

Queer and Feminine Spaces

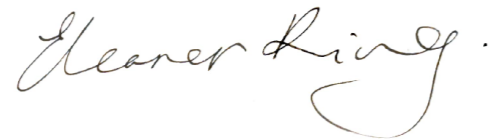
Architectures of the
everyday and
patriarchal
repression

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Statement of Own Work

This study was completed as part of the BA (Hons) Interior Architecture at the University of the West of England. The work is my own. Where the work is used or drawn on, it is attributed to the relevant source.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Most of us experience architecture every day. However, it is questionable as to whether we feel we can experience it completely, when it may not reflect our needs, or us as people. As designers, it is important to recognise that humans are complex and unique beings, varying in shape, size, race, ability, gender and sexual orientation. Despite this knowledge, it is questionable as to whether architectural design practices are considerate of this and are working to meet the needs of everyone that they serve.

In order to break down barriers into a more inclusive and fairer world, it is crucial that we analyse the existing one, and the structures that have informed what it is today. This discussion aims to focus on the themes of gender and sexual orientation- analysing how patriarchal power structures have influenced architectural design and in turn, how this has affected women and LGBT+ communities. It will attempt to dismantle the existing conditions of architectural practices in relation to sexuality and question whether now in a more accepting and equal society, architectural design has begun to sway its norms to respond to more fluid and inclusive, queer articulations of spaces.

Historically, the architectural industry has been predominately dominated by men, resulting in the built environment reflecting the needs of a traditionally heteronormative culture, and dismissing the needs of others. Whilst we are witnessing a rise in female architects- currently 29% of qualified architects in the UK are women and the gender split for architects under 30 is now at 50% (ARB, 2020), it is questionable as to whether the shifting of structure is enough to ensure that architecture is representative of all its users. Creating more equal representation within the industry is important to allow for opportunity and encourage equal representation. However, it is also important for those that hold traditionally hierarchical positions of privilege, of whom are members of the industry, to recognise the needs and identities of others within their own practices.

2.0 OVERCOMING CONVENTION

This chapter will explore varying theories and critical writings that challenge conventional patriarchal systems, with a focus on how they might have influenced architectural practices. It also aims to define who may have been/is repressed through these practices and the built environment that they shape, with a focus on gender and sexuality. It will use non-patriarchal criticisms of space and practices to gain perspective on the complex issues being addressed and understand the nature of the underlying ways in which architecture contributes to the overall system of patriarchal repression.

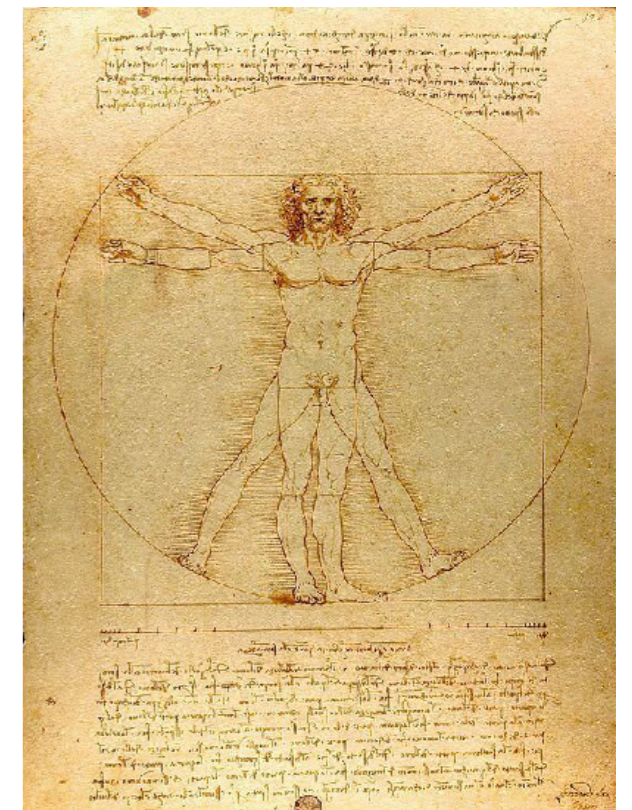


Figure 1: The Vitruvian Man (around 1486) At: Art and Object [online]

2.1 Feminist Theory

Feminist theory has been considered in order to develop an understanding of non-patriarchal criticisms of spaces. The book *Feminist Practises: interdisciplinary approaches to women in architecture* (Brown, 2011), is a compilation of various feminist texts that contribute to raising awareness around ways that feminist methodologies impact design and our relationship to the built environment (Brown, 2011, p.1). It outlines how feminist theory takes an interdisciplinary approach using anthropology, art history, cultural studies, film theory, geography, philosophy, and psychoanalysis as tools and models for critiquing architectural culture (Brown, 2011, p.18). In modern times, this has shifted to a 'rethinking of the role of theory, from a tool of analysis to a mode of practice in its own right.' (Brown, 2011, p.20). Interdisciplinarity has the potential to powerfully impact theories and practices by destabilising engagement with dominant power structures in order to allow for the emergence of new forms of knowledge (Rendell, 2011, p.23). In a world in which 'one is not born, but rather becomes a woman' (Jacques citing Beauvoir, 2015), due to the patriarchal conditions in which women are raised, this approach is key to questioning the ways in which we work (Rendell, 2011, p.22).

Throughout the history of architectural design, logocentrism and anthropomorphism, in particular male anthropomorphism has been underlying the system of architecture since Vitruvius (Agrest, p.358) (Figure 1). Following this, in the modernist era Le Corbusier's 'Le Modulor' (Figure 2), a method of proportioning created based on the Golden Section theory was used by the architect as a tool for standardising architectural design (Ramussen, 1964, p.114).

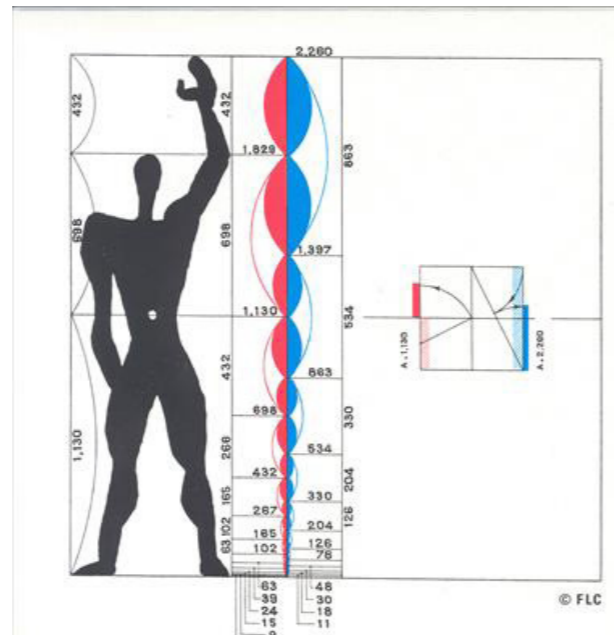


Figure 2: Le Modulor (1945) At: At: Fondation Le Corbusier [online]

In the text 'Architecture from without: Body, Logic and sex' (Agrest, 1993, pp.358-370), Agrest (1993, p.359) conveys the how the body is inscribed within architecture as the male body replacing the female body. This is problematic as the system is not only defined by what it includes, but also what it excludes (Agrest, 1993, p.358). Basing architectural proportions off the figure of an able bodied, average sized male categorically excludes any persons outside of the description, resulting in a system of repression (Agrest, 1993, p.358). Its failure to be inclusive of all that might experience it physically and metaphorically exemplifies the expectations of a patriarchal society to place the male needs as central importance.

This text has informed an understanding of where the patriarchal systems are rooted from within architectural practice, and how it has played a part in creating a symbolic order in which not everyone can fit (Agrest, 1993, p.358). It will also inform the discussion in terms of the historical nature of patriarchal design, noticing where male needs may continue to be placed as central importance and thus perhaps unconsciously disregarding the needs of females.

2.2 Queer Theory

To gain an understanding of non-patriarchal alternatives to approaching architectural thinking and designing of spaces that could be applied to existing patriarchal spaces, the development of Queer theory and its effects on the built environment has been considered. In the essay 'Home is the Place We all Share' by Oliver Vallerand (2013, pp.64-75), Vallerand defines the motivation of Queer Theorists as taking upon the feminist challenges to mainstream architectural discourse, broadening the focus from understanding how space is gendered and sexualised to suggest new ways of inhabiting space (Vallerand, 2013, p.64). The essay "Struggles for Space: Queering Straight Space: Thinking towards a queer architecture" (Jacques, 2015) offers a definition of the word 'Queer', communicating that whilst it was once associated with gay men (positively and negatively), it is now deployed from the margins of gender to undermine and contest its naturalness, political innocence or utility. This suggests that whilst in the past, the word may have been used to negatively to categorise those in minority sexual and gender communities, ownership can now be claimed of it to deconstruct the ways in which existing systems have repressed those that they effect. However, whilst some might assume that queer space is the physical manifestation of a gay community (Vallerand, 2013, p.65), an enlarged understanding is that queer space is space in the process of claiming territory in opposition to heteronormativity (Vallerand citing Reed, 2013, p.65).

Both texts have informed an understanding of the significance of Queer Theory in relation to the deconstruction of patriarchal systems rooted within architecture and how the theory can be applied not only as a tool to think about space in relation to identity, but as a powerful framework to rethink the way we design our collective environment (Vallerand citing Muñoz, 2013, p.64).

Jacques (2015) explores the significance of queer thought and practice as a response to sexism and how architectural practise contributes to the construction of repressive identities of sex, gender and sexuality (Gavroche, 2016). Queerness may be a utopian ideal (Vallerand citing Munoz, 2013, p.64) as there is not a formal aesthetic response to architecture's role in the constitution of repressive sex-gender-sexuality norms and habits, for there is no intrinsically queer house, dwelling or building (Jacques, 2015). Nevertheless, applying queer theory can contribute to challenging normative views and creating space that is continually in the process of being constructed in opposition to heteronormativity and broader prescriptive norms (Vallerand, 2013, p.65).

Applying queer theory to the study of space can underline the political importance of the built environment in the construction of self-identification, but also as a vector of power relations (Vallerand, 2013, p.p.65-66). Significantly, the theory has been used to build upon the critique of the division of the public and private spheres (Vallerand, 2013, p.65). In 19th century America separate spheres were "a historically constituted ideology of gender relations that holds that men and women occupy distinct social, affective, and occupational realms." (Vallerand citing Tocqueville, 2013, p.65). Spatially, the concept shapes discussions and understandings of space and architecture opposing the public/outside/corporate/masculine to the private/inside/domestic/feminine. Feminist critiques have argued that these oppositions are historically and socially constructed (Vallerand, 2013, p.65). The opposite nature of the public and private in relation to gender raises the question of identity categorisation. As Judith Butler (cited by Vallerand, 2013, p.65) explains, gender is created through sustained social performances, such as speech and unconscious corporeal acts. Queer theory challenges this type of identity categorization (Vallerand, 2013, p.65) offering a communitarian ideal that puts aside traditional divisions.

The texts explored inform an understanding of ways in which architectural design can transgress from normative orders (Vallerand citing Bonnevier, p.66), moving towards a system that is representative of everyone. Utilising queer theory contributes to an understanding of how architecture may reposition its limits and how buildings may become performative acts that are less confined with normative constraints (Vallerand citing Bonnevier, 2013, p.66).

2.3 Privacy and Voyeurism

Sexuality and Space, edited by Beatriz Colomina (1992), is a collection of interdisciplinary essays that explores the relationship between sexuality and space. Colomina (1992, p.10) argues that 'architecture must be thought of as a system of representation in the same way that we think of drawings, photographs, models, films or television.' She justifies this by claiming that the built object itself is a system of representation (Colomina, 1992, p.10). In a world in which the built environment plays a key role in most people's lives, one might argue that this perspective is crucial in ensuring an inclusive environment.

The power constructs of a patriarchal society can be observed through the implementation of privacy and voyeurism in architectural design. In the essay, 'The Split Wall- Domestic Voyeurism' (Colomina, 1992, p.73), that sits within the book, Colomina critically analyses Adolf Loos's domestic architecture. Colomina (1992, p.74) highlights how Loos placed great importance on the gaze within his designs. The analysis of the Moller and Muller house design (Figure 3) demonstrates how the public and private was used as a tool to control the gaze, implementing physical barriers between the spaces whilst visually they were open (Colomina, 1992, p.86). Often, this was used to create framing for the 'female' spaces that were defined by the domestic nature of the furniture (Colomina, 1992, p.81), creating a sense of voyeurism. Colomina exemplifies how a similar approach is taken in the unrealised design of the home of Josephine Baker, Paris (Figure 4). Loos makes the inhabitant, Josephine Baker the object of the visitor's gaze by placing the most intimate and sensual space- the swimming pool, at the centre of the house (1992, p.88). Loos's purposeful design choice epitomises the patriarchal tendency to ensure the female's position as the voiceless object of desire.

A sense of voyeurism is also depicted within the representation of Le Corbusier's buildings. Within the photographs, the gaze is controlled so that the female figure appears vulnerable (Colomina, 1992, p.102). A sense of hierarchy is also implied by ensuring that women are always facing away from the camera (so that only her figure is

visible), and she rarely occupies the same space as males (Colomina, 1992, p.104). This power play is also exemplified through Corbusier's drawings. For example, in a drawing for the Wanner project (Figure 5), the female figure admires the male figure from a separate space whilst the male figure's gaze appears to be towards the exterior of the building at 'the world' (Colomina, 1992, p.104). Patriarchal positions of power within architecture in the modernist era can be recognised through these representations and inform an understanding of the subtle ways in which they play a role in the repressive narrative.

These examples have played a key role in informing how the physical design of space and spatial representation may be read in relation to sexuality. Furthermore, they exemplify further the development of patriarchal practices in architecture throughout time, providing evidence that allows for contextual understanding of current approaches. Colomina (1992) explores the user/viewer's experience, exemplifying how the architect's choices can determine who may experience empowerment, or vulnerability. This research has therefore contributed to an understanding of the control of 'the gaze' as a tool to inflict voyeurism through examples of work from prominent figures within the history of architectural design.



Figure 3: Moller House- Loos, A. (1927) Plan and section tracing the journey of the gaze from the sitting room back to the garden In: Colomina, 1992, Sexuality and Space

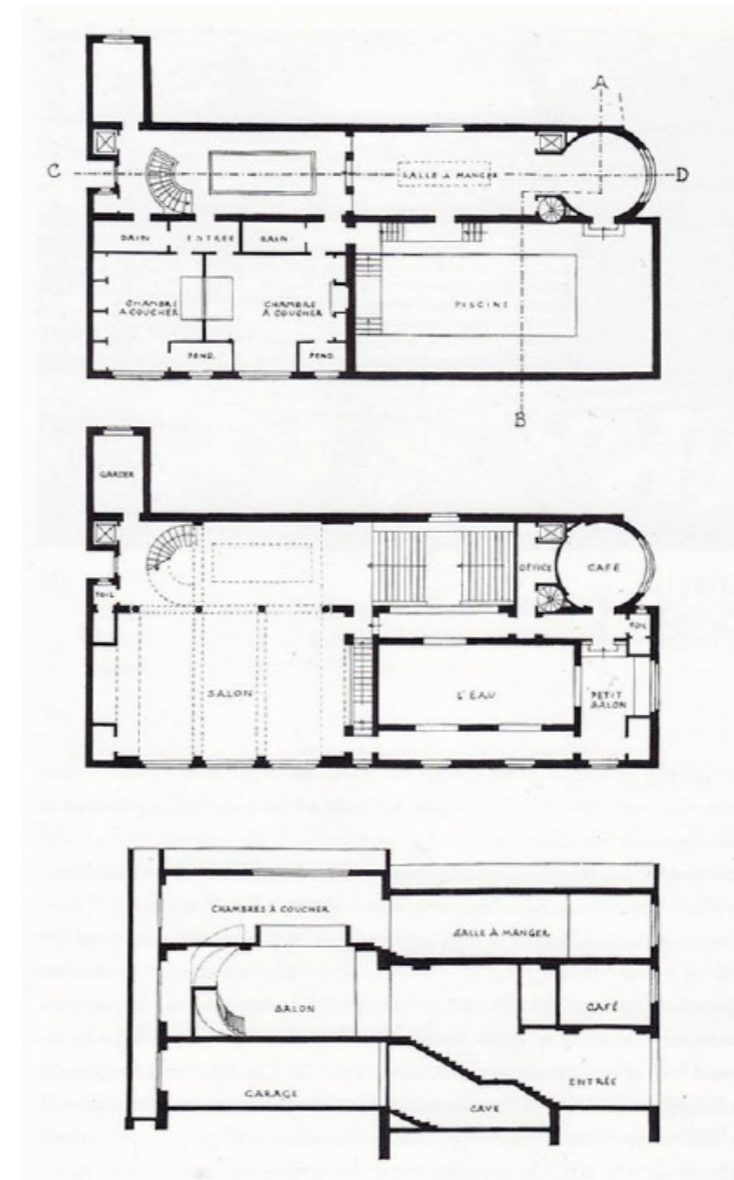


Figure 4: Loos, A. (1928) Josephine Baker House- Plans of first and second floors In: Colomina, 1992, Sexuality and Space

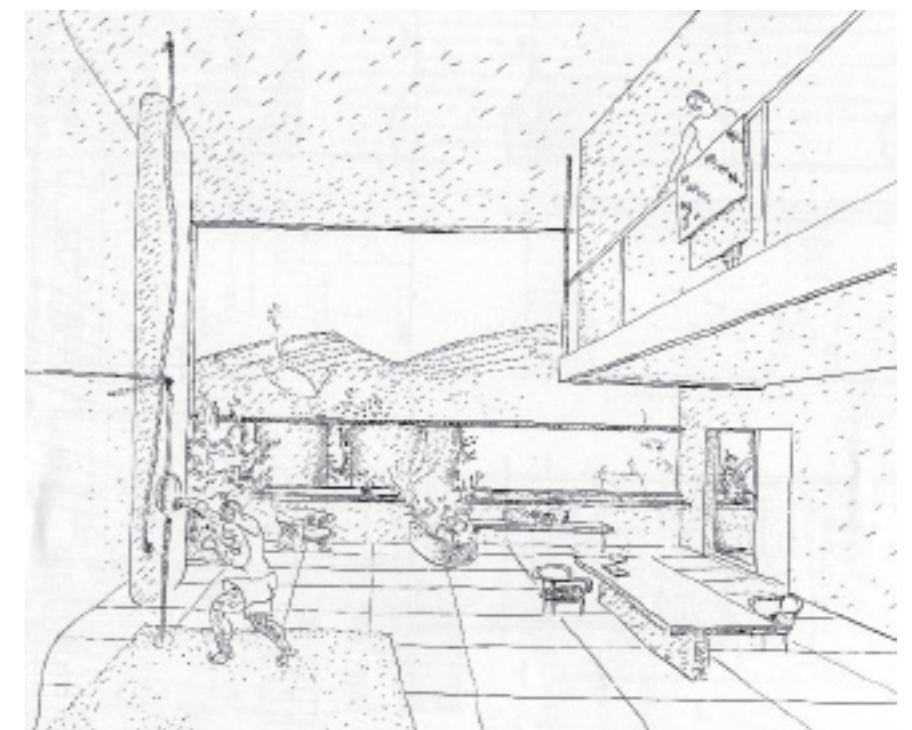


Figure 5: Corbusier, Le. (Unknown) Wanner Project At: JD Design Inspiration [online]

4.0 Typological Spaces and the Patriarchal Forces Behind their Design

4.1 Public Restrooms – architecture as a tool to facilitate vulnerability

3.0 Process- Discourse of the Everyday

The research that has been undertaken will be used to inform an exploration of how architectural design has responded to cultural positions of femininity and those in marginalised sexual communities within the design practices of typological everyday structures. As Michel de Certeau states in 'The Practice of Everyday Life' (1984, p.93), by exploring the everyday 'we are able to escape the imaginary totalizations produced by the eye'. Furthermore, by deconstructing the everyday we can define practices that sit outside of the geometrical and geographical realms exploring 'an anthropological poetic and mythical experience of space' (de Certeau, 1984, p.93).

De Certeau (1984, p.93) highlights that ordinary persons write an urban "text" without being able to read it, manifolding a story of the city. It is therefore valuable to explore how people interact and respond to space in order to shape these narratives. The exploration will focus on three "ordinary" typologies of space including the public restroom, bars/nightclubs and the dwelling. The spaces will centre the analysis of architecture as a tool for segregation, critiquing the impact the design of these everyday spaces may have upon those they affect. Each spatial typology has been selected as being key cultural reflections of architectural designs relationship to cultural and political climates in terms of sexual and gender repression. The objective of this choice is to develop a focused discussion around architecture and its power to facilitate patriarchal systems within the built environment and those who experience it in the everyday.

Furthermore, the discussion will question ways in which future practices may move away from patriarchal influences in order to create more fluid, inclusive and equally representative spaces. The approach to the criticisms of the existing nature of these spaces will be informed by non-patriarchal examples of critical texts from queer and feminist theorists and existing exemplifications of ways in which the systems may be deconstructed.

Sex-segregated public toilets are commonplace in most countries in the world. One might find the subject trivial, as a banal architectural system that contributes to the everyday lives of people. However, it is important to analyse what the ritual practice of implementing segregated facilities tells us about the socialisation of women and men, the relationship between them and about the very concept of sex itself (Overall, 2007, p.76). It is argued that segregation of facilities 'represents, reinforces and communicates assumptions about vulnerability privacy, safety, and the integrity of the body' (Overall, 2007, p.76). To segregate by means of gender identity supports the general feeling that women should feel more shame and vulnerability in connection with acts of elimination (Overall, 2007, p.76). One might argue that due to female specific needs such as the effects of childbirth on continence, women's toilets require a difference in design (Overall citing Greed, 2007, p.78). Whilst these requirements should be carefully and sensitively considered in the design process, it is questionable as to whether segregated facilities are the solution (Overall, 2007, p.79), or whether perhaps intelligent architectural thought could assist in creating a safe environment that deconstructs the sense of shame generally inflicted upon women in relation sexuality.

It is important to assess the role of architectural design in implementing this type of segregation, and whether perhaps reflection within the industry is necessary in order to assure the facilities users have a positive experience of this type of space. Safety is a key factor to be considered within the conversation of the topic.

The segregation of facilities is often justified to protect cisgender occupants (mainly women) from violent and sexual attacks (Stalled!, 2018). However, it is often the case that the implementation of segregation can exacerbate attacks (Overall, 2007, p.82) as assailants have reasonable expectations that they will find potential victims in a ladies room (Overall citing Ayers, 2007, p.82). Furthermore, the question of identity is raised when one is asked to select a choice of either male or female facilities. As mentioned before, gender is usually perceived through sustained social performances, such as speech and unconscious corporeal acts (Vallerand citing Butler, 2013, p.63). However, 'there are many ways of expressing one's gender independent from biological sex that don't conform to the binary of sex segregated bathrooms' (Stalled! The Film, 2018). This raises issues for transgender (particularly transgender women) and non-binary individuals, as often the segregation of facilities has sadly led to violent attacks against them (Stalled!, 2018).

Queer theory could be applied here, to achieve the transformation of a straight, hierarchal space (Jacques). The project 'Stalled!' embodies an example of this type of transformation that provides an inclusive, safe and sustainable solution to its users (Stalled!, 2018). Whilst it is unclear as to whether queer theory influenced the project's architects in their design choices, a new way of constructing a space has been approached here that incorporates Muñoz's idea of queer space- allowing everyone, regardless of their self-identifications to experience space fully and safely (Vallerand citing Muñoz, 2013, p.73).

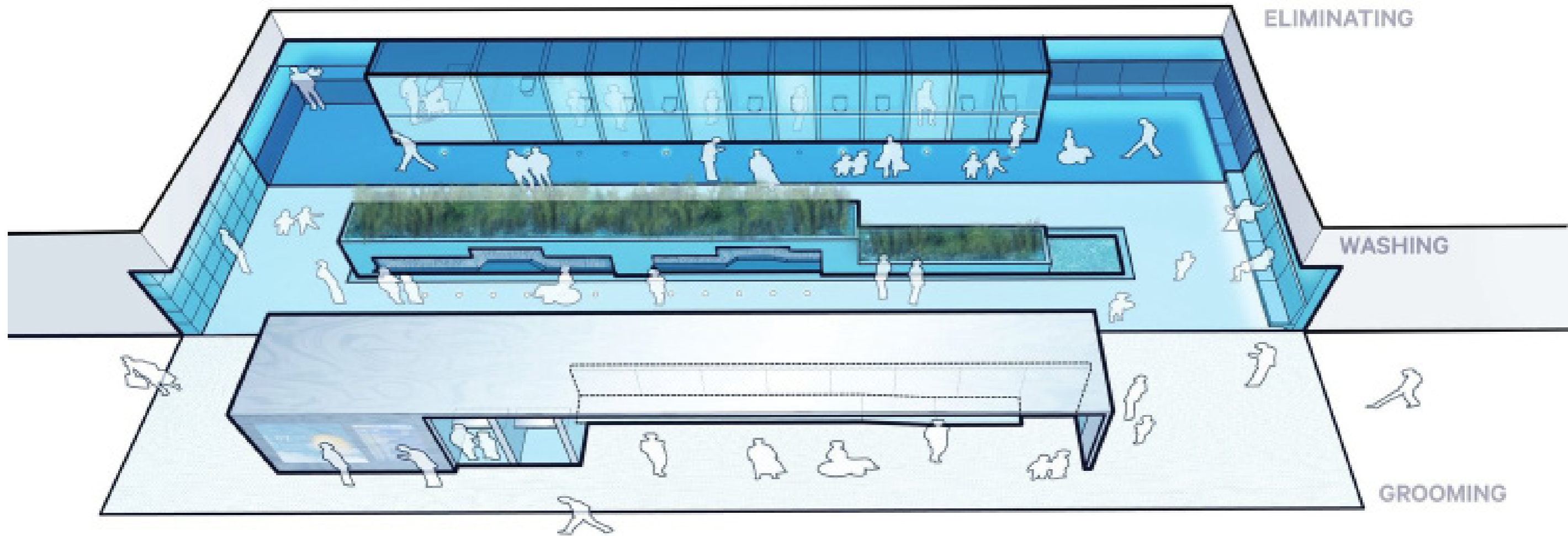


Figure 6: Stalled! (2018) Prototype: Airport- Activity Zones At: Stalled![online]

The project champions a multi-user solution driven by inclusive criteria that calculates gender as one aspect in a broad field of factors (Figure 6) (Stalled!, 2018). The outcome is a design that includes secure rooms for affinity group gatherings and expansive precincts that promote the mixing of non-conforming bodies in public space.' (Stalled!, 2018). The design also eliminates the typical corridor wall that separates facilities from the rest of the building, making them a porous extension of the hallway and thus improving the safety and visibility of the space (Stalled! The Film, 2018).

A public restroom is something that everyone should feel safe and comfortable using. Their design can influence how the user will feel in using them, and therefore it is crucial for architectural designers to approach them with sensitivity and awareness. As Vallerand (2013, p.73) states, it is time to begin creating spaces that refrain from relying on the normative "here and now" and instead bring a potential for a performative provocation, shifting the patriarchal patterns we currently sit within.

4.2 Bars and Nightclubs – architecture as a tool for positive segregation

The presence of bars and nightclubs has been an integral part of LGBT+ culture, with the ethos of the LGBT+ movement birthed from Stonewall, a small gay bar in Greenwich village (Perry, 2019, p.852). Stonewall was a refuge for the LGBT+ community, safe within, in spite of the structural stigma outside of the bar (Croff citing Kissack, 2017, p.233). The public and private spheres are important to recognise as themes within this discussion. However, whilst the private sphere was mentioned previously in relation to the domestic realm (Vallerand, 2013, p.65), in this instance perhaps we can draw connections between the private sphere and a sense of shame. In the study 'Hidden Rainbows: Gay Bars as Safe Havens in a Socially Conservative Area Since the Pulse Nightclub Massacre' by Julie M. Croff et. al (pp.233-240, 2017) 'seeks to compare gay bar attendance and feelings of comfort and safety in gay bars in regions of the USA with varying structural stigma' (Croff, 2017, p.233). Within the study, Croff (2017, p.234) recognises that in areas of lesser acceptance of the LGBT+ community in the USA, gay and lesbian bars might be in isolated industrial locations, and relatively difficult to identify as gay or lesbian bars from the street. This suggests that there is a hidden nature to the community in these areas, highlighting how the built environment can inflict a hierarchical tone, and play a part in lessening the presence of a community. In contrast, in more liberal areas, the urban centralization of gay and lesbian bars creates a safe and protected neighborhood (Croff citing Whittle, 2017, p.234).

One might argue that despite the original reason for these spaces rooting from judgement or shame, the private sphere is necessary in order to ensure safety and a sense of place for the community- implementing positive segregation within the built environment, when the larger cultural environment makes providing a safe space necessary. Nevertheless, it has been argued that the segregation of the LGBT+ community through these spaces is now unnecessary due to more accepting cultures (Croff, 2017, p.233). However, hostility towards those in sexually

marginalised communities is sadly still prominent, with many states in America continuing to propose and pass bills which target or restrict the freedoms of LGBT+ persons (Croff, 2017, p.233). This raises the question of geographical context, suggesting that "the need for bars and nightclubs for those in sexually marginalised communities is dependent on the cultural overtones of the place itself." These cultural overtones may also affect the possibility of these spaces becoming a target for violent attacks such as the Pulse nightclub massacre in 2016 (Croff, 2017, p.233). As Croff states, "the safety of individuals within gay and lesbian bars within the USA may be examined on a continuum, dependent on the stigma associated with being openly LGBT+ within that region" (Croff citing Hasenbush et. al, 2017, p.234). Therefore, perhaps it is crucial that the placement and visibility of these spaces within the built environment is carefully considered.

"the need for bars and nightclubs for those in sexually marginalised communities is dependent on the cultural overtones of the place itself."

Although the study is limited to the geographical context of America, it provides an insight into the significance of the built environment's relationship to the users experience of bars intended for those in sexually marginalised communities. In the study, Croff (2017, p.237) concludes that the presence of LGBT+ bars and nightclubs are important to facilitate quality interactions among LGBT individuals and might promote appreciation of diversity in all aspects and improve psychological and long-term physical health outcomes in the community. The spaces are also important in order to increase opportunities to socialise with other community members (Croff, 2017, p.237). However, there is a new type of urban landscape surfacing in some parts of the world that are free of structural stigma- sometimes described as 'post-homosexual communities'. In these landscapes, all spaces are safe for LGBT persons, diminishing the need for specific safe spaces (Croff citing Nash, 2017, p.234). The fluidity of this type of space embodies Jacques and Muñoz's 'utopian' ideas of queer space, as a reality.

The analysis of built environment structures and their effects on the livelihoods of members of sexually marginalised communities demonstrates the power of implementing more fluid landscapes may have upon promoting feelings of acceptance and belonging. Nevertheless, it also highlights the power of the political standing of the area in terms of acceptance, and it's influence on facilitating these non-patriarchal spaces. Therefore, it may be argued that this type of positive segregation maintains a necessity for LGBT+ community members to feel safe and accepted, until hostility towards sexually marginalised communities is diminished and 'post-homosexual communities' become a possibility everywhere.

4.3 The Dwelling – the architectural representation of the nucleus of society

It could be argued that the dwelling and its societal representation reinforces sex-role stereotypes (Weisman, 1981, p.2), and that architecture has traditionally played a part in supporting this. For example, the 'man of the house' is often afforded places of authority such as his own study, whilst women are typically attached to spaces of service such as playing the role as a hostess in the living room, a cook in the kitchen, and a lover in the bedroom (Weisman, 1981, p.2). As mentioned previously, there is a tendency for the domestic sphere to be related to women and the public relating to 'the man's world', enforcing segregation that reinforces the emotionally monolithic stereotype of women and men (Weisman, 1981, p.2). However, it is questionable as to how much the role of the architectural design itself of the western dwelling has played a part in enforcing patriarchal systems and whether perhaps, we have moved away from them today.

Although the gendering of architecture is not straightforwardly visible since the values and ideologies architecture embodies are normally taken as gender-free, as a system of representation it is saturated with meanings which contribute to our culturally constructed identity (Rey Lico citing Wigley, 2001, p.31). Therefore, when analysing historical development of the typical shell of a western dwelling, we can understand how it might implicate a spatial order and a system of female surveillance which encourages the relatability between the dwelling and female domestication (Rey Lico, 2001, p.37). As mentioned before, Adolf Loos's domestic architecture exemplified this type of surveillance by controlling the gaze of the viewer (Colomina, 1992, p.86). It can also be recognised in the design of Mies van der Rohe's house for Edith Farnsworth (Figure 7), a single woman doctor, where the architect's conservative views on gender shape the design as he attempted to stage a woman's life and her control over her domestic space (Vallerand, 2013, p.71).

Systems that enforce the relatability between the dwelling and female domestication are also rooted in examples of standardised housing such



Figure 7: Van der Rohe, M. (1951) Farnsworth House
At: Chicago Architecture Centre [online]

as the British Victorian and Edwardian by-law terraced houses and the inter-war semi-detached house (Figure 8) (Roberts, 1990, p.263). Within these early examples, domestic spaces were confined to the rear of the house, reinforcing the notion that the work carried out by women should be removed from the public gaze (Roberts, 1990, p.263). This placement reduces the women's work to a factitious status that reinforces the patriarchal power structure (Rey Lico, 2001, p.34). In more recent times, architects have implemented 'open plan' spaces within the home in which the kitchen, living and dining room may occupy one space, leading to the ground floor becoming an area for entertainment and shifting the boundary between public and private space (Roberts, 1990, pp.265-266).



Figure 8: Roberts, M. (1990). Plan of a by law terraced house
In: Roberts, M. (1990) Gender and Housing- The Impact of Design Built Environment. Women and the Designed Environment [online]

However, it could be argued that this has reinforced the division of gender and class status due to further expectations for women to maintain a higher standard of cleanliness within the home (Roberts, 1990, p.266). This sense of service within a dwelling that the woman did not build, or was built for them, amounts to feelings of homelessness (Grosz, p.219) and lack of ownership, reinforcing the patriarchal power structure between the man and the woman.

Connections can also be drawn between the private sphere in relation to the dwelling and those in sexually marginalised societies. The notable queer space theory essay 'Closet, Clothes, disclosure' (1996, p.342) by Henry Urbach, explores how the advent of the built-in wardrobe (Figure 9) inspired the 'In the closet' metaphor and how it was used as a social and literary convention that narrated homosexuality as a spectacle of veiled disclosure (Urbach, 1996, p.346). The built-in wardrobe provided concealment without eliminating access. (Urbach, 1996, p.345) and utilising it as a metaphor communicated a social order that ascribes normalcy to heterosexuality and the hidden nature of homosexuality as promiscuous and degenerate (Urbach, 1996, p.342). The necessity for homosexuality to retain a hidden nature is exemplified in the design of Harwell Hamilton Harris's Weston Havens House (1941), in which the house plays a protective role for its original owner's queer "private" life, while simultaneously presenting a very strong "public" image (Vallerand citing Adams, 2013, p.71). In contrast, as stated by Alice Friedman, Philip Johnson's Glass House (1949) is a commentary from the gay architect on the invisibility of homosexuality in mid-twentieth century society, blurring the division of the interior and exterior to create a fluid space (Vallerand, 2013, p.71).

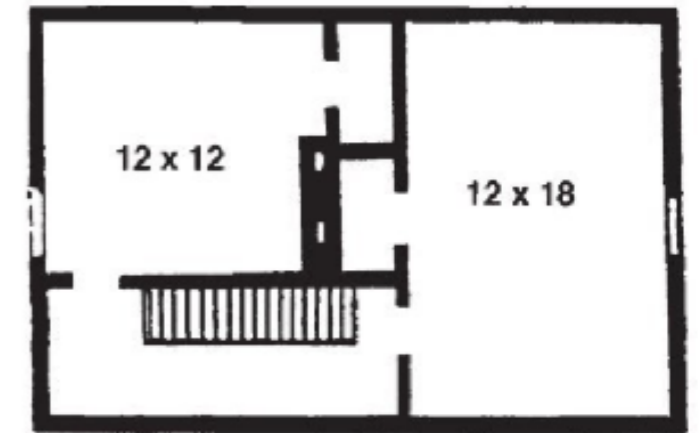


Figure 9: Urbach, H. (1996) Second-floor plan for a labourer's cottage showing closet hidden within the wall cavity In: Penner, B., ed., (2002) Gender space architecture: an interdisciplinary introduction [online].

Divisions by the public and private are not a product of housing design but are a part of the design process and the building itself (Roberts, 1990, p.266). Therefore, it is the process that must be questioned as the process that we build and the forms themselves embody cultural values and imply standards of behavior which affect us all (Weisman, 1981, p.1). In order to deconstruct the existing patriarchal process within dwelling design it is crucial for designers to engage with existing conservative social meanings and values of houses before they can challenge them (Roberts, 1990, p.267).

5.0- Moving Towards a Non-Patriarchal World

As Vallerand suggests (2013, p.73), the evolution of queer theory towards a more relational understanding, exemplified by Muñoz, suggests that as we move from theoretical investigations towards buildings and communities, it is necessary to renew our understandings of queer utopia's potentiality. In order to move forward and make these utopias a reality, a blurring of traditional understandings of public and private, and attempt to open windows onto new potentialities, towards freeing queer futurity needs to take place (Vallerand, 2013, p.64). One might argue that whilst architecture should always be fluid and encompass everything and everyone- compromise will always have to prevail.

For example, in design of Pumpwerk Neukölln by Nils Wenk and Jan Wiese (Figures 10 and 11), a studio-house in Berlin that was converted from a water pumping station in 2006-2008 demonstrates an attempt to create an ideal space that eschews the usual dichotomy between (private) living and (public) working, while simultaneously presenting a clear critique of common domestic planning, setting aside traditional family models in the layering of its different functions (Vallerand, 2013, p.70). It purposefully puts the visitor in close proximity to the artists who may be performing intimate acts or working- reversing the private and public expectations (Vallerand, 2013, p.71). However, in examples such as these, the tension between utopian desires and liveable spaces don't always produce a positive result, especially in terms of meeting universal needs (Vallerand, 2013, p.73). This is exemplified through the flaws within the Pumpwerk such as the experience of working and living in the same environment causing constraints on the inhabitants (Vallerand, 2013, p.73). Nevertheless, the contributions that architecture can make to addressing social and political issues won't always be formal or structural, but may embody an ongoing exploration with some solutions that emerge of how to live and inhabit space (Jacques paraphrasing Grosz).

Elmgreen and Dragset are artists of whom have been linked to queer theory. They state that "the term 'power structure' is misleading since

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(Vallerand citing Elmgreen and Dragset, 2013, p.68)

no structure can impose authority in itself. It is only the acceptance of the structure that creates the notion of power." (Vallerand citing Elmgreen and Dragset, 2013, p.68). Therefore, it is perhaps important for architectural practice to begin with refusing acceptance of the patriarchal structures that lie within the industry and begin the process of queering space in order to stand at the threshold between order and disorder, the liminal point-moment of freedom, in permanent metamorphosis (Jacques, 2015). Whilst queer theory initially developed from a rethinking of gender and sexuality categories and their performativity, it has now evolved to encompass broader discourses on all identity categories, engaging a larger anti-oppression struggle and including divergent views (Vallerand, 2013, p.66). Both feminist theory and queer theory share a commonality in that they are approached with the motivation to break down barriers into a non-patriarchal world.

Therefore, perhaps it is the driving forces behind these theories that designers need to embody into their work- a drive to create spaces that are inclusive and that demonstrate sensitivity for whoever may experience them.

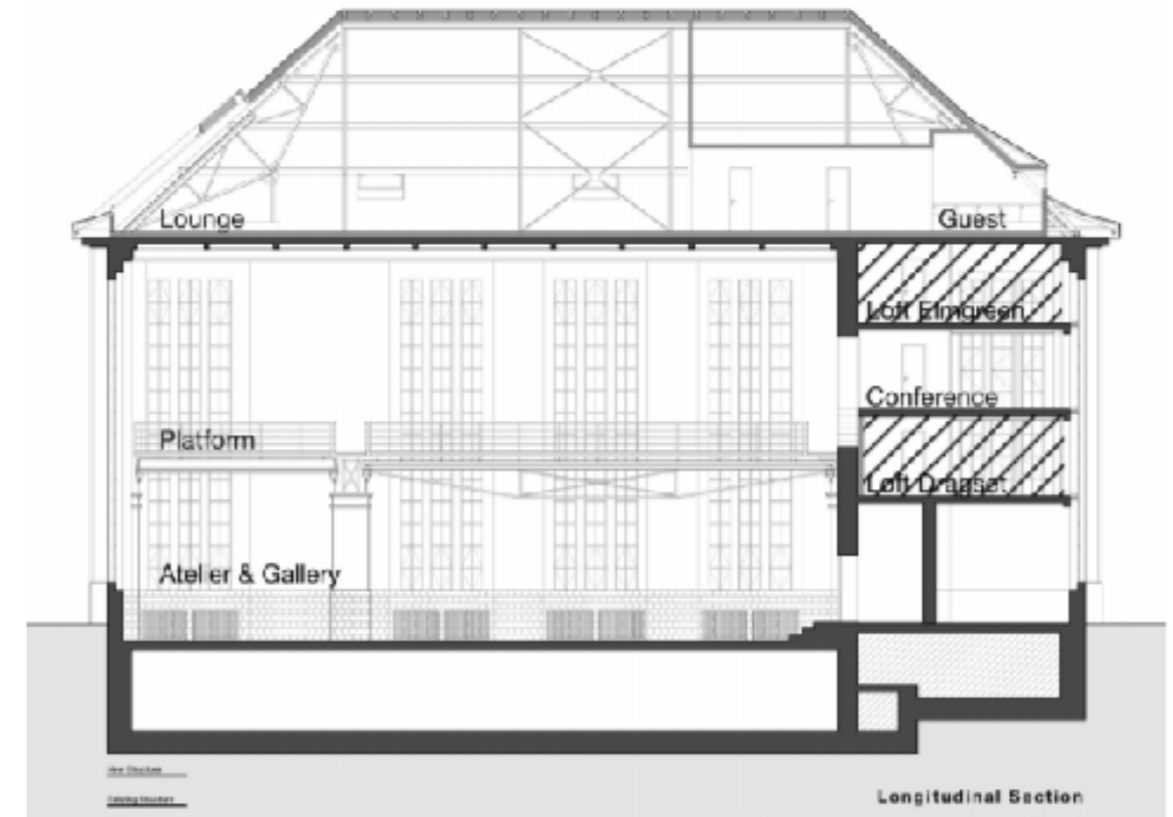


Figure 10: Wenk, N. (2007-2008). Pumpwerk Neukölln- section In: Vallerand, O. (2013) Home Is the Place We All Share Building Queer Collective Utopias. Journal of Architectural Education [online].



Figure 11: Wenk und Wiese Architekten (2007-2008). Pumpwerk Neukölln Atic Floor At: JWA Berlin [online]

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Figure 1:

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Figure 5:

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Figure 9:

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Figure 10:

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Figure 11:

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