan el-Hasan were built to rehouse one thousand former residents of demolished *bidonvilles* in the area. The scheme, described by the architect as “between vertical and horizontal,” compactly settled the units on a series of terraces parallel to each other and against the steep slope of the terrain, giving each apartment an uninterrupted view (fig. 5). The lessons that Simounet had learned from the Casbah were interpreted, rationalized, and aestheticized in the stacked, uniform vaulted units. At the same time, the overall image borrowed from the architecture of Le Corbusier, in particular the Roq et Rob project in Roquebrune–Cap Martin (1949), a particularly relevant scheme in the “Mediterranean tradition.” Rationalizing the street network of the Casbah, Simounet developed here a complex circulation system of level paths and stepped paths that responded to the site and opened up to small public squares intended for use by men and children.

Simounet’s apartments, developed on a strictly modular system derived from Le Corbusier’s “Modulor,” were either single story or duplex, the latter doubling the former vertically. The first type consisted of a single room and a loggia, which combined the notions of the rooftop terrace and the courtyard. The loggia was intended to function as a living, working, and recreational space – an extension of the house. Unlike the terraces of the houses in the Casbah, this space did not become part of the larger entity but remained linked to the interior space onto which it opened. The placement of a water outlet here was to enable the inclusion of washing facilities, but the further insertion of a toilet (derived from the out-houses in the courtyards of rural domestic architecture) complicated matters by hindering the intended function of this mutant courtyard/roof terrace.

The vaulted roofs could not be reached from the apartment units and, hence, were not designated as useable spaces. Despite their inconvenient form and difficult accessibility, the women of Djenan el-Hasan claimed these rooftops, turning them into work and recreation areas. Thus, the space limitations of the apartments pushed the functions meant to be sheltered in the loggias (such as food preparation) to the rooftops, overruling the inconvenience of jumping from the balcony, down to the roof of the unit in the front row, climbing back up, and working and moving on a curved surface.

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As observed in these case studies, French architects were struggling to rationalize, tame, and control indigenous forms. Especially important was the appropriation of women's spaces, into which a great deal of consideration was invested. Nevertheless, this consideration did not achieve access into Algerian women's lives, which remained closed to colonizers – a situation eventually revealed by the active role that women were to play in a war totally unexpected by the French. The pacifying powers of architecture were proven false, as well. With the intensification of the decolonization war, housing project after housing project turned into a resistance center. To cite one example, the residents of Climat de France – deemed by an official report to be politically “less fidgety” than those of the Casbah due to their much better living conditions – took part in public demonstrations. On one memorable day, December 1, 1960, sixty people from 200 Colonnes alone were killed by French forces.²³

The war of decolonization brought the Casbah to the forefront as a major locus of resistance. In this context, Algerians did not consider the privacy of the family and of women as a sacrosanct issue: resistance fighters were allowed into the houses and onto the rooftops (accessible only through the hearts of houses), facilitating their movements, while other outsiders, including the French forces, were not allowed access. Subsequently, the French forces would blockade the Casbah and occupy not only the streets but also the homes and roof terraces. The surrender of the Casbah is extensively documented by photographs showing armed officers on rooftops – a telling comparison with earlier depictions of the Casbah terraces being “invaded” by women.

Underlying the history of Algiers is a continuing theme that centers on the gendering of urban and architectural spaces. The gendered spaces of Algiers have carried great significance in asserting power, as clearly illustrated by the persistent struggles of appropriation and reappropriation that surfaced so blatantly during the colonial period. Yet, both the pre- and postcolonial eras display a separation of the city into men's and women's realms, albeit in very different contexts.

The current political climate in Algeria calls for extended discussion of women's public and private spaces in contemporary Algiers.

While I cannot engage in that discussion here, I would like to acknowledge the seriousness of the situation by dedicating this essay to the memory of Nabila Djanine, an Algerian woman architect and the leader of a feminist group called The Cry of Women. Nabila Djanine was shot and killed in February 1995.

The material for this article is taken from my forthcoming book, *Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontations: Algiers Under French Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

1. Winifred Woodhull, *Transfigurations of the Maghreb* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 19.
2. J. Lorrain, *Heures d'Afrique* (1899), quoted in Yvonne Knibielser and Régine Goutalier, *La Femme aux temps des colonies* (Paris: Stock, 1985), 40.
3. Marius Bernard, *D'Alger à Tanger* (n.d.), quoted in Judy Mabro, *Veiled Half-Truths: Western Travelers' Perceptions of Middle Eastern Women* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris & Co., 1991), 35.
4. Lucienne Favre, *Tout l'inconnu de la Casbah* (Algiers, 1933), 10. "Sex appeal" is in English in the original.
5. Le Corbusier, *La Ville Radieuse* (Paris: Editions Vincent, Fréal & Cie., 1938), 229.
6. *Ibid.*, 260.
7. Janet L. Abu-Lughod, "The Islamic City – Historic Myth, Islamic Essence, and Contemporary Relevance," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19 (May 1987), 162–64.
8. Djaffar Lesbet, *La Casbah d'Alger. Gestion urbaine et vide social* (Algiers: Office des Publications Universitaires, 1985?), 39–48.
9. Colonial relationship is not a symmetrically antagonistic one due to the ambivalence in the positioning of the colonized and the colonizer. Ambivalence is connected to the notion of "hybridity," which depends on the rewriting of the other's original, but transforming it because of misreadings and incongruities and thus making it something different. Expanding the work of Frantz Fanon, cultural critics have focused largely on the ambivalence of the colonized. I would like to extend this notion to the colonizer as well. Among the key texts on the topic are Homi K. Bhabha, "The Other Question," in Russell Ferguson, Martha Gever, Trihn T.

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- Mihn-ha, Cornel West, eds., *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 71–87; Homi Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man,” *October* 28 (October 1984), 125–33; and Benita Parry, “Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse,” *Oxford Literary Review* 9 (1987), 27–58.
10. The list of paintings is long. For the depiction of terraces, see, for example, Jules Meunier’s *Femmes d’Alger sur les terrasses* (1888) and Marius de Buzon’s *Trois Algériennes* (ca. 1927). Among the best-known interior depictions are Delacroix’s two versions of *Les Femmes d’Alger* (1832 and 1848) and Auguste Renoir’s painting of the same title.
 11. For colonial postcards, see Malek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem*, trans. Myrna Godzich and Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985).
 12. Le Corbusier, *La Ville Radieuse*, 230–31.
 13. Le Corbusier, “Le Folklore est l’expression fleurie des traditions,” *Voici la France de ce mois* (June 16, 1941), 31.
 14. Djamila Amrane, *Les Femmes algériennes dans la guerre* (Paris: Plon, 1991), 45.
 15. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Algerians*, trans. Alan C. M. Ross (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), 157.
 16. Albert Sarraut, *Servitudes et grandeur coloniales* (Paris: Sagittaire, 1931), 102–3, 108, 116, 119.
 17. René Lespès, “Projet d’enquête sur l’habitat des indigènes musulmans dans les centres urbains en Algérie,” *Revue africaine* 76 (1935), 431–36.
 18. Louis Morard, “L’Algérie – ce qu’elle est – ce qu’elle doit devenir,” *Le Monde colonial illustré* 87 (November 1930).
 19. I borrow the term “*Arabisation*” from François Béguin, who defines it as “arabization of architectural forms imported from Europe.” See François Béguin, *Arabisations* (Paris: Dunod, 1983), 1.
 20. Pouillon’s specific reference here is to Diar el-Mahçoul, a housing complex he designed on the hills of Algiers prior to *Climat de France*.
 21. Fernand Pouillon, *Mémoires d’un architecte* (Paris: Seuil, 1968), 206–8; *Travaux nord-africains*, March 7, 1957.
 22. Simounet elaborated on the major difference between Pouillon and himself: “Je respecte le site; Pouillon agresse le site” (I respect the site; Pouillon attacks the site). Furthermore, he criticized Pouillon for designing “sans penser aux hommes” (without thinking of men). For Simounet, Pouillon’s insensitivity to the site, context, and culture stemmed from his coming directly from France – unlike Simounet, who was “from Algeria.” Roland Simounet, interview with the author, Paris, April 16, 1993.
 23. Albert-Paul Lentin, *L’Algérie entre deux mondes. Le Dernier Quart d’Heure* (Paris: René Julliard, 1963), 147, 151.

La Donna è Mobile: Agoraphobia, Women, and Urban Space

ESTHER DA COSTA MEYER

For Diana Balmori

This essay will focus on the appearance of agoraphobia, and the imbrication of women, urban space, and pathology.¹ Since this neurosis straddles the fault line between public and private, and affects women in particular, it seems to be a relevant subject of study for us today. Even though agoraphobia cannot be generalized as reflecting the current situation of women, like other urban pathologies, it tells us something about the way space is constitutive of personality. I wish to explore different theories of agoraphobia – sociological, psychological, psychoanalytic, feminist, new historicist – to discover what each of these has to say about this most spatially confining of anxiety disorders, and its relation to women.

Agoraphobia is most commonly defined as the fear of open spaces; or, more literally, the fear of the marketplace. First coined by Dr. Carl Westphal in 1871, the term did not gain common currency until relatively recently.² Different authors used *Platzscheu* or *Platzfurcht* (fear of public squares), *Platzschwindel* (dizziness in public squares), *Strassenangst* (fear of streets), *Raumangst* (fear of space), and *Topophobia*. With time, fear of urban spaces came to be identified more correctly with situations located in the public realm: not only streets and squares but, more specifically, crowds, shopping, trains, bridges, tunnels, elevators, and so forth.

In recent years, the incidence of agoraphobia has increased exponentially, currently constituting more than 50 percent of all phobic or psychoneurotic disorders.³ Its connection to women is beyond dispute: around 85 percent of agoraphobes in this country today are women,⁴ and although the vast majority of them are white and affluent, we simply do not know

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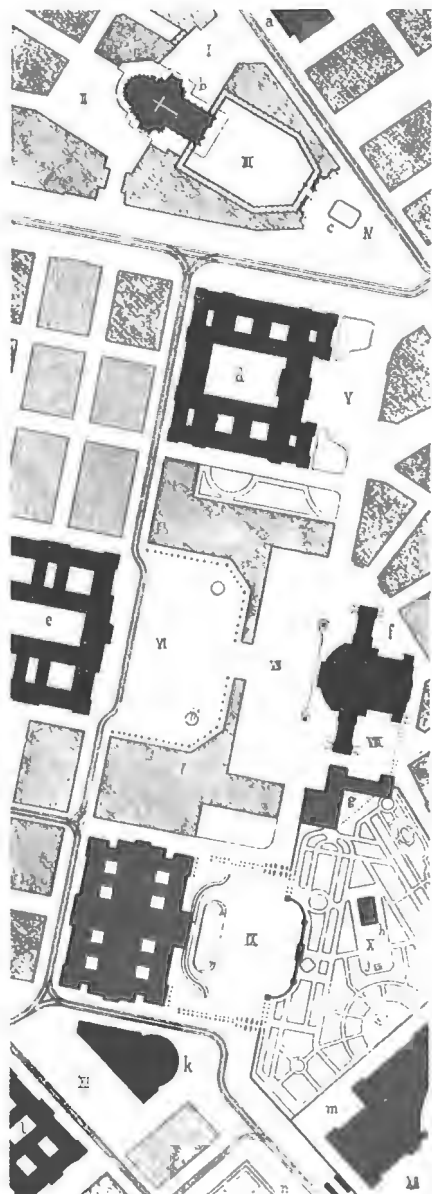


FIG. 1

Camillo Sitte's plan for the Ringstrasse. The Roman numerals designate the close-knit squares created by his infill blocks

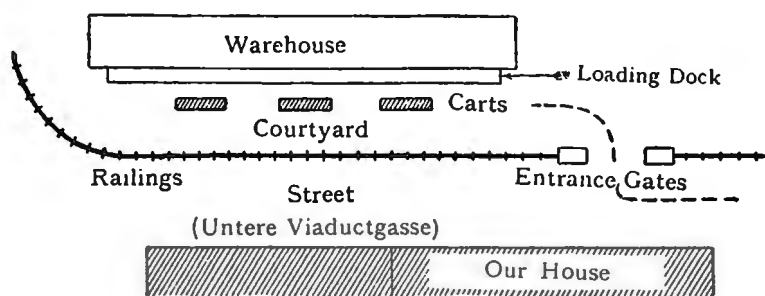
enough about the extent of the disease and the forms it takes in other ethnic groups that have no access to psychiatry and lack the resources to stay at home.

One of the first scholars to deal with agoraphobia was the Viennese architect and urbanist Camillo Sitte. Sitte fell back on a literal interpretation of agoraphobia: the fear of open space. Or perhaps it is more fair to say that he was primarily concerned with agoraphobia as a sociological, rather than a pathological, phenomenon. Always attuned to psychological questions, Sitte noticed that many of his contemporaries either scuttled uneasily across large city squares or engaged in long detours, skirting the walls of surrounding buildings. As he wrote in 1889, "Recently a unique nervous disorder has been diagnosed – 'agoraphobia.' Numerous people are said to suffer from it, always experiencing a certain anxiety or discomfort whenever they have to walk across a vast empty place."⁵ According to Sitte, only small-scale, enclosed squares took account of what he liked to call "our natural craving for protection from the flank."⁶

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Sitte had particular reason to be concerned with agoraphobia. Vienna's old ramparts, which for centuries had served as a boundary – psychological as well as architectural – protecting the historic center, had been torn down to make way for the Ringstrasse, a vast boulevard 190 feet wide and dramatically out of scale with the historic fabric. Perhaps unconscious class fears had something to do with the tensions attaching to the Ringstrasse: from time immemorial the old city had been the seat of the court, the aristocracy, the wealthy bourgeoisie and their servants, while over time, the proletariat was housed in the featureless urban sprawl beyond the walls. The destruction of the ramparts erased the main spatial divide that separated the affluent from the poor and the minorities.

Sitte's proposed redesign for parts of the Ringstrasse added infill architecture to produce small, protective city squares of the sort he had seen in Tuscany and Umbria (fig. 1). His projects, while not carried out, remain a nostalgic, petit bourgeois protest against the inevitable transformation of Vienna into a metropolis. Although they would have helped dispel the malaise of the small-town dweller inured to the shelter and comfort of the capillary street network, his proposals would have worked



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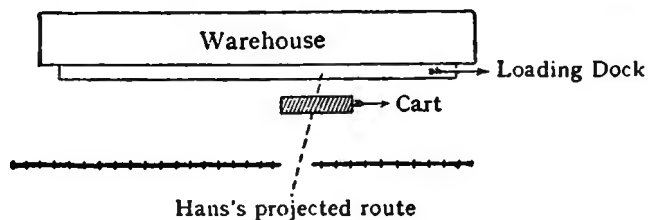


FIG. 2
Freud's diagram showing the
location of Little Hans's house

FIG. 3
Freud's diagram of Little Hans's
projected route

only at the expense of future traffic. His insights were based on an incomplete formulation of the complex social issues involved, but his sensitive reading of the intricacies of urban space remains a valuable tool for town planning even today. And his emphasis on the emotional importance of walls is most perceptive, though it misses the psychosexual connotations that other scholars were later to identify and analyze.

For Sitte's contemporary and fellow citizen Sigmund Freud, who focused on the clinical picture, the fear of urban space was a symptom, not a cause, of aberrant behavior. In Freud's view anxiety neuroses such as agoraphobia were due to repressed, unconscious fears or wishes masquerading as spatial ones, and these fears or wishes were connected not with empty space, but with *urban* (that is, social) space – above all, streets. According to Freud, streets were threatening to those, like affluent or middle-class women, who led a sheltered or repressed life because they held out promises of temptation, sexual fulfillment, and escape from home. This freedom of choice, Freud believed, was a source of great anxiety for the agoraphobe who experienced unconscious guilt for what were, in fact, unconscious desires and, thus, felt the need for a restraining influence like the walls of the house or a companion to walk with.⁷

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Linking the etiology of agoraphobia to repressed sexual desire, Freud theorized it as a female malady, at least in his early writings on the subject. As he put it rather crudely in a draft entitled "The Architecture of Hysteria" (1897), "Agoraphobia seems to depend on a romance of prostitution."⁸ Yet the first three known patients for whom Westphal earlier had named the disease were, in fact, men, as was the overwhelming majority of cases reported in the medical literature of the day.⁹ Freud himself had treated one case of male agoraphobia in 1893 and two in 1895; and though he did not know it at the time, his most important experience with agoraphobic patients was to revolve around a five-year-old boy – the celebrated case of Little Hans.¹⁰ Significantly, this is the only one of Freud's case histories where he makes use of urban plans, however schematic (figs. 2, 3).

When Little Hans developed a fear of going out into the streets and squares of Vienna, Freud correctly saw that space *per se* was incidental to the disease, and incapable of causing trauma. In the case of

agoraphobia, buildings and squares have no intrinsic architectural meaning, but are convenient “symbolic substitutes” for repressed feelings.” Desire, thwarted by prohibition, transfers itself by metonymy to a nearby object. Urban and architectural space become eroticized through displacement: the final resting place of the repressed and overdetermined signified, at the end of a long metonymic chain. Freud later explained the mechanism and the secondary gains it affords:

“In the case of phobias one can see clearly how this internal danger is transformed into an external one. . . . The agoraphobic is always afraid of his impulses in connection with temptations aroused in him by meeting people in the street. In his phobia he makes a displacement and is now afraid of an external situation. What he gains thereby is obvious; it is that he feels he can protect himself better in that way. One can rescue oneself from an external danger by flight, whereas an attempt to fly from an internal danger is a difficult undertaking.”¹²

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As we can see, for Freud there was no easy fit between the urban or architectural signifier and the referent, which is always overdetermined and, thus, partly unavailable. In this sense, we might say that he was a poststructuralist *avant la lettre*. Like all phobias, the story of Little Hans can be broken down into different issues that never exhaust the whole picture: his fear of the streets had to do with, among other things, zoophobia (in his case, a fear of horses). One of Hans’s playmates had fallen down while both children were playing horses, and he had also seen a horse fall down in the street. He wished his father, too, would fall down and hurt himself: the Oedipal triangle would then happily resolve itself around Little Hans and his mother. Had Hans limited himself to feelings of love for his mother and ambivalence toward his father, he would not be phobic. “What made it a neurosis,” wrote Freud, “was one thing alone: the replacement of his father by a horse. It is this displacement, then, which has a claim to be called a symptom.”¹³ Displacement – a form of censorship – permitted Little Hans to overcome the ambiguity of his emotions with respect to his father by transferring the aggressive impulses to a substitute object, the horse.

Freud later changed his mind with regard to the origin of agoraphobia in one very important aspect. Reflecting on the case of Little Hans from a distance of several years, he began to revise his earlier view according to which anxiety was the *result* of repressed material. Anxiety, he now believed, was the *cause* of repression: "The majority of phobias go back to an anxiety of this kind felt by the ego in regard to the demands of the libido. It is always the ego's attitude of anxiety which is the primary thing and which sets repression going. Anxiety never arises from repressed libido."¹⁴ What agoraphobes fear is the outbreak of their anxiety attacks.

Be that as it may, Freud successfully isolated the main components of the symptomatology of agoraphobia: the underlying sexual symbolism, the mechanisms of condensation and displacement, and the bipolar world of the patient torn between a fear of obscure forces transferred to urban space, and a home that could be far from nurturing, even in the case of affluent women. Though Freud knew better than to mythologize the home as a benign, sheltering cocoon, he underestimated the extent to which even placid, happy homes could be confining to women. By concentrating on individual cases, which were seen as unique occurrences, he also avoided any correlation between pathology and society. Today, psychoanalysis has moved far beyond its own initial sexist and essentialist explanations, which focused primarily on *women* agoraphobes and disregarded the cultural construction of gender in the pathogenesis of mental illness.

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The synchronicity of the appearance of agoraphobia with the rise of the metropolis also anchors it firmly within capitalism. The Industrial Revolution required, among other things, the sexual division of labor and the separation of dwelling from workplace. As a result, the social identities of men and women came to be constituted differently. Yet the doctrine of separate spheres – a male public sphere and a female private sphere – cannot be accepted today except *as* ideology. Numerous historians have underscored the continued presence of women in the public realm throughout the centuries;¹⁵ it was only to men that they had been invisible. Similarly, African-American scholars have shown that in this country, non-Caucasian women often spend more time in the public

realm than do men; the relentless focus on the private realm betrays an exclusively white middle-class conception of domesticity.¹⁶

But the Industrial Revolution also radically altered the class structure and its inscription in the urban fabric. The zoning of land use, which began to be codified in the early decades of the twentieth century, split the proletariat into ethnic subgroups, often driving them out of the historical city with tragic consequences, particularly for working-class women. “It is no accident,” according to Gerda Lerner, “that the slogan ‘woman’s place is in the home’ took on a certain aggressiveness and shrillness precisely at the time when increasing numbers of poorer women *left* their homes to become factory workers.”¹⁷ Only affluent white housewives could afford to lead cloistered lives secluded in suburbia.

Class plays a powerful role in the geopolitical distribution of agoraphobia over urban space. Just as the equation of obesity with lower-income groups plays a role, however subliminal, in the rise of anorexia,¹⁸ so, too, we must ask to what extent the isolation, if not the suburbanization, of the agoraphobe in this country – her spatial segregation from other ethnic and social groups – may be linked to class fears. Are we dealing with a “pathologic pastorate,” if we may be permitted the oxymoron? Is the agoraphobe’s attempt to reterritorialize urban space unwillingly complicit with some form of societal discrimination? It seems clear that the semiotics of this anxiety disorder include powerful markers of class and ethnicity, as well as gender. The correlation of urban space and social class is not incidental to the emergence of phobias. Personality evolves in response to specific economic, social, and cultural opportunities made possible in and through the urban environment. According to David Harvey, “Assignment of place within a social-spatial structure indicates distinctive roles, capacities for action, and access to power within the social order.”¹⁹ Positionality, we might say, is destiny.

Agoraphobia must, I think, be theorized in relation to capitalism. But we must remember, too, that what we call the public sphere has to do not only with gender, but also with social class and race – issues that vary from culture to culture, and are articulated differently in terms of space. As Susan Bordo notes, “Agoraphobia and anorexia are, after all, chiefly disorders of middle and upper middle-class women – women for whom

the anxieties of *possibility* have arisen, women who have the social and material resources to carry the language of femininity to symbolic excess.”²⁰

If gender is the product of social practices and institutions (disciplines), we must historicize and contextualize agoraphobia, not just pathologize it. Several scholars have done just that, relating cultural factors – not just psychological ones – to the genesis of psychological disorders.²¹ Going back to the etymology of agoraphobia, Gillian Brown has reinterpreted it as the fear of the marketplace (or agora), that is, the fear of consumption. In her view, agoraphobia epitomizes the plight of the individual in a market economy and thus can also be seen as a painful and pathologic attempt to circumvent the consumerist role assigned to middle-class women in affluent societies.

With the advent of industrialization, concomitant economic pressures caused severe strains in the traditional value system of American society. The transformation of the home from a place of production to one of consumption had great impact on women’s personalities, and led to a drastic change from the Protestant values of thrift and self-denial to an ethic of self-indulgence and self-fashioning. Extending this analysis to the spatial aspect of agoraphobia, we might say that this disorder can be considered, to a certain degree, as a rejection of the commodification of public space made available exclusively for purposes of consumption.

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However, withdrawal from the marketplace is no longer feasible: the two realms have become consubstantial. This desperate attempt on the part of agoraphobic women to reprivatize the home and wrest it from commercialism was doomed to failure from the start. With the spread of consumer ideology, the boundary between house and marketplace has eroded.²² Hence the need for an ideology of domesticity: middle-class women were encouraged to consume but also to stay out of the labor market. Agoraphobia can thus be said to allegorize the sexual division of labor and the inscription of social as well as sexual difference in urban space. It speaks, after all, the same symbolic language as patriarchal society: the gendered antinomy between interior and exterior space reasserts the economic (active) function of the male, and the “non-productive” (passive) one of the middle-class female. Agoraphobia represents a virtual parody of twentieth-century constructions of femininity.²³

The parodic femininity of agoraphobia is based on a literal interpretation of domesticity as immobility, helplessness, and infantilization – the main stereotype fabricated in the West as a role model for affluent women.²⁴ Significantly, the vast majority of cases of agoraphobia develop *after* marriage.²⁵ Transition from a state of total dependency on parents to one of expected independence precipitates a crisis, which may result in agoraphobia. Obviously, an anxiety neurosis as complex as this is always overdetermined. But in light of the escalating number of cases, we cannot be satisfied with purely psychological explanations. The very fact that most cases appear after marriage should alert us to the socio-economic connotations of a disease that keeps women out of the labor force and reiterates their role as housekeepers for their husbands. Agoraphobia is known, to no one's surprise, as "housewives' disease."²⁶

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In recent years feminist scholars on both sides of the Atlantic have produced a steady stream of challenging literature that treats gender-specific types of neurosis as outlets of resistance to patriarchy: Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous, Catherine Clément, and Michèle Montrelay in France and, in the United States, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, and Elaine Showalter, among others. For these scholars, psychopathology is a form of protest: the hysteric's repressed impulses are articulated symbolically through the body – a fact that implies, from a Lacanian point of view, a refusal of the phallogentric power anchored in language.

Studies on agoraphobia have followed the same trend. Like other forms of psychopathology, it is a language with a syntax of its own. Robert Seidenberg and Karen DeCrow, for example, see it as a strategy of opposition to what we might call the ethic of renunciation usually demanded of married women.²⁷ It is precisely the somatization of the symptoms that permits the victim to express feelings s/he finds unacceptable. Conversely, agoraphobes avoid situations that give (unconscious) symbolic expression to their hidden fears or wishes: trains (the wish to flee), elevators and tunnels (fear of being trapped in unhappy marriages), and so on.²⁸ Space perception depends on mastering institutionalized signs, but agoraphobes tend to read them figuratively. Both the places they avoid and those they designate as shelters have to do with distinct typologies which are metaphors for situations they fear or desire. Their

spatial codes are personal and hermetic rather than socialized.

The notion that agoraphobia is “body talk” is crucial also for Julia Kristeva, who comes to a similar conclusion from a different perspective. Drawing on the work of Lacan, she sees phobia as a failure of the subject’s “signifying system.”²⁹ The [agora]phobic personality, she writes in her analysis of Little Hans’s case study, is “incapable of producing metaphors by means of signs alone, . . . the only rhetoric of which he is capable is that of affect, and it is projected, as often as not, by means of *images*.”³⁰ But – and here she departs radically from the others – symbolicity is cathected by a drive that has nothing to do with object choice, and thus bypasses sexual difference.³¹

There can be no doubt that agoraphobia is a coherent signifying system. Its victims stand to gain something from their extreme stance and are prepared to pay exorbitant prices for it. As Freud points out, illness of this kind ends in compromise; Little Hans’s fear of going out into the streets served as a ruse for keeping him at home with his beloved mother.³² Bordo, however, has underscored the self-defeating nature of the agoraphobic protest and its ultimate unwilling and unconscious collusion with the system.³³ Non-discursive, symbolic protest through the body ends up by subserving the hated establishment and reproduces sexual division of labor by keeping women at home; which is to say, it reproduces capitalism.³⁴

One of the most perplexing characteristics of this gender-specific disease is the persistence of architectural imagery, a fact that raises several issues. Are the buildings and urban spaces just empty husks to which repressed pathologic behavior attaches itself? Are they, in other words, simply neutral signifiers? Or is there some underlying reason that leads victims of agoraphobia to cast their scenarios of fear and foreboding in architectural terms? If architecture is eroticized through metonymy, which depends on propinquity, why is the garden, for example, not an equally powerful source of affect?

Helène Deutsch, the first woman psychoanalyst to study agoraphobia, was also the first psychoanalyst to analyze the architectural imagery of the house. According to her studies, the act of leaving the protective walls of the home and finding oneself “outside” is associated by many

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agoraphobics with the act of giving birth.³⁵ For some psychoanalysts this would explain the high rate of agoraphobia among women. Lest this be taken for an essentialist claim, it should be noted that agoraphobia is one of the rare phobias in which the association of crossing the threshold with parturition occurs in male as well as female patients, thus linking it not to biological sex, but to gender. The equation of home and womb would seem to be so profoundly ingrained that it has the power to feminize male patients. In their regression to intrauterine memories, the agoraphobes' *Lebensraum* shrinks to this tautological condensation of home and maternal body. Their inspired misreading of domestic space is revelatory: after all, "everyone's first environment is a woman."³⁶

But architecture has reasons of its own that inflect the slippery referentiality of the word "home." Size, scale, and the anthropomorphic resonances encoded in the articulation of architectural form – all conspire to give it a strong presence in the urban environment. As Denis Hollier writes, "Architecture is society's authorized superego; there is no architecture that is not the Commendatore's."³⁷ And he quotes Lacan to this effect: "This edifice [Lacan was speaking metaphorically of the psychoanalytic building] is appealing to us. For, metaphoric though this may be, it is perfectly constructed to remind us of what distinguished architecture from building: that is, a logical power organizing architecture beyond anything the building supports in terms of possible use. Moreover no building, unless reduced to a shack, can do without this order allying it with discourse."³⁸

As we have seen, agoraphobia was engendered by Western culture even before it was diagnosed for the first time; and femininity, construed as planned helplessness, has still not disappeared from our society. Until relatively recently, children's books often depicted girls immobilized in the house – behind the protection of windows, fences, porches – while boys were shown actively exploring the environment.³⁹ Although today women may no longer be inexorably trapped in a circularity that culturally constitutes them through images, even the most emancipated women are confronted with another major obstacle that keeps them behind walls. When one woman out of every four in the United States is raped (or one every ten minutes), agoraphobia – the fear of *public* spaces –

takes on a different coloration altogether. In the case of rape victims, public space as such does not exist except as part of a topology of fear. And time, not just space, is also a constituent element of agoraphobia: at night, in most large cities, *all* women are agoraphobic.

Neither the appearance of agoraphobia nor the escalating number of victims is accidental. As Bordo has forcefully demonstrated, psychopathologies that emerge within a given society, far from being exceptions to the rule are, in fact, products of that culture.⁴⁰ Agoraphobia cannot be reduced to a cultural stereotype – its victims suffer intensely – nor to a purely psychological or individual phenomenon, given the growing incidence of cases. Because of the circumscribed nature of its social distribution, the disease cannot be universalized: it does not represent the female condition. After all, the Duke of Mantua in Verdi's *Rigoletto* was literally correct: even though his famous definition of women was intended sarcastically, today at least – and against all odds – *la donna è mobile*.

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I wish to thank John Goodman and George Hersey for their suggestions and helpful readings of the manuscript.

1. A longer version of this paper appears in *Assemblage* 28 (1996), 6–15.
2. Carl F. O. Westphal, "Die Agoraphobie: eine neuropathische Erscheinung," *Archiv für Psychiatrie und Nervenkrankheiten* 3 (1872), 138–61. All quotations are from the American edition, Westphal's "Die Agoraphobie" with Commentary: *The Beginnings of Agoraphobia*, commentary by Terry J. Knapp, trans. Michael T. Schumacher (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America Books, 1988).
3. Isaac M. Marks, "Agoraphobic Syndrome," *Archives of General Psychiatry* 23 (December 1970), 539.
4. Iris Goldstein Fodor, "The Phobic Syndrome in Women: Implications for Treatment," in Violet Franks and Vasanti Burtle, eds., *Women in Therapy: New Psychotherapies for a Changing Society* (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1974), 151.
5. George R. Collins and Christiane C. Collins, *Camillo Sitte: The Birth of Modern City Planning* (New York: Rizzoli, 1986), 183.
6. *Ibid.*, 233.

7. Muriel Frampton, *Agoraphobia* (Bodmin, Cornwall: Thorsons Publishing Group, 1990), 36.
8. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887–1904* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985), 248. On this passage and on urban pathology in general, see the illuminating article by Anthony Vidler, “Bodies in Space/Subjects in the City: Psychopathologies of Modern Urbanism,” *differences* 5 (Fall 1993), 31–51.
9. Knapp, “Introduction,” *Westphal’s “Die Agoraphobie,”* 34. See also pp. 28 ff.
10. Sigmund Freud, “Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy” (1909), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London: The Hogarth Press, 1973), vol. 10, 3–149. This was an unusual case, as Freud rarely analyzed children. He saw Little Hans only once, and analyzed him by proxy: the child’s father, a physician, was an early follower of Freud. Not surprisingly, the mother plays a shadowy role in this tale of two fathers.
11. *Ibid.*, 48.
12. Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, trans. W. J. H. Sprott (London: Hogarth Press, 1949), 111–12.
13. Sigmund Freud, *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety* (1926), trans. Alix Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton, 1989), 25.
14. *Ibid.*, 32. See also Jacques Derrida, “To Speculate – on Freud,” in Peggy Kamuf, ed., *A Derrida Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 523.
15. For example, Linda K. Kerber, “Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman’s Place: The Rhetoric of Women’s History,” *Journal of American History* 75 (June 1988), 9–39.
16. Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 46–47.
17. Gerda Lerner, quoted in Kerber, 12 (her emphasis).
18. Noelle Caskey, “Interpreting Anorexia Nervosa,” in Susan Suleiman, ed., *The Female Body in Western Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), 178.
19. Quoted in Gillian Rose, *Feminism and Geography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 18. Space, according to many modern geographers, is not an environment in which social life takes place but “a medium *through which* social life is produced and reproduced.” Rose, 19 (her emphasis).
20. Susan Bordo, “The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity: A Feminist

- Appropriation of Foucault," in Alison M. Jaggar and Susan R. Bordo, eds., *Gender/Body/Knowledge* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 22 (her emphasis).
21. Particularly the New Historicists: see Gillian Brown, "The Empire of Agoraphobia," *Representations* 20 (Fall 1987), 134–57, and Walter Benn Michaels, *The Gold Standard and the Logic of Naturalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 3–28. But see also Bordo, "Anorexia nervosa: Psychopathology as the Crystallization of Culture," in Irene Diamond and Lee Quinby, eds., *Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on Resistance* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), 87–117.
 22. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), 156. Brown, 142.
 23. Bordo, "The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity," 17.
 24. See Alexandra Symonds, "Phobias After Marriage, Women's Declaration of Dependence," in Jean Baker Miller, ed., *Psychoanalysis and Women* (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1973), 297.
 25. Kathleen Brehony, "Women and Agoraphobia: A Case for the Etiological Significance of the Feminine Sex-Role Stereotype," in Violet Franks and Esther Rothblum, eds., *The Stereotyping of Women* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1983), 115.
 26. Dianne L. Chambless and Alan J. Goldstein, "Anxieties: Agoraphobia and Hysteria," in Annette M. Brodsky and Rachel T. Hare-Mustin, eds., *Women and Psychotherapy* (New York: Guilford Press, 1980), 123.
 27. Robert Seidenberg and Karen DeCrow, *Women Who Marry Houses: Panic and Protest in Agoraphobia* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1983), 31.
 28. Chambless and Goldstein, 116, 126.
 29. Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 35.
 30. *Ibid.*, 37 (her emphasis).
 31. *Ibid.*, 45.
 32. Freud, "Analysis of a Phobia," 139.
 33. "On the symbolic level, too, the protest dimension collapses into its opposite and proclaims the utter defeat and capitulation of the subject to the contracted female world." Bordo, "The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity," 21.
 34. But see Brown, 154, n. 25.
 35. Hélène Deutsch, "The Genesis of Agoraphobia," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 10 (1929), 69; Milton Miller, "On Street Fear," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 34 (1953), 238.

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36. Ruth Perry, "Engendering Environmental Thinking: A Feminist Analysis of the Present Crisis," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 6 (Fall 1993), 13.
37. Denis Hollier, *Against Architecture: The Writings of Georges Bataille*, trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989), ix.
38. Ibid., 32–33.
39. Fodor, 143.
40. Bordo, "Anorexia nervosa," 89. See also her *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

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*“Women Internet” vs. the “Space of Tyranny”:
Reply to Esther da Costa Meyer*

LAURETTA VINCIARELLI

When, in *Rigoletto*, the Duke of Mantua sings the aria, “*La donna è mobile*,” metaphorically stating that woman is volatile and voluble, he is tracing a self-portrait. Indeed, the moral of the drama is that *man* is *mobile*, woman is *not*. Gilda is, in fact, faithful, brave, and heroic to the point of sacrificing her own life for that of the duke.

Was Gilda *mobile*? If mobility is defined as safe movement in urban space, public and private, the answer is no. The fictional Mantua of *Rigoletto* represents, in urban terms, the absolute power of the duke. Public and private spaces coalesce in what I call the “space of tyranny.” As for women, they were not only seduced in the streets, but abducted from their homes when convenient for ducal schemes. Gilda’s tragic destiny was inevitable. In a Mantua of tyranny, she could not have resorted even to agoraphobia to save herself. However, in the real Mantua of the sixteenth century, Gilda would have been protected by what I call the “Women Internet”: communication among not only women in the same household, but all the women in town. From infancy, “Women Internet” would have informed Gilda in minute detail about the physical and moral character of the duke, so that she could not have been deceived, at least not easily.

The segregation of women, conceived in the West at least as early as the Greeks, was never entirely successful. More often it was totally unsuccessful, as shown in both literature and painting. (A few examples from the Roman period would include Petronius’ *Satyricon*, Apuleius’ *Golden Ass*, and Juvenal’s *Xth Satyre*.) The very *raison d’être* of treatises such as Alberti’s *Della famiglia* proves that in the fifteenth century the

practice of life was not the one prescribed but, most probably, was closer to that related by Boccaccio in the *Decameron*. From medieval and Renaissance Italian paintings depicting urban scenes, we have a description of urban space where people of all ranks move freely, especially women; for example, Ambrogio Lorenzetti's fresco *Gli effetti del buon governo* at the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena.

With the rise of the middle class and the capitalist economy, segregation of women became more successful. The notions of public and private spaces as we know them today, did, in fact, spring from capitalism. Limiting my observation to central Italy, I can safely say that, as long as agrarian values have resisted the pressures of emerging middle-class values, the majority of public space has been understood and used as an extension of private space, and has been almost entirely controlled by women. Even today, I have seen this phenomenon in Gradoli, a little town north of Rome, in Latium, where 90 percent of the public space is still controlled by women. They inhabit it, they work in it, and they enjoy leisure time in it, keeping alive the "Women Internet."

However, while this situation may still be common in small towns all over central Italy, it is disappearing rapidly. Perhaps this is because women are joining the specialized work force in jobs commonly done away from home, but new work conditions alone do not explain the increasingly muted relationship of women to public space. Instead, this seems to be more the consequence of a change in mentality and social attitudes.

One of the prices people have to pay to be acknowledged as middle class is relinquishing control of public space into the hands of local and regional governments. For example, middle-class Viennese at the turn of this century refused the blurred definition of public and private space implicit in the projects of architect and urbanist Camillo Sitte, who proposed a series of small-scale, enclosed city squares that would have generated a form of public space unsuitable for an efficient performance of the municipal police.

The two urban conditions that I have called the "space of tyranny" and the "space of 'Women Internet'" resurface today in the modern metropolis: the former as a description of critical states of affairs in the

metropolitan fringes; the latter as a plausible form of renewal of those fringes – slums that represent, all over the Western world, the other side of the metropolis. The South Bronx in New York during the 1970s and 1980s is a pure example of the “space of tyranny.” Neighborhood residents were terrorized and victimized by violent gangs, which, in constant war with each other, were allowed by an indifferent city to control the streets. Consequently, the physical deterioration within the community was tremendous: violent crime, murders, poverty, and disinvestment soared. In *Marisol*, a play by José Rivera, the audience experiences a particularly vivid description of the kind of “continuum of terror” that existed during those years when no private door could interrupt it.

Today, in the mid-1990s, the South Bronx shows signs of improvement. The wars over drugs are somehow under control; some capital is being reinvested there; new housing is being built; and, as a result, both public and private spaces are beginning to reappear. However, even though what is happening is not exactly gentrification, there exists a pervading sense of antagonism between the “old” and the “new” that is palpable. As a result, a philosophy of renewal that “fits the new and old together,” based on the involvement of the inhabitants of the area, has begun to emerge. Melrose Commons is an outstanding example. Primarily because of the efforts of one woman, Yolanda Garcia, leader of the neighborhood group *Nos Quedamos*, the renewal of Melrose is being strongly controlled by its inhabitants, who continue to win innumerable fights with city authorities.

The primary difference between Melrose Commons and many other participatory housing projects is that in Melrose public space is conceived of as an extension of private space; it is safeguarded by the residents who deliberately choose to be responsible for it. It is obvious that this is no middle-class community. Rather, this is a community that relies on itself for protection, knowing that self-defense starts with control. The urban space, public and private, requested by Yolanda Garcia and *Nos Quedamos*, is that of “Women Internet.” In other places in the West, too, in Naples and in Rome, for instance, the urban renewal that really works is that which allows for self-protection and keeps “Women Internet” alive to the advantage of the entire community.

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As for myself, I have never felt more secure than in those streets where women sit outside, talking and working, firmly in control of their own surroundings. I think that it is time to reflect on issues of real power versus middle-class status. Yolanda Garcia did not have any hesitation as to which one to select. She chose power – the power of control over her own neighborhood, for the benefit of everybody – and I applaud her.

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The Matter of Matter: A Longing for Gravity

JENNIFER BLOOMER

"In one sense, and that deep, there is no such thing as magnitude. . . . Greatness is the aggregation of minuteness; nor can its sublimity be felt truthfully by any mind unaccustomed to the affectionate watching of what is least."

– John Ruskin, *Precious Thoughts*

I shall begin with a tiny thing, the little spot on the body called a birthmark. The birthmark was in times past called a longing mark, the explanation being that it is the image impressed on a baby's skin of an object craved by the mother during her pregnancy. The small caramel marks that ornament the skins of my daughters are shaped, respectively, like a jar of French's mustard and a cucumber. Such images, figures of desired objects, have their analogue in the representations of certain other objects that resemble jars and cucumbers.

Architecture, "the Mother of the Arts," is, after all (as Catherine Ingraham points out in her essay in this volume) not an object art but an object-longing art. And architectural drawings, compositions of lines suggesting form, can be construed as the longing marks of architecture; or perhaps more precisely in this analogy, of the architect who is, with his conception, development, and delivery of product, a kind of mother. The mother, the one who carries weight: gravidity and gravity. This is nothing new or particularly astonishing, but I raise it in order to reconsider the notion of longing and, more particularly, the place of nostalgia, homesickness, the longing for home, in contemporary Western architecture.

I am interested in teasing out the fibers of nostalgia in relation to the practice and discourse of architecture. In opening up this subject – invoking this word tinged with obloquy and often preceded by the qualifier “mere” – I cringe with awareness of the minefield on which I tread. But I am profoundly curious about the polarized response to nostalgia in contemporary architectural discourse. On the one hand, it is placed on a pedestal and made a universal genius of new town planning and architectural style. On the other hand, nostalgia is covered in refusal. But nostalgia *exists*, in all its syrupy sweet, kitschy wonder, in its heartfelt longings, in its achy-breaky desire for something that cannot be had. I am interested in the urge to make it mere, to cover it up, to pretend it isn’t there, like a bad zit or a body odor. In the manner of these analogues, nostalgia happens; and it comes with certain pleasures.

The repression of nostalgia is at the core of the project of modernity. Nostalgia is a nineteenth-century disease ever threatening to erupt on the glossy smooth skin of the twentieth. It is, perhaps, like so many repressions, a marker of the animal in us. But, as sentient creatures know deep down inside, any attempt to ignore or repress animal yearnings must always be dominated by an uneasy awareness of their pressures.

In its subjugation of matter by form, the modern concept of design necessarily is dominated by a nostalgia for matter, a fetishization of an imagined absence. Design is the necessity of the new and, in architecture, the big. The possibility of electronic space is the new infinite, eternal design with no bounds, no walls, no enclosure, no stopping. It is the space of going, and certainly not Ruskin’s space of repose. The hyperspatial entity, in which space and time form a seamless continuum, is the legitimate heir to the modern project. For a nexus of lines, whether drawn, virtual, simulated, or troped, is the mark of a longed-for object. Form sitting on the lid of its other, matter.

Design is the making of the “always-in-progress New,” which is always the “becoming-old.” The lust for the New, that telic carrot on a string, like nostalgia, is a longing for something one cannot have, for as soon as the New is materialized, it ceases to be new. And this lust, driven by a neglect of the heavy business of matter, is, in its persistent repressions, intensely nostalgic.

But let us go between the lines, to the heart of the matter, in the belly of the wall:

Lying in the broad, enveloping poché of an ancient castle on Loch Ness, my face catching the gentle breeze off the water through the machicolation, I am cradled in a sac of pure pleasure. The summer breeze, the setting sun, the warmth of the stone, the weight of it, the possibility of the monster – oh, I think I see it, there! No, now it's gone. I am swallowed by this wall, warm, safe, comfortable, but also pricked by longing. It has something to do with the immediacy of the material and its attributes – warmth, weight, odor, color, texture – and the distance of history of which it is a pregnant trace. Other bodies, sharp projectiles, boiling liquids, abject substances, scrambling limbs, the sound of metal on metal, metal on stone, metal on flesh. The howling of dogs. The longing of human animals. Here, in this utterly foreign place, I feel at home. This wall of home and shelter, gravid object swollen with these facts, can be represented with two simple straight, parallel lines.

The track of progress that can be drawn between this pile of stones and contemporary configurations of space is a straight line threatened by ballooning eruptions along its continuum. The line, bulging thing, has swallowed a great deal of *mater* in the hope of hiding her, that little matter of matter. Now you see it, now you don't!

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The momentary end of the line, the Now New, is, perhaps, the notion of electronic space. Curiously, to enter this space is to leave home without leaving home. In this space, however, there is no matrix of domesticity; the cozy, sensual matter of home has no place here. Where is the sweet smell of babies, the lovely, slightly sour smell of toddlers? Where is the fat furry twitch of the September squirrel, the slightly unnerving, but endearing, social sounds of hundreds of mother bats nursing hundreds of wee batbabies in the wall just behind the dictionary shelf? As if the Greek, German, French, Latin, Italian, Russian, and English dictionaries speaking together make this little chit chit chit squeue sound. The overwhelming wave of delight in finding the first crocus, narcissus, or delicate tips of the peony emerging from the earth in spring? The strange warmth of stone long after the sun has disappeared? There is no place for cyber-domesticity, for electro-sentimentality. Why?

Because this apparent nostalgia-free zone is, in fact, nothing if not nostalgic, a repression of “home-sickness” so extreme that something is not quite being covered up.

The urge to virtual realities of any kind relies on a constant domestic space, whether proximal or distant. The space of domesticity, configured as “real” space, is still, always already, the spatial envelope of the cyberventuring subject who explores the public space of the net or the virtual space of simulation. With his body, that hunk of pulsing meat, in his comfortable, safe, warm, uninterrupted, timeless space, he can project himself anywhere, into anything.

Here, the lines of nerves and the lines of communication form a continuum. It is all transmission of information. Here is an apparent triumph of Aristotelian form over matter, of the rational over the corporeal. With the ostensible obviation – secretion – of the body comes the repression of shame, sentiment, nostalgia, longing. This space of no gravity replicates in certain ways the space of the infant, or even that of the fetus: interactive intake, no responsibility to any body. A nostalgic and sentimental, if not shameful, project in the extreme: the return to the natal home. That dirty place, the matter of *mater*. The relentless drive toward the New is a strangely directed attempt to escape from *Materia*, the old, generative soil, the origin. The New is never dirty; it is always bright, spanking clean, light, full of promise, devoid of weight.

I have a dirty architectural secret: I choose to live in a house designed and built sixty-five years ago by an engineer with an engineer’s appreciation of the local climate and an engineer’s disregard for style or fashion. I love its beefy masonry walls that, with the shade trees outside, obviate air conditioning in our nasty summers and in which I love to nest and nestle during our nasty winters. I delight in its funky “built-ins,” such as the fold-down ironing board in its own little poché space behind the laundry-folding table, which in its 1995 function holds an amazing pile of correspondence, books, slides, and dirty teacups. I am entranced by the 8-inch-wide, 6-foot-deep closet in the part of the downstairs bath plumbing wall unoccupied by plumbing, with its tiny Alice-in-Wonderland door opening out into the hall. It is perfect for storing anything long and skinny. Right now it holds tubes of drawings, rolls of gift-wrapping

paper, my loom-warping templates, and a supply of dried corn left over from our fatten-the-squirrels project last fall. And I will not soon forget the thrill of my discovery in the basement of the Herculean 2 x 12 joists beneath the only space in the house where a grand piano can go.

Why does this house-object evoke such blatant nostalgia, such a professionally shameful response? Because I am pleased by this warm, sheltering thing. I am sentimental about its quirks, mad about its materiality, its weight. Gravid thing, hulking among the wizened yews and cedars, sunk ten feet into the Iowa topsoil, it is going nowhere. It is my home, my burrow, my vessel of children. A catalyst of nostalgia and deeply generated sentiment, this assemblage of rock and tree, metal and molten sand, can be accurately represented less as a construction of lines than as an assemblage of details. For it is in the details, traditionally for philosophers and writers an object burdened with the trope of femininity (and for Mies the momentary dwelling of God), that form and matter, use and pleasure, coincide.

At the coincidence of the exterior and interior of my house are lodged a phalanx of 1930 Pella Rollscreens. Built-in toys, they are technological wonders made in nearby Pella, Iowa, a town built on nostalgia. Pella maintains its old, Dutch immigrant identity: a tiny, tourist attraction of lace, pastries, and an annual Tulip Festival complete with Tulip Princess and tens of thousands of early May cups of color rising from the soil of the town square and its outlying borders and lawns. And, of course, the making of windows of astonishing quality. It is said that the Pella Corporation requires its employees to live in Pella, at home in the body of the family, and not in larger, neighboring, and more diverse Des Moines.

My Pella Rollscreens are markers of the seasons: when the last maple leaf has gone from red to brittle, and the double-glazed casements are levered shut in readiness for the arctic assault to come, it is time to play. Pop, pop, two perfect, thumb-receiving aluminum pads on springs are pushed to the wood of the sill. Then, zooodooop! Look quickly, or you'll miss it! The delicate metal grid, defying gravity in the most astonishing act, disappears upward into the frame of the window, leaving bewildered cobwebs waving bye-bye in its wake. Sometimes, because I adore peeka-boo, I reach up and grab its little rolled aluminum bottom and pull it all

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the way down, thwack!, to the sill again. Then, pop! pop! It's gone. But, come the first promise of crocus . . . Wheeeere's the screen? There it is! – mediating the boundary of home, the domestic membrane through which spring breezes and summer's gravid air pass, but not the relatively gargantuan bodies of houseflies and errant finches. Pella Rollscreens can be specified on an architectural drawing, but not drawn. Drawn, they are illegible; they simply disappear into the representation of the window's frame. They are a trace in the extreme, an uncanny example of the way that architectural drawings are the longing marks of the architect.

Lodged in the *poché* of our walls, and in the marrow of our bones, is matter that has been around since the Big Bang. The meat of history and culture: heavy matter. Two parallel lines constitute the longing mark for any wall/vertical planarity of any material, any gravity. How little such longing marks express – all form, no matter. They form a ghostly, nearly immaterial apparition, like the birthmark, a little nothing, representing little, but signifying much.

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This essay is a small piece from a book manuscript in progress called "The Matter of Matter: Architecture in the Age of Dematerialization."

Battle Lines: E.1027

BEATRIZ COLOMINA

“Anger is perhaps the greatest inspiration in those days when the individual is separated in so many personalities. Suddenly one is all in one piece.”

– Eileen Gray, 1942

E.1027. A modern white house is perched on the rocks, a hundred feet above the Mediterranean Sea, in a remote place, Roquebrune at Cap Martin in France (fig. 1). The site is “inaccessible and not overlooked from anywhere.” No road leads to this house. It was designed and built between 1926 and 1929 by Eileen Gray for Jean Badovici and herself. Gray named the house E.1027: *E* for Eileen, 10 for *J* (the tenth letter of the alphabet), 2 for *B* and 7 for *G*. Gray and Badovici lived there most summer months, until Gray built her own house in Castellar in 1934. After Badovici’s death in 1956, the house was sold to the Swiss architect Marie Louise Schelbert. She found the walls riddled with bullet holes. The house had clearly been the scene of some considerable violence. In a 1969 letter, she commented on the state of the house: “Corbu did not want anything repaired and urged me to leave it as it is as a reminder of war.”² But what kind of war? Most obviously, it was World War II. The bullet holes are wounds from the German occupation. But what violence was there to the house before the bullets, and even before the inevitable relationship of modern architecture to the military? And anyway, to start with, what is Le Corbusier doing here? What brings him to this isolated spot, this remote house that will eventually be the site of his own death?

COLOMINA



FIG. 1

Eileen Gray. E.1027, Roquebrune-
Cap Martin, France. 1926-29.
View from the sea

“As a young man he had traveled in the Balkans and the near East and had made sketches of strange, inaccessible places and scenes. It was perhaps through a natural, anti-romantic reaction of maturity that later, as a Purist, he proposed to paint what was duplicable and near-at-hand.”³ We will have to go back to Le Corbusier’s earlier travels, to the “strange, inaccessible places and scenes” that he had conquered through drawing – at the very least, to Le Corbusier’s trip to Algiers in the spring of 1931, the first encounter in what would become a long relationship to this city, or in Le Corbusier’s words, “twelve years of uninterrupted study of Algiers.”⁴ By all accounts, this study began with his drawing of Algerian women. He said later that he had been “profoundly seduced by a type of woman particularly well built,” of which he made many nude studies.⁵ He also acquired a big collection of colored postcards depicting naked women surrounded by accoutrements from the Oriental bazaar. Jean de Maisonneuve (later director of the Musée National des Beaux-Arts d’Alger), who as an eighteen-year-old boy had guided Le Corbusier through the Casbah, recalls their tour:

“Our wanderings through the side streets led us at the end of the day to the rue Kataroudji where he [Le Corbusier] was fascinated by the beauty of two young girls, one Spanish and the other Algerian. They brought us up a narrow stairway to their room; there he sketched some nudes on – to my amazement – some schoolbook graph paper with colored pencils; the sketches of the Spanish girl lying both alone on the bed and beautifully grouped together with the Algerian turned out accurate and realistic; but he said that they were very bad and refused to show them.”⁶

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Le Corbusier filled three notebooks of sketches in Algiers that he later claimed were stolen from his Paris atelier. But Ozenfant denies it, saying that Le Corbusier himself either destroyed or hid them, considering them a “*secret d’atelier*.”⁷ The Algerian sketches and postcards appear to be a rather ordinary instance of the ingrained fetishistic appropriation of women, of the East, of “the other.” Yet Le Corbusier, as Samir Rafi and Stanislaus von Moos have noted, turned this material into “preparatory studies for and the basis of a projected monumental figure composition,

FIG. 2

Le Corbusier. *Crouching Woman, Front View* (after Delacroix's *Les Femmes d'Alger*). n.d. Watercolor on transparent paper, 19 5/8 x 12 7/8 in. Private collection, Milan

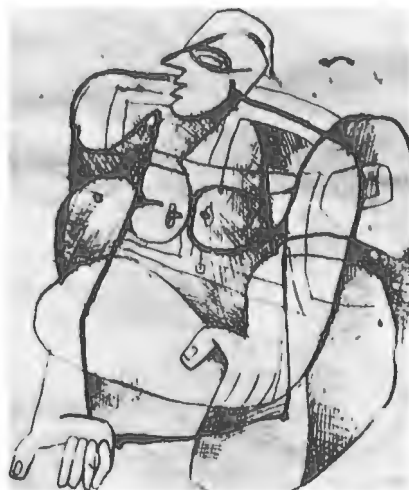


FIG. 3

Eugène Delacroix. *Les Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement*. 1833. Oil on canvas. Musée du Louvre, Paris

FIG. 4

Le Corbusier. *Graffiti à Cap Martin (Three Women)*. 1938. Mural in Eileen Gray's house E.1027, Roquebrune-Cap Martin



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the plans for which seem to have preoccupied Le Corbusier during many years, if not his entire life.”⁸

From the months immediately following his return from Algiers until his death, Le Corbusier seems to have made hundreds and hundreds of sketches on yellow tracing paper by laying it over the original sketches and redrawing the contours of the figures. (Ozenfant believed that Le Corbusier had redrawn his own sketches with the help of photographs or postcards.) He also exhaustively studied Delacroix’s famous painting *Les Femmes d’Alger dans leur appartement*, producing a series of sketches of the outlines of the figures in this painting, divested of their “exotic clothing” and the “Oriental decor” (figs. 2, 3).¹⁰ Soon the two projects merged: he modified the gestures of Delacroix’s figures, gradually making them correspond to the figures in his own sketches. Le Corbusier said that he would have called the final composition *Les Femmes de la Casbah*.¹¹ In fact, he never finished it. He kept redrawing it. That the drawing and redrawing of these images became a lifetime obsession already indicates that something was at stake. This became even more obvious when in 1963–64, shortly before his death, Le Corbusier, unhappy with the visible aging of the yellow tracing paper, copied a selection of twenty-six drawings onto transparent paper and, symptomatically for someone who kept everything, burned the rest.¹²

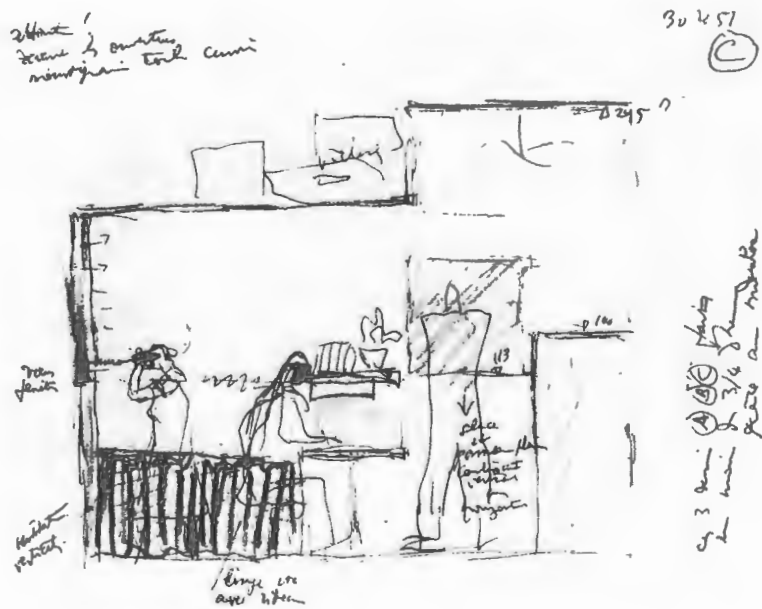
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But the process of drawing and redrawing the *Les Femmes de la Casbah* reached its most intense, if not hysterical, moment when Le Corbusier’s studies found their way into a mural that he completed in 1938 in E.1027. Le Corbusier referred to the mural as *Sous les pilotis* or *Graffiti à Cap Martin*; sometimes he also labeled it *Three Women* (fig. 4).¹³ According to Schelbert, Le Corbusier “explained to his friends that ‘Badou’ [Badovici] was depicted on the right, his friend Eileen Gray on the left; the outline of the head and the hairpiece of the sitting figure in the middle, he claimed, was ‘the desired child, which was never born.’”¹⁴ This extraordinary scene, a defacement of Gray’s architecture, was perhaps even an effacement of her sexuality. For Gray was openly gay, her relationship to Badovici notwithstanding. And in so far as Badovici is here represented as one of the three women, the mural may reveal as much as it conceals. It is clearly a “theme for a psychiatrist,” as Le



Le Corbusier. Early sketch for the *cabanon*. December 30, 1951

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Corbusier's *Vers une architecture* says of the nightmares with which people invest their houses,¹⁵ particularly if we take into account Le Corbusier's obsessive relationship to this house as manifest (and this is only one example of a complex pathology) in his quasi-occupation of the site after World War II, when he built a small wooden shack (the *cabanon*, figs. 5, 6) for himself at the very limits of the adjacent property, right behind Gray's house. He occupied and controlled the site by overlooking it, the cabin being little more than an observation platform, a sort of watchdog house. The imposition of this appropriating gaze is even more brutal if we remember that Gray had chosen the site because it was, in Peter Adam's words, "inaccessible and not overlooked from anywhere." But the violence of this occupation had already been established when Le Corbusier painted the murals in the house (there were eight altogether) without Gray's permission (she had already moved out). She considered it an act of vandalism; indeed, as Adam put it, "It was a rape. A fellow architect, a man she admired, had without her consent defaced her design."¹⁶

The defacement of the house went hand in hand with the effacement of Gray as an architect. When Le Corbusier published the murals in his *Oeuvre complète* (1946) and in *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* (1948), Gray's house was referred to as "a house in Cap-Martin"; her name was not even mentioned.¹⁷ Later on, Le Corbusier actually got credit for the design of the house and even for some of its furniture.¹⁸ Today the confusion continues, with many writers attributing the house to Badovici alone or, at best, to Badovici and Gray, and some still suggesting that Le Corbusier had collaborated on the project. Gray's name does not figure, even as footnote, in most histories of modern architecture, including the most recent and ostensibly critical ones.

"What a narrow prison you have built for me over a number of years, and particularly this year through your vanity," Badovici wrote to Le Corbusier in 1949 about the whole episode (in a letter that Adam thinks may have been dictated by Gray herself).¹⁹ Le Corbusier's reply is clearly addressed to Gray:

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"You want a statement from me based on my worldwide authority to show – if I correctly understand your innermost thoughts – to demon-

strate 'the quality of pure and functional architecture' which is manifested by you in the house at Cap Martin, and has been destroyed by my pictorial interventions. OK, you send me some photographic documents of this manipulation of pure functionalism. . . . Also send some documents on Castellar, this U-boat of functionalism; then I will spread this debate in front of the whole world."²⁰

Now Le Corbusier was threatening to carry the battle from the house into the newspapers and architectural periodicals. But his public position completely contradicted what he had expressed privately. In 1938, the same year he would go on to paint the mural *Graffiti à Cap Martin*, Le Corbusier had written a letter to Gray, after having spent some days in E.1027 with Badovici, in which he acknowledges not only her sole authorship but also how much he likes the house: "I am so happy to tell you how much those few days spent in your house have made me appreciate the rare spirit which dictates all the organization, inside and outside, and gives to the modern furniture – the equipment – such dignified form, so charming, so full of spirit" (fig. 7).²¹

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Why, then, did Le Corbusier vandalize the very house he loved? Did he think that the murals would enhance it? Certainly not. Le Corbusier had repeatedly stated that the role of the mural in architecture is to "destroy" the wall, to dematerialize it. In a letter to Vladimir Nekrassov in 1932, he writes: "I admit the mural not to enhance a wall, but on the contrary, as a means to violently destroy the wall, to remove from it all sense of stability, of weight, etc."²² The mural for Le Corbusier is a weapon against architecture, a bomb. "Why then to paint on the walls . . . at the risk of killing architecture?" he asks in the same letter, and then answers, "It is when one is pursuing another task, that of telling stories."²³ So what, then, is the story that he so urgently needs to tell with *Graffiti à Cap Martin*?

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We will have to go back once more to Algiers. In fact, Le Corbusier's complimentary letter to Gray, sent from Roquebrune–Cap Martin on April 28, 1938, bears the letterhead, "Hôtel Aletti Alger." Le Corbusier's violation of Gray's house and identity is consistent with his fetishization of Algerian women. One might even argue that the child in this mural

reconstitutes the missing (maternal) phallus, whose absence, Freud argues, organizes fetishism. In these terms, the endless drawing and redrawing is a violent substitution that required the house, domestic space, as prop. Violence is organized around or through the house. In both Algiers and Cap Martin, the scene starts with an intrusion, the carefully orchestrated occupation of a house. But the house is, in the end, effaced – erased from the Algiers drawings, defaced at Cap Martin.

Significantly, Le Corbusier describes drawing itself as the occupation of a “stranger’s house.” In his last book, *Creation Is a Patient Search*, he writes: “By working with our hands, by drawing, we enter the house of a stranger, we are enriched by the experience, we learn.”²⁴ Drawing, as has often been noted, plays a crucial part in Le Corbusier’s appropriation of the exterior world. He repeatedly opposes his technique of drawing to photography: “When one travels and works with visual things – architecture, painting or sculpture – one uses one’s eyes and draws, so as to fix deep down in one’s experience what is seen. Once the impression has been recorded by the pencil, it stays for good – entered, registered, inscribed. The camera is a tool for idlers, who use a machine to do their seeing for them.”²⁵ Statements such as this have gained Le Corbusier the reputation of having a phobia for the camera – despite the crucial role of photography in his work. But what is the specific relationship between photography and drawing in Le Corbusier?

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The sketches of the Algerian women were not only redrawings of live models but also redrawings of postcards (fig. 8). One could even argue that the construction of the Algerian women in French postcards, widely circulated at the time,²⁶ would have informed Le Corbusier’s live drawings in the same way that, as Zeynep Çelik notes, Le Corbusier precisely reenacts the images of foreign cities (Istanbul or Algiers, for example) constructed by postcards and tourist guides when he actually enters these cities. In these terms, he not only “knew what he wanted to see,”²⁷ as Çelik says, but saw what he had already seen (in pictures). He “entered” those pictures. He inhabits the photographs. The redrawings of the *Les Femmes d’Alger* are also more likely to have been realized, as von Moos points out, from postcards and reproductions than from the original painting in the Louvre.²⁸ So what, then, is the specific role

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Cap Martin
mardi 28/4/38.

HÔTEL
ALETTI
ALGER.

Cher Matansieille,

J'ai vivement apprécié
d'être arrivé ici tout
de suite après mes amis dans
quelques instants avec vous.
Ma femme ne dit que non
mais nous sommes là, festinant
partout. J'ai mangé
un peu, mais surtout très tard.
Ainsi je compte bien me voir
avec vous le plaisir de venir

bientôt nous dire bonjour à
Paris. Te dis-je, le jour de voir
un combiné de juges pour
passer dans votre maison, m'a été
personnel d'apprécier l'architecture
qui en a été faite. C'est
à l'architecture, de la et
de la et a du donner
un intérieur moderne.
L'appréhension — une forme d',
digne, de l'architecture.
Alors d'apprécier.

Mais, c'est dimanche à
Paris, et c'est un très bon
travail. Bientôt
nous aurons en cela de nous faire
le Corbusier



FIG. 7
Letter from Le Corbusier to
Eileen Gray, in which he praises
E.1027. Roquebrune-Cap Martin,
April 28, 1938. Note the letter-
head: Hôtel Alelli Alger

FIG. 8
"Femmes kabyles," postcard
bought by Le Corbusier in
Algiers in 1931

of the photographic image in the fetishistic scene of the *Femmes de la Casbah* project?

The fetish is “*pure presence*,” writes Victor Burgin, “and how many times have I been told that photographs ‘lack presence,’ that paintings are to be valued *because of their presence!*”²⁹ This separation between painting and photography organizes the dominant understanding of Le Corbusier’s relationship to photography. What these accounts seem to ignore is that here the drawing, the handcrafted artistic meditation, is done “after” the photograph: the art reproduction, the postcard, the photograph.

In fact, the whole mentality of the *Femmes de la Casbah* drawings is photographic. Not only are they made from photographs but they are developed according to a repetitive process in which the images are systematically reproduced on transparent paper, the grid of the original graph paper allowing the image to be enlarged to any scale. This photographic sensibility becomes most obvious with the murals at Roquebrune-Cap Martin. Traditionally, they have been understood as a paradigm of Le Corbusier the painter, the craftsman detached from mechanical reproduction, an interpretation to which Le Corbusier himself has contributed with the circulation of that famous photograph of him, naked, working at one of the murals (fig. 9). This is the only nude image of him that we know, and that it had to be here, in this scene, is telling. What is normally overlooked is that *Graffiti à Cap Martin* was not conceived on the wall itself. Le Corbusier used an electric projector to enlarge the image of a small drawing onto the 2.5 x 4 meter white wall where he etched the mural in black.

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It is said that in using black Le Corbusier was thinking about Picasso’s *Guernica* of the year before, and that Picasso, in turn, was so impressed with the mural at Cap Martin that it prompted him to do his own versions of the *Femmes d’Alger*. Apparently Picasso drew Delacroix’s painting from memory and was later “*frappé*” to find out that the figure that he had painted in the middle, lying down, with her legs crossed, was not in the Delacroix.³⁰ It was, of course, *Graffiti à Cap Martin* that he remembered, the reclining crossed-legged woman (inviting but inaccessible), Le Corbusier’s symptomatic representation of Gray. But if Le Corbusier’s mural had so impressed him, why did Picasso choose not to

see the swastika inscribed on the chest of the woman on the right? The swastika may be yet one more sign of Le Corbusier's political opportunism (we must remember that the mural was done in 1938). But the German soldiers, who occupied the house during World War II, may not have seen the swastika either, for this very wall was found riddled with bullet holes, as if it had been the site of some execution.

The mural was a black and white photograph. Le Corbusier's fetish is photographic. Photography, too, has been read in terms of the fetish. Victor Burgin writes: "Fetishism thus accomplishes that separation of knowledge from belief characteristic of representation; its motive is the unity of the subject. The photograph stands to the subject-viewer as does the fetishized object. . . . We know we see a two-dimensional surface, we believe we look through it into three-dimensional space, we cannot do both at the same time – there is a coming and going between knowledge and belief."³¹

So if Le Corbusier "enters the house of a stranger" by drawing, could "the house" stand in here for the photograph? By drawing he enters the photograph that is itself a stranger's house, occupying and reterritorializing the space, the city, the sexualities of the other by reworking the image. Drawing on and in photography is the instrument of colonization. The entry to the house of a stranger is always a breaking and entering – there being no entry without force no matter how many invitations. Le Corbusier's architecture depends in some way on specific techniques of occupying yet gradually effacing the domestic space of the other.

Like all colonists, Le Corbusier did not think of it as an invasion but as a gift. When recapitulating his life work five years before his death, he symptomatically wrote about Algiers and Cap Martin in the same terms: "From 1930 L-C devoted twelve years to an uninterrupted study of Algiers and its future. . . . Seven great schemes (seven enormous studies) were prepared *free of charge* during those years"; and later, "1938–39. Eight mural paintings (*free of charge*) in the Badovici and Helen Grey house at Cap Martin."³² No charge for the discharge. Gray was outraged; now even her name was defaced. And renaming is, after all, the first act of colonization. Such gifts cannot be returned.



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FIG. 9

Le Corbusier painting one of
the murals in E.1027

P.S. In 1944, the retreating German Army blew up Gray's apartment in Menton (Saint-Tropez), having vandalized E.1027 and Tempe à Pailla (her house in Castellar). She lost everything. Her drawings and plans were used to light fires.

P.P.S. On August 26, 1965, the endless redrawing of the *Femmes de la Casbah* still unfinished, Le Corbusier went from E.1027 down to the sea and swam to his death.

P.P.P.S. In 1977, a local mason in charge of some work in the house "mistakenly" demolished the mural *Graffite*.³³ I like to think that he did so on purpose. Gray had spent almost three years living on the site in complete isolation, building the house with the masons, having lunch with them every day. She did the same thing when building her house at Castellar. The masons knew her well; in fact, they loved her and they hated the arrogant Badovici. They understood perfectly what the mural was about. They destroyed it. In so doing, they showed more enlightenment than most critics and historians of architecture.

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P.P.P.P.S. Since then, the mural has been reconstructed in the house using photographs. It reemerged from its original medium. The occupation continues.

1. Peter Adam, *Eileen Gray: Architect/Designer* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1987), 174.
2. Letter from Marie Louise Schelbert to Stanislaus von Moos, February 14, 1969, as quoted by von Moos in "Le Corbusier as Painter," *Oppositions* 19–20 (1980), 93.
3. James Thrall Soby, "Le Corbusier, Muralist," *Interiors* (1948), 100.
4. Le Corbusier, *My Work*, trans. James Palmes (London: The Architectural Press, 1960), 50.
5. Samir Rafi, "Le Corbusier et 'Les Femmes d'Alger,'" *Revue d'histoire et de civilisation du Maghreb* (Algiers) (January 1968), 51.
6. Letter from Jean de Maisonseul to Samir Rafi, January 5, 1968, as quoted by Stanislaus von Moos in "Le Corbusier as Painter," 89.
7. From several conversations of both Le Corbusier and Ozenfant with Samir Rafi in 1964, as quoted by Samir Rafi in "Le Corbusier et 'Les Femmes d'Alger,'" 51.

8. Von Moos, 91.
9. Conversation of Ozenfant with Samir Rafi, June 8, 1964, as quoted by Samir Rafi in "Le Corbusier et 'Les Femmes d'Alger,'" 52.
10. Von Moos, 93.
11. Rafi, 54–55.
12. Ibid., 60.
13. In *My Work*, Le Corbusier refers to the mural as *Graffiti at Cap Martin*. In "Le Corbusier as Painter," Stanislaus von Moos labels the mural *Three Women (Graffiti à Cap Martin)*, and in "Le Corbusier et 'Les Femmes d'Alger,'" Samir Rafi labels the final composition from which the mural was derived "*Assemblage des trois femmes: Composition définitive*. Encre de Chine sur papier calque. 49.7 x 64.4 cm. Coll. particulière. Milan."
14. Letter from Marie Louise Schelbert to Stanislaus von Moos, February 14, 1969, as quoted by von Moos, p. 93.
15. Le Corbusier, *Vers une architecture* (Paris: Crès, 1923), 196. The passage here referred to is omitted in the English version of the book.
16. Adam, 311.
17. See Adam, 334–35. No caption of the photographs of the murals published in *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* mentions Eileen Gray. In subsequent publications, the house is either simply described as "Maison Badovici" or credited directly to Badovici. The first recognition since the thirties of Gray as architect came from Joseph Rykwert, "Un Ommagio a Eileen Gray – Pioniera del Design," *Domus* 468 (December 1966), 23–25.
18. For example, in an article entitled "Le Corbusier, Muralist," published in *Interiors* (June 1948), the caption of the murals at Roquebrune–Cap Martin reads: "Murals, interior and exterior, executed in sgraffito technique on white plaster, in a house designed by Le Corbusier and P. Jeanneret, Cap Martin, 1938 (my emphasis)." In 1981, in *Casa Vogue* 119 (Milan), the house is described as "Firmata Eileen Gray – Le Corbusier" (signed Eileen Gray and Le Corbusier), and an Eileen Gray sofa as "pezzo unico di Le Corbusier" (unique piece by Le Corbusier), as quoted by Jean Paul Rayon and Brigitte Loye in "Eileen Gray architetto 1879–1976," *Casabella* 480 (May 1982), 38–42.
19. "Quelle réclusion étroite que m'a faite votre vanité depuis quelques années et qu'elle m'a faite plus particulièrement cette année." Letter from Badovici to Le Corbusier, December 30, 1949, Fondation Le Corbusier, as quoted by Brigitte Loye in *Eileen Gray 1879–1976: Architecture Design* (Paris: Analeph/J. P. Viguier, 1983), 86; English translation in Adam, 335.

20. "Vous réclamez une mise au point de moi, couverte de mon autorité mondiale, et démontrant – si je comprends le sens profond de votre pensée – 'la qualité d'architecture fonctionnelle pure' manifesté par vous dans la maison de Cap Martin et anéantie par mon intervention picturale. D'ac [sic], si vous me fournissez les documents photographiques de cette manipulation fonctionnelle pure: 'entrez lentement'; 'pyjamas'; 'petites choses'; 'chaussons'; 'robes'; 'pardessus et parapluies'; et quelques documents de Castellar, ce sous-marin de la fonctionnalité: Alors je m'efforcerai d'étaler le débat au monde entier." Letter from Le Corbusier to Badovici, Fondation Le Corbusier, as quoted in Loye, 83–84; English translation in Adam, 335–36.
21. Letter from Le Corbusier to Eileen Gray, Roquebrune–Cap Martin, April 28, 1938, as quoted in Adam, 309–10.
22. "J'admets la fresque non pas pour mettre en valeur un mur, mais au contraire comme un moyen pour détruire tumultueusement le mur, lui enlever toute notion de stabilité, de poids, etc." *Le Corbusier. Le passé à réaction poétique*, exh. cat. (Paris: Caisse Nationale des Monuments Historiques et des Sites/Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, 1988), 75.
23. "Mais pourquoi a-t-on peint les murs des chapelles au risque de tuer l'architecture? C'est qu'on poursuivait une autre tâche, qui était celle de raconter des histoires." Ibid.
24. Le Corbusier, *Creation Is a Patient Search* (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1960), 203.
25. Ibid., 37.
26. About French postcards of Algerian women circulating between 1900 and 1930, see Malek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).
27. Zeynep Çelik, "Le Corbusier, Orientalism, Colonialism," *Assemblage* 17 (1992), 61.
28. Von Moos, 93.
29. Victor Burgin, "The Absence of Presence," in Burgin, *The End of Art Theory: Criticism and Postmodernity* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press International, 1986), 44 (his emphasis).
30. Rafi, 61.
31. Victor Burgin, "Modernism in the Work of Art," *20th Century Studies* 15–16 (December 1976). Reprinted in Burgin, 19. See also Stephen Heath, "Lessons from Brecht," *Screen* 15 (1974), 106 ff.
32. Le Corbusier, *My Work*, 50–51 (my emphasis).
33. Von Moos, 104.

Colomina's Web: Reply to Beatriz Colomina

SYLVIA LAVIN

It has often been supposed that the first architecture was domestic and that the first element used to establish this domestic space was a fabric. Even before Gottfried Semper's now-famous enumeration in *The Four Elements of Architecture*, primitive huts were often represented as made of woven sticks or understood to be constructed out of fabric, like a tent (fig. 1). Equally, it has often been supposed that the weaving of textiles is archetypally women's work.¹ Although these traditions are ancient, study of this type of contribution by women to the foundations of architecture has until recently been neglected in favor of emphasizing women's containment by architecture. I would like to suggest that Beatriz Colomina uses the "battle lines" of her paper to spin a web, to weave a fabric that describes a new house, a kind of contemporary hut. Catching within this ensnaring net a complex combination of hitherto unmentionable issues, Colomina offers an understanding of domestic space radically different from that permitted by the long line of primitive huts with which we are familiar.

One of the extraordinary qualities of Colomina's cloth is the huge, almost promiscuous number of threads that she has joined together in its making. I say promiscuous because she has entwined a series of ideas, events, and accidents that would normally be thought of as not properly belonging together. For example, according to more conventional models of historical study, the fact that E.1027 happened to have been occupied during World War II, or that Le Corbusier – long after the house had been designed and built – happened to die there, would have been considered incidental to the proper story of the house itself. But as Colomina so

clearly demonstrates, Gray's house never had a proper history. To the contrary, these older models of historical inquiry – based on what have come to be understood as patriarchal notions of autonomy, authorship, and intentionality – betrayed the work of Eileen Gray. Rather than merely erect a new canon in which Gray might have a place, as though she had been simply and benignly overlooked, Colomina reveals how these accidents and happenstances created a history from which Gray was actively excluded. By spinning these new tales, Colomina uncovers the structural conditions that make domestic violence possible and that use the presumed sanctity of the house as shelter for this abuse.

Colomina's essay focuses on containment and occupation as two of the most important of these conditions. The analysis of Gray's house being surveilled by Le Corbusier, its walls being occupied by his murals, evolves, in Colomina's essay, into a strategy complicit with the use of drawing and photography as instruments of colonization, and the use of the media as new tools for the containment of public space. One possibility opened up by this focus is the opportunity to disentangle Gray from Le Corbusier, for the most active agent in the history of E.1027 has been Le Corbusier himself, and his authority, while increasingly undermined and enmeshed in a complex sociohistorical matrix, remains in some way dominant. This concern for male agency and its desire to contain the feminine not only tends to overshadow any independent attention to Gray's work but, by conflating desire with success, also risks reconfining her within the limited status of victim.² In contrast, I would like to tug at a few of these threads to see if within these various models of containment and occupation there is ever any possibility of escape.

E.1027 can itself be thought of as a place of escape, for it is one of several houses and environments that Gray built in an effort to begin again – to escape a previous life.³ Le Corbusier's *cabanon* is even more obviously an escape, as it aligns itself with that whole tradition of rustic retreats from the pressures of urban life (fig. 2).⁴ The landscape in which these two houses did battle, so to speak, is also the main feature they share: both use nature as architecture's "other" and as a space of renewal and regeneration. Indeed, E.1027 and the *cabanon* can be seen as versions of primitive huts, not in the sense that they offer themselves as models

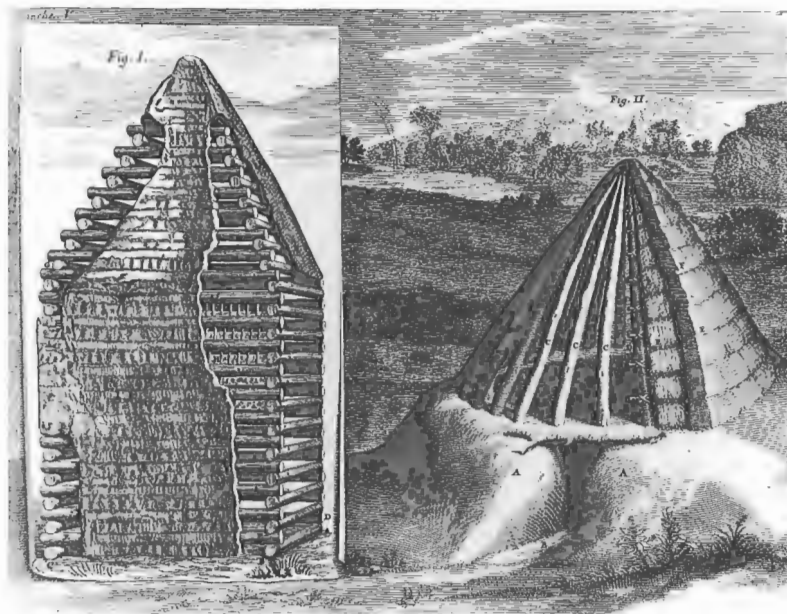


FIG. 1

Primitive huts in Claude
Perrault's 1684 edition of *Les Dix*
Livres d'architecture de Vitruve

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FIG. 2

Le Corbusier's *cabanon* at
Roquebrune-Cap Martin





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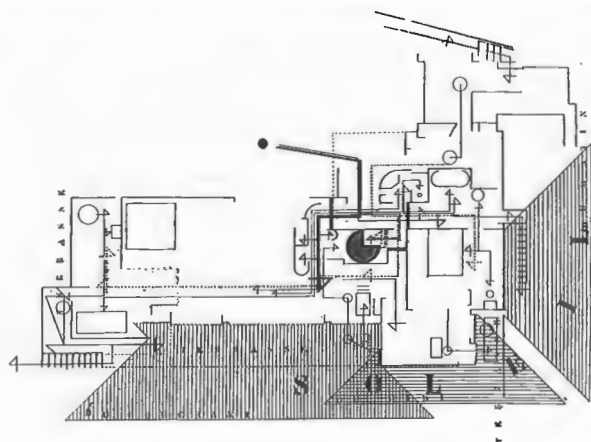


FIG. 3

Eileen Gray. E.1027 living room
with mural by Gray

FIG. 4

Diagrammatic plan of E.1027
showing the passage of the sun

and paradigms of new buildings by posing as originals, but because they seem to offer access to a life outside the rules of civilized behavior and conventional architecture. This aspect of modern primitivism has received a great deal of attention with regard to painting and sculpture, but less so in relation to architecture.

It is in terms of seeking “escape hatches” and “leaks” in the boundaries of normative architecture that some interesting differences between Gray and Le Corbusier emerge. E.1027 is, in fact, riddled with what might be called secret passages, hidden escape routes that have little to do with conventional windows and doors. While Le Corbusier reconsidered the notion of the window, he nevertheless conferred on it the importance of a traditionally privileged architectural element; Gray’s work instead suggests other means of relating interiority and exteriority, sociality and subjectivity. The name of the house, E.1027, is written as a cryptogram, both asking and refusing to be decoded. Maps and stencils throughout the house remind the visitor of types of movement uncontainable by architectural interiors and literally invite the spectator *au voyage* (fig. 3).⁵ Plans of the house trace the movement of the sun in relation to the movement of occupants, as though attempting to capture these ceaseless peregrinations (fig. 4). Gray herself said that the house had been designed in the “camping style,” a style of territorial impermanence, of being on the run, being mobile.⁶

Le Corbusier, in stark contrast, seems to have planted himself on the Roquebrune–Cap Martin site permanently.⁷ Although primitivizing, the hut he built for himself is totally stable and entrenched, boxlike and closed off to the external world. The very fact that the *cabanon* was placed so as to serve as an observation platform transformed the site into property, a place that demanded constant surveillance. The way he walked the coastline, marking the territory, was a means of claiming it, almost as though he were leaving his scent and scratches for others to recognize.⁸ The clearest articulation of Le Corbusier’s attitude toward territorialization and spatial striation seems to lie in his murals. At the time they were painted there was a keen and widespread interest in cave painting, in the marks left on walls by what were presumed to be primitive men. The title Le Corbusier gave them, *graffiti*, is associated with

spontaneous and unlettered scratches. His claim that the particular walls of Gray's house that he chose as his easels needed the addition of "spiritual value" (as though he alone could provide the house with a link to some earlier, less compromised age), and the fact that he selected this of all possible places to have himself photographed nude – raw and uncooked – seems to suggest precisely a kind of primitive marking in which Le Corbusier sets himself up as a modern cave painter with the corollary that E.1027 becomes a cave.⁹

Do these two shelters, by Gray and by Le Corbusier, not reveal themselves, then, as differing models of primitive huts? Gray, living on the site like a hunter-gatherer, with her house understood as a tent, and Le Corbusier, dug into the ground, protected by his cave? Above all, did Gray's tent offer her a means to evade the prison in which she said Le Corbusier had placed her? Can the feminine, in fact, be so readily contained? Or, when we repeat the conclusion of Peter Adam, Gray's biographer, that Le Corbusier, by painting his murals on her walls, had raped her, are we not crediting, still, Le Corbusier with a measure of success that we do not confer on Gray?¹⁰ Both these architects held highly developed positions and attitudes toward making and marking, toward stasis and mobility, toward spatiality and containment, that seem to merit equal consideration. By no means do I want to establish a series of simple and gendered oppositions – tent vs. cave, nomadic vs. sedentary – but rather to continue the search for ways to "think difference." When her essay is understood as a fabric woven of differently colored threads, a fabric that changes color depending on the conditions of perception, there emerges a way of "thinking difference" that does not, in Colomina's words, continue the occupation.

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1. Within a strictly architectural context, associating the first structures with domesticity begins with Vitruvius in the 1st century B.C. From the Renaissance on, the domestic nature of originary architecture was maintained for a variety of reasons. Palladio, for example, argued that the temple had its origins in domestic space in order to explain and justify his use of the temple front on residential architecture, a conflation otherwise contrary to the rules of decorum. When architectural interest

began to shift beyond iconography and to include issues such as structure, greater attention was paid to the specific forms of these original buildings. Although the Abbé Laugier's hut, first illustrated in the second edition of his *Essai sur l'architecture* (Paris, 1755), which emphasizes the centrality of post and lintel construction, has come to be seen as paradigmatic, other and quite different versions of the hut exist. For example, Claude Perrault's edition of Vitruvius, first published in Paris in 1673, represents the primitive hut as woven out of sticks, as does E.-E. Viollet-le-Duc, in his *Histoire de l'habitation humaine* (Paris, 1875). A.-C. Quatremère de Quincy, in *De l'architecture égyptienne* (Paris, 1803), as well as in others of his numerous publications, argued that one type of hut was in fact a tent, made literally out of fabric. Semper's interest in what one might call alternative modalities of the hut can be seen in this context. See Semper's *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). For discussions of these traditions, see Joseph Rykwert, *On Adam's House in Paradise* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981); Sylvia Lavin, *Quatremère de Quincy and the Invention of a Modern Language of Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992); Mark Wigley, "Untitled: The Housing of Gender," in Beatriz Colomina, ed., *Sexuality and Space* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992), 327–89. On weaving and architecture, see Ann Bergren's essay in this volume.

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2. In her essay "E.1027: The Nonheroic Modernism of Eileen Gray," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 53 (September 1994), 265–79, Caroline Constant sought to give the house and its designer their architectural due. However, the complexity of this endeavor is suggested by the organization of her essay, which is structured by a comparison of, and an opposition between, Le Corbusier and Gray. The essay's title accords Gray a negatively marked version of the epithet "heroic" (normally reserved for Le Corbusier), and the inescapable pressure of this structure reveals its effect.
3. Gray more or less abandoned her life in Paris to go to the south of France during the late 1920s. She later left E.1027 to go to Castellar. See Peter Adam, *Eileen Gray, Architect/Designer* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1987).
4. It might most profitably be compared to the philosophers' huts and hermitages that were built in eighteenth-century picturesque gardens.
5. In the living room of E.1027 a nautical map of the Caribbean bore the inscriptions "invitation au voyage," from Charles Baudelaire's *Paris Spleen* (1869), and "vas-y-

totor," Gray's nickname for her car. See Constant, 271.

6. For the context in which Gray used the term "camping style," see Adam, 207.
7. Permanence is of course an odd notion in this context, since the hut seems to have reproduced itself on the site. For example, the "Unité de Camping" was built adjacent to the *cabanon* in 1957. Furthermore, necessary extensive rebuildings and renovations of the hut cast doubt on its original permanence.
8. The small shoreline path that runs the full distance between Monte Carlo and Roquebrune is now called the Promenade Le Corbusier. The narrow walkway is marked with street signs and is signaled as a tourist site in the Michelin guide for the French Riviera.
9. In a statement published in "Unité," *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* 19, 1948, Le Corbusier described the effect of his murals as "an immense transformation. A spiritual value introduced throughout." Of course, to turn E.1027 into a cave is an attempt to naturalize it, a common approach to the feminine.
10. In discussing Le Corbusier's murals, Adam states: "It was rape. A fellow architect, a man she admired, had without her consent defaced her design" (Adam, 311). This seems a highly rhetorical formulation demanding careful consideration. Adam implies that he is finally articulating something that Gray meant and wanted to say but was unable to. Putting words in Gray's mouth seems a particularly problematic way of addressing her work and the ponderous silence it has had to endure. Adam's completely unsubstantiated yet highly sensational claim takes on the weight of truth as it proliferates and is reiterated in the growing literature on Gray. See, for example, Constant, 278, and Beatriz Colomina's essay in this volume.

*Mirror Images: Technology, Consumption,
and the Representation of Gender in
American Architecture since World War II*

JOAN OCKMAN

Two well-known images might be said to define American architecture in the first decades after World War II. One is Lever House, an early icon of International Style modernism, public face of American corporate capitalism (fig. 1). The other is Levittown, embodiment of suburban single-family domesticity, a vision of private life socially traditional and aesthetically conservative (fig. 2). How is this apparent schism in the built representation of postwar America to be explained? Why was a modernist aesthetic acceptable in the public realm but not in the private one? What is the relationship between this – literally and figuratively – high and low architecture? In what follows I shall attempt to answer these questions by postulating the existence of a kind of unstated “bargain” or social arrangement facilitated by basic assumptions about gender roles. From this analysis I shall then consider some significant shifts that have taken place more recently in the context of postmodernism.

It is necessary to begin by redescribing these two emblematic images in terms of the dominant ideologies they represented (fig. 3). The International Style as developed in the corporate and administrative framework of postwar America explicitly embodied the values of *technocracy* – the ethos of rationalism, bureaucracy, and technoscientific progress on which both big business and government were predicated. The exposed high-rise structural frame infilled with the repetitive modulations of an abstract curtain wall reflected the expansionist ambitions and laconic demeanor of American capitalism in an age of cold-war geopolitics.



FIG. 1

Skidmore, Owings & Merrill.
Lever House, New York City.
1952. Photograph by Ezra Stoller,
© ESTO

FIG. 2

Levittown, New York. 1948.
Photograph by Bernard Hoffman,
LIFE Magazine, © 1950, Time, Inc.

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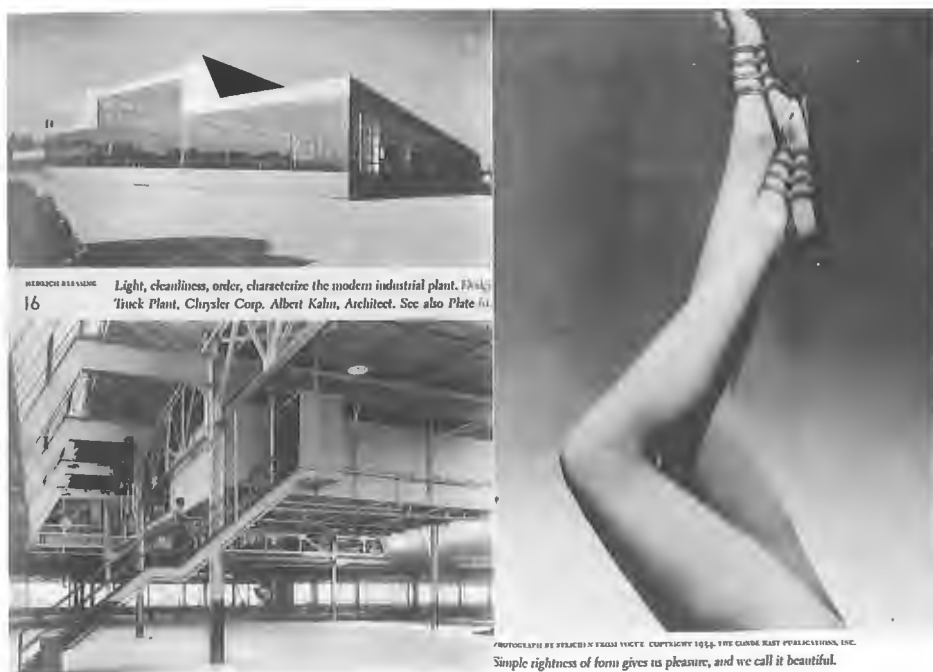


FIG. 3

Spread from Walter Dorwin Teague, *Design This Day*, 2nd ed. (The Studio Publications, 1946). On the left, Albert Kahn's Dodge Half-Ton Truck Plant, Chrysler Corporation, Detroit, photographed by Ken Hedrich, Hedrich-Blessing, 1938. On the right, photograph by Edward Steichen for *Vogue*

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FIG. 4

Henry Dreyfuss. Evening dress designed for "*Vogue's* Woman of Tomorrow." Photograph by Anton Bruehl for February 1, 1939, issue of *Vogue*

Ironically, this “strong silent type” came to represent the “new monumentality” that Sigfried Giedion had called for during the war years, although not, to be sure, in the civic sense he had envisioned. Its cold, hard, unornamental, technical image supplied the American government with what it wanted out of its professional elites during the cold-war period. This was, as historian Godfrey Hodgson has put it, “a maximum of technical ingenuity with a minimum of dissent.”¹

Having its major origin in the interwar modern movement in Europe, the postwar International Style was an outcome of the doctrine codified by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson in their 1932 show at the Museum of Modern Art and of the teachings disseminated by the European emigrés who began at this time to head America’s most prestigious schools of architecture. But American postwar modernism also had an indigenous source in the formidable imagery of native American technology: in engineering achievements like the Ford plant at River Rouge, the TVA dam, and, most recently, the arsenal of military production that had brought the United States and its allies to triumph in the war. As a recent exhibition at the National Building Museum in Washington illustrated,² the ascendancy of the postwar International Style coincided with the emergence of the American military-industrial complex. American architectural firms, led by offices like Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, designers of Lever House, reproduced these values in their own technically sophisticated and increasingly bureaucratic professional structures. SOM, still a moderate-sized firm at the beginning of the 1940s, got its major breakthrough during the war when it received a \$60 million commission from the U.S. government to design a new town for fifty thousand people at Site X of the Manhattan Project, a location near Knoxville, Tennessee, where the atomic bomb was secretly being developed.

It is apparent that the imagery of technological power, highly rationalized and disciplined production, and wealth projected by this postwar architecture was a product of the male-dominated hierarchy whose expression it was and whose values were at stake in it (fig. 4). Geared to optimizing the labor of a new class of capitalist worker whom sociologists would dub “organization man,” it reflected a major shift in social orientation. In the earlier phase of modern architecture, the urbanized

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factory worker had been the protagonist of culture, at least symbolically, and factories and social housing were the inspirational programs. In postwar America, corporate headquarters, embassy buildings, and detached single-family houses became architecture's defining instances, and the man in the gray flannel suit commuting to a wife and children in the suburbs its prototypical occupant (fig. 5). Nor is this characterization belied by the fact that behind the office tower's glass facade, the corporation's CEO furnished his penthouse suite in the style of Louis XIV or the executive dining room like an Edwardian gentleman's club; below, the middle managers, secretaries, and staff worked and lunched in "office landscapes" programmed for maximum functional efficiency. Indeed, the implementation of modernism as the prestige style of corporate capitalism was not a matter of a significant change in taste, as Russell Lynes pointed out in 1949 in his book *The Tastemakers*.³ Rather, it was a symbolic display of power. The American philosopher George Santayana had observed four decades earlier: "The American Will inhabits the skyscraper; the American Intellect inhabits the colonial mansion. The one is the sphere of the American man; the other, at least predominantly, of the American woman. The one is all aggressive enterprise; the other is all genteel tradition."⁴

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In the postwar period this split between the work world and domestic life characterized not only the upper class. For the burgeoning middle class, too, the domestic abode became, if not the place for the ritual enactment of gentility, at least the antithesis to the workaday routine and the repository of bourgeois comfort. The "male" culture of production found its complement in the "female" culture of consumption.

The postwar house thus reflected the other dominant ideology of the postwar period, that of *consumerism*. By the second quarter of this century, mass consumption had become central to the development of American capitalism. Even during the years of World War II, when consumer goods were greatly restricted because of war production needs, the public's appetite for postwar plenitude was whetted by the media and by government-sanctioned advertising (figs. 6, 7). Above all, it was feared that the economy, having reached peak productivity during the years of



FIG. 5

Skidmore, Owings & Merrill.
Manufacturers' Trust Company
Fifth Avenue Branch Bank,
New York City. 1954. View of
vault door through Fifth Avenue
facade. Photograph by Ezra
Stoller, © ESTO

O C K M A N



WE'VE GOT THE RANGE

Not the kind that goes in the kitchen — we didn't make those even in peace times. No, the range we're talking about is the distance to the nearest Axis outpost from the muzzle of a U. S. howitzer.

Today Briggs men make cartridge cases of steel for these guns — do it as well as they once made model kitchen and bathroom fixtures. When folks can buy such things again, the best will proudly display the name of Briggs.

BRIGGS *Beautyware*
PLUMBING FIXTURES

BRIGGS MANUFACTURING COMPANY • DETROIT

FIG. 6

Advertisement for Briggs
Beautyware Plumbing Fixtures,
Architectural Forum, October
1943

FIG. 7

Advertisement for United
States Steel, *Architectural Forum*,
July 1943

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FROM A FOXHOLE IN NEW GUINEA
PVT. HOUSTON DREAMS OF

Home

"OH, BOY, when I get out of this jungle, I'm going to build me a sweet little cottage in California and stay there the rest of my natural life. It won't be big but it'll have every convenience I can cram into it... a shower with hot and cold running water for each bedroom... a handy little kitchen... and a certain girl named Sally who knows how to make a juicy steak sit up and cry papa."

What kind of homes will the boys want when they get back from the wars in 1945? They've been fighting for a memory of home—a home better than anything else they've found in foreign countries. They'll be tired of war-

rooms—and they'll want something not too different from the home they left behind.

One thing you can be sure of, this mechanical war has given our fighters a healthy respect for the value and versatility of steel.

For post-war homes, steel will be increasingly important. Because it lends itself to mass production methods, steel windows, steel kitchen cabinets, painted steel bathrubs, sinks and lavatories can be made cheaper and will cost less to install.

Prefabricated steel stairs, clothes closets, shower cabinets will rubber coats, lined roofing, gutters, and downspouts will give the most uncovered services obtainable over a period of years.

Furthermore, in a variety of colors, will give the soldier something new to work with. It can be made into attractive paneling for bathrooms and into colorful maintenance-free shingles for roofing and a host of other products. The war has opened development of new steels, many of which will be available when the fighting is over. Our new booklet, "41 Ways to Make a Better Home" will show you what's new in steel products. Write for a copy.

U-S-S
BUILDING STEELS



COLUMBIA-CLINTON STEEL CORPORATION, Pittsburgh and Chicago
COLUMBIA STEEL COMPANY, Los Angeles

WENDELL COAL, NEW & KANSAS COMPANY, St. Louis

United States Steel Supply Company, Chicago, Washington, Baltimore • United States Steel Export Company, New York

UNITED STATES STEEL

emerging mobilization, would slide back into a depression if conversion from a military to a domestic economy did not occur rapidly. Postwar planners now spoke of “mobilizing for abundance.” Crucial to the viability of the economy’s domestic sector was the low- and middle-cost housing market. During the war years, job-hungry architects and an eager building industry indulged in wildly optimistic predictions about the postwar housing market. Nor did their optimism prove unfounded. In the unprecedented boom that followed the war, the suburban dream house became a form of compensation for the privations and sacrifices endured during the years of war and economic stagnation, a realization of the material prosperity to which Americans considered themselves at long last entitled. As the postwar office building became a machine for streamlined white-collar production, so the private house became a machine especially for white middle-class consumption.

It was a machine, however, that dissembled its mechanistic nature. If the American public momentarily became intrigued during the war years with Bucky Fuller’s Dymaxion Dwelling Machine (fig. 8) – whose advantages Fuller had been proselytizing for more than a decade with the question, “Madam, do you know how much your house weighs?” – the sheen of a lightweight metal domicile quickly wore off in comparison with the more rooted-looking Cape Coddage offered by a canny developer like William J. Levitt.

O C K M A N

“Home, in the American dream, is a quaint little white cottage, shyly nestled in a grove of old elms or maples, bathed in the perfume of lilacs, and equipped with at least one vine-covered wall. Its steep gabled roof, covered with rough, charmingly weathered shingles, shows a slight sag in the ridge. The eaves come down so low that one can almost touch them. Tiny dormers on one side poke themselves through the old roof and let in light through tiny-paned windows to the upstairs bedrooms. In front of the house there is invariably a picket fence, with day lilies poking their heads between the white palings. Let into the fence, at the end of a flagstone walk bordered with alyssum and verbena, is a swinging gate, where husband and wife embrace tenderly as he dashes for the 8:11 and the workaday world.”⁵



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FIG. 8

R. Buckminster Fuller. Dymaxion house prototype, manufactured and erected by Beech Aircraft, Wichita, Kansas, 1945

This was the nostalgic idyll that George Nelson and Henry Wright set out to dispel in their book of 1945, *Tomorrow's House*, but nothing that they or other modernist proselytizers had to offer seemed able to replace it. Levittown was a margarine substitute, but an appealing one for the thousands of returning GIs and their wives. The fact that like the Dymaxion its Taylorized construction process contradicted its traditionalist image was not a fatal defect for buyers who were, in no small measure, purchasing a life-style, a dream. Moreover, the Levitt was hardly lacking in up-to-dateness; it came equipped with one or more of the latest conveniences, from Bendix washing machines to "built-in" television sets. The idea of the built-in derived from modernist spatial concepts, but Levitt was quick to realize its economic benefit: it qualified equipment to be paid on the mortgage. The buyer was also given, in the later Levitt developments, some limited choice as to plan type, elevation details, and finishes. The marketing strategy of "standardized diversity" catered at least minimally to the deep American desire for individualism.⁶ William Levitt appears to have understood the compromise that a large segment of the American public wanted as Fuller and other architects promoting a more radical image of the low-cost house did not. This is not to suggest that Levitt was a populist. He was a businessman. Acknowledging himself that the renderings in his sales brochures could appear deceptive – they portrayed Levittown houses set on spacious, private lawns surrounded by lush foliage – he quipped, "The masses are asses."⁷

But the postwar campaign to redomesticate women after their brief taste of equal employment opportunity in the wartime work force was abetted not only by the tangible amenities of the new suburban dream house but also by its essentialism. Women, voluntarily making room in the job market for the returning veterans, were induced or seduced to return to home and child-rearing through intensive propaganda by government, businessmen, psychologists, religious leaders, and others on behalf of "family values." As one feminist historian has commented, "'Rosie the Riveter' was . . . transformed with dizzying speed from a wartime heroine to a neurotic, castrating victim of penis envy."⁸ The mythological imagery of the house as a nest and haven presided over by a nurturing mother figure was fundamental in reestablishing the traditional division

A house with a future



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FIG. 9

Cover of a pamphlet by Harwell Hamilton Harris for a promotional series entitled *Revere's Part in Better Living*, published by Revere Copper and Brass Inc., 1943

FIG. 10

Cover of a pamphlet by George Nelson for the series *Revere's Part in Better Living*, 1943



**Your children
could romp here
while you shop...**

of labor in the American family. The new tract divisions served in a literal way to enforce the gulf of space and time between private life and work world. Women's separation increased along the lengthening network of highways; homemaking became increasingly distanced from the making of history.⁹

Nor, to most women at the time, did it seem a bad bargain. After the traumatic dislocations of the war, stability and nest building came as a welcome relief for many. So did economic prosperity, which meant that the domestic abode, for all its cozy image, did not need to have humble aspirations (fig. 9). It could be added to, or if rendered obsolete by the family's changing needs and status, shed for a new and larger home. Planned obsolescence became an important economic strategy after the war; an approach similar to that used for selling automobiles had its application to mass-market housing. Meanwhile, the cornucopia of new domestic goods churned out by a retooled economy was aggressively marketed to the new generation of housewives, the appointed "managers of consumption," as Margaret Mead described them in 1948.¹⁰ While their husbands strove to move upward in the corporate hierarchy, the "wives of management"¹¹ attended to the parallel task of keeping up with the neighboring Joneses. Wartime savings fueled a postwar spending spree, heavily abetted by advertising. Having from its inception targeted "Mrs. Consumer" as the prime object of its sales pitch, American advertising increased sixfold between 1920 and 1950 and then doubled again between 1951 and 1960.¹² Women who had remained on the home front during the war, encouraged in a time of rationing to be "generals in their own kitchens," now were assured that the newest gadgetry would free them from domestic "drudgery" – an oft-repeated Dickensian word. The myth of the happy housewife – the flawed logic that a streamlined kitchen was sufficient to liberate a woman from a patriarchal society's oppression – was parodied by British Pop artist Eduardo Paolozzi in a 1948 collage entitled *It's a Psychological Fact Pleasure Helps Your Disposition*.

Moreover, now that technology had presumably released women from the burdens of old-fashioned housework, questions remained of how they should spend their new leisure time. In an ironic turn, the fundamental capitalist axiom "time is money" was reformulated for a

consumer society. Certainly as far as the advertising industry was concerned, leisure time was time available for consumption, for shopping (fig. 10). In his widely read book *The House and the Art of Its Design*, the architect Robert Woods Kennedy acknowledged, "Our general desire is for women to consume beautifully."¹³ During the 1950s the beautiful consumers would play their part. At the beginning of the decade *Fortune* magazine forecast that they would incite \$10 billion in spending on home construction and \$12 billion on home furnishings.¹⁴ It was Betty Friedan who explosively deconstructed this system ten years later, in 1963, in *The Feminine Mystique*. Stopping short of alleging a conscious conspiracy aimed at women, she wrote, "The perpetuity of housewifery, the growth of the feminine mystique, makes sense (and dollars) when one realizes that women are the chief customers of American business. Somehow, somewhere, someone must have figured out that women will buy more things if they are kept in the underused, nameless-yearning, energy-to-get-rid-of state of being housewives."¹⁵

It would seem, in short, that the prevailing dichotomy between Lever House and Levittown amounted to a highly efficient, eminently practical, and symbiotic social arrangement. In a society that sought simultaneously to promote maximum productivity and maximum consumption, the public and private spheres had separate but complementary roles to play. Architecture served to reproduce and reinforce this gendered social division, providing an efficacious image for each.

In actuality, of course, the two forms of representation were mirror images of a single system, two sides of the capitalist coin. Both Lever House and Levittown were predicated on highly rationalized and optimized production processes; both were geared to a postwar mass society. Where they differed was in the image they projected, in the one case of elite modernist aesthetics, in the other of midcult taste. Despite his antipathy for the latter, Theodor Adorno acknowledged the fundamental identity of these two antagonistic forms of the contemporary world: "Both [modernism and mass culture] bear the stigmata of capitalism, both contain elements of change. . . . They are torn halves of an integral freedom to which, however, they do not add up."¹⁶

Meanwhile, the image of architectural modernism, too, was becoming precisely that – an image. In the context of postwar America, of the cold war and McCarthyism, the social idealism that had animated the vanguard architecture of the 1920s began to appear naive or hollow. The postwar glass-grid skyscraper seemed duplicitous in its reference, its elegant, abstract transparency alluding to the utopian vision of a radiant, egalitarian, dynamically open society, while embodying the reality of panoptic, hierarchical bureaucracy. In an influential article published in 1951 entitled “Origins and Trends in Modern Architecture,” the architect Matthew Nowicki characterized American architecture at this date as preoccupied more with structure and form than with function. Instead of following function, suggested Nowicki, form now followed form; moreover, he noted, the new architectural formalism was tending toward the “decoration of structure” (this almost twenty years before Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi would coin the concept of the decorated shed). Certainly the buildings produced in these years by young architects like Philip Johnson, Edward Durrell Stone, Minoru Yamasaki, and Paul Rudolph, and even older masters like Gropius and Le Corbusier, not to mention Frank Lloyd Wright, were undermining modernist orthodoxy with eclectic and personal inputs. Nowicki probably had in mind Ludwig Mies van der Rohe’s famous details at Illinois Institute of Technology and the Lake Shore Drive apartments, where Mies used steel mullions more for expressive purposes than strictly structural ones, in writing, “The symbolic meaning of a support has also been rediscovered, and a steel column is used frankly as a symbol of structure even when it is not part of the structure itself.”¹⁷

And precisely in this revelation of architecture as a system of arbitrary signs, in the dissociation between image and reality, in the use of design for purposes of “corporate identity” and “marketing strategy,” in the recognition that modern architecture was simply another historical style – in all this, the transition from modernity to postmodernity took place. With this, I’d like to extend my argument about the relation between technology, consumption, and gender conceptions to the present period, although my comments here can only be very preliminary.

We have said that the postwar International Style was a symbolic representation of the virility of American technology. Starting in World

War II, however, a subtle change began to occur, even if culture was to take a number of years to register it. With the emergence of a so-called postindustrial economy, technological power began to be associated with something besides industrial hardware and large-scale, discrete mechanical objects – besides the rockets, bridges, munitions factories, not to mention grain elevators, airplanes, ocean liners, and plumbing fixtures that had defined modernity earlier. Advanced technology now also came to mean cybernetic processes, software systems, miniaturized electronics, artificial intelligence, telecommunications, and other sophisticated instrumentalities eluding physical form. *The imagination of power* inevitably began to take inspiration from the new logic of global networks, integrated circuits, microchips, smart weapons, virtual fields.¹⁸ The penetration of these often invisible technologies into the unconscious – especially through the impact of advertising and the media on everyday life – served to unleash potent new images and desires. Alison and Peter Smithson wrote in 1956:

“Gropius wrote a book on grain silos,
Le Corbusier one on aeroplanes,
And Charlotte Perriand brought a new object to the office
every morning;
But today we collect ads.”¹⁹

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Architecture would remain no less bound than before to rehearse the technocratic background from which it sprang, but the repository from which it would draw its symbolic content would necessarily change with the new modes of production and reception.

At the same time, consumerism would also undergo a change. If gender stereotypes had previously served to reproduce the binary relations of production and consumption – consumption being marked as female and therefore socially less valuable – then increasingly, after World War II, these relations ceased to be so clear-cut. As Robert Bocock has written,

“The modern period was marked by [a] gender division between mothering and consumption, on the one hand, and production and making war

on the other. The post-modern has been, by comparison, a period of peace in Western Europe, North America and Japan. This has allowed a change in gender roles for men. No longer required in large numbers as fighters, men, especially younger men, have become consumers too since the 1950s.”²⁰

Men, too, now construct their identities in terms of what they consume, from sports and cars to movies, food, and clothing. The sociopolitical emergence of gays within capitalist culture, with their frank patterns of consumption, has further challenged the traditional dichotomy that marks consumption as feminine and production as masculine, just as the new politics of childbearing, child rearing, and healthcare have expanded the concept of production to include women’s biological reproduction and the whole hitherto excluded economy of the home. At the same time, the increasing participation of women in every echelon of the conventional work force, the shift of the workplace not only from city to suburbs but into the home itself, and the accelerating computerization of both work and everyday life have effectively blurred the lines between production and consumption, public and private realms, undoing the simple bargain between technocracy and consumerism that obtained in the postwar decades. The old dichotomy between home and history has been superseded by public/private relationships deeply inflected by the new commercially and technologically mediated conditions of contemporary life. As German film theorists Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge have suggested in their book *The Public Sphere and Experience*, our concept of the public realm has to be rethought today across a broadly inclusive and interconnected horizon of social relations.²¹ Going beyond traditional liberal civic models, such a reconceptualization of public space would extend to privately owned spaces of commerce and consumption (including, for example, shopping malls), as well as to those less physical and more ephemeral sites where public opinion and consciousness are formed – television and the movies, the print media, the computer internet.

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But if the intrusion of commerce and sophisticated technology into every crevice of daily life can hardly be considered cause for comfort, it is also the case that the built representations of postmodern society are no longer charged so heavily with dichotomous gender stereotypes. Both

the “softening” of technology and the universalizing of the consumer have obliged architecture to seek new forms of representation. In this context, the initial phase of postmodernist architecture, characterized by the decorative facade treatments of corporate buildings like Johnson’s AT&T and civic ones like Michael Graves’s Portland, may be described as “cross-dressing” – scandalous with respect to the “strong silent” typology, but symptomatic of the mixing up of technocratic and consumerist values and gender stereotypes in today’s society. A current obsession on the part of many architects with using glass on the facade – no longer as a repetitive infill within a clearly articulated and primary structural frame, but as a screening element veiling the structure, or, as Diana Agrest has suggested in an article entitled “Architecture of Mirror/Mirror of Architecture,” a reflective element dissolving materiality into paradox and disarticulating the conventional relationships between architectural language and image, surface and depth²² – offers a further ambiguation of the postwar imagistic clarities.

The ideologies of technocracy and consumerism that we have inherited from the period after World War II are no less entrenched in contemporary architecture than they were at the moment when Lever House and Levittown were conceived. The design and practice of architecture continue to be bound up with the representation of power and the marketing of pleasure. I believe, however, that these twin imperatives are now less reinforced by, and reinforcing of, undesirable gender stereotypes. From a feminist perspective, this is something positive.

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1. Godfrey Hodgson, “The Ideology of the Liberal Consensus,” in William H. Chafe and Harvard Sitkoff, eds., *A History of Our Time: Readings on Postwar America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 133.
2. *World War II and the American Dream: How Wartime Building Changed a Nation*, with catalogue edited by Donald Albrecht (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995). See also Elizabeth Mock, ed., *Built in U.S.A. – 1932–1944* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1944).
3. Russell Lynes, *The Tastemakers* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), 305–9.
4. George Santayana, *Winds of Doctrine: Studies in Contemporary Opinion* (London:

J. M. Dent, 1913), 188.

5. George Nelson and Henry Wright, *Tomorrow's House: How to Plan Your Post-War Home Now* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945), 4.
6. Stewart Ewen, *All Consuming Images: The Politics of Style in Contemporary Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 229. The unilevel ranch, almost equally popular at this date, especially in the West, represented a less nostalgic image of modern living; it appealed more for its easy life-style, however, than its aesthetic pretensions.
7. John Liell, "Levittown: A Study in Community Development" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1952), 111; cited in Ewen, 227.
8. Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women During World War II* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981), 176. See also Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda During World War II* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984).
9. See Dorothy Dinnerstein, *The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and Human Malaise* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976).
10. Margaret Mead, "The American Family as an Anthropologist Sees It," *American Journal of Sociology* 53 (1948), 454; cited in Robert H. Bremner and Gary W. Reichard, eds., *Reshaping America: Society and Institutions 1945-1960* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1982), 4. It may, of course, be questioned to what extent women actually controlled the purse strings, especially where large purchases were concerned.
11. "The Wives of Management" is the title of a well-known article by William H. Whyte Jr., first published in *Fortune* 44 (October 1951), 68-88, 204-6. Whyte satirically sets out the rules according to which corporate wives should behave.
12. Mary P. Ryan, *Womanhood in America from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1975), 260; Douglas T. Miller and Marion Nowak, *The Fifties: The Way We Really Were* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1975), 117.
13. Robert Woods Kennedy, *The House and the Art of Its Design* (New York: Reinhold, 1953), 40.
14. Cited in Ryan, 301.
15. Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), 181.
16. Letter from Adorno to Walter Benjamin (1936), cited in Thomas Crow, "Modernism and Mass Culture in the Visual Arts," in Francis Frascina, ed., *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 263.
17. Matthew Nowicki, "Origins and Trends in Modern Architecture," *Magazine of Art*, November 1951; republished in Joan Ockman, ed., *Architecture Culture 1943-1968*:

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- A Documentary Anthology* (New York: Rizzoli, 1993), 156.
18. On technology as symbolic form in architecture, a classic essay is Alan Colquhoun's "Symbolic and Literal Aspects of Technology" (1962), republished in Colquhoun, *Essays in Architectural Criticism: Modern Architecture and Historical Change* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), 26–30.
 19. Alison and Peter Smithson, "But Today We Collect Ads," *Ark* 18 (November 1956), republished in David Robbins, ed., *The Independent Group: Postwar Britain and the Aesthetics of Plenty* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 185.
 20. Robert Bocock, *Consumption* (London: Routledge, 1993), 96.
 21. See Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *The Public Sphere and Experience* (1972), trans. Peter Labanyi, Jamie Daniel, and Assenka Oksiloff (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).
 22. Diana Agrest, "Architecture of Mirror/Mirror of Architecture," in Agrest, *Architecture from Without: Theoretical Framings for a Critical Practice* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1991), 138–55.

Through the Looking Glass: Reply to Joan Ockman

DENISE SCOTT BROWN

"Things grow curiouiser and curiouiser," said Alice, as she fell down a hole and grew large then small. And we, as we grow and fall and pass, like Alice, through our own looking glasses, can see a curious new life unfolding before us, challenging us to question old ideas. Today the lenses of gender and ethnicity are upending conventional notions, infusing them with vitality just as, earlier this century, the perspectives of European immigrants and their children enlivened American arts and intellectuality.

Sectional views can engender social reappraisal and effect action. For example, women in the 1970s and 1980s brought changes to work life in America through the provisions they required to help them combine home and work. Among those who flocked to corporations then were women who later left when they hit the glass ceiling. Some started their own businesses, and these incubating enterprises may be signposts to the American economy of the next century. Productivity may rise as a result of women-induced work changes, and work for men and women will never be the same again. The home, too, has changed. As work has become more homely, home has become more work-like. Some of the beneficiaries have been men.

Joan Ockman presents a fascinating thesis on the historical period immediately preceding these changes. *Her* reflections through the looking glass of gender show mid-twentieth century technology and consumption mirroring each other. The technologically based architecture of the American corporation represents, for her, the macho male of the early post-World War II decades and is a metaphor for the military-

industrial complex of that time. Inversely, 1950s and 1960s suburbia, typified by Levittown, represents the capitalist environment of maximum consumption, engendered to support postwar increases in goods production. Levittown was primarily a women's world.

These reinterpretations and recombinations of ideas on Modern' architecture and suburbia are examples of how new perspectives can mash the conventional wisdom. The word "perspectives" has an architectural ring. In another context, I have referred to a "worm's eye view," using a type of architectural perspective drawing to symbolize history – as I saw it – from the distaff side.² Perhaps the oppressed have a worm's eye view. Then who has the bird's-eye perspective on architecture: the king-maker critics? the new theorists? How should we as women and professional architects react to Ockman's gender-based perspectives? We may, in our turn, interpret today's housing and work environments.

In the late 1960s, Robert Venturi and I began our own interpretation of two emerging American environments: the commercial strip via its archetype, Las Vegas; and suburban residential sprawl, typified for us, too, by Levittown. We tried to dissect them using analytic tools derived from architecture, sociology, art history, and other fields. To see our material through other than architectural perspectives, we studied suburban housing environments and the images of houses purveyed by real estate developers, television, film, and other media.

An important reason for using these commercial images was to question Modern orthodoxy from a perspective of social concern, but that is missed by most architects and critics even today. (It is particularly frustrating to see our work and thought associated with the blatant superficiality of Postmodernism when, in fact, it was derived so obviously from the social planners' critique of the 1960s.³) We saluted *early* Modernism not least for its social concern. As Modern images have moved, over the last ninety years, between east and west, Europe and America, their symbolic meanings have shifted in interesting ways. The flat roof meant left-wing ideals in Germany long before it projected corporate enlightenment in America. Later, Modern architecture was reappropriated by the left as Communist architects borrowed from Oscar Niemeyer and Miami Beach for the Stalin Allee.

Were I to perform our Las Vegas and Levittown studies today, I would take account of America's changing demographic patterns, family forms, and multiculturalism. To the media selected for content analysis I would add retail sales catalogues, particularly for their depiction of house and garden items and clothing. Following Ockman's views of male consumption post-1980, I would examine the ways catalogues sell to men as well as to women.

Another noticeable change is the shifting pattern of workplaces. Levittown started as an outpost but was soon within driving distance of regional shopping malls. Work followed – enough of it to employ many suburbanites near their homes. Now we have “edge city” and even activities once thought to be tied to downtown – for example, financial services – are moving to the suburbs. There is also the prospect of the economy becoming a series of electronically linked cottage industries. This much-heralded shift may have less impact on living and working patterns than is predicted, but already one can learn, earn, and shop at home – all through the same computer screen.

Perhaps, in the end, some cultural activities will remain in the city and urban economies will depend increasingly on these for their support. This pattern has been emerging since the 1980s – for example, on Main Street in the Manayunk section of Philadelphia – if one includes the types of retail commercial uses that prefer old buildings as part of culture and recreation.

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This is not necessarily a death knell for cities, architecture, or architects, but their roles do need rethinking. When and if work and production, goods and services, no longer determine transportation movements and housing choice is not tied to workplace (or the house *is* the workplace), then the whole urban pattern will have changed. Understanding the new work patterns and workplace options could be a challenge to architectural imagination. For example, when costs of travel to work are less constraining on peoples' housing choices, amenity will be an important determinant of location, and architects are strong on finding or defining amenity. Helping people to live and work and build well, in settings that are beautiful, could be an important task for architects.

Rethinking the urban housing environment to suit new family, liv-

ing and working relationships could be a part of this task. A housing strategy for an urban region should be complex – the opposite of the mass-production, “tin lizzy” solutions architects have propounded for housing problems worldwide. All manner of choices for all manner of groups, cultures, ages, and classes, should exist, in and out of the city. Then the best cities would be those that offer the richest opportunities, many at the neighborhood level rather than at the individual house level. For example, medieval towns had communal food ovens; we, today, share the educating of children and sometimes the care of the elderly. What new apportionment of daily activities between home and neighborhood will best suit the evolving work and family lives of women, men, and children? Should the elementary school and the day care center be near the parents’ home or near their workplaces? Architects should be helping to provide, in rich ways, for what is needed now and will be in the near future, given today’s social and economic forces of change.

Joan Ockman uses one other lens in her reflection on twentieth-century technology and consumption: the lens of politics. In order for one to agree or disagree with her argument, one would have to know her political stance at the outset. From our studies I would ask: Is Levittown really conservative? Did the capitalists really lead buyers there by their noses? Did the Levittowners believe the ads? Did Levitt really think “the masses [were] asses?” We know how carefully he watched people’s reactions to the model houses, and that he built for several markets at once, a few houses at a time, leaving himself options for shifting with buyer preference.

Ockman also mentions “American culture.” I’m not sure there is a single American culture. I prefer to talk of “cultures” and then to ask whether different cultures can be aggregated to support general statements about Levittown – or to make input to meaningful designs for city hall. While Ockman has admitted that the capitalists weren’t all wrong, that their forecasts weren’t all inaccurate, and that some of the changes they generated may even have been good, her statements on architecture in a capitalist society are, for me, too pat and insufficiently supported. Theorists in both architecture and the women’s movement

are, to my way of thinking, frequently fuzzy: Their speculations lack the discipline of scholarly backing. Now, arguably, the social sciences as “soft” sciences should not be held to the same order of accountability as is physics (the “physics envy” of the social sciences notwithstanding), but the danger lies in architecture and feminist theorists evolving conclusions from anecdotes and stereotypes – the same distortions that women, themselves, have suffered from – rather than from supportable findings. By contrast, the writings of Herbert Gans prove it is possible to make compelling and even polemical observations on cultures and groups without sacrificing scholarly rigor.⁴

I think it’s OK for Adorno to make the grand categorical statements quoted by Ockman,⁵ given his role in society and the aims of his polemic; but we, as architects and practitioners, makers of concrete things, recommenders of present action, might leave our statements a little more open or produce the research and studies to prove them. And because I can’t do that, because I’m a practitioner not an academic (I use academic information for practical, professional purposes; I don’t generate it), because I haven’t done the research to prove categorical statements, I’ve learned to say “perhaps.” I think this allows one to be more flexible, both as a creative person and as a professional trying to serve clients. Furthermore, ideologies come and go and functional needs change with time, yet our buildings may remain. So as a practitioner I must think of user requirements twenty years from now, not only, as a politician does, of how users may vote two years from now. I must try to persuade my client to think in these terms, too.

In all these ways we architects, *as architects*, should take a different stance from that of the politically identified writer, or from the one we ourselves may take as polemicists, publicists, and politicians – roles as open to us as to anyone else, but we should announce them. Meanwhile, the women’s movement, in helping us to see our inherited ideologies in a new light, has opened the doors to all architects to build for new patterns of life and, whether affirming or negating our profession’s ideologies, to act as idealists rather than ideologues.

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1. "Modern" and "Postmodern" are capitalized to denote a style and an ideology rather than a way of designing buildings today.
2. Denise Scott Brown, "A Worm's Eye View of Recent Architectural History," *Architectural Record* (February 1984), 69–81.
3. Moreover, for the record, when in 1968 we "coin(ed) the concept of the decorated shed" (Ockman), we knew well Matthew Nowicki's concepts as excerpted in Lewis Mumford's *Roots of Contemporary American Architecture* (1952). Criticism of Mies's architecture as the "decoration of structure" was, as I recall, fairly widely made in the 1950s.
4. See, for example, Herbert Gans, *Middle American Individualism: The Future of Liberal Democracy* (New York: The Free Press, 1988).
5. See Ockman, 204.

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Not a Muse: The Client's Role at the Rietveld Schröder House

ALICE T. FRIEDMAN

Notably missing from the history of modern architecture is any substantive discussion of the role of women clients as collaborators in design or as catalysts for architectural innovation. This failure of attention, together with the overvaluing of the individual architect as innovator, has contributed to the “star system” and distorts our understanding of the design process. Moreover, by neglecting the role of convention and gender ideology in shaping both architecture and social relations, historians not only overemphasize individual creativity, but they also perpetuate the false notion that buildings are to be valued primarily as isolated art objects.

Reinserting gender factors into historical inquiry results in a narrative strikingly different from the familiar surveys of architecture. For example, focusing on domestic architecture in Europe and the United States, one finds that a surprisingly large number of the most important houses by prominent architects in this century were designed for women clients or for non-traditional, woman-headed households.¹ The list includes Frank Lloyd Wright's Aline Barnsdall house (1919–23) in Hollywood, California, which was intended to serve as a semi-public residence at the center of a large “art-theater garden”; the Truus Schröder house (1924) in Utrecht, Holland, by Gerrit Rietveld; the Villa Stein–de Monzie (1927) at Garches by Le Corbusier, designed as an exhibition space and residence for four adults (a married couple, Michael and Sarah Stein, and their friend Mme Gabrielle de Monzie and her adopted daughter); Eileen Gray's own house E.1027 (1929), in Roquebrune–Cap Martin (see also Beatriz Colomina's and Sylvia Lavin's essays in this volume); Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's weekend house for Dr. Edith Farnsworth (1945–51) in Plano, Illinois;

Richard Neutra's Constance Perkins house (1955) in Pasadena, California; and Robert Venturi's house for his mother (1963) in Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia – as well as a handful of other, less famous examples.

These houses have a number of characteristics in common. First, they were all designed for relatively well-to-do, highly educated women. Although there is among these women a considerable range in wealth, privilege, and social status (from the heiress Aline Barnsdall to the college professor Constance Perkins), this range is small in comparison with the chasm that divides these women as a group from the majority of the population. Second, the houses were all designed for women who were able to turn to professional architects to work out individual solutions tailored to their needs. Third, the projects were all informed by a simple but radical notion: that the woman-headed household is something that can be actively chosen by women and need not be given second-class status; that such a household is not only a viable social entity but also an architectural entity, worthy of a carefully considered design response. Such representation required a fundamental departure from precedents of type in domestic architecture structured by conventional imagery and social relationships.²

While the conditions mentioned above may separate these houses and their clients from the mainstream in some obvious ways, there are fundamental aspects of program, gender, and type in domestic architecture that clearly transcend artistic, economic, and class differences. Since the mid-nineteenth century, conventional thinking about the middle- and upper-class home in Europe and the United States has focused on the idea that it should be protected as a private, family-oriented environment, separate from the public sphere of work.³ Paired with this is the notion that the home is not only the locus of heterosexual reproduction and socialization but also a stage for ordering social and economic relations. "Home" and "family" have thus been traditionally defined by the patriarchal gender relations that structure them and connect them to the larger society. Nevertheless, while traditional wisdom may have suggested that a woman's place was in the home, it was also true that her status there was awarded to her by her husband and the male-dominated institutions of society as a whole. Within this system, the female-headed

household represents a significant disjunction in architectural, economic, and social terms, even for elite women.⁴

Despite the rhetoric of social and technological change, the outlines of the conventional domestic program have remained constant throughout much of this century. Devoted primarily to non-work activities and the care of the body, the twentieth-century house is the locus of family activity as well as a place to entertain and impress guests, including those whose primary contact with family members may be in the workplace. In this context, the typical plan of the American and European single-family home has taken shape: the public and formal spaces, such as living rooms, family rooms, dining rooms, kitchens, and guest bathrooms, are located on the ground floor; the master bedroom, children's rooms, bathrooms, and other private spaces are located in relatively remote, protected areas.

The houses listed above challenge this model, particularly in plan (because it reflects changes in program, the plan, more than any other aspect of design, is the barometer of changes in gender relations that render conventional type-forms irrelevant). When the program shifts away from the patriarchal model, not only do the boundaries between the social environments inside and outside the home begin to blur, but also the spatial allocations within the house itself. For example, in all of these projects, the work/leisure distinction was one of the first elements to go. Work and "public" activities traditionally carried on outside the middle-class home – from light assembly to design work, retail sales, small classes, study groups, or business meetings – were accommodated within the domestic sphere, expanding the program of the home. Multiple functions replaced single-function room designations. In households where children were present, such as the Barnsdall and Schröder houses, conventional spatial divisions between mothers and children were broken down, leading to a more permeable boundary between the areas occupied by different generations and to a greater emphasis on the activities and education of children.

Moreover, ideas about community and individual privacy were redefined and problematized. In some examples, notably the Schröder house, there was a clear effort to provide a separate, private bedroom (however

tiny) for the mother and, in that way, to allow her to lay claim to a personal, adult-only area separate from the family's space. In the Villa Stein-de Monzie, where the bedrooms were all on upper floors, the biggest problem was the separation of the suite of private spaces occupied by the Steins from those of Mme de Monzie and her daughter, since the four were close friends but not family members.

Finally, in those houses built for single women, the issue of the bedroom arose because of the ambiguities (either in the mind of the architect or for the client herself) about the sexual and private lives of unmarried women. In some examples, the bedroom disappeared altogether. The most obvious case is the Farnsworth house (intended as a weekend retreat), where the issue of privacy – already challenged by the open plan – was further problematized by the glass exterior walls. In Neutra's Perkins house there is no bedroom, either: the client chose to sleep on a narrow bed next to her drafting board in a small studio off of the main living space. The only real bedroom in the Perkins house is a guest room added at the insistence of the bank that provided the mortgage loan.⁵ Clearly, the issue of sexuality (which, in the case of single women, was frequently overshadowed by the spectre of lesbianism) was foreclosed in these projects.

For a variety of reasons, then, houses built for women – whether for themselves alone or for their children as well – reorder the conventions of the domestic program and challenge the values that structure it, producing new, hybrid types and mixed-used spaces. At the same time, this realignment of the categories of patronage, plan, and program opens up a whole new range of questions. To what extent do these and other women clients function as patrons for architects, recapitulating the familiar role of woman as the “guardians of culture”?⁶ How many of these women saw themselves as agents of social change, helping generate new prototypes that could be useful in producing innovative housing for other women? How many sought only individual luxuries or monuments to their own wealth and taste? To what extent does the fundamental departure from conventional gender relations and social relations – and, with it, the resulting departure from type – serve as a catalyst for design innovation? Finally, while all of these single-family houses were

designed for middle- and upper-class women in the United States and Europe, what new ideas or approaches might they offer for a broader range of choices in housing today?

The Rietveld Schröder House

A closer look at one particularly well known icon of modern architecture, Rietveld's Schröder house, reveals how much basic information has been left out of conventional architectural history (fig. 1).⁷ All but one of the widely used introductory texts make no mention of the client or her part in the design process, despite the fact that Truus Schröder's involvement in the project was documented early on and published in a 1958 monograph.⁸ All of the texts make much of the house's relationship to the De Stijl movement and to artists such as Theo van Doesburg, concentrating on color, volume, and composition. Only William Curtis discusses the project in detail and credits Schröder, noting that "it seems probable that she inspired some of the more revolutionary aspects of the building like the openness of the upstairs 'free plan' and some of the ingenious built-in furniture."⁹ Nevertheless, because this information is not connected to broader questions of gender, nor to social or typological convention, it loses much of its significance.

Although a great deal of information about the Schröder house has been published, very little of it has found its way into the survey books. For example, in a series of interviews conducted in 1982 (she lived in the house until her death in 1985), Schröder described her life history and the circumstances that shaped the design of her house.¹⁰ Truus Schröder was born in 1889 to an upper middle-class Catholic family. She trained as a pharmacist but seems never to have practiced. In 1911, she married F. A. C. Schröder, a lawyer, and the couple settled in Utrecht.¹¹ Although her first meeting with Rietveld may have occurred during the period of her engagement to Schröder, it is clear that Rietveld's status as a furniture-maker placed him in a world apart from the haut-bourgeois circles in which the Schröders moved (figs. 2, 3). Nevertheless, both Rietveld and Schröder took an interest in contemporary art and design, which ultimately would bring them together.

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FIG. 1
Gerrit Rietveld. Schröder
House, Utrecht, Holland. 1924.
Photographed in 1924



FIG. 2

Truus Schröder, ca. 1910

FIG. 3

Gerrit Rietveld, seated on an early version of the Red-Blue Chair, in front of his furniture-making shop in Utrecht, ca. 1918



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Through her sister, An Harrenstein, who lived in Amsterdam, Schröder became aware of a circle of artists and writers who held far greater interest for her than the Utrecht society in which she circulated. This group included Jacob Bendien, Charly Torop, and Kurt Schwitters. Schröder's restlessness was compounded by disagreements with her husband about the upbringing of their three young children. In 1921, at the suggestion of her husband (who was introduced to Rietveld's work by a business associate), Truus Schröder commissioned Rietveld to remodel a room in their house as a private space for her use alone, complete with a day bed, table, and comfortable chairs. The project is significant not only because it brought architect and client together for the first time, but also because it marks Schröder's first venture as a patron. Schröder saw the new room as a place in which she could escape and live as she liked: "I hardly met any people who had a feeling for what was modern. Not through my husband. My husband was eleven years my senior; he had a very busy practice and a great many acquaintances, some of his family lived in Utrecht and they weren't at all interested in that sort of thing. It was only through my sister that ideas came in from outside. We would discuss such things in my room, and then it was mine, only mine."¹²

In his design Rietveld reduced furniture and lighting fixtures to bare essentials, rejecting the luxurious ornament and heavy forms of conventional upper middle-class interiors.¹³ Significantly, he seems to have remained open to his client's ideas, giving shape to her suggestions. His own extraordinary ideas about form and color, already apparent in the Red-Blue Chair of 1918, were channeled and challenged by Schröder's critique. This working relationship would structure their collaborations over a period of more than forty years.

When her husband died two years after the remodeling project, Schröder again looked to Rietveld. Her first idea was to find an apartment that Rietveld could renovate for her (her plan was to remain in Utrecht only for the next six years, until the children were out of school, and then to move to Amsterdam).¹⁴ Nevertheless, having discovered a suitable lot at the end of a row of brick houses on the edge of town, Rietveld and Schröder set about designing a new house for her family. Although she had a comfortable income under the terms of her husband's

will, her budget was limited: the final cost of the house was approximately the same as for a small, semi-detached dwelling at that time.¹⁵

When Schröder described her program to Rietveld, she emphasized her need for a home in which parent and children would be brought together in an open space, and in which work activities, such as design, also could be carried out: "I thought it was very good for the children to live in an atmosphere like that, also to have Rietveld often around. To have that experience. To hear those conversations, including those with people who disagreed. In fact, to take part in that exchange of ideas. I was very pleased that the children could share in that."¹⁶ The result was a small house (7 x 10 meters) with a studio, library, workroom, and eat-in kitchen on the ground floor. On the upper floor were the children's bedrooms and a large living and dining area; these "rooms" were actually one large space, which could be partitioned by thin, sliding panels (figs. 4, 5). Although Schröder's own bedroom, also located on this upper floor, was separated from the principal living area by fixed walls, it was not as prominent or large as a traditional parents' bedroom. In the main living space there was a specially designed cabinet made up of storage modules for sewing supplies and stationery, a phonograph, and a movie projector (fig. 6). Each "room" on the upper floor had a washbasin and electrical outlet, which Schröder felt were important to allow individuals to cook "if they wanted."¹⁷ The house not only made a social and artistic statement but also embraced new forms of technology. From the start, it was considered a major contribution to design, and it established both Rietveld and Schröder in the art world.

Throughout the 1920s, Schröder's activities as a patron and artist expanded, and she is listed as co-designer with Rietveld on a number of projects dating from this and the following decade. They completed an important interior renovation of her sister's Amsterdam home in 1926.¹⁸ Between 1930 and 1935, she collaborated with Rietveld on two experimental housing blocks close to her home in Utrecht. Moreover, in the late 1920s her sister, An Harrenstein, with a group of other feminists, founded a magazine, *De Werkende Vrouw*, to which both Schröder and Rietveld contributed articles on architecture and design.¹⁹ Schröder's interest in progressive interior design, and specifically her emphasis on

women's work at home, were clearly of a professional nature. An avid reader, she was constantly bringing new ideas to Rietveld's attention and, as she put it, she "urged him to write things down."²⁰

It is possible to situate Truus Schröder's feminism and her goals for her house within the broad movement of Dutch and European feminism of the early twentieth century. Although *De Werkende Vrouw* was published for only a short period, its contributors included a number of distinguished feminist philosophers and theorists, and its readers were middle-class intellectuals more interested in art, family, and educational theory than in women's rights in the workplace. Schröder herself never worked outside the home, and her position as a widow with three children compelled her to take a greater interest in household labor and child care than she might otherwise have done.

Like many of her contemporaries, Schröder was broadly influenced by the writings of the Swedish feminist Ellen Key, whose ideas on women's maternal gifts and special role in the home (set forth in a series of books published between the late 1890s and World War I) were particularly well known in Holland and Germany.²¹ Key urged feminists to shift their attention away from the workplace and women's equality *outside* the home to focus on women's unique abilities to nurture and guide their families *within* it. Moreover, Key believed that marriage was unduly restrictive of women's emotional, spiritual, and sexual gifts, and she thus campaigned not only for "free love" and birth-control but also for state support of single mothers.

Although Schröder was never politically active, she nonetheless took a lively interest in housing policy. As a designer she sought to respond to the needs of non-traditional households and believed strongly in women's rights. Her own house is testimony to her ambitious goals and to her concern for broad social and artistic change; her personal circumstances and struggles reinforced that commitment. The Schröder house broke down boundaries between generations and redefined social relations through unconventional design; it contested the structure of the traditional family as well. Rietveld and Schröder were both professional partners and lovers for more than forty years. He was in the house every day and appeared at art events and social gatherings with Schröder,

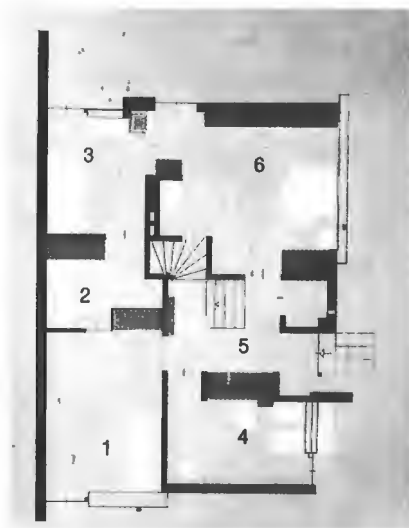


FIG. 4
Schröder House. Plan of the
ground floor. 1. Atelier;
2. Workroom; 3. Service room;
4. Studio; 5. Entry; 6. Kitchen

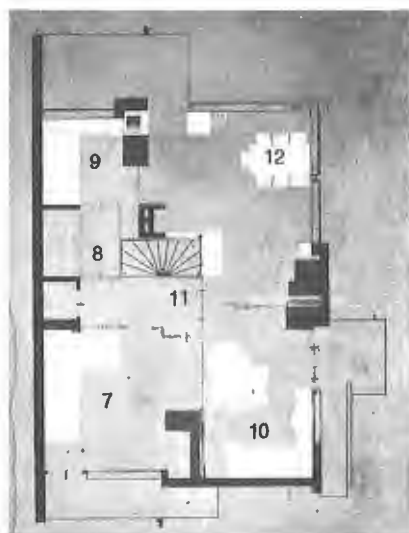


FIG. 5
Schröder House. Plan of the
upper floor 7. Girls' room;
8. Bathroom; 9. Truus Schröder's
room; 10. Boy's room;
11. Staircase; 12. Living-dining
room

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FIG. 6

Schröder House. Interior, with
the living-dining room and
the corner of the boy's room.

Photographed ca. 1924

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despite the fact that his own wife and six children also lived in Utrecht (Rietveld moved into Schröder's house only after his wife's death, and he lived there with Schröder from 1958 until his own death in 1964). As a mixed-use family home and design studio, it went beyond the more familiar type of the artist's studio to suggest a new model for a small family house and workshop.

The lessons of the Schröder house are many. First, it is clearly the result of a collaboration between a man and a woman, each of whom brought distinctive skills and interests to the project. Second, the client's role was critical to the outcome: not only did Schröder act as patron and partner, but it was she who created both the program and the opportunity to work it through. This collaboration – which took ideas off the drawing board into the real world where they were challenged by material, economic, social, and artistic conditions – was indispensable; without it there would have been no architecture, only drawings and models. Finally, the house included a number of successful design innovations: a flexible, open plan on the upper floor, in which rooms were screened by moveable partitions, allowing for both privacy and community for mother and children (although noise seems to have been a constant problem while the children remained in the house);²² large, open windows, which extended the interior space out to the street and garden and flooded the house with light; brilliant colors and intimate scale; a small, private room apart from the open area in which the parent could be both close to her children and separate from them; a ground floor of small, fixed-wall rooms in which privacy and quiet could be found. Clearly the Schröder house is both a richly meaningful work of architecture and an essay on the meaning of privacy and community.

Ultimately, the Schröder house and other houses built for women clients reveal the narrowness of conventional approaches to the history and design of domestic architecture. Failure to recognize and understand the radical decisions that produce significant buildings blunts our awareness of the social choices that can be and have been made. Too often buildings are discussed solely in formal terms, while the political and ideological context of the design process remains obscure. The future of historiography and the future of design go hand in hand: if historians

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and teachers do not have the information or the analytic approaches to make the process known, then architects and students cannot be blamed for falling back on conservative type forms as the starting point for design; certainly they cannot be faulted for failing to recognize the importance of planning for social change. The charge to feminist historians and critics is clear: to reveal, through research that begins with individual lives and choices, the cultural conditions in which buildings are produced, and to confront the relationships of power that structure the physical environment and produce the sociopsychological conditions in which the lives of men and women are lived.

1. The work presented here is drawn from my book on women clients and twentieth-century architecture, to be published by Harry N. Abrams in 1997. The section on the Schröder house is taken from a chapter of that book written in collaboration with Maristella Casciato and draws on her unpublished paper "Models of Domesticity in the Twentieth-Century Dwelling: The Case of the Schröder House (1924)."
2. For an extended discussion of this issue, see my article "Just Not My Type: Gender, Convention, and the Uses of Uncertainty," in Karen A. Franck and Linda H. Schneekloth, eds., *Ordering Space: Types in Architecture and Design* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1994), 331–34. The problem of designing for non-traditional households is considered in detail in Franck and Sherry Ahrentzen, eds., *New Households, New Housing* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1991).
3. The literature on this subject has grown over the last decade. For an overview, see Leslie Kanes Weisman, *Discrimination by Design: A Feminist Critique of the Man-made Environment* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), and Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981). Clifford E. Clark Jr., *The American Family Home 1800–1960* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), provides a useful survey of social and architectural developments.
4. This research is incorporated into two important articles on housing for single parents and female-headed households: Sherry Ahrentzen, "Overview of Housing for Single-Parent Households," and Jacqueline Leavitt, "Two Prototypical Designs for Single Parents: The Congregate House and the New American House," both in Franck and Ahrentzen. See also Eugenie Ladner Birch, ed., *The Unsheltered*

Woman: Women and Housing in the '80s (New Brunswick, N.J.: Center for Urban Policy Research, 1985).

5. On Farnsworth, see my "Domestic Differences: Edith Farnsworth, Mies van der Rohe, and the Gendered Body," in Christopher Reed, ed., *Not at Home: The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, forthcoming). The information about the Perkins house is drawn from a series of interviews I conducted with the client at her home in January 1989.
6. On women as patrons of the arts, see Kathleen D. McCarthy, *Women's Culture: American Philanthropy and Art, 1830–1930* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), and Karen J. Blair, *The Torchbearers: Women and Their Amateur Arts Associations in America 1890–1930* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).
7. On the Schröder house, see Paul Overy et al., *The Rietveld-Schröder House* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988). This volume includes an interview with the client conducted by Lenneke Büller and Frank den Oudsten in 1982 (first published in *Lotus International* 60 [1988], 33–57).
8. On Rietveld, see Theodore M. Brown, *The Work of G. Th. Rietveld, Architect* (Utrecht: A. W. Braun, 1958), and Marijke Kuper and Ida van Zijl, eds., *Gerrit Th. Rietveld: The Complete Works* (Utrecht: Centraal Museum Utrecht, 1992). The surveys include Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*, 3rd ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992), 144–46; Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco dal Co, *Modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1986), vol. 1, 112; and Spiro Kostof, *A History of Architecture: Settings and Rituals*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 702.
9. William J. Curtis, *Modern Architecture since 1900*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1987).
10. Ibid. Schröder's contribution was also the subject of an important pamphlet written by Corrie Nagtegaal, who lived in the house as a tenant/companion in the last years of Schröder's life (*Tr. Schröder-Schröder, Bewoonster van het Rietveld Schröderhuis* [Utrecht: 1987]). I am grateful to Ms. Nagtegaal for her generosity in sharing her research and experiences with me.
11. Overy et al., 21.
12. Büller and den Oudsten, "Interview with Truus Schröder" in Overy et al., 47.
13. Kuper and van Zijl, cat. nos. 51, 84.
14. Büller and den Oudsten, 52.
15. The house cost somewhere between 6,000 guilders (Schröder's recollection in *ibid.*,

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78) and 11,000 guilders (Overy et al., 22, after Brown, 155, n.38). A figure of 9,000 guilders is cited, without source, in Kuper and van Zijl, 101.

16. Büller and den Oudsten, 93.
17. Ibid., 60. How this would work in practice in such a small space is unclear.
18. Kuper and van Zijl, cat. no. 107. A surgery and guest room by Schröder and Rietveld were completed in 1930 (cat. no. 156).
19. Truus Schröder-Schräder, "Wat men door normalisatie in den woningbouw te Frankfurt a/d Main heeft bereikt" (What Has Been Achieved by the Standardization of Housing in Frankfurt a/d Main) 1 (no. 1-2, 1930), 12-14, and "Een inliedend woord tot binnenarchitectuur" (An Introductory Note on Domestic Architecture) 1 (no. 3, 1930), 93-94. Gerrit Rietveld, "De stoel" (Chairs) 1 (no. 9, 1930), 244, and "Architectuur" (Architecture) 1 (no. 11-12, 1930), 316-18.
20. Büller and den Oudsten, 92.
21. On Key's influence, see Richard J. Evans, *The Feminist Movement in Germany 1894-1933* (London: Sage Publications, 1976), and Katharine S. Anthony, *Feminism in Germany and Scandinavia* (New York: H. Holt and Co., 1915). See also Kay Goodman, "Motherhood and Work: The Concept of the Misuse of Women's Energy, 1895-1905," in Ruth-Ellen Joeres and Mary Jo Maynes, eds., *German Women in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 110-27. Key's works influenced Frank Lloyd Wright, and it was Wright's lover Mamah Borthwick Cheney who was designated as Key's official English translator in 1909. See Anthony Alofsin, *Frank Lloyd Wright: The Lost Years, 1910-1922: A Study of Influence* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994), and his "Taliesin: To Fashion Worlds in Little," *Wright Studies* 1 (1991), 44-65.
22. Büller and den Oudsten, 57.

Housing for a Postmodern World: Reply to Alice T. Friedman

GHISLAINE HERMANUZ

The thesis that to design for women is – at least potentially – to design for a different social order is intriguing. It assumes that political and ideological conditions can engender specific architectural responses that lead to socially relevant forms. Thus understanding both “the cultural conditions in which buildings are produced and . . . the relationships of power that structure the physical environment and produce the socio-psychological conditions in which the lives of men and women are lived” (see Alice T. Friedman’s essay in this volume, p. 230) is key to the design of housing that is relevant to women. If, indeed, as Friedman suggests, women are the challengers to conventions that have traditionally constrained the design of the residential environment, it is imperative to recognize the different societal, cultural, and economic forces that affect women’s lives, for these life circumstances expand the concept of home for women beyond the confines of its interpretation by a singular class or cultural group.

The house Friedman discusses, namely Rietveld’s Schröder house, clearly articulates the different sets of premises that women clients, when given the opportunity to suit their own homes to their specific needs, have used to redefine the domestic environment. From conventional definitions of privacy and publicness, and the traditional concept of the sacrosanct bedroom, to the notion of separation of workspace and domestic space, Truus Schröder questioned accepted notions and substituted original answers tailored to her own individual life-style. Schröder’s house seems to suggest that a model for the spatial reordering of the domestic program exists, and that it consists of blurring the boundaries

between the private and public spheres as well as questioning the social relationships of traditional family life.

Whether these findings are universal and hold true within the realm of collective housing (as opposed to that of the individual single-family home) and whether they apply across class and cultural boundaries are the pivotal questions to raise relative to the design of gender-specific dwelling spaces. For the Schröder house to be meaningful as an archetype of a new domestic environment, the lessons learned from it must illustrate more than a successful process of individuation. In fact, it must establish a conceptual and programmatic breakthrough relevant to housing for all women. If the Schröder house is more than the expression of class privileges – indeed, if it is the expression of a socially responsible domestic environment – the choices and priorities implied in it will ultimately produce better homes for all. To find a definition of domesticity with relevance for women globally and, thus, to understand the meaning of “home” in our postmodern world, a look at some ideas that have evolved from debates among grassroots women internationally brings new insight to the issue.

In September 1995, the Fourth World Conference on the Status of Women, a summit meeting of women called by the United Nations, was held in Beijing. The issue of housing was, surprisingly, absent from the conference’s initial agenda. Because of the pressure put on the United Nations by groups of grassroots women involved – by choice and necessity – in providing homes for their communities, issues of shelter, housing, and the role of women in their development were eventually discussed. These women (from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and across the United States and Europe) proposed a platform that defined housing, and therefore homes, as that essential institution that roots people in a place and a culture. In a joint statement prepared for Beijing, they also stressed the creation of communities as the ultimate goal of housing development. They asked for recognition of the informal household economy and domestic work, both controlled by women, as the most valuable economic activities of developing societies.¹

Home, thus defined in political terms as the nexus of social and economic activities, is the place that offers women equitable access to resources

and a stake in their community. It is a means to overcome poverty and re-create a community. Home is also the place that provides safety in the midst of the insecurities created by fluctuating economies. It is not only the space where women's traditional reproductive role unfolds but also a place that can fulfill much deeper yearnings for empowerment and control over one's life. Indeed, for these women home is the very source of their empowerment. Control, security, community building, and economic sustenance are key concepts in defining what housing for women should be.

The Beijing declaration asked that housing be viewed as a social and economic investment. As a social investment it gives women access to the basic services they are entitled to from society, allowing them to redefine their reproductive and nurturing roles; as an economic investment it gives them a place in the production system and, thus, in the definition of development policies – from land use to transportation patterns.² If the Schröder house gives us a glimpse of a possible model for a modern house-type (albeit one that is bound up in its own class conventions), grassroots women have defined for us the paradigm of housing for our postmodern society.

But what is domesticity in a postmodern society? Is it within the realm of collective housing or within the realm of the private house that this concept will find a new definition? The dilemma of finding the proper, formal architectural response to this fundamental challenge of domesticity as social program still needs to be explored. Differentiating between ruptures with conventions and the replacement of one convention with another is another dilemma. For instance, blurring the separation between private sphere and public realm within the home can be seen as representing women's efforts to transcend domesticity; but it could just as well be the expression of a middle-class trend toward the fragmentation of social units into single autonomous entities, rather than a collective redefinition of the social space. Understanding the impact of today's economic reality on the home's potential for change is yet another key aspect of design for postmodernity. What if housing provided support for more than the reproduction of labor power? Three projects, representing work done for women and with women as clients, will illustrate the import of these questions.

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Domesticity Redefined: Three Case Studies

The first project is a proposal for housing women released from prison in a facility located on New York City's Lower East Side. The brief from the sponsor, the Women's Prison Association, called for an environment supportive of these women's effort to reestablish themselves in the larger community and renew close ties with their children. In discussions of the program, the clients defined their bedroom as the most private space within the dwelling unit – not as the sacrosanct marital room centered on a large bed, or even as the showcase of a consumption-oriented society – but as a place for total privacy (figs. 1, 2). The transformation of the domestic program that the women deemed essential was based on the collectivization of certain domestic tasks: sharing of child care and some housekeeping activities, provided that sharing created an economic advantage. Sharing a kitchen was acceptable only to the degree that it made for a more rational use of space; control over food provisions and cooking remained individual. Here collectivization, not individuation, was the dynamic of change. Yet, it is the very process of collectivization which led to an increased need for a totally private sphere, no matter how small.

The second project, proposed for Harlem, was sponsored by the Inner City Labor Alliance (ICLA), which represents several minority labor unions in the New York region. The ICLA had asked its membership to describe their ideal home.¹ The result of that consultation was an innovative apartment program focused on redefining the parents' bedroom. While its privacy was maintained, the bedroom was transformed into a polyvalent space. The bed, still a major element in the room, shared space with an entertainment center, a workspace, a hobby space, and a storage space. The importance of the parents' room required its location in the most prominent place in the building's footprint – the corners – where it would enjoy light from and views in two directions. The living room, ceded to children and guests, was more anonymous and smaller in size. In this project, the boundary between public and private realms was redefined in response to a restructuring of family relationships, which are often no longer hierarchical. Parity and separateness between par-

ents' world and children's world was the core of the unit's design. Linkages to the larger community were expressed symbolically with the parents' bed-sitting room offering visual connections to the surrounding neighborhood.

The third project is in the Williamsburg-Greenpoint section of Brooklyn, where a multicultural group of women has been struggling to revitalize and transform the neighborhood for more than ten years.⁴ Here the architect was asked to respond to a brief for the development of housing that encouraged self-sufficiency rooted in interdependence with the community.⁵ This concept led to specific design principles. Dwelling units had to foster companionship, support, and sharing of domestic chores. The addition of a door between individual dwelling units made it possible for two families to merge their family spaces while still maintaining privacy. Separately accessible rooms could accommodate a helper, a guest, or an older relative. Numerous community spaces, centrally located and directly accessible from the outside, were included to allow for a variety of functions that could provide economic benefits for residents (fig. 3). Additional spaces devoted to economic enterprises increased the relative size of the building's communal spaces, and individual spaces could be devoted to collective use, which offered neighbors choices rather than imposing on them a single pattern of social relationships.

Although they do not constitute a definite answer to the questions raised at the beginning of this essay, these three examples show that identifying, and then responding to, a changing social program can lead to significant formal changes. They also suggest that revolutionary changes are hard to confront and respond to. For instance, when domesticity is redefined in collective terms – when domestic work is recognized for its value to the economy and elevated to productive status – it may be that those activities should leave the dwelling altogether. If this were to happen, would it mean the demise of the concept of home, which, without its individualized domestic work function, would then lose its *raison d'être*? Most socially driven changes to the house program seem to force the admission that the home is not a world unto itself but a link to the services and the development opportunities of the larger society. According to this view, the house could become the foundation of a socially

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FIGS. 1, 2

City College Architectural Center (CCAC) in collaboration with Conrad Levenson Architects. Proposal for Women's House, 308 East 8th Street, New York. 1987. The mother's bedroom is the smallest of the two rooms. Because it occupies the farthest, most remote corner of the unit, this tiny room offers total privacy

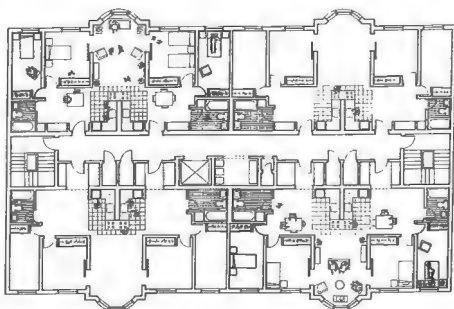
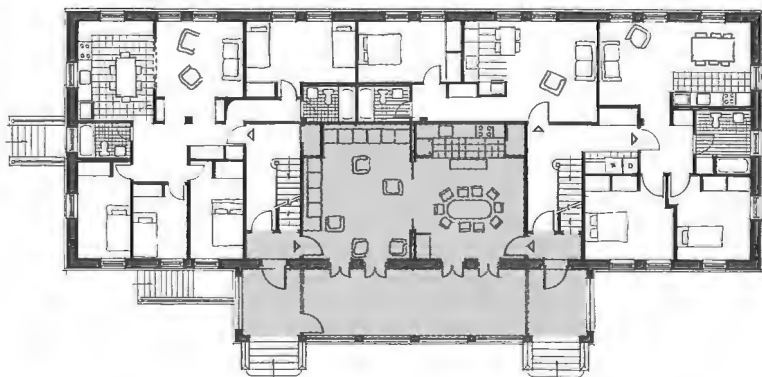


FIG. 3

Katrin Adam with Barbara Marks. Neighborhood Women's Inter-Generational Housing, Williamsburg-Greenpoint, Brooklyn. 1984. At ground level, rooms directly accessible from the outside can become shared spaces that "outsiders" can enter without interfering with the privacy of the residential areas

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responsible urbanism, instead of an introverted world of isolation and privilege. Rather than blur the boundary between private and public realms, this urbanistic function of the dwelling begs for its intensification. These examples also suggest how important it is to define women's role beyond domesticity.

Housing for Postmodernity

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, movements to reform conditions in the workplace also led to the transformation of the nineteenth-century industrial city into the modern metropolis of today, and the introduction of public health measures, zoning, new transportation systems, and suburban residential development. Similarly, the struggles of women in the residential realm today – in support of women's right to survive in an often hostile and unsupportive environment – must look beyond the individuation of the home as the only way to reflect changed socioeconomic conditions; only then will they lead to a different urbanism and a different home environment for postmodern times. Such efforts must recognize new forms of households: extended, nuclear, multilocational, polygynous, those headed by men or women, single or not, and even by children. They must challenge present building norms and design standards that conflict with the economic behavior of diverse households and communities. And they must lead to new dwelling types that do not preclude opportunities for economic development but, instead, allow for a symbiotic relationship with the social services of the larger community and the fostering of equal access to resources.

These new housing designs will acknowledge the economic value of women's contributions within the household and within the community, giving them parity with traditionally recognized economic endeavors. Women's struggles to control, transform, upgrade, and maintain their houses will lead to the creation of sustainable environments. For houses to become homes, in women's terms, they must be changed from mere shells, tailored to specific life-styles, to the building blocks of communities and equitable economic structures upon which social structures can develop.

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1. HIC (Habitat International Coalition), Women & Shelter Network, International Council of Women, GROOTS International, and UNCHS, "Women in Human Settlements Development" (Habitat, 1995).
2. Jo Beall and Caren Levy, "Moving Toward the Gendered City" (paper prepared for the Preparatory Committee for Habitat II, Geneva 1994, University College, London, 1994).
3. Joint design studio project between City College Architectural Center (CCAC) and Columbia Community Design Workshop (CCDW), A. Philip Randolph Village, housing development proposal for the Inner City Labor Alliance, spring 1991.
4. Sandra Shilen, "Grassroots Women Reclaiming and Rebuilding Communities: Neighborhood Women's Renaissance" (paper presented at OECD conference Women in the City: Housing Services and the Urban Environment, Paris, 1994).
5. For a complete analysis of this project, which was designed by architect Katrin Adam, see Leslie Kanes Weisman, *Discrimination by Design: A Feminist Critique of the Man-Made Environment* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 150–52.

Claiming the Public Space: The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo

SUSANA TORRE

To my “disappeared” Argentinian classmates, and to their mothers

The role of women in the transformation of cities remains theoretically problematic. While women’s leadership in organizations rebuilding communities and neighborhoods and their creation of new paradigms for monumentality are sometimes noted in the press, these interventions have yet to inform cultural discourse in the design disciplines or in the history and theory of art and architecture.

The largest body of current feminist scholarship on women in urban settings is concerned with the construction of bourgeois femininity in nineteenth-century European capitals.¹ Within this framework, women are seen as extensions of the male gaze and as instruments of the emerging consumer society and its transformative powers at the dawn of modernity. In other words, they are described as passive agents rather than engaged subjects.² When women have assumed transformative roles, feminist critics and biographers have seen them as exceptional individuals or female bohemians, publicly flaunting class and gender distinctions; in contrast, women in general, and working-class women in particular, are presented as unintentional agents of a collective social project, acting out assigned scripts. As a class, women share the problematic status of politically or culturally colonized populations. Both are seen as passively transformed by forced modernization rather than as appropriating modernity on their own and, through this appropriation, being able to change the world that is transforming them.

From this perspective it is difficult to see the current individual and collective struggle of women to transform urban environments as anything of cultural significance, or to reevaluate the enduring influence of traditional female enclaves originated in the premodern city. Many of these enclaves continue to serve their traditional functional and social roles, like the public washing basins in major Indian cities or the markets in African villages, while others have persisted as symbolic urban markings, like the forest of decorated steel poles that once held clotheslines in Glasgow's most central park. Some of these enclaves have even become a city's most important open space, like River Walk in San Antonio, Texas, where women once congregated to wash laundry and socialize.

A literature is now emerging, focused on the participation by marginalized populations in the transformation of postmodern cities and establishing the critical connection between power and spatiality, particularly within the disciplines of art and architectural history and architectural and urban design.³ To these contributions, which have revealed previously unmarked urban sites as well as the social consequences of repressive urban planning ideologies, should be added feminist analyses of women's traditional urban enclaves and of women's appropriations of public sites that symbolized their exclusion or restricted status. These appropriations, whether in the form of one of the largest mass demonstrations ever held on the Washington Mall (in favor of abortion rights) or in the display of intimacy in very public settings (such as the private offerings and mementos that complete Maya Lin's Vietnam Memorial and compose the monumental Names Quilt commemorating AIDS victims), continue to establish women's rights not merely to inhabit but also to transform the public realm of the city. It is in such situations that women have been most effective in constructing themselves as transformative subjects, altering society's perception of public space and inscribing their own stories into the urban palimpsest.⁴

As in all instances where the topic of discussion is as complex as the transformative presence of women in the city – and particularly when this topic does not yet operate within an established theoretical framework – the main difficulty is to establish a point of entry. In the present essay I propose entering this territory through the examination of one

dramatic case of a successful, enduring appropriation: the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina.⁵ This small but persistent band of women protesters first captured international attention in the mid-1970s with their sustained presence in the nation's principal "space of public appearance," as Hanna Arendt has called the symbolic realm of social representation, which is controlled by the dominant political or economic structures of society. This case illustrates the process that leads from the embodiment of traditional roles and assigned scripts as wives and mothers to the emergence of the active, transformative subject, in spite of – or perhaps because of – the threat or actuality of physical violence that acts of protest attract in autocratic societies. As we will see, this case is also emblematic of architecture's complicity with power in creating a symbolic system of representation, usually of power hierarchies. The hegemony of this system has been threatened ever since the invention of the printing press and is now claimed by electronic media and its virtual space of communication. Finally, the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo's appropriation of the public square as a stage for the enactment of their plea is a manifestation of *public space* as social production. Their redefinition of that space suggests that the public realm neither resides nor can be represented by buildings and spaces but rather is summoned into existence by social actions.

The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo

In March 1976, after a chaotic period following Juan Perón's death, a military junta wrested power from Perón's widow, Isabel, in order (as the junta claimed) to restore order and peace to the country. The first measures toward achieving this goal were similar to those of General Pinochet in Chile three years earlier, and included the suspension of all civil rights, the dissolution of all political parties, and the placement of labor unions and universities under government control. It would take seven long, dark years for a democratically elected government to be restored to Argentina, which at last permitted an evaluation of the extent of open kidnappings, torture, and executions of civilians tolerated by the military. Because of the clandestine, unrecorded activities of the paramilitary groups charged with these deeds, and because many burial sites

still remain undisclosed, agreement as to the exact number of “disappeared” may never be achieved, but estimates range from nine thousand to thirty thousand. Inquiries to the police about the fate of detainees went unanswered. Luis Puenzo’s 1985 film, *The Official Story*, offers glimpses into the torture and degradation endured by thousands of men, women, and even babies, born in detention, some of whom were adopted by the torturers’ families.

“Disappearances” were very effective in creating complicitous fear: many kidnappings were conducted in broad daylight, and the victims had not necessarily demonstrated open defiance of the military. In fact, later statistics show that almost half of the kidnappings involved witnesses, including children, relatives, and friends of those suspected of subversion. Given the effectiveness of arbitrary terror in imposing silence, it is astonishing that the public demands of less than a score of bereaved women who wanted to know what had happened to their children contributed so much to the military’s fall from power. Their silent protest, opposed to the silence of the authorities, eventually had international resonance, prompting a harsh denunciation of the Argentinean military, which led, finally, to the demise of state terrorism and the election of a democratic government.

The actions of the “Mothers,” as they came to be known, exemplified a kind of spatial and urban appropriation that originates in private acts that acquire public significance, thus questioning the boundaries of these two commonly opposed concepts. Gender issues, too, were not unimportant. The Mothers’ appropriation of the plaza was nothing like a heroic final assault on a citadel. Instead, it succeeded because of its endurance over a protracted period, which could only happen because the Mothers were conspicuously ignored by the police, the public, and the national press. As older women they were no longer sexually desirable, and as working-class women they were of an inferior ilk. Nevertheless, their motherhood status demanded conventional respect. Communicating neither attraction nor threat, they were characterized by the government as “madwomen.” The result of their public tenacity, which started with the body exposed to violence, eventually evolved into a powerful architecture of political resistance.

Plaza de Mayo is Argentina's symbolic equivalent of the Washington Mall. It is, however, a much smaller and very different kind of space: an urban square that evolved from the Spanish Plaza de Armas, a space that has stood for national unity since Creoles gathered there to demand independence from Spain in May of 1810. The national and international visibility of Plaza de Mayo as *the* space of public appearance for Argentinians is unchallenged. Originally, as mandated by the planning ordinances of the Law of the Indies, its sides were occupied by the colonial Cabildo, or city council, and the Catholic Cathedral. Today the most distinctive structure is the pink, neoclassical Casa Rosada, the seat of government.

Military exercises, executions, and public market commingled in the plaza until 1884, when Torcuato de Alvear, the aristocratic mayor, embarked on a Haussmanian remodeling of the center of Buenos Aires shortly after important civic structures – such as Congress and the Ministries of Finance and Social Welfare – had been completed. A major element of Alvear's plan was Avenida de Mayo, an east-west axis that put Congress and the Casa Rosada in full view of each other. Such a potent urban representation of the checks and balances of the modern, democratic state was achieved through selective demolition, including the removal of the plaza's market stalls and the shortening of the historic Cabildo's wings by half their original length. Currently, the plaza's immediate area includes several government offices, the financial district, and the city's most famous commercial street, Florida. This densely populated pedestrian thoroughfare links Avenida de Mayo to Plaza San Martín, another major urban square. A plastered masonry obelisk, the May Pyramid, erected on the square in 1811 to mark the first anniversary of the popular uprising for independence, was rebuilt as a taller, more ornate structure and placed on the axis between Congress and the Casa Rosada. In this new position, it became a metaphorical fulcrum in the balance of powers.

The now well-known image of a ring of women with heads clad in white kerchiefs circling the May Pyramid evolved from earlier spontaneous attempts at communication with government officials (fig. 1). At first, thirteen wives and mothers of the “disappeared” met one another at the Ministry of the Interior, having exhausted all sources of information about their missing children and husbands. There a small office had been

opened to “process” cases brought by those who had filed writs of *habeas corpus*. One woman well in her sixties, Azucena Villaflor de Vicente, rallied the others: “It is not here that we ought to be,” she said. “It’s the Plaza de Mayo. And when there are enough of us, we’ll go to the Casa Rosada and see the president about our children who are missing.”⁶ At the time, popular demonstrations at the plaza, frequently convened by the unions as a show of support during Juan Perón’s tenure, were strictly forbidden, and gatherings of more than two people were promptly dispersed by the ever-present security forces. The original group of thirteen women came to the plaza wearing white kerchiefs initially to identify themselves to one another. They agreed to return every Thursday at the end of the business day in order to call their presence to the attention of similarly aggrieved women. The Mothers moved about in pairs, switching companions so that they could exchange information while still observing the rule against demonstrations. Eventually they attracted the interest of the international press and human rights organizations, one of which provided an office where the women could congregate privately. Despite this incentive to abandon the plaza for a safer location, the Mothers sustained a symbolic presence in the form of a silent march encircling the May Pyramid. That form, so loaded with cultural and sexual associations, became the symbolic focus of what started as a literal response to the police’s demand that the women “circulate.”

The white kerchiefs were the first elements of a common architecture evolved from the body. They were adopted from the cloth diapers a few of the Mothers had worn on their heads in a pilgrimage to the Virgin of Luján’s sanctuary. The diapers were those of their own missing children, whose names were embroidered on them, and formed a headgear that differentiated the Mothers from the multitude of other women in kerchiefs on that religious march (fig. 2). In later demonstrations the Mothers constructed full-size cardboard silhouettes representing their missing children and husbands, and shielded their bodies with the ghostly blanks of the “disappeared.”

By 1982, the military had proven itself unable to govern the country or control runaway inflation of more than 1000 percent per year. The provision of basic services was frequently disrupted by the still powerful

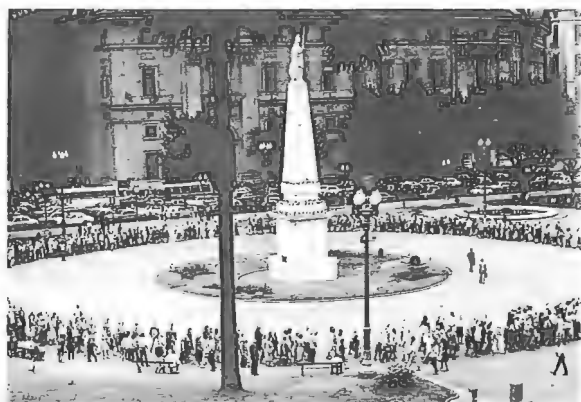


FIG. 1
The circular march around the
May Pyramid



FIG. 2
Mothers clad in kerchiefs embroi-
dered with the names of their
relatives and the dates of their
disappearance, 1985

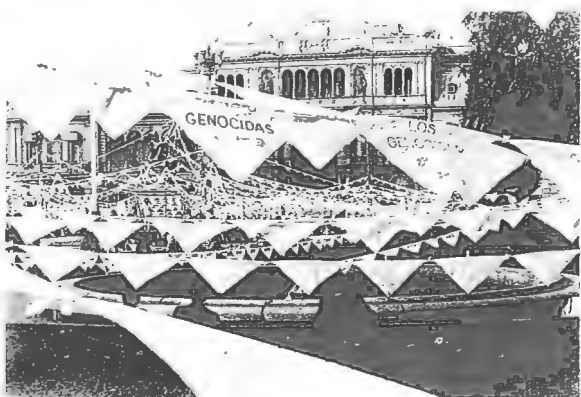


FIG. 3
Celebration in Plaza de Mayo
with scarves signed by the sup-
porters of the Mothers. The Casa
Rosada is in the background

TORRE

Peronista labor unions, and many local industries had gone bankrupt due to the comparative cheapness of imported goods under an economic policy that eliminated most import taxes. Then, in the same year, the military government embarked on an ultimately ruinous war with Great Britain over the sovereignty of the Falkland/Malvinas Islands. With the help of the United States satellite intelligence and far superior naval might, Great Britain won with few casualties, while Argentina lost thousands of ill-equipped and ill-trained soldiers. The military government, which had broadcast a fake victory on television using old movie reels rather than current film footage, was forced to step down in shame by the popular outcry that followed. Following the collapse of the military government, the Mothers were a prominent presence at the festivities in Plaza de Mayo, their kerchiefs joyously joined as bunting to create a city-sized tent over the celebrants (fig. 3). They have continued their circular march to this day, as a kind of living memorial and to promote their demands for full accountability and punishment for those responsible for the disappearance of their husbands and children.

After the election of a democratic government, the military leadership was prosecuted in civil rather than military court, resulting in jail sentences for a few generals and amnesty for other military personnel. Although the amnesty was forcefully contested by the Mothers and other organizations, the protest was seen by many as divisive. Nevertheless, the Mothers and a related organization of grandmothers pressed on with attempts to find records about disappearances and fought in the courts to recover their children and grandchildren. Then, early in 1995, more than a decade after the restoration of democratic government, a retired lieutenant publicly confessed to having dumped scores of drugged but still living people from a helicopter into the open ocean, and he invited other military men on similar assignments to come forth. The Mothers were present to demonstrate this time as well, but now the bunting had become a gigantic sheet that was waved overhead as an angry, agitated sea.

The Mothers were able to sustain control of an important urban space much as actors, dancers, or magicians control the stage by their ability to

establish a presence that both opposes and activates the void represented by the audience. To paraphrase Henri Lefebvre, bodies produce space by introducing direction, rotation, orientation, occupation, and by organizing a *topos* through gestures, traces, and marks.⁷ The formal structure of these actions, their ability to refunctionalize existing urban spaces, and the visual power of the supporting props contribute to the creation of public space.

What is missing from the current debate about the demise of public space is an awareness of the loss of architecture's power to represent the *public*, as a living, acting, and self-determining community. Instead, the debate focuses almost exclusively on the *physical space* of public appearance, without regard for the social action that can make that environment come alive or change its meaning. The debate appears to be mired in regrets over the replacement of squares (for which Americans never had much use) with shopping malls, theme parks, and virtual space. But this focus on physical space – and its ideological potential to encompass the public appearance of all people, regardless of color, class, age, or sex – loses credibility when specific classes of people are denouncing their exclusion and asserting their presence and influence in public life. The claims of these excluded people underscore the roles of *access* and *appearance* in the production and representation of public space, regardless of how it is physically or virtually constituted. They also suggest that public space is produced through public discourse, and its representation is not the exclusive territory of architecture, but is the product of the inextricable relationship between social action and physical space.

TORRE

1. An excellent example is Elizabeth Wilson's *The Sphinx and the City* (London: Virago, 1991).
2. See Alain Touraine, *Critique of Modernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), especially the chapter entitled "The Subject."
3. See Sophia Watson and Katherine Gibson, eds., *Postmodern Cities and Spaces* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995).
4. A different approach has been taken by Jennifer Bloomer in her *Urban Still Life*

project, which proposes to replace heroic (male) statues with domestic (female) tableaux, apparently without challenging the symbolic order of the nineteenth-century city.

5. The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo's activities have been extensively documented from a human rights point of view. See Josephine Fisher, *Mothers of the Disappeared* (Boston: South End Press, 1989), for interviews with the leaders and bibliographical references.
6. Quoted in John Simpson and Jana Bennett, *The Disappeared and the Mothers of the Plaza: The Story of the 11,000 Argentinians Who Vanished* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985).
7. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1991).

The Politics of Underestimation

MARION WEISS

"It was never about proving that women can do anything a man can do, but about being judged as individuals by the same standard as men in any job for which they can qualify. . . . It was about the privilege of serving one's country without artificial barriers based solely on gender. In short, women's struggle for a place in the armed forces has been about seeking the full rights and responsibilities of citizenship."

— Major General Jeanne Holm, USAF (Ret.)¹

This is the story of my involvement for more than five years in the Women's Memorial and Education Center at Arlington National Cemetery, a project that is still a work in progress, caught in the messy laboratory of practice. To work as the architect and as a woman on a "women's project" — a project in the monumental corridor of Washington, D.C. — for a woman general and her board composed largely of other women generals has been a unique experience.

But this is also the story of a particular moment in time, when the politics of underestimation will have enabled a permanent change to the physical core of the most symbolically laden city in the United States. True power in architecture begins not with the architect but with a site and the aspirations of an enlightened client. In this case the site had been perceived as a remnant in spite of its central location on the monumental axis, and the client represented a group of individuals perceived as peripheral to the history of this country in spite of their critical role in its military service. The client, Brigadier General Wilma Vaught, USAF Retired, is the power behind the realization of this visionary pro-

ject, and her will has been fueled by a desire to transform this country's perception of the women who have served in its defense, to create a monument that will give physical recognition to the collective contribution of a group of individuals previously denied recognition on the basis of gender. Finally, it is a story about the efficacy of the review process for public work in the capital city of the United States.

"Without clear-cut authority, the [women's] . . . ability to influence decisions and coordinate actions depended on perceptions of their relationship to the power structure. In this respect they shared a number of severe handicaps. Because they were totally without military experience, their credibility was always in doubt. Because they held low rank in a hierarchy of top brass, they lacked military clout. Because they were women, it was difficult to be taken seriously. . . . The best things the line directors had going for them were their backgrounds; basic intelligence, an ability to get along with people; the fact that the men were basically unsure of themselves where women were concerned. [They] had no precedents to fall back on so [they] had to chart [their] own course."

— Major General Jeanne Holm, USAF (Ret.)²

The history of women in the United States military has been one of persistence, courage, and foresight in the face of repeated frustrations and the built-in institutional resistance of a tradition-bound military subculture. It is a history set against the background of peace and war, social evolution, and advancement in the technology of warfare. It is ultimately a disturbing history of consistently inequitable treatment in both opportunity and recognition. The perceived need for a memorial to women in the military implicitly recognizes that ours is not an egalitarian society without discrepancies in treatment and opportunity, and that there is still the need to confer separate status and recognition for women's contributions.

The initiative to hold a national design competition for a women's memorial was not unprecedented; competitions had been held for the Vietnam and Korean war memorials. However, securing for the competition one of the last sites remaining on the monumental axis was a highly unprecedented achievement. In 1985, Congresswoman Mary

Rose Oakar, chairperson of the House Subcommittee on Libraries and Memorials, had introduced legislation for a memorial to honor women who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States, and to authorize the incorporation of the Women in Military Service for America (WIMSA) Foundation to establish the memorial on federal lands in the District of Columbia or its environs.

In the spring of 1988, the National Park Service assisted the WIMSA Foundation in identifying potential sites within the National Capital Beltway but well outside the monumental corridor: one near Washington National Airport, another near the National Park Service headquarters at Haines Point, and a third in a yet more isolated location. At the conclusion of a guided tour of the sites, the director of the National Park Service, returning to the office at Arlington National Cemetery, drove the site selection team past the cemetery gateway with its 240-foot neo-classical hemicycle/retaining wall on axis with the Lincoln Memorial (fig. 1). General Vaught, aware that she had never known the purpose of that structure or what the site was for, said to the director, "I've never understood that thing. What is it? What does it mean? Is it available?" The director, unable to answer any of her questions, offered to find out.

To understand the significance of the cemetery gateway site, it is necessary to understand its historical context. Washington is a city that has been built, modified, extended, built again; equally, the politics of the city are layered and entrenched. The utopian idea of a monumental city set in a virgin landscape belonged to the nineteenth century of L'Enfant and Jefferson, but the plan of monumental Washington as we know it today was determined in the first quarter of the twentieth century, the same era that also saw the establishment of the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Planning Commission.

The hemicycle wall, at best a dry piece of classicism, was designed in the 1920s by William Kendall of McKim, Mead & White long after the original partners in the firm had died. Devoid of meaning today, the hemicycle wall and forecourt, marked by 60-foot-high pylons, are streaked by thick white and yellow stalactites formed primarily by calcium compounds that leak steadily through the concrete reinforced stone retaining wall. Trees and weeds grow within the most deteriorated joints of the wall.



FIG. 1
Aerial view of existing hemicycle/
retaining wall and Arlington
National Cemetery

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General Vaught, having given military briefings for twenty-eight years, was exceptionally well qualified to seek site approval from Congress as well as the many commissions and advisory groups that participated in the review process. She recognized that the embarrassing condition of the site, clearly caused by lack of funds to restore and maintain it, was a strategic advantage, and she was confident that site approval would be granted because the WIMSA Foundation was prepared to incorporate into the competition brief the restoration of the hemicycle wall and entrance to Arlington National Cemetery. Additionally, the WIMSA Foundation was prepared to establish a \$1 million endowment, which would assist the Park Service in the maintenance of the site after the memorial was built.

On July 28, 1988, the final steps in site selection were accomplished with approval of the hemicycle site by the National Capital Planning Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts. Six weeks later, the extraordinarily thorough preparation by WIMSA and General Vaught resulted in approval by Congress of both the site and the competition design program – a shorter approval period than previously had been achieved for any Washington memorial site.

A national design competition was soon announced and entries were reviewed in June and November 1989. Jurors included artist Mary Miss, architect Romaldo Giurgola, *Boston Globe* critic Robert Campbell, and three women veterans. The competition brief articulated concern for the relationship of the new women's memorial to existing historic structures on the site, and emphasized that restoration and preservation of the historic hemicycle and cemetery gateway were to be integral parts of any design concept. In addition to the memorial itself, the brief called for a 30,000-square-foot education center to be included in the design.

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In our preliminary studies for the competition, my partner, Michael Manfredi, and I were powerfully struck by the quality of light defining the family of Washington monuments at night and, by contrast, the darkness that enshrouded the gateway to Arlington National Cemetery. We were also taken by the remarkable view of the city from the site and the carpet of tombstones that stretched behind the wall in the other direction. Our winning scheme proposed four stairs thrusting through the blank niches of the hemicycle wall, and a crown of ten 40-foot-high



FIG. 2

Conceptual model of memorial
with glass spires

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glass spires symbolizing the collective nature of the memorial (fig. 2). Our intent was to celebrate the many individuals whose strength reflected collective rather than singular acts of heroism and bravery. The memorial gallery of the education center, located in our scheme behind the hemicycle wall, was to be lit during the day by natural light brought in through the glass spires; at night the spires would join the other illuminated memorials of monumental Washington. The four stairs, breaking through the old wall and ascending to the cemetery above, symbolized women's breaking through of barriers and gradual ascension through the ranks of military service. The stairs also connected the lower level of the memorial with the cemetery level above, making accessible expansive views of the cemetery and the city. The education center, incorporating the hemicycle wall as its only visible facade, was buried, its roof forming a public terrace that met the gravesites and looked back to the city of Washington.

During the first half of 1991, informal reactions to our design by various public agencies and advisory groups required us to prepare additional material for submission to the National Capital Planning Commission. Meetings with preservation review boards revealed their collective concern about penetrations into the existing hemicycle wall that might "damage the historic fabric." In response, reports were prepared by architectural historians demonstrating the precedent for modifying significant historic structures within the monumental axis. We incorporated minor modifications into the design and employed computer imaging to describe the project's appearance by night and by day.

In June 1991, a revised design was presented to the National Capital Memorial Commission, whose members expressed overall satisfaction with the design except for two elements – the spires and the stairs, which were deemed too visible and intrusive for this historically significant site. The commission's recommendations included eliminating the stairs and the spires; or changing the glass spires into marble obelisks like others already present in the cemetery; or lowering them below the 4-foot-high balustrade of the upper terrace so that they would not be visible from the Lincoln Memorial. (The glass spires were viewed as incompatible with the traditional structures in place on the site, and Jacqueline Kennedy

expressed concern about night lighting, which she felt might diminish the importance of the Kennedy Flame located on axis with and up the hill from the Women's Memorial.) The director of the National Park Service, also chairman of the National Capital Planning Commission, informed General Vaught that he would not advance our project for the necessary review by other commissions unless we incorporated the recommendations of his commission, which we were unwilling to do. It was a discouraging end to two years of hard work.

Rather than abandoning the project, we met with General Vaught and asked if she would be willing to allow us to present to her and her design advisory board an alternative design scheme based on our original concept. In her typically positive manner, General Vaught agreed. We were immobilized for nearly a month. Light and passage remained the critical ideas, but the parameters and possibilities had been redefined. Finally, with the meeting date only a few days away, we realized that there was another way to employ light to express collective contribution. Our new concept emerged from personal contacts over the previous year and a half with some of the women whom this memorial would be commemorating. They were sharp, direct, modest about their singular contributions, and passionate about the contributions of their respective units of service. We spent a lot of time getting to know one group of women in particular – former military aviators now in their seventies and who continue to fly recreationally. They told us many stories of women pilots whose lives were lost in World War II while transporting injured fighter planes back to neutral territory for repairs (male fighter pilots were considered too valuable to be put at risk for such maintenance missions). Individual recollections like these led us to conclude that the richness of these women's stories could best be conveyed in their own words; no single quote could express the diversity of their experiences and sacrifices. The project needed to make vivid the many voices versus the singular.

In our final scheme, the four stairs still invade the wall selectively, but the gallery behind the wall is lit internally by an arc of 150 glass tablets (figs. 3, 4). Like unbound pages of a journal, the tablets are inscribed with individual quotes that carry the voices of those who served; and



FIG. 3

Final conceptual model of memorial with arc of glass tablets



FIG. 4

Mock-up of inscribed glass showing legible shadow cast on adjacent surface

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FIG. 5

Model of interior of memorial
gallery with arc of glass tablets
above

their collective memories cast legible shadows into the gap between the wall and the cemetery. At night a horizon of light is transmitted through the glass arc, which is nearly invisible by day (fig. 5).

Our preparation for the next round of approvals became increasingly tactical. General Vaught took the lead, explaining that success in Washington is achieved by patiently “filling in all the squares.” She listened carefully to each of the commissions’ concerns, read the transcripts of their comments, and prepared lists of items to which we had to respond. She began each meeting with, “We’ve listened to you carefully, we hope you feel we’ve responded to your concerns, and we need your help.” Staff members of the various commissions became our allies as General Vaught demonstrated her flexibility and desire to “do the best thing for the Memorial and the Gateway to the Cemetery.” Eventually, approvals and memoranda of understanding were secured from the National Capital Memorial Commission, the National Capital Planning Commission, the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation, the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office, the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office, Arlington National Cemetery, the National Park Service, and the National Commission of Fine Arts. Groundbreaking occurred in June 1995 in a televised ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery with the president, Mrs. Clinton, and the secretary of defense present. Construction is scheduled for completion in 1997.

Working on the Women’s Memorial has not involved, as one might have expected, long discussions of gender, of “otherness,” of separate status, of feminine symbolism, nor of the physical distinctions of form celebrating women versus men. The desire voiced by many newscasters and reporters – to see the memorial as a statue of a woman – was adeptly handled by General Vaught, who replied: “There has been too much time and too broad a set of jobs that military women have held for any statue to do justice to these women’s contributions. . . . What uniform would be timeless, what job would be the appropriate one to give form to?” Rather, the project has reinvented a historically significant site in order to provide a powerful symbolic tribute to women patriots.

Design of the Women’s Memorial and Education Center has been an experience that should forever destroy the myth of Howard Roark,

of the architect as autonomous artist, indifferent to the dynamic circumstances and uncertainties inherent in the design and review processes. The “success” of our project is not the central issue. What remains salient is the passion and commitment of our client and her prescient understanding that what was most critical to the Women’s Memorial was that it be located within the center of monumental Washington, not at its periphery.

1. Major General Jeanne Holm, USAF (Ret.), *Women in the Military: An Unfinished Revolution*, rev. ed. (Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1982), 508.
2. Ibid., 35.

Confessions in Public Space

LYNNE BRESLIN

Architects in practice most often recognize private and public domains as they are defined by conditions of physical boundedness. In common law, property ownership means the exclusive private right to determine occupancy, use, and form. The public interest, however, is asserted by establishing zoning and building codes and, in some municipalities, regulations concerning materials, heights, and other design features that strictly determine the conditions for development of that private property.

In architectural theory a division is often made between the private (domestic) space and the public realm. However, with the development of new institutions beginning in the late Enlightenment, this simple private/public division breaks down, generating a progressive crisis of signification, identification, and function. The hospital, school, and prison are reconfigured to assume characteristics and functions of both the private and public realms. In the hospital, for example, our most private acts – giving birth and dying – are performed in public. The very notion of a public realm comes increasingly under attack as society's consensus on values weakens and the opportunity to celebrate shared values, urbanistically, is undermined. Consensus may be legally expressed and politically arbitrated, but the public internalizes the resulting laws less and less and relies, instead, on paid surveillance. Thus public codes of behavior and private impulses often conflict in the daily occupation of public spaces. In 1904, the New York City subway opened to a week of public celebration of this newest of civic amenities, but today, ninety years later, crime so threatens public order that the subway must now be secured by a separate transit police force. Living/sleeping – common

acts on subway trains and in stations – are outlawed on the grounds that private behavior is not appropriate in public spaces.¹

The role of visibility and of the “gaze” is also of great importance in defining the public realm.² In the United States, the violation of privacy (spying, wiretapping) is legally justified if the public interest is perceived to be threatened. Jeremy Bentham and Michel Foucault recognized (almost two hundred years apart) that any society that maintains a “watch” over its citizens prepares them for subtle (or not-so-subtle) assaults on individual rights facilitated by ever-more invasive technologies that can make a private realm public, despite the opaqueness of space. However, without such technologies opaqueness renders a public space private, leaving it vulnerable to anti-social conduct. Thus parks are often renovated to increase the visibility of pedestrians and police so that such private acts as vagrancy, drug use and dealing, and other crimes are discouraged.

The dialectic of private and public allows us to define ourselves both as individuals (private persons) and as public citizens (members of a polis). The nature of our private identification – the acknowledgment of our individuality (depending on gender, race, nationality, values, politics) – has spatial and architectural implications. Similarly, our ability to identify public spaces, our readiness or reluctance to project ourselves into those public spaces, and our actions in those spaces depend on our well-being in, and psychological evaluation of, such spaces.

The Museum as Articulation of Public and Private

Nationality and identity as the particularized versions of private and public are often mobilized by the museum experience. The accounting of individual/private acts in relation to the public or national interest becomes a qualitative standard for the polis. Yet the continuing implosion of public and private makes the discerning of potential for individual and social expression even more critical. While some modern critics have reviled the museum as a desiccated, encyclopedic, diachronic venture that buries culture and history, Andreas Huyssen argues otherwise. In his essay “Escape from Amnesia: The Museum as Mass Medium,” he points out that in museums there is the possibility of “people experienc-

ing the never-ceasing negotiations between self and other.”³ In its building design, its collections, and its curatorial approaches, the museum foregrounds issues of memory, representation, and narrative.

The museum as an institution began as one of the great Enlightenment projects – the material objectification of knowledge and the ordering of matter and culture (science, people, art, and history). In the late 1960s, the emergence of several new types of museums, accompanied by new attitudes toward design and curating, not only demonstrated an expansion of interest in the museum as a public/social forum – a clearly “spectacular” operation – but also shifted its focus from an objectified majority (defined according to the dominant values of a white European male elite) to a particular, subjective marginality that embraces gender as well as race, class, national origin, religion, age, and numerous other sociopolitical subsets.⁴

The Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., is a good example of this shift. Originally a repository of artifacts of high culture and officially sanctioned historical interest, the American History museum later began to collect everyday objects – the private stuff of popular culture. At about the same time, new museums and museum exhibitions of interest only to small segments of the population began to attract growing and increasingly mainstream audiences. From the Musée des Arts Populaires (with its collection of toys, cooking equipment, clothing, instruments) to the Museum of Humor, the National Museum of Women in the Arts, the Museum of Television and Radio, African-American museums, Native American museums, Jewish museums, and children’s museums, we have witnessed an almost endless desire for the absorption of the popular, the marginal, the ephemeral, and the peripheral – for restructuring it into transcendent significance.

Huyssen points out in his essay that the public craves the sharing and experience of the materiality of everyday objects. This need for actualizing a public realm in the shared reexperience of common histories, everyday occurrences, and aesthetic moments has been mobilized in two recent Smithsonian exhibitions: *From Field to Factory*, which traced African-American migration from the southern to the northern states; and *A More Perfect Union and the U.S. Constitution*, the story of

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the legally sanctioned treatment of Japanese Americans during World War II, including the interning of most of the West Coast Japanese-American population. Both exhibitions made more explicit an official but personalized accounting of a problematic history and a marginalized identity within a nation. Both said a great deal about American legal wrongdoing and officially sanctioned violation of minority rights, and both were designed so as to compel the museum visitor to experience and perceive these violations personally and privately. For example, at two adjacent entryways to *From Field to Factory* marked “White” and “Colored,” the museum visitor was forced to take a stand, to choose an identity, to act as “White” or “Colored” in embarking on this historical passage through a series of one-to-one oral histories. In *A More Perfect Union*, the visitor had to accept the confidences of a father recalling his humiliation at internship and discrimination – at his separation from the majority. Whether or not visitors were able to accept as authentic these victims’ testimonies (relating what it was like to live behind fences and the lingering tug of guilt and inferiority) remains to be fully evaluated, but the drama of dispossession and dislocation because of the accident of birth is no longer left to nuance and inference. The point made in these exhibitions is the vulnerability and powerlessness of the private individual in a public realm where the will of the majority is left morally unchallenged.

This implosion of public history and (marginalized) private identity is further explored in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. At the entrance, each visitor is given a passport and an assumed identity (close in age and gender-matched to the visitor’s identity) so that the events of the exhibition can be experienced in a more direct way. At significant junctures, passports are electronically updated to note the changing circumstances of the visitor’s assumed identity (now you are living in the ghetto, now you are interned in a camp, now you escape and work with the underground – though in the majority of the forty thousand real cases depicted in this exhibition, death was the victim’s fate). The visitor follows a promenade that leads through one of the cattle cars used to transport victims to the Nazi

concentration camps and past a real barracks and crematorium from Auschwitz. The visitor's experience is manipulated so that objective distancing of fact and past history via the safety net of simulation is not possible. Here the museum creates not simply a context – a *mise en scène* – but rather a setting for emotionally laden artifacts that viscerally recall past existence. This shift to the material – to real, intense fragments of horror – demands emotional as well as intellectual engagement.

Another example of this design strategy is *Assignment Rescue: The Story of Varian Fry*, an exhibition for the United States Parks Service installed in temporary exhibition space in the Holocaust Memorial Museum (figs. 1–3).⁵ The client's directive was to communicate that legal and moral action are not always the same, and that when law and morality come into conflict, the greater good is to act morally, even if this means violating the law. This message was conveyed through the story of Varian Fry and his work during a thirteen-month period beginning in the fall of 1940 as a representative of the Emergency Rescue Committee in Marseille, France. Fry's mission was to save as many as possible of the artists, intellectuals, writers, and politicians trapped in Nazi-occupied and Vichy France. Identity, identification, and party membership become morally compromising conditions. Public/private, objective/subjective are the issues in this particular examination of a repressed event.

Private artifacts – diaries, personal effects, private letters, postcards to loved ones, confidential memoranda, souvenir photographs, government forms, and oral histories that reveal much information of a very personal nature – engage the visitor, who, through several exhibition strategies, is forced into complicity. In order to understand what is going on, the visitor quite naturally looks through slightly ajar doors, into open drawers, closets, and suitcases, louvers, and one-way mirrors; the visitor cannot help but overhear, oversee. Without quite realizing it, the visitor penetrates the sanctioned space of the museum, crossing over the line, the invisible but tangible wall that is supposed to separate visitor from the museum staging. The story is a “secret,” documented only incidentally with photographs of the peripherally permitted and the officially allowed that never explicitly depict events or reveal the rescue maneuvers. A

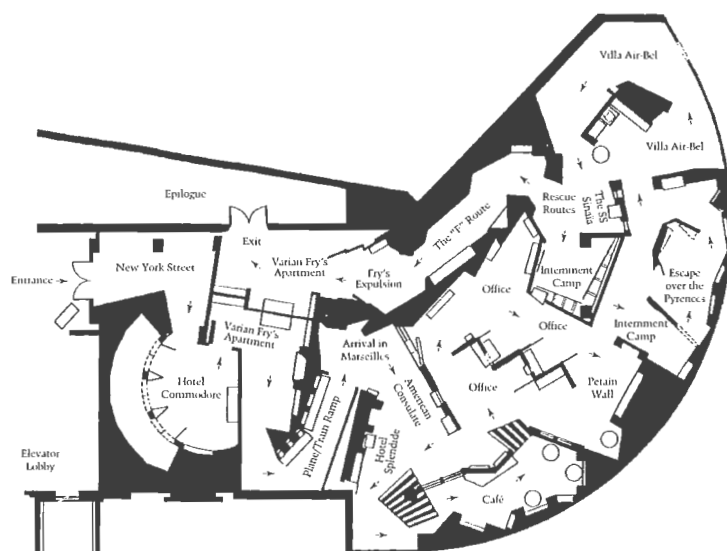


FIG. 1
Assignment Rescue, exhibition
 floor plan



FIG. 2

The "F" Route

Fry and his staff constantly refined their clandestine strategies as border patrols became stricter, the Vichy government changed its exit visa policies, old escape routes were discovered, and new ones had to be established and tested. Fry enlisted a refugee couple, Johannes and Lisa Fittko, to help him organize what would become one of the committee's most successful escape routes to Spain – the "F" Route

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FIG. 3

The Villa Air-Bel

The intensity of Fry's work began to take a personal toll. He and his staff endured interrogations, searches, and constant surveillance by the distrustful French and American authorities. When several of his colleagues decided to rent a villa on the outskirts of Marseille, Fry seized the opportunity to move in and escape the relentless pace of his work for a few hours each day. Several Surrealist artists and their families who were waiting to receive their visas completed the company.

From the Villa Air-Bel, Fry wrote to his wife, "I now live in a château about half a mile out, and none of my clients knows where. It is a delightful big house, with an incredible Mediterranean view from the terrace. Besides four members of my staff, André Breton and Victor Serge and their wives live with us. They too are clients, but of the delightful rather than the pestiferous kind. Breton is particular fun: I like Surrealists. The first night, for instance, he had a bottle full of praying mantises, which he released on the tablecloth at dinner and had walking round like so many pets"

series of walls that separate, hide, and reveal double dealings creates a space in which the visitor experiences the conditions that in 1940–41 ensnared the hunted, the refugee, and Fry himself.

Assignment Rescue is an exhibition that progressively demands not spectator approbation, but an intrusive behavior, which challenges the normally conditioned, passive experience of museum-going. The distinction between authentic and facsimile, while recognized, is muted and consigned a less important role in the orchestration of a psychologically invested surrealistic enactment of Fry's mission. The angled, lateral, obsessive spaces introduce the visitor to a world – Marseille in the 1940s – where it was impossible for the private person (refugee or rescuer) ever to occupy the center, to freely observe the monumental (public) city. The visitor/refugee is always relegated to the periphery, deprived of the “gaze.” Public collapses into private through the confession of private acts in public space.

1. See Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1991). Philosophers from Hegel to Lefebvre have claimed that each age engenders paradigmatic forms and types that express a consensus of the polis, its philosophy and culture in public architecture (the Renaissance *palazzo* might be seen as a confusion between domestic and public architecture, but since the nobility ruled, their homes and places of business inevitably assumed a public presence).
2. Since the 1950s, the discourse of the “spectacular” society and the postmodern have elaborated on the shrinking of *both* the private and public realms. Baudrillard discusses the implosion of the public and private realm into the television box and computer screen. Guy Debord routinely points out that in our universal condition – that of a spectator society – private experience has been so mediated that the individual can no longer experience authentic emotions. S/he looks to a conditioned response (inculcated through the mediated medium that circumscribes any and all experience) for instructions on how to react. As our private capacity is diminished, our ability to meet in unmediated public space erodes.
3. Andreas Huyssen, “Escape from Amnesia: The Museum as Mass Medium,” in *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York: Routledge,

1994). Huyssen presents Baudrillard's attitude toward the museum – a “simulation machine like television . . . extending sometimes towards the preservation of districts – whole areas of cities” as a modernist attitude. “For Baudrillard, musealization is the pathological attempt to preserve, control and dominate the real in order to hide the fact that the real is in agony due to the spread of simulation. . . . Musealization is precisely the opposite of preservation, it is killing, freezing, sterilising, dehistoricising, and decontextualizing.” Huyssen skillfully argues that Baudrillard's depiction of the exploded museum as imploded world never acknowledges “any of the vital attempts to work through repressed or marginalized pasts or acknowledges the current to create alternative forms of museum activities” (30).

4. I view gender as a subset of the marginal because, grouped with race, class, national origin, religion, and age (to mention only some), it is related to the larger social political issues of marginality. The countercultural protests in the America of the 1960s gave voice to groups publicizing their differences from the majority. Post-modernism took the political movements of feminism, civil rights, anti-war, and Marxism and elaborated on the conditions of marginality (the emphasis of the particular) granting license to individuals to focus on and celebrate difference. Thirty years ago, individuals often repressed their difference to maintain entitlement, while today mainstream culture and commerce (if not politics) embrace and market marginality. Museums have often addressed the lack of information and documentation to better depict difference. As institutions, museums are not simply capitalizing on the desire for more information but are instrumental in enabling their audience to construct identities. Material culture and history are necessary for self-education as well as majority education.
5. Conceptualized and designed by Lynne Breslin: Architecture and Design. The design team, led by Breslin and including Meira Kowalsky and Dennis Balk, worked closely with the Exhibitions Department of the Holocaust Memorial Museum, headed by Susan Morgenstein, Lauriston Marshall, Elizabeth Berman, and Marvin Liberman. Breslin was also responsible for the interior design of the temporary exhibition gallery on the concourse level.

Diversity by Design: Feminist Reflections on the Future of Architectural Education and Practice

LESLIE KANES WEISMAN

Teaching and practice in service of social justice and environmental responsibility have historically been considered marginal to the central concerns of architecture. Those who are committed to these goals often find themselves “outsiders within an inner circle of privilege.”¹ However, I am optimistic that the current identity crisis in architectural education and practice – about which there is a plethora of recently published books and articles² – will cause the margins and the center to change place. I fear that if they do not, the practice of architecture may well become anachronistic and irrelevant.

The fundamental question facing architectural education and practice today is not how better to train future architects to compete against one another in a diminishing job market and professional role; but, rather, how to improve the quality of architectural education and practice as inherently interrelated, life-affirming models for understanding the world at large, and each person’s special “belongingness” to it. Lynda H. Schneekloth puts the question this way:

“How do we situate ourselves within the academy that simultaneously privileges us and excludes others and is therefore a form of oppression that subjugates other knowledges and peoples? We who are located in the university and are trained by the university as professionals, are implicated in the production and reproduction of the existing truths that marginalize and empower. We have the intellectual tools and time to engage in a sustained critique of the culture, to resist the elitist claims of the university, and to transform the deformation resulting from participation in oppression. This work is one of our most emancipatory projects.”³

In the industrialized Western world of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, almost all design and technology has been based on the disassembling of organic wholes into fragmented parts. Both physical space and social place have been shaped by dichotomies: cities and suburbs, workplaces and dwellings, architecture and nature, women and men, rich and poor, black and white, young and old, gay and straight, able-bodied and disabled. Today, we stand at the foothills of the twenty-first century, facing a future in which the old, dichotomous paradigms simply will not work. The disastrous consequences of global homelessness, poverty, and environmental degradation, and the escalation of social chaos, violence, and disharmony worldwide require healing and the restoration of wholeness within the art of living. The bleak and hostile environments of most American cities must be transformed into places of health, regeneration, and conviviality.

Architecture, too often regarded as a matter of style, is now a matter of survival. After eleven thousand years of building to protect ourselves from the environment, we are now discovering that our designs often diminish our health and the viability of the planet. The global need for housing, healthcare, and environmental restoration have far-reaching consequences for all of humanity's future. Architects have a particularly important and creative role to play in addressing these problems.⁴

I write as an architectural educator who believes that it is professionally myopic and morally irresponsible to teach students to evaluate architectural work in terms of aesthetics, building performance, and cost without also teaching them to consider whether what they are designing is ecologically intelligent and socially just. I also write as a feminist who believes that equal rights for women are not worth having in a society that would force people to choose between the pain of a woman who is the victim of domestic violence and an African-American man who is beaten by police officers who are just "doing their job." In such a society, no one has a monopoly on suffering. Moreover, if we fail to see and understand the systemic connection between the behavior of those who rape the earth and those who rape women – if we say we will stop doing violence to the environment and its precious biodiversity but remain neutral and unmoved by the overwhelming global violence against women, children, and people of color – those who hold power in society will

simply be free to continue to displace the tragedies of oppression and exploitation from one locus or group to another. To achieve a feminist future in which all people and all life matters, we will have to move beyond the politics of exclusion, intolerance, and competing special interests; we will have to recognize the interdependence among all of humanity, the natural world, and the products of human design; and we will have to learn to think and act out of that recognition.

Recognizing the Challenges

The Global Need for Housing Today, one quarter of the world's population – more than one billion people – do not have adequate housing. Since the 1960s, major wars in Eastern Europe, Asia, Latin America, Africa, and elsewhere have created a vast refugee population of some thirty million people, 75 percent of them women and children. An estimated 100 million people worldwide are homeless.⁵

In the United States in 1989, twenty-nine million people needed low-income housing, including eleven million children and four million elderly; yet only one in four of those in need had access to it. Two and one-half million Americans are displaced from their homes each year. Homelessness, which afflicts three million Americans, continues to grow by leaps and bounds among all ages, races, and household types, but especially among minority women and children.⁶ From the miserable refugee camps in Bosnia and Rwanda and the squalid shanty towns of South Africa, to the deplorable public housing projects of North America, the need to provide decent, affordable housing is crucial worldwide; and that need will escalate as the global population continues to expand throughout the twenty-first century.

Today, although many individual faculty members offer studio courses that address housing design relative to urban renewal and the needs of the homeless, the poor, low-income households, and immigrant groups, few architecture schools require courses that analyze the social and political contexts in which housing is designed and built. Yet an understanding of housing economics, manufacturing processes, real-estate development, land-use zoning, government housing programs, political

systems, and community organization is essential if architects are to be effective advocates of housing as a basic right available to all people as well as designers of houses for the affluent.

Architecture and Healthcare Equally crucial will be the need to provide innovative healthcare environments that contribute to healing and human welfare. Advances in medicine and nutrition have made important contributions to extending the average lifespan. In the next forty years the population eighty-five and older will quadruple in the United States. The Census Bureau estimates that by the year 2020, for every hundred middle-age persons, there will be 253 senior citizens;⁷ and as the population continues to age, there will be a dramatic increase in the numbers of people with some form of mobility, vision, or hearing impairment, as well as those suffering from Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. The traditional skilled nursing home will not be an appropriate residential setting, either financially or psychologically, for a significant number who will only require a minimal or moderate level of assisted care.

In addition to the burgeoning aging population, the AIDS pandemic will cause the demand for health-related services and facilities to soar. In 1994, there were one million Americans with AIDS or HIV trying to gain access to an appallingly inadequate healthcare system with beleaguered healthcare facilities. The World Health Organization estimates that worldwide there are currently ten million people infected with HIV and that by the year 2000, that number will grow to forty million. Harvard University, however, predicts that by that date 100 million people will be living with HIV, ten million of them children under the age of five years.⁸

Despite the need for design expertise in healthcare that these statistics project, there is currently a paucity of courses and programs on the subject available in architecture schools.⁹ Who in this last decade of the twentieth century is being taught to design barrier-free, assisted-living arrangements with built-in healthcare and support services for the frail elderly and people with Alzheimer's or AIDS? Who will provide small-scale, family-oriented neighborhood wellness centers where preventive medicine is practiced? New regional hospitals providing state-of-the-art technology for those in need of specialized care? Hospice settings to ease the pain of terminal

illness? In the future, redesigning existing healthcare settings and creating new environments for care and cure will offer design professionals a major challenge for which few architecture students are being prepared.

“Lifespan” Design As four-generation families become the norm in the next few decades, new transgenerational or “lifespan” design standards will have to be developed and used to construct new buildings and adapt existing spaces so that people of all ages and with different levels of physical ability can live and work independently. (“Lifespan” design conceptually expands the more familiar term “universal design,” which implies, quite impossibly, that “one size fits all.”) Buildings and spaces designed according to “lifespan” principles would be dynamic, not static; changeable over time in response to social and environmental factors and the changing needs, activities, and life circumstances of the people who use them. “Lifespan” design embodies a philosophy of process and architectural transformation that will require architects and designers to change their priorities from designing buildings of permanence and monumentality to designing buildings and spaces that survive, like living species, by adaptive evolution.¹⁰

Although there are notable exceptions,¹¹ few architecture students are presently being introduced to these issues. Practitioners – obliged to design to code in order to avoid lawsuits – are learning to comply with the complex regulations for accessibility set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), but it is the spirit not the letter of the ADA that both architecture students and practitioners should be responding to by exploring the potential for innovation inherent in “lifespan” design.

Restoring the Environment In the future, environmental restoration, a new cross-disciplinary field dedicated to the science and art of healing the earth, will employ huge numbers of people around the world in cleaning up and repairing the damage done to our water, land, and air, and in restoring regional habitats and ecosystems to protect endangered species. This emerging “green consciousness” should have a profound impact on architectural education and practice as designers begin to understand the consequences of the choices they make. For example, design practitioners, through lack of awareness and, until fairly recently,

lack of choice, have specified building materials that come from threatened or non-renewable resources; materials that are mined, harvested, or manufactured in a manner that creates pollution or in other ways is harmful to the environment, and is destructive of certain cultures. Architects and designers also have unknowingly specified toxic building products and HVAC systems that create indoor air pollution ("sick building syndrome"), a phenomenon that costs the United States \$60 billion a year in absenteeism, medical bills, and lost worker productivity. (The EPA ranks poor indoor air quality as the fourth highest health risk out of thirty-one classes of pollution.)¹²

More than half of the energy that is consumed in the United States every year goes into constructing and maintaining the built environment; and wasted construction materials represent 20 percent of the contents of all landfills in the U.S. or thirty-one and a half million tons of waste.¹³ "Green architecture" is not a trend; it is an ethical responsibility for all architecture students and practitioners.

At present, architectural offices generally score higher than architectural schools on the environmental literacy test. Organizations like the American Institute of Architects (AIA), Architects, Designers and Planners for Social Responsibility (ADPSR) and groups like the Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) have developed impressive resource guides, bibliographies, and databases on green building technologies, materials, and products. Some educational programs, like the Center for Regenerative Studies at California State Polytechnic University, Ball State University, and Yestermorrow Design/Build School in Warren, Vermont, are pioneering in training future architects to be environmentally responsible designers. Still, there are relatively few practitioners and even fewer graduating students who know how to integrate sustainable design principles into their work; most are unprepared even to challenge energy-wasteful building conventions.

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Cultural Pluralism in Neighborhood Regeneration Thirty years of continuous immigration from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia has dramatically shifted demographics in the United States and will ultimately change America's view of race. Currently, 13 percent of the nation's population is African-American; nearly 10 percent, or twenty-five million, is

Hispanic. Another three and a half million are Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Filipinos, Vietnamese, and Laotian Hmong, and hundreds of thousands are dark-skinned East Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis. The 1990 census identified nearly three hundred “races,” six hundred Indian tribes, seventy Hispanic groups, and seventy-five combinations of multiracial ancestry.¹⁴ These demographic changes will have no less an impact on architectural education and practice than on society as a whole.

All across the United States, ethnically and racially diverse middle- and working-class people are struggling to regenerate deteriorated inner-city neighborhoods through collective activism dedicated to creating affordable homes and safe streets (see also the essays in this volume by Ghislaine Hermanuz and Lauretta Vinciarelli). As agents of social change and urban renewal, these neighborhood groups should be able to form powerful partnerships with socially concerned architects. How can an architectural education that continues to define professional expertise in relation to the history of white, heterosexual, Euro-American male consciousness prepare students to function as effective professionals in pluralistic communities? How will students be sensitized to “difference” when they are encouraged to suppress their own gender, race, and class identities in the process of becoming “professional”?

Equal Access to Electronic Information Like ecological awareness and multiculturalism, information technology will also transform societies. In the coming decades, access to the information highway will be the basis for generating wealth and power and determining the fundamental ability to function in a democratic society. In 1994, American consumers spent \$8 billion on personal computers, just a little less than the \$8.3 billion they spent on television sets.¹⁵ Not surprisingly, access to the new technology breaks down along gender, race, and class lines. Wealthy and upper middle-class families, white males, and affluent school districts form the bulk of computer owners and users. The impact of this disparity is reflected in a study that determined that those who can use computers earn 15 percent more than those in similar jobs who cannot.¹⁶ This statistic reveals one of the most troubling questions of the information age: in an era in which success is increasingly identified with the ability to

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gain access to cyberspace, will the new technology only widen the gap between women and men, rich and poor, white and non-white, educated and undereducated?¹⁷

Computers have already had a significant impact on architectural practice. Computer-aided design has eliminated entry-level drafting jobs, increased the productivity and profitability of firms using the technology, and “eliminated the barriers of time and distance that once protected firms from [long distance] competition. . . . By the year 2000, any two person design firm [will be able to] do work anywhere.”¹⁸ The implications for architectural education are clear: students who graduate without computer skills will be seriously handicapped in the job market; and schools that fail to provide their graduates with these tools will risk their status as accredited degree programs.

Learning From Feminism

Increasingly, architecture schools are being criticized for graduating students who discover that their “status is low, their chances at designing something satisfying are slim . . . and their earnings stand scant prospect of being commensurate with the length of their training.”¹⁹ Some argue that “the implicit guarantee that the school prepares the student for the world of work verges on dishonesty.”²⁰ Feminist pedagogy – with its attention to collective processes, redefining power relationships, deconstructing false dichotomies (for example, between theory and practice, client and professional), and eliminating inequities in gender, race, class, disability status, and sexual orientation – can be especially useful in constructing a new model of architectural education and practice attuned to today’s real problems and possibilities. Four feminist educational principles deserve discussion.²¹

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Employ Collaborative Learning Educators should develop and use teaching methods in which interdependent, team problem solving and “co-creativity” are practiced and rewarded over competitive, solitary problem solving and individual creativity. In the discipline of architecture, which has historically applauded the solo virtuoso designer, reconceptualizing

and valuing the different roles and contributions of individuals within a collective design process represents a radical change. Nevertheless, collaborative learning in small groups is important preparation for a world in which most problems, whether scientific, corporate, or architectural, will be solved in teams.

Share Authority and Knowledge Teachers must share their authority and question their monopoly over knowledge so that students are empowered to direct their own learning, and so that people in other disciplines and with different life experiences can join in the problem-solving discourse. In the future, the boundaries of the problem to be solved – not the boundaries of a single academic discipline – will determine what knowledge is needed and where it can best be found. These changes will be facilitated by the growing and ultimately universal use of computers in the classroom. As tools for learning, computers will dramatically change both the locus of information and the traditional role of the teacher as oracle versus the student as passive recipient of hand-me-down knowledge. In the techno-university, education will shift from experts giving answers to students seeking answers.²²

Eliminate False Dichotomies Teachers must create learning situations that connect academic theory and knowledge with applied practice, establishing collaborative relationships among architects, clients, and user groups. The best way to teach students about cultural difference is to involve them with people who are different from themselves – not easily accomplished within the narrow confines of the traditionally elitist university dominated by privileged white males. Further, although architecture has always been a service profession, it has traditionally served only those who can afford to pay for it.

Faculty can address these concerns by arranging for students to work as volunteers on real projects for non-profit organizations that engage contemporary social and environmental problems. The non-profit organizations and the constituencies they serve become, in effect, pro bono clients.²³ Be it through design/build studios, community design centers, design/research studios, or elective and required courses, service learning raises students' confidence in their own abilities to meet the challenges of the real world,

in which they will practice. As important, they learn that being an architect – with all the formal and technological demands the role involves – and working for social justice and a sustainable future do not have to be at odds.

Emphasize Ethical Values and Interconnectedness Teachers should inspire and challenge students to use their creative abilities to improve our world by changing what they find today into what is needed tomorrow; into what is fair and just for all people and all life on our planet. When we design, we affect the lives of others by our decisions. When students discover that they are accountable to others, they begin to design in an empathic mode, entering into peoples' plights and identifying with their concerns. And when this happens, students, educators, and practitioners cannot remain neutral or detached from the processes and products of their own design; they are summoned to compassionate action in which they seek to empower others through their work, rather than merely imposing their own images on the world.

Reexamining Professional Boundaries

To prepare architects for professional practice in a world characterized by global telecommunications, environmentally responsible lifestyles, and increasingly aging and pluralistic societies worldwide, architecture must become a more research-oriented, knowledge-based profession; and the conventional professional boundaries of the discipline must be reexamined. Architects must learn how better to solve problems in interdisciplinary teams with experts in natural resource conservation, economics, politics, art, medicine, behavioral and social sciences, law, and engineering. They must learn to work in innovative partnerships with low-income, non-profit, and culturally diverse groups. They must be taught how to use design as a tool to create, rather than respond to, public policy, legal regulations, and building codes. They must be taught not only to design buildings but also to diagnose them for their healthfulness, energy efficiency, and accessibility. The public's growing interest in healthy buildings and barrier-free design must be translated into an architecture where both function and form celebrate the environmental message and human diversity. "Green architecture"

and “accessible design” must evolve beyond the inclusion of environmental control systems and wheelchair ramps which, while functionally and morally important, have hardly produced visually inspiring architecture.

Several initiatives that address the need to redefine the architecture profession are worth mentioning. For example, the *Code of Conduct for Diversity in Architectural Education*, published in 1992 by the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture, states:

“Given current demographic trends, architectural education – and ultimately the architectural profession – will be denying itself the best pool of young talent, if major segments of the population are not encouraged and welcomed to the study of architecture. If students of architecture are not encouraged to be sensitive to the pluralism of our culture, they will not be able to serve the diverse range of clients with whom they will eventually be working. Students who learn to develop a sensitivity to the diverse cultural traditions of the world will be better prepared to take on the challenges of working in the global marketplace. This is important not just for the career development of individual students, but also for the competitive advantage of both the profession and national interests.”²⁴

In support of this statement, the National Architectural Accrediting Board has asked all school visitation teams to put more emphasis on evaluating how a school’s curriculum and administrative policies and practices “contribute to and enrich gender, racial and ethnic diversity in architectural education.”²⁵ Similarly, the American Institute of Architects has established a Diversity Program to provide women and “minority” members – defined in the broadest sense to include diversity by gender, race, creed, ethnic origin, age, disability, or sexual orientation – with equal access and influence at all levels of the Institute and profession. California Women in Environmental Design (CWED), based in San Francisco, has created a booklet entitled *Design = Leadership, A New Perspective for Designing a Better Future*, that provides design students and professionals, political and business leaders, and community groups with guidelines for determining the impact of a proposed design upon the public good at all scales, from a single building to a regional plan. *Project EASE: Educating Architects for a Sustainable*

Environment, has held two planning conferences in which invited participants with expertise in sustainable development, architectural education and practice, landscape architecture, planning, environmental science, and architectural and ecological research have evaluated existing program content throughout North America in light of “the demands of sustainability, changing demographics, social and cultural change . . . and the need to restore architects to leadership positions in the world community.”²⁶

The politics of human and environmental exploitation that defined the twentieth century must be replaced in the twenty-first century with an ethic of interdependence that values human difference, fosters relationships of human equity, and acknowledges humanity’s debt to the earth. As the form givers in our society, architects have a professional opportunity and civic responsibility to contribute their expertise toward that end. But to effectively do so, traditional architectural education and practice must undergo creative change today.

1. Sharon E. Sutton paraphrases bell hooks’s phrase in “Contradictory Missions of a Tempered Radical’s Teaching,” Jeffrey Howard, ed., *Praxis I: Faculty Casebook on Community Service Learning* (Ann Arbor: ocsL Press at the University of Michigan Press, 1993), 152.
2. For examples on architectural practice, see Thomas Fisher, “Can This Profession Be Saved?” *Progressive Architecture* (February 1994), 5–49, 84; and Dana Cuff, *Architecture: The Story of Practice* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991). For examples on architectural education, refer to Greig Crysler, “Critical Pedagogy and Architectural Education,” *Journal of Architectural Education (JAE)* 48 (May 1995), 208–17; Thomas Dutton, ed., *Voices in Architectural Education, Cultural Politics and Pedagogy* (New York: Bergen and Garvey, 1991); and Sharon E. Sutton, “Seeing the Whole of the Moon,” in Schoem Frankel and Zuniga Lewis, eds., *Multicultural Teaching in the University* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1993), 161–71.
3. Lynda H. Schneekloth, “Partial Utopian Visions,” in *Women and the Environment*, Human Behavior and Environment series 3, Irwin Altman and Arza Churchman, eds. (New York: Plenum Press, 1994), 288–89.
4. In the future, successful problem solving will require an increasingly sophisticated collaboration among many different specialists. When I refer to architectural education and practice in this essay, I do so for the sake of brevity and mean also to include those practicing, teaching, and studying in the related professions of inte-

- rior design, industrial design, product design, landscape architecture, and planning.
5. Mim Kelber, ed., *Official Report of the World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet* (New York: Women's Environment and Development Organization, 1992), 3.
 6. *Safety Network, The Newsletter of the National Coalition for the Homeless* 6 (June 1989), 1; and Jane Midgley, *The Women's Budget*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1989), 16.
 7. Melinda Beck, "The Geezer Boom," *Newsweek*, special issue, "The 21st Century Family" (Winter/Spring 1990), 66.
 8. Erik Eckholm, "Aids, Fatally Steady in the U.S., Accelerates Worldwide," *New York Times*, June 28, 1992, E8.
 9. The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee offers courses in gerontology and architecture; Texas A&M and Clemson University teach health-facilities design; Harvard lists a number of professional development courses in universal design, hospital design, and the design of assisted-living facilities; and New York University School of Continuing Education established a certificate program in healthcare design in 1994. The American Institute of Architects (AIA), in cooperation with the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA), has developed a Design For Aging Curriculum Resource Package, which was tested by architecture faculty at ten ACSA schools in Spring 1995. The National Symposium on Healthcare Design, based in Martinez, Calif., holds annual conferences that bring together design educators, practitioners, healthcare providers, and manufacturers specializing in health-related environments.
 10. For further discussion about the impact of changing demographics and other social trends on the future of housing design, see "Redesigning the Domestic Landscape" in Leslie Kanes Weisman, *Discrimination by Design: A Feminist Critique of the Man-Made Environment* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992).
 11. Adaptive Environments in Boston, Mass., has developed an excellent model curriculum on universal design which was tested in twenty-two schools in 1993-94.
 12. "Healthy Buildings and Materials," AIA Building Connections Series Videoconferences; "Building Green, Audubon House," videotape (New York: National Audubon Society, 1993); and National Audubon Society and Croxton Collaborative, Architects, *Audubon House, Building the Environmentally Responsible, Energy-Efficient Office* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1994), 38.
 13. "Resource Flows and Efficiencies," AIA Building Connections Series Videoconferences (Washington, D.C.: American Institute of Architects, 1993).
 14. Tom Morganthau, "What Color is Black?" *Newsweek*, February 13, 1995, 64-65.
 15. Suneel Ratan, "A New Divide Between Haves and Have Nots?" *Time*, special issue,

"Welcome to Cyberspace" (Spring 1995), 25.

16. Ibid.

17. The Women, Information Technology, and Scholarship (WITS) Group at the Center for Advanced Study, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, has developed a series of recommendations and action steps that individuals and organizations can take to ensure gender equity in global communications networks.

18. Fisher, 46.

19. Ibid., 47.

20. Thomas Saint, as quoted in *ibid.*

21. Feminist pedagogy is currently used by many design educators, in both traditional universities and in alternative educational settings like the Women's School of Planning and Architecture (WSPA) and Sheltering Ourselves: A Women's Learning Exchange (SOWLE). WSPA was cofounded in 1974 and operated until 1981 as a national summer program open to all women interested in the environmental design professions and trades. For a history of the organization, its goals and curricula see Leslie Kanes Weisman, "A Feminist Experiment, Learning From WSPA, Then and Now" in Ellen Perry Berkeley with Matilda McQuaid, eds., *Architecture, A Place For Women* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 125–33. SOWLE, based at the Women's Research and Development Center, Cincinnati, Ohio, has been operating since 1987 as an international association of women who are personally and professionally involved in issues of housing and economic development for women and their families. SOWLE's learning exchanges are designed in a variety of formats accessible to women of diverse racial and educational backgrounds.

22. Claudia Wallis, "The Learning Revolution," *Time* (Spring 1995), 50.

23. For more information on service learning see Susan DeLuca-Dicker, "Building a Revolution, Using Architecture and Education to Instigate Social Change," *Interiors & Sources* 6 (January/February 1993), 38–43; and Leslie Kanes Weisman, "An AIDS Education," *The Construction Specifier* 46 (August 1993), 78–80.

24. The Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture, *Code of Conduct for Diversity in Architectural Education* (Washington, D.C.: ACSA, 1992), 2.

25. Letter from John M. Maudlin-Jeronimo, AIA, Executive Director of the National Architectural Accrediting Board, Inc. (NAAB), to NAAB Visiting Team Members, January 5, 1994.

26. Published materials on Project EASE are forthcoming. The project is headed by Marvin E. Rosenman, Professor and Chair, Department of Architecture, College of Architecture and Planning, Ball State University.

Resisting the Patriarchal Norms of Professional Education: Reply to Leslie Kanes Weisman

SHARON E. SUTTON

Power. Many people conceive of it as a somewhat negative characteristic of the human psyche, encompassing the capacity to exert force, manipulate, coerce, and even destroy. Having power in the sense of control or domination means having superior physical strength, economic resources, or public distinction; it accrues to the wealthy, to politicians, corporate executives, and famous athletes.¹ Being without power – being powerless – is being unable to exercise choice, deferring to others who are supposedly more qualified, reacting to someone else's agenda rather than setting one's own. Being powerless suggests a state of dependence, alienation, or disenfranchisement; it is the domain of the poor, women, persons of color, and even those professional students who are trained to conform to white middle-class norms in university settings.

In an earlier era, when relationships were more circumscribed and resources more plentiful, hierarchical conceptions of authority were less damaging than they are in today's multicultural society because control – whether of nature or society – necessarily results in exploitative uses of the earth's assets. Leslie Kanes Weisman draws a connection between degradation of the physical environment and a dichotomized social world-view that assigns greatly varied status and worth to different individuals, which, in turn, affects their access to natural resources.² As development ethicist Rajni Kothari wrote in 1990: "Modern humanity, and in particular Western technological humanity, has accumulated wealth by denying the rights of others to share in nature's bounty. These 'others' include marginal communities (tribes and small villages), future generations, and other species. Inequality, nonsustainability, and ecological instability all arise from the selfish and arrogant notion that nature's gifts are for private exploitation, not for sharing."³

A sustainable society rests not only on the willingness of the powerful to share resources but also on the participation of many persons, including those who traditionally have been cast as powerless, in democratic decision making. Such power sharing is essential in the fields of planning and design, where broad-based cooperation is a prerequisite to lasting environmental solutions. As the amount of undeveloped, uncontaminated land disappears; as escalating violence within and between nations increasingly determines how space is designed and used; as car-oriented, privatized United States life-styles are promulgated worldwide via global communications systems, planners and designers⁴ will require more empowering, inclusive approaches to authority.⁵

But how will students learn such approaches in university settings that are governed by patriarchal norms of control and domination?⁶ How can faculty engage aspiring professionals in critically reflecting on whether their work is, in Weisman's words, "ecologically intelligent and socially just"? How can feminists achieve a pedagogy that allows persons who traditionally have been marginalized in their fields to simultaneously succeed in and resist the patriarchal norms of professionalization? These are the questions I address in this essay.

Power versus Empowerment

Ecofeminist Starhawk differentiates three forms of authority: power-over, power-with, and power-from-within.⁷ Power-over shapes most institutions – from the halls of Congress to corporations, schools, churches, hospitals, and even our families. It is the power of prison guards, the military, or drug dealers who use weapons or physical force to exert control. It is the power of corporate executives, university presidents, or faculty who have named roles that entitle them to enforce obedience. It is the power of white men as well as educated, wealthy, heterosexual, and able-bodied persons whose favored socioeconomic status grants them certain inherent rights. Starhawk compares the consciousness of power-over to seeing the world with a high-beam flashlight that illuminates the details of discrete elements but does not reveal the fabric of space in which these elements are interrelated. This conception of power can be found in most

of the earlier leadership literature, which placed great emphasis on the personal style and skills of a charismatic individual.⁸

Unlike power-over, Starhawk's other two forms of authority are not tied to material privilege. Power-with is the ambiguously structured influence that is wielded among equals. It is the authority of good parents or teachers who guide young persons in realizing their own capacities. It is the authority of the elders, clan mothers, or chiefs in indigenous societies who are listened to because of their wisdom and judgment. It is the authority of poets, public speakers, or songwriters who provide intellectual leadership through their clarity of thinking. The strength of power-with does not come from an ability to outdo others but rather from a desire to connect with and nurture them; it is not driven by the status-seeking that prevails in power-over but rather by a commitment to assume responsibility and make a difference on behalf of others. While power-over concentrates authority in the hands of properly credentialed persons, power-with grows as relationships multiply within a culture of shared responsibility and mutual respect. In recent leadership literature, power-with is referred to as transactional leadership, in which followers are acknowledged as vital to any leader's ability to bring about change, no matter how charismatic that person might be.

Starhawk's third type of influence is known as power-from-within, a spiritual endeavor that is anything but objective or externally controlled. Power-from-within stems from idealism, magic, love, hope, and persistence; it is accessed through a sense of connectedness to the universe of human beings and nature; it comes from an ongoing struggle to develop greater awareness of self and other. Expressed through such vehicles as poetry, ritual, surprise, or humor, power-from-within is perhaps more available to young persons than it is to those who are ensconced in the status quo. Francis Moore Lappé and Paul Martin DuBois applauded this form of influence as a way of addressing controversial environmental issues, noting a citizens group in Kentucky that used drama to call attention to the dumping of waste in their community. The group staged a funeral on the steps of the state capitol, complete with music, a hearse, and many bereaved citizens, who demanded that the governor either sign a death certificate for the state of Kentucky or implement a moratorium on dumping. Their performance focused attention on an important

problem and everyone had a good (empowering) laugh in the process.” Other examples of power-from-within include such rituals as the singing of “We Shall Overcome” during the civil rights movement, the embroidering of Circle of Life squares by displaced Peruvian women, and the painting of graffiti by disenfranchised ghetto youth.

Professional Education as Enculturation into Power-Over

Schools of planning and design ought to be extraordinary sources of power-with and power-from-within. Since no one person can bring about change in something as complex as the physical environment, schooling in these disciplines ought to engage students in transdisciplinary collaboration, community organizing, and political activism. Since planning and designing are about envisioning alternative futures, schooling ought to increase students’ awareness of the societal inequities that are made visible through built form, and encourage them to resist restating those inequities in their own work. Since a more sustainable society will only come into being if more privileged groups (planners and designers among them) limit their own consumption, schooling ought to encourage students to critique those professional values and assumptions that encourage exploitation of nature’s bounty.

Unfortunately, such an empowering education would contradict the norms of professionalization whose very purpose is to prepare students for exercising power over given bodies of knowledge. Professionalization is the last step in a lifelong process of ranking and rating; it restricts membership in various fields to those with specified levels of education and training, thus creating occupational monopolies that are controlled by persons who already are within the inner circle.¹⁰ Unlike those whose authority derives from ownership of capital or property, the power-over of middle-class professionals lies in ownership of specialized knowledge and thus in the capacity to define the reality of other persons.

In licensed fields such as architecture and landscape architecture, power-over is especially apparent – in the accreditation of schools, internship requirements, registration exams, and enforcement of codes and zoning ordinances – advancement being contingent on conformity to explicit as well as implicit professional standards. For example, to excel

within the culture of architecture one must be able to stay up for nights on end to finish school projects, fill out countless forms and get numerous recommendations to take the state board exams, sacrifice private life to ninety-hour work weeks, and design in the prevailing architectural style. And, as in other areas, family class background plays a potent role in determining the opportunities that are available to individuals at given points in their careers, as do gender and race.

Over time, such enculturation processes reinforce patriarchal norms and coopt the idealism of planners and designers, rendering them powerless to address contemporary environmental challenges. As leadership scholar John W. Gardner noted:

“All too often, on the long road up, young leaders become ‘servants of what is rather than shapers of what might be.’ In the long process of learning how the system works, they are rewarded for playing within the intricate structure of existing rules. By the time they reach the top, they are very likely to be trained prisoners of the structure. This is not all bad; every vital system re-affirms itself. But no system can stay vital for long unless some of its leaders remain sufficiently independent to help it to change and grow.”¹¹

A professional worldview that is promulgated from a position of privilege to protect its own cache of credentialed expertise cannot be responsive to today’s explosive global changes, especially relative to the physical environment. As Weisman notes, students need more organic, inclusive paradigms to address the problems of sheltering and caring for trans-generational, culturally diverse families. At the same time, they must learn how to use new technologies to enhance rather than destroy the beauty of nature and the specialness of individuals. Such challenges require a new generation of planners and designers who are sufficiently independent of the self-serving aspects of their fields. What kind of education would empower students to exercise authority in concert with socioeconomically disadvantaged groups? How can students be enculturated into their exclusionary professional roles while becoming more inclusive in their thinking? How can educators, especially women and persons of color, who already occupy marginal positions in academia, break with patriar-

chal norms in their pedagogy without risking their own and their students' ability to reap the rewards of mainstream society?

The Paradoxes of Professional Education in a Sustainable Society

"I imagine an alternative praxis of architecture that simultaneously embraces two seemingly contradictory missions. In this alternative approach, we use our right hand to pry open the box so that more of us can get into it while using our left hand to get rid of the very box we are trying to get into. With part of ourselves, we work to achieve power and authority within the traditions of the dominant culture. . . . With another part of ourselves, . . . we reject the dominant voice's power-over mentality because it is inappropriate to the power-with mentality that is required to bring about social change."¹²

Education in a sustainable society involves contradictions for students and faculty alike, and this is especially true for women, persons of color, and those non-materially privileged persons who manage to access the ivory towers. Weisman proposes a feminist pedagogy that emphasizes collective, non-hierarchical problem-solving processes that strive for a more ecological worldview through an ongoing critique of social injustice. Such a pedagogy necessarily means that faculty must assume paradoxical roles and, at the same time, decide just how far out of the mainstream to venture. Feminist pedagogy requires that we simultaneously strive for professional excellence as defined by the dominant culture while seeking to serve the interests of those who have been marginalized by that culture's power structure. It requires that we indulge ourselves intellectually and, at the same time, critique our privilege to do so. It requires that we struggle against oppression while acknowledging our own complicity – however unintentional – in perpetuating injustice through our participation in the credentialing process.

Given these paradoxes, feminist faculty might elect one of many avenues along a continuum of resistance to the power-over of the patriarchy. Some might choose more conventional routes, seeking ways to create alternative learning spaces within traditional contexts – a choice that is the least costly because it does not challenge institutional hierarchies. Others might choose the path I have taken, working within the mainstream while seeking to transform it. bell hooks and others have written about the

duality of being inside an institution while struggling against its traditions, referring to this position as one of creative marginality, “a site one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes one’s capacity to resist.”¹³ Some activist faculty might opt out of professional education and find other venues for affecting the physical environment. This choice exacts the highest price because it means sacrificing the security of conferred status and mainstream credentials. I might have pursued this path, but I felt obliged to pry open academia’s doors for other women and persons of color.

Each of these different horizons is equally valuable and necessary to igniting a widespread movement within the fields of planning and design. Students in these fields already learn critical skills for contributing to today’s environmental challenges, including the capacity to synthesize disparate information and project alternative futures. Faculty can encourage them to use these abilities to engage so-called powerless persons in collective problem-solving while assiduously resisting the prevailing acceptance of domination and exploitation. Most movements are embodied not in institutional contexts but in books, speeches, popular songs, or memories of people and events. Power-with and power-from-within – empowerment – comes to those, often without titles or named roles, who have the courage to challenge normative thinking and inspire risk-taking visions of social and environmental justice.

1. Francis Moore Lappé and Paul Martin DuBois, *The Quickening of America: Rebuilding Our Nation, Remaking Our Lives* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994).
2. Of the industrialized countries, the United States has the widest income gap between rich and poor. The well-to-do, who earn about 95 percent of their income from exploitative land development, reap eleven times the income of the poor, thus providing a striking example of the connection between the domination of nature and the domination of people.
3. Rajni Kothari, “Environment, Technology, and Ethics,” in J. Ronald Engel and Joan Gibb Engel, eds., *Ethics of Environment and Development: Global Challenge, International Response* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1990), 27–35.
4. I use the term “planners and designers” because I believe that the environmental problems Weisman outlines in her essay cannot be addressed by single disciplines but, rather, require broad transdisciplinary collaboration. Although a number of

individual planners and designers are making valuable contributions, they are limited by prescribing solutions according to their own disciplinary focus. Thus the neo-traditional urban designers look at town-making without taking into account the rural environment; conservationists focus on farmland and open space without considering the need for reducing dependence on the automobile; and the “fur, feather, and fin” ecologists ignore human ecology, especially with respect to race, gender, and class. Contemporary environmental problem-solving requires collaboration among the many persons who plan and design natural and built space, and this linked term, “planners and designers,” is meant to suggest such an inclusive approach.

5. The term “empowerment” generally refers to the processes through which disadvantaged persons seek to increase their fair share of resources. I use the word to include, as well, the processes through which privileged persons gain the courage to share their advantages.
6. “Patriarchy” literally refers to that condition (still existing in some cultures) in which a man owned his wife, children, and perhaps slaves. I use the term “patriarchal norms” more broadly to indicate a condition of dominance and dependence in which some persons have institutionally conferred authority over others. For example, the behavior of faculty and students is typically governed by patriarchal norms, regardless of the gender of either group.
7. Starhawk, *Truth or Dare: Encounters with Power, Authority, and Mystery* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987). Starhawk’s definition of power is but one of many in the literature, but it provides particularly useful insights into the inner, spiritual resources of individuals and groups.
8. The notion of leadership as a way of ordering social life was first articulated in 1869 by the English scientist Sir Francis Galton, who put forth the “Great Man” theory, according to which leaders possessed universal savior-like characteristics that were fixed, largely inborn, and applicable in all situations.
9. Lappé and DuBois.
10. Barbara Ehrenreich, *Fear of Falling: The Inner Life of the Middle Class* (New York: Pantheon), 1989.
11. Thomas E. Cronin, “Reflections on Leadership,” in William E. Rosenback and Robert L. Taylor, eds., *Contemporary Issues in Leadership*, 3rd ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 7–25.
12. Sharon E. Sutton, “Finding Our Voice in the Dominant Key,” in Jack Travis, ed., *African-American Architects in Current Practice* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1991), 13–15.
13. bell hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics* (Boston: South End Press, 1990), 150.

*The Pen Is Mightier Than the Building:
Writing on Architecture 1850–1940*

DIANE FAVRO

As the current raging discourses reveal, architecture is as much about words as about actual buildings. From Vitruvius to Peter Eisenman, architects have relied on texts to promote their work, explain their theories, document their careers, and glorify their lives in an attempt to ensure their places in history. The written word, after all, reaches a far larger audience and endures far longer than place-bound buildings, and it is not subject to the ravages of the elements, economics, and changing social needs.

From the mid-nineteenth century through the period between World Wars I and II, publications by architects proliferated.¹ The first American publishing boom in architecture occurred just after the Civil War, when the number of new books per year rose from eleven in 1868 to twenty in 1882. One architect, the Gothic Revivalist Ralph Adams Cram, founded or edited four well-known journals, wrote art criticism for the *Boston Transcript*, and authored more than one hundred articles and twenty-four books. Not surprisingly, the written voice of the American practitioner of architecture during this period was decidedly male. Largely excluded from the profession, women took up their pens to address, instead, larger issues of the built environment.² Public reception of their writings had widespread implications for fields related to architecture – implications either ignored or minimized by the profession and the histories it condoned.

The social mores of early American society tended generally to muffle the voices of women, who were not expected to speak out – even when dealing with sanctioned “female subjects.” For example, a manual of manners from 1837 advised American women to work hard at household chores but warned, “Honorable as is the performance of these daily

duties, it is bad taste to say much about them.”³ The Victorian female had been programmed to assume the self-effacing and largely anonymous position of “the woman behind her man” (or the woman behind her country). Writing was an acceptable activity for the genteel woman of the nineteenth century only as long it was undertaken to improve her skills as wife and homemaker. Ideally, writing was to be done at home (family duties permitting), isolated from the corrupting influences of the male business world. Considered a hobby, not an occupation, women’s writing was not meant to compete with men’s efforts. Those women who did make writing a career operated in completely different spheres from male authors, remaining in the background (that is, the home) and denigrating or subordinating their own personalities for the good of others.

As the emotional, nurturing sex, women wrote about feelings more than about ideas. They addressed audiences composed of other middle- and upper middle-class women or young people, and their topics were those socially identified as “female”: child rearing (including education of the young) and domesticity. Assuming the role of cultural custodians, women also wrote about the arts in America, delving into criticism and history. Their written works were generally small in scale and modest in intent: articles, short stories, diaries, letters, and pamphlets; often they published anonymously or in collections, with no one contributor dominant.

The same generalities applied when nineteenth-century American women writers turned to topics relating to the built environment. They championed the architectural achievements of individual (male) practitioners and of America as a whole. Generally, women writers were relegated to the position of *adjuncts to* or *servicers of* the profession, viewed by their contemporaries (especially architects) as mere mediators between the profession and the public. Similarly, women who wrote on domesticity and social reform were seen as mere conduits for teaching other women how to cope with the concerns of family and society. Thus, their production was further devalued because it addressed primarily female (by definition lower status) audiences. Assuming roles of self-denial and speaking on behalf of others, women writers fell outside the accepted parameters of high culture and, instead, operated in the antipodal realm of mass culture.

The earliest American texts relating to architecture were pragmatic “how to” books aimed at (male) amateurs expanding the built environment of a new nation.⁴ However, by the later part of the nineteenth century, architects began to define themselves as educated professionals, not builders. As a result, writing about architecture changed character. Male architects wrote to exalt architecture as an art or science, and the architect as an independent artistic genius toiling to bring forth the truth. This notion quickly became ingrained in the American imagination. In the 1934 edition of *The Book of the School*, architect and University of Pennsylvania professor Paul Cret stated that architecture “has for its main object the development of the artist’s personality.” By the turn of the century, design, history, and representation had been added to the predominantly technical curricula of the recently established architecture schools. Elevating their discourse, architects more and more were writing for a select audience of their peers and an educated elite from which they hoped to attract worthy clients.

The male voice was singular and headily self-promotional. Like artists, genius-architects wanted to be thought of as working alone to create masterpieces. Beyond articles in professional journals, the most desirable venues were autobiographies and monographs on individual architects or firms.⁵ Naturally, individual authorship was important; few men published with co-authors or in anthologies. And while the architect might pass the pen to a professional writer, he was always careful to maintain some degree of control. The results were predictably sympathetic as, for example, the 1915 commissioned monograph on McKim, Mead & White, a production which has its contemporary counterpart in the far more numerous and lavish Rizzoli and *A.D.* publications.

In contrast to their male peers, women architects rarely wrote. Julia Morgan, one of the most prolific practitioners (male or female) on the West Coast, with more than five hundred projects to her credit, scrupulously avoided being what she disparagingly labeled “a talking architect.” Not only did Morgan decline to write about her own work or ideas, she refused interviews and did not seek publication of her projects.⁶ Various

rationales for such behavior are conceivable: self-promotion and advocacy of independent ideas were contrary to contemporary bourgeois ideals of femininity; women architects had to work harder and longer than their male peers, leaving little time for authorship; and, in general, women designed houses, not monuments, emphasizing the social aspects of design and client satisfaction (topics of marginal interest to a profession concerned with the apotheosis of the genius-architect). Moreover, strong restrictions on the architectural education available to women gave them scant opportunity to develop the fluency necessary to participate in more avant-garde discourse.

Likewise, until the middle of the twentieth century, few female practitioners published in the professional press. Architecture journals only grudgingly accepted contributions by female writers, naturally giving preference to the few women who had acquired architectural training. Not surprisingly, activist articles promoting women's entry into the profession were infrequent. A female writer of the nineteenth century, whether trained as an architect or not, was most likely to have her article published if she promoted male achievement, the male vision of the profession, or women's traditional roles.⁷ Consequently, the majority of articles by women dealt with sanctioned female subjects such as domestic design, the decorative and pictorial arts, and history.⁸ No female architect of the period wrote an autobiography. Yet, while their male peers more or less ignored them, women writers on architecture were readily accepted by the broad popular audience in America, which was greatly affected by their output.

Promoting Home Economics

The house dominated architecture in nineteenth-century America and, as the acknowledged realm of women, was naturally the topic of greatest coverage by female writers. Most had no training as architects; instead, they drew on their first-hand knowledge as homemakers as well as on their educations in the arts, teaching, philosophy, and, by the first decades of the twentieth century, the newly defined fields of home economics (including interior design) and landscape design.⁹ Responding to the clearly gendered divisions between work and living spaces fostered by

the Industrial Revolution, women writers guided other middle- and upper middle-class American women in their efforts to create comfortable, attractive, healthy homes. A spate of housekeeping books emerged, focused on everyday strategies for running a home.¹⁰ In line with the professionalization of other fields, several writers identified housekeeping as a domestic science, in effect arguing for its consideration as a female profession. They advised not only on cooking, cleaning, and child rearing, but also on architectural design and the technical aspects of heating, ventilation, plumbing, lighting, and construction.

For example, the much studied book by Catherine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The American Woman's Home* (1869), explored the centralization of the kitchen and other mechanical services. The feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman wrote on the physical organization of the home and apartment building, and the socialization of housework in *Women and Economics* (1898) and *The Home: Its Work and Influence* (1903). Greta Gray's *House and Home* (1923) was published in the popular Lippincott's Home Manuals series and served as both a manual for women at home and as a textbook for students at the burgeoning teachers' colleges and other female-oriented institutions emphasizing domestic science and home economics. Concurrently, a number of home magazines aimed at a female readership appeared, many of them edited and staffed primarily by women, for example, *Woman's Home Companion*, founded in 1873, and *The Ladies' Home Journal*, founded in 1883 (fig. 1).¹¹ These popular periodicals explored all aspects of domestic life, frequently juxtaposing fashions with house plans and technical information on house construction and maintenance.

Teaching Etiquette and Cultivating Taste

In 1831, the English writer Mrs. Frances Trollope caused an uproar with her book *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, in which she lambasted the coarse, immoral, and uncultured life-styles of this relatively new country's citizenry – as well as the disgraceful architecture of its major cities. Women across the country took up the gauntlet, publishing numerous books and articles on etiquette, all interwoven with moralism. Etiquette

books not only taught middle-class women how to behave socially but underscored the significance of environment in determining behavior. These culminated with the authoritative and comprehensive writings of Emily Post, who in her newspaper columns and especially in her popular book *The Personality of a House* (1930) dealt with interior design and behavior, advising that male environments should be based on the man's occupation while female environments should respond to how a woman looks.¹²

Mariana Van Rensselaer, identified as America's first professional female art critic, was one of several women who honed America's taste by evaluating art and the built environment for the general public. She wrote for both popular magazines (*Century*, *Atlantic Monthly*) and professional journals (*American Architect*, *American Architect and Building News*). In a piece for the *North American Review* entitled "Client and Architect," Van Rensselaer argued that clients should defer to the elevated taste and knowledge of the American architect.¹³ Sarah Hale, editor of *Godey's Lady's Book* magazine (published alternately as *Godey's Magazine*; fig. 2) from 1837 to 1877, led successful campaigns to make Bunker Hill and Mount Vernon national monuments, acknowledging women's role as, "the preserver, the teacher or inspirer, and the exemplar."¹⁴ In a nationalistic gesture she announced in 1854 that *Godey's* would publish only projects by American designers for the popular series Lady's Book Houses. Louisa C. Tuthill, who wrote the first book on American architectural history in 1841 (*History of Architecture, from the Earliest Times; Its Present Condition in Europe and the United States*, published 1848), explained in a letter to her publisher that her objective was "to improve the public taste by bringing the topic before readers of all classes, and furnishing correct models for imitation." But, like her male counterparts, Tuthill did not incorporate the efforts of early women designers into her history.

Advocating Reform

Early on in America's history, women had assumed responsibility for the general care of the soul; in architecture this translated into the promotion of community projects and morally uplifting designs.¹⁵ By the twentieth century, women writers were actively attempting to shape devel-

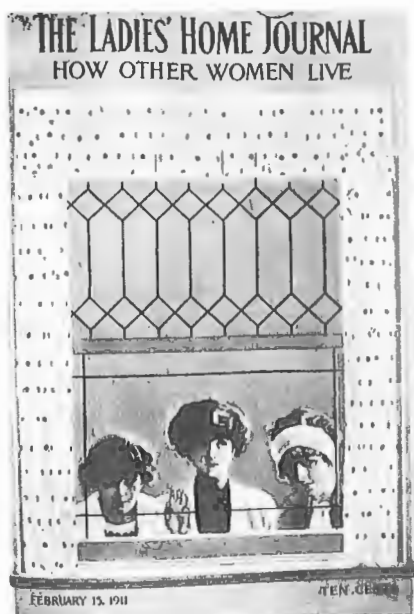


FIG. 1

1911 theme issue of *The Ladies' Home Journal*, which focused on "How Other Women Live"

FIG. 2

Cover of *Godey's Magazine*, 1896, edited by Sarah Hale

GODEY'S MAGAZINE

FOR SEPTEMBER

TEN CENTS A COPY
ONE DOLLAR A YEAR

THE WOMAN
THAT SAVED
THE UNION



ANNA ELA CARROLL, "Secret Member of Lincoln's Cabinet"

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

11.13. II. S. Phillips, "The Woman That Saved the Union," poster for *Godey's Magazine* (1896).

opments in social reform. For example, Alice Constance Austin wrote a number of articles in socialist publications outlining the design of an efficient, supportive, centralized community with communal cooking and laundry services, and a printing shop run by women.¹⁶ Gilman created an entire feminist utopia in her novel *Herland* of 1915, first serialized in a monthly magazine. Composed entirely of women, this society fashioned a rational, peaceful, prosperous, and ecologically sound environment focused on the collective raising of children (reproduction was by parthenogenesis).

The social worker and peace advocate Jane Addams reached a national audience with such works as *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1902), which prompted her campaign for cleaner urban environments, healthy living and work environments, and humane urban design. Her autobiographical account of an urban settlement house, *Twenty Years at Hull House* (1910), became a classic of reform literature, and in 1931 she won the Nobel Peace Prize. Later in the century, planner Catherine Bauer capitalized on the opportunities for improving low-income housing offered by the New Deal; she analyzed the socialized housing experiments of Europe and promoted a human-scale American solution (*Modern Housing*, 1934). And while no female architects of the period wrote about their lives, several reformers penned boastful autobiographies, such as *The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman*, published posthumously in 1935.

High versus Popular Culture

While the architecture profession in the early twentieth century considered women's writings on the built environment as, at best, a promotional service and, at worst, frivolous, the cultural impact of these publications was significant. Reaching a broad audience (as early as 1851, *Godey's Lady's Book* magazine boasted seventy thousand subscribers), these writings helped forge unified, distinctly American ideas about the house, the city, and architecture in general. Although wide distribution did not immediately shake the ivory tower of the profession, in the end, American (male) architects could not ignore the value of popular acclaim. Recognizing the need to attract a broader audience, in 1891 the profession established the *Architectural Record*, a journal edited by male journalists, not archi-

texts, and targeted at the educated layman, an audience reached by neither technical professional journals nor the popularizing “ladies’ magazines.” Nevertheless, the profession’s low opinion of “lady writers” and its adamant distancing of itself from “feminine” or popular concerns had long lasting and deleterious results. Proclaiming the autonomy of architecture as art and demonstrating an open hostility to mass culture, male architects in the early twentieth century fostered a radical separation of themselves from domestic economy, functionality, health, morals, and social reform – all the topics of women’s writings. The most famous architects of the day presented themselves as being above concern with budgets and lower-status users, much to the detriment of their clients and the profession as a whole. The problematization of high and low culture, male and female, also segregated and devalued the related fields of interior and landscape design that women had pioneered.

In the area of history, male architects focused on the high cultures represented by European architecture, deriding or ignoring the multiculturalism evident in the popular histories written by women. For example, Tuthill’s pivotal history of architecture was devalued because she took a subjective, inclusive approach to the past, discussing, alongside European examples, the architecture of a wide range of cultures, including Persian and “aboriginal” American. Architects favored, instead, the encyclopedic *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method* (1896), a heavy tome in which the British architect Banister Fletcher and his son, Banister Flight Fletcher, adopted a more scientific approach, presenting a veritable taxonomy of past architecture. Although the Fletchers avoided any hint of popularization by focusing their first edition on the major monuments of Europe, in the revised fourth edition of 1901, Banister Flight Fletcher did expand the contents to include other cultures – but he placed them under the pejorative heading of “non-historical.”

The New Woman

As Victorian social worker Helen Bosanquet noted, “In reference to the outside world, man has power and woman ‘influence.’ Within the home woman has the active power and man ‘influence.’”⁷ For women authors

in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the equation was reversed. “Lady writers” had great influence in the outside world, while male architectural authors had power in the much smaller professional realm. Women addressed a broad, nationwide, public audience, and ultimately shaped architectural developments as forcefully as their male counterparts. Operating outside the gender restrictions of the profession, women authors had the opportunity to succeed. Many did just that, claiming the right to autonomy as authors at a time when women could not do so as designers. Equally important, women explored and advanced issues displaced from the profession by both pure misogyny and by the gendering of high and mass culture.

Gradually, economic and theoretical transformations compelled American male architects to venture out from their ivory tower and into female domains. Faced with declining opportunities after the depression of the 1890s, architects began to concern themselves increasingly with the middle-class house and urban reform movements.¹⁸ While women’s writings on gendered subjects continued to flourish in the early decades of the twentieth century and to be appreciated by the masses, their dominant voice softened. Simultaneously, various social theories, including the neo-Marxian Frankfurt School, abandoned the notion of mass culture as feminine and equated it instead with streamlining, technological reproduction, and masculine objectivity.¹⁹ The genderized dichotomy between high and mass culture blurred and shifted after World War 1, encouraging more crossover between topics and authors.

Complementing this shift in ideological ground were transformations in the educational and vocational possibilities for women. With increased access to education, the suffrage movement, health and dress reforms, women redefined themselves. Since the 1890s, mainstream media had described the ideal of the New Woman as an independent, intelligent, educated individual able to interact and compete with men as an equal. By the 1920s, living examples of the New Woman walked the streets of America. Greater numbers of women entered the expanding service and public sector occupations, while others became influential clients of architecture, either individually or collectively. In particular, women took leadership positions as critics and editors for respected art

and literary publications, including Dora Marsden of *The Egoist*, *An Individualist Review*, Harriet Monroe of *Poetry*, and Emma Goldman of *Mother Earth*. Their highly visible and public participation in the discourse on high art further defeated the old gendering of mass culture and facilitated women's direct participation in the profession of architecture.

After World War I, more women became architects and took an active part in professional discourse. Currently, women writers on architecture come from such diverse backgrounds as professional practice, teaching, history, theory, criticism, and journalism. Having cast aside the role of *servicers* to the profession, they occupy positions of power both in architecture and in popular culture. Most significantly, they shape the discourse of the profession as major contributors to ongoing debates and as editors of not only the home journals of enduring popularity but of important professional journals as well. Today, when women write about architecture, both the public and the profession listen.

1. American architectural writers naturally drew upon English models; see Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *American Architectural Books, New Expanded Edition* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1976), vi; Nikolaus Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972); and Andrew Saint, *The Image of the Architect* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 96–114. Some of the earliest discussions of architecture in America are to be found in the writings of philosophers, including Thoreau and Emerson; see Don Gifford, ed., *The Literature of Architecture: The Evolution of Architectural Theory and Practice in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1966), 92–126, 172–197.
2. The process of women's entry into the profession is explored in a number of works, including the essays in Susan Torre, *Women in American Architecture* (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1977), and Ellen Perry Berkeley and Matilda McQuaid, eds., *Architecture, A Place for Women* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989). See also Gwendolyn Wright, "On the Fringe of the Profession: Women in American Architecture," in Spiro Kostof, ed., *The Architect* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 297–98.
3. The quote comes from a book written by "A Lady": *The Young Lady's Friend* (Boston: American Stationers' Company, John B. Russell, 1837), 41. On the

endurance of societal pressures to keep women invisible in the professional realm, see Denise Scott Brown, "Room at the Top? Sexism and the Star System in Architecture," in Berkeley and McQuaid, 237–46.

4. In the first half of the nineteenth century, few architects had professional training and thus relied on pattern books and manuals, among them Dr. William Thorton's *Town and Country Builders' Assistant* (1797), Minard Lafever's *The Young Builder's General Instructor* (1829) and *The Modern Builder's Guide* (1833), and Asher Benjamin's *The Country Builder's Assistant* (1797) and *The American Builder's Companion* (1806). These were based upon English examples such as *British Architect* by Abraham Swan, reissued in 1775 for an American audience; see Helen Park, *List of Architectural Books Available in America before the Revolution* (Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, 1973).
5. Ralph Adams Cram wrote *My Life in Architecture* in 1936; some twelve years earlier, the prolific Louis Sullivan had devised a new genre merging philosophy and life experience in *Autobiography of an Idea*. Authorship was an important means of promotion for American architects who, as professionals, were not allowed to advertise until the 1970s. Architects often used biographies and other writings to validate their careers, present a revisionist life-style, or attack their rivals; see Lisa Koenigsberg, "Life-Writing: First American Biographers of Architects and Their Works," in Elisabeth Blair MacDougall, ed., *The Architectural Historian in America* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1990), 41–58.
6. Only at the urging of her engineering associate Walter Steilberg was Morgan's work published, in *Architect and Engineer in California* 55 (1918), 39–107; see Sarah Boutelle, *Julia Morgan, Architect* (New York: Abbeville, 1988), 16, 46. Natalie Kampen and Elizabeth G. Grossman, "Feminism and Methodology: Dynamics of Change in the History of Art and Architecture" (Wellesley, Mass.: Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, Working Paper no. 122, 1983).
7. Reflecting the national cultural insecurity, professional journals were more likely to publish articles by foreign women; see Lisa Koenigsberg, "Mariana Van Rensselaer: An Architecture Critic in Context," in Berkeley and McQuaid, 47–48.
8. Two American women architects published architectural histories in the early twentieth century: Lois Lilley Howe and Eleanor Raymond; Keith Morgan and Richard Cheek, "History in the Service of Design: American Architect-Historians, 1870–1940," in MacDougall, 75.
9. In 1867, Louisa Tuthill wrote *True Manliness: Or, The Landscape Gardener. A Book for Boys and Girls*. Landscape design became an accepted field for women and was

- avidly promoted by Van Rensselaer and other writers; see Koenigsberg, "Mariana Van Rensselaer," 49–50. On the history of landscaping architecture in general, see Anne Peterson, "Women Take Lead in Landscape Art," *New York Times* (March 13, 1938), 1; Deborah Nevins, "The Triumph of Flora: Women and American Landscape, 1890–1935," *Antiques* 127 (April 1985), 913; and Catherine R. Brown and Celia N. Maddox, "Women and the Land: A Suitable Profession," *Landscape Architecture* 72 (May 1982), 64–69. On women in interior design, see Emma M. Tyng, "Women's Chances as Bread Winners, Part VIII: Women as Interior Decorators," *The Ladies' Home Journal* (October 1891), 4; and C. Ray Smith and Allen Tate, *Interior Design in 20th Century America: A History* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987).
10. Dolores Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981); Gwendolyn Wright, "The Model Domestic Environment: Icon or Option?" in Torre, 22–24.
 11. Middle-class women from both urban and rural contexts formed a large constituency whose commonalities overrode the particularities of locale. Their patronage made the nineteenth century into "the century of the woman's magazine"; Frank L. Moti, *A History of American Magazines, 1741–1850* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1930).
 12. Post claimed familial knowledge of architecture; she dedicated *The Personality of a House* to the "memory of the architects of my family." On the evolution of the etiquette book tradition, see Arthur Meyer Schlesinger, *Learning How to Behave: A Historical Study of American Etiquette Books* (New York: Macmillan, 1946). Post in effect anthropomorphizes various portions of the house; see Leslie Kanes Weisman, *Discrimination by Design: A Feminist Critique of the Man-Made Environment* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 92–97.
 13. Mariana Van Rensselaer, "Client and Architect," *North American Review* 151 (September 1890), 390. This article so closely captured the profession's vision of itself that the American Institute of Architects recommended it be distributed at the convention of 1890 and made Van Rensselaer an honorary member. The article was subsequently reprinted in *AABN* 40 (April 1893), 11–12; Koenigsberg, "Mariana Van Rensselaer," 45.
 14. Sarah Josepha Hale, *Manners, or Happy Homes* (Boston: J. E. Tilton, 1868), 21. Hale also successfully lobbied to make Thanksgiving Day a national holiday.
 15. Doris Cole, *From Tipi to Skyscraper: A History of Women in Architecture* (Boston: i press, 1973), 34–49.

16. On Austin's community designs, see Hayden, 242–48.
17. Helen Bosanquet, *The Family* (1906); quoted in Elizabeth Roberts, *A Woman's Place: An Oral History of Working-Class Women, 1890–1940* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), 117.
18. Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home*, 222.
19. This shift was further accelerated by the rise of modernist ideology after World War I. In many ways modernism was reactionary, responding to the female threat of mass culture. Several basic modernist tenets were antithetical to those championed in women's writing, including nationalism and traditionalism. Huyssen characterizes an ideal modernist work as displaying male characteristics of experimental (that is, scientific) approaches, autonomy, irony, ambiguity, individualism, effacement of content, and erasure of subjectivity; see Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 48, 53–55; my thanks to Anne Bermingham for the reference. On modernism as a professional ideology, see Magali Sarfatti Larson, "Emblem and Exception: The Historical Definition of the Architect's Professional Role," in Judith R. Blau, Mark E. La Gory, and John S. Pipkin, eds., *Professionals and Urban Form* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), 70–76.

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FIG. 4: Satoshi

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The Sex of Architecture brings together twenty-four provocative texts that collectively express the power and diversity of women's views on architecture today. Edited by Diana Agrest, Patricia Conway, and Leslie Kanes Weisman, three leaders in their field, this volume presents a dialogue among women historians, practitioners, theorists, and educators concerned with critical issues in architecture and urbanism.

In their insightful essays the authors explore history, public space and the city, housing, consumerism, and discourse itself. They reexamine some long-suspect "truths" – that man builds and woman inhabits; that man is outside and woman is inside; that man is public and woman is private; that culture is male and nature is female. The texts are accompanied by a rich selection of over ninety illustrations, from Vitruvius to Eileen Gray and Le Corbusier to examples of current architectural work by some of the contributors themselves.

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