

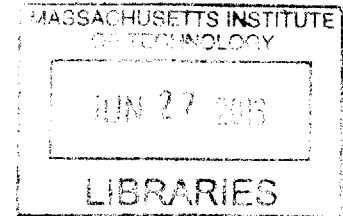
Notes on Sexuality & Space

ARCHIVES

by

Samuel Ray Jacobson

B.A. Architecture
Rice University, 2010



SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE IN PARTIAL
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ABSTRACT

Very little has been written on sexuality in architectural scholarship. *Sexuality & Space* (Princeton Architectural Press, 1992) contains the proceedings of an eponymous 1990 conference at Princeton University, and was both the first and last book-length publication dedicated to a comprehensive discourse on sexual identity within the discipline of architecture. While symposium organizer and proceedings editor Beatriz Colomina writes in the proceedings' introduction that the occasion's effort to "raise the question of 'Sexuality and Space'" was but "one small event" in an ongoing discourse, that discourse failed to materialize. To the extent that feminist theorists conspicuously ignored in architectural discourse and practice are addressed by *Sexuality & Space*, the "interdisciplinary exchange in which theories of sexuality are reread in architectural terms and architecture is reread in sexual terms," by its essays, asserts the very silence that its inquiry ostensibly alleviated. By carefully examining the constative impact of literary style within the publication *Sexuality & Space*—that is, by looking at how the use of language, therein, impacts that document's inscription of its intellectual and historical context—I have come to a better understanding of how that publication was both the beginning and end of the conversation it sought to inaugurate. "Notes on *Sexuality and Space*" investigates three related essays from that publication: Laura Mulvey's "Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity," Beatriz Colomina's "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism," and Mark Wigley's "Untitled: The Housing of Gender." Each investigated essay has been given a corresponding chapter. My method has been close reading, or the sustained interpretation of brief passages of text. Paying close attention to individual words, syntax, and the order in which ideas unfold as they are read, I have developed a comprehensive narrative of how these three essays, together, both instantiate and negate a shared discourse. To these ends, this thesis raises serious questions about what it means to have historiography after silence, and what it means to re-open an already closed discourse.

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Figure 1 *Notorious* publicity still N. 105, MGM Studios, 1946.

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I thank Lexx Gray, for being my friend, and Roland Betancourt, for loving me, somehow.

With apologies to Beatriz Colomina, who I've always admired.

For my mother.

“PANDORA: TOPOGRAPHIES OF THE MASK AND CURIOSITY”

LAURA MULVEY AND THE STATUS OF THE ANTECEDENT

At the beginning of “Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity,” Laura Mulvey takes note of her self-reflexivity in composing that essay. In her words, “I became conscious of a dawning sense of *déjà vu*. While thinking I was mapping new ground, I found myself back with themes that had frequently figured in my work before” (Mulvey, “Topographies” 54). Where “Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity” encounters once more Greek myth, Hitchcock, psychoanalytic theory, and the look in cinema, Mulvey proceeds as if through a “new turn of the kaleidoscope,” representing familiar themes in unfamiliar ways.

Mulvey’s kaleidoscopic turn is appropriate, when examined in context. In its own way, each essay included in *Sexuality & Space* takes a similar approach, presenting material that had already been published in a new configuration. This is particularly true of the two other texts considered in this thesis: “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism” combines writings from a magazine Beatriz Colomina worked on during her college years, a co-authored book, and articles published in *Assemblage* and *AA Files*;¹ Mark Wigley’s “Untitled: The Housing of Gender” consists entirely of historiography. Moreover, in both “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism” and “Untitled: The Housing of Gender,” Mulvey’s essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (1975) is cited extensively. These citations are offered in a manner that makes the essay seem emblematic of the “kinds of work on representation and desire developed over the last fifteen years by feminist theorists” (Colomina, introduction to *S&S* n.p.) that the 1990 symposium intended to bring to the attention of architectural discourse and practice.

¹ Respectively,

Quetglas, José. “Lo Placentero.” *Carrier De La Ciutat* 9-10 (1980): 2. Print. Note, cited in Colomina, “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism” 92; for an in-depth discussion of this citation, see the second chapter of this thesis. Print.

Risselada, Max, and Beatriz Colomina. *Raumplan versus Plan Libre: Adolf Loos and Le Corbusier 1919-1930*. New York: Rizzoli, 1988. Print.

Colomina, Beatriz. “Le Corbusier and Photography” *Assemblage* 4 (1987). Print. Note, cited in Colomina, “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism” 112 (footnote 47).

Colomina, Beatriz. “Intimacy and Spectacle: The Interior of Adolf Loos.” *AA Files* 20 (1990): 5-15. Print. Note, cited in Wigley, “Untitled: The Housing of Gender” 385.

Reading laterally, it is apparent that a shared interest in unveiling is what established “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” as the primary conceptual antecedent to both “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism” and “Untitled: The Housing of Gender.” For example, in “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism,” Beatriz Colomina considers the female body as signified in representations of space; as Colomina makes evident in her essay, media such as photography and film undermine and dematerialize architecture’s gendered “organizing geometry.” Additionally, in “Untitled: The Housing of Gender” Mark Wigley considers the regulation of the female body through spatial and disciplinary boundaries; as Wigley writes, “subordinated femininity is produced historically” by the evolution of domestic interiors and discourse on exterior ornament. In both of these essays, dialectics of interior and exterior are derived from connotations implicit in the female/male gender binary; in the terms of “Untitled: The Housing of Gender,” this is “the role of sexuality in the construction of space.” Following this proposition, the role of the architectural historian is to make explicit these implicit connotations. Such performance is analogous to Laura Mulvey’s demonstration of how the unconscious of patriarchal society has structured film form in “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.”

While it is unveiling that captures the attention of Colomina and Wigley, the veil itself is the subject of “Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity.” It is through the figure of the veil that Mulvey can speak to the spatial concepts of interest to her architectural audience. In the essay, Mulvey considers the image of the female body as a sign, and analyzes it in terms its symbolic topography. In this manner, the exploration of cinematic tropes speaks to issues of ontology in space. As “Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity” explains, the topography of the female body in cinema both conceals and reproduces anxieties projected onto the feminine within the patriarchal psyche. Beginning with an extract from Alfred Hitchcock’s *Notorious* (1946), Mulvey explores how narrative clichés are translated into characters in art and drama, informed by the aesthetics of gender. Because representations of the mythic figure Pandora in different media² involve a shared iconography, Mulvey argues that the figure of Pandora presents “an intermittent strand of patriarchal mythology and misogyny” that extends “across the ages” (Mulvey, “Topographies” 63). The spatial manifestation of this mythology derives from “the inside/out polarization” in castration anxiety, iconographically represented in images of the female body. Depictions of Pandora by men in art, psychoanalysis, and cinema are each in their own way generated by castration anxiety, a fetish whereby “an appropriate object is substituted to stand in for the missing penis” (68). In this way, fetish depends on topography, where the psyche produces a signifier (Pandora) who functions as a mask, which veils a trauma which cannot itself be signified (castration).

Because the concept of topography bridges the symbolic and spatial, as well as space and its representation, it functions as a fulcrum between Mulvey’s interest in signification and her interlocutors’ interests in media and the built environment. In both “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” and “Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and

² in Renaissance painting, early twentieth century science fiction, Freudian psychoanalysis, and contemporary consumer goods, specifically

Curiosity,” signifiers articulate topography because they *are spatial* rather than because they *refer to spaces*. Consider, for example, Mulvey’s depiction of cinematography in Hitchcock’s *Notorious*:

*The camera itself emphasizes the look of curiosity, tracking with Ingrid Bergman’s point of view as she surreptitiously and inquisitively looks for clues. Again, the chain of signifiers builds up metonymically, linking together the images of space and enclosure from the house itself, the double clanging of the front door, to the montage of cupboards that she looks into. I would argue that the **topography** of the mise-en-scène enhances the spatial implications of the look of curiosity and also reflects the spatial configuration of the heroine’s masquerade.* (Mulvey, “Topographies” 65; emphasis mine)

Here, the physical interval traversed by a tracking shot is analogous to its corresponding duration in cinematic narrative. As Mulvey describes it, space is configured by the gaze, which is in turn subject to the symbolic signification of what it sees. This process occurs in space, but the space in which it occurs is only a medium.

The “space of secrets” Mulvey analyzes from *Notorious* and her study of iconographically similar depictions of the figure Pandora emerges from the gendered aesthetics of curiosity rather than a pre-existing territory. While Mulvey analyzes realities manifest in space, the spaces she depicts are secondary to their intersection of the feminine, memory, and cliché. Paraphrasing Dora and Irwin Panofsky’s iconological study *Pandora’s Box* (1956), Mulvey argues that the figure of Pandora can be identified by the presence of a box, across art history. The connotation of woman and box, together, is dependent on their juxtaposition in space.³ The space of this juxtaposition and that to which it refers is represented by Mulvey—for example within the engraving by Abraham van Diepenbeck and drawing by Paul Klee identified by the Panofskys in their book⁴ and cited by Mulvey in her essay—but only insofar as this depiction illuminates an argument about symbolic signification.⁵

With this in mind it can be said that the evocative nature of Pandora’s spatial imagery is phantasmagorical, in the literal sense of the word. Like phantasmagoria, in the literal sense of the word, the “intermittent strand of patriarchal mythology and misogyny” evident in historical depictions of Pandora and her box consists of optical effects and illusions, a constantly shifting succession of things seen and imagined, and bizarre assemblages: images and the cinema are discussed, the representations

³ Mulvey writes, “[t]he reverberations of connotation between Pandora and her box depend on contiguity: both the juxtaposition of the figure to the box and the topography of the female body as an enclosing space link metonymically to other enclosing spaces” (“Topographies” 63).

⁴ Panofsky, Dora, and Erwin Panofsky. *Pandora’s Box: The Changing Aspects of a Mythical Symbol*. New York: Pantheon, 1956. Print. 77, 113

⁵ As Mulvey notes, this method of spatial depiction has a precedent in the work of Sigmund Freud. “Freud used the concept of a topography to convey the structure of the psyche, the relation, that is, between the unconscious, preconscious, and conscious minds. He used spatial imagery to visualize the dream work, describing the manifest content as a façade, concealing the latent dream thoughts. The image of concealment, of veiling, seems to imply that one lies, like a layer, behind the other” (“Topographies” 66).

produced are all dependent upon the manipulation of the visual, and the complete set of art historical artifacts considered is eccentric to Mulvey's particular investigation. The etymology of "phantasmagoria" captures this last, enigmatic nature of Laura Mulvey's desired "reformulation" of Pandora's iconography. While Pandora characterizes clichés of femininity as a transgressive and dangerous enigma, "Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity" resituates these motifs within a transgressive, feminist curiosity. In so doing Mulvey leverages the spectral quality of phantasmagoria, as derived from the Old French *fantasme*, in the interest of a collective, hermeneutic effort: "an investigation of the slippages between signifier and signified, that characterize both the structure of the individual psyche and the shared fantasies of a common culture" (Mulvey, "Topographies" 66).

It is also noteworthy that phantasmagoria, in the theatrical (rather than literal) sense, is politicized within Laura Mulvey's essays. In "Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity," the interval between the iconography of Pandora and Bergman's portrayal of "the look of curiosity" inhabited by her character (Alicia Hoberman) is analogous to the interval between the spectral terror of phantasmagoric theater and the collective, affective pleasure of the cinema.⁶ In *Notorious* the spatial register of *mise-en-scène* enhances the experience of feminine curiosity so that it can be "transmuted into a pleasure of decipherment;" in this way, the "mystery and threat" of female sexuality signified by Pandora's Box can be "interpreted as a curiosity about the mystery she herself personifies" (Mulvey, "Topographies" 65-6, paraphrased liberally). As Mulvey writes, the experience of cinema amplifies this phenomenon by translating the imaginary into the symbolic. Inasmuch as Pandora functions as a collective mnemonic (imaginary) symbol, her presence in cinema materializes the anxiety she signifies in an emotionally resonant form.⁷ In this way, narrative is transformed into a collective experience.

As Mulvey writes in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," when accompanied by psychoanalytic theory this transformation can advance the understanding of the patriarchal status quo as exemplified by the scopophilic gaze. In contrast to the symbolic space of film, the topography of built objects resists connotation. Charged with the responsibility for use, architecture lacks the "dislocation of word and image" characteristic of cinema in Mulvey's description; while film is viewed, architecture is

⁶ Invented in France in the late 18th century, phantasmagoria is a theatrical technique which uses a "magic lantern" to project frightening images onto walls and screens; this form of projection is one of the many precursors of film.

⁷ "[Certain] images persist through history, giving private reverie a shortcut to a gallery of collective fantasy, inhabited by monsters and heroes, heroines and femme fatales. To my mind, these images and stories function like collective mnemonic symbols, and allow ordinary people to stop and wonder or weep, desire or shudder, resurrecting for the time being long lost psychic structures. The symbolic space of cinema allows for the resurrection of these persistent figures in the present imaginary: The cinema, with its strange, characteristic dislocation between word and image, fulfills this psychic function beautifully, drawing on preexisting connotations, metaphors, and metonymies to achieve a level of recognizable, but hard to articulate, emotional resonance that evades the precision of language and then materializes amorphous anxieties and desires into recognizable figures who will gain strength and significance from repetition" (Mulvey, "Topographies" 67-8).

sensed: seen, felt, and occupied in continuous and unrepeatable ways. Although Beatriz Colomina's investigation of architectural representation in "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism" and Mark Wigley's architectural historiography in "Untitled: The Housing of Gender" seek for architecture to signify in the multiple registers of metonymy, their use of second-order material (photography and film, and architectural treatises, respectively) both render architecture as symbolically impotent on its own accord. Their architecture cannot signify alone.

Ironically, the interdisciplinary exchange between theories of architecture and theories of sexuality initiated by *Sexuality & Space* re-enforces architecture's symbolic impotence. In the terms of castration anxiety outlined by Sigmund Freud, one can argue that the discourse exemplified by the 1990 symposium stands in as an "appropriate object" to compensate for the symbolic impotency of architecture relative to other media. The shared dialectic of inside and outside allows for Laura Mulvey's feminist theory of iconography to facilitate an architectural engagement with the gendered ontology of space; to this end Beatriz Colomina expands upon Mulvey's theory of the gaze to discuss the gendering of interior and exterior spaces in architectural photography, and Mark Wigley interrogates the gender identity of the "Renaissance space" referred to in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema."⁸ However, in their engagement with gender both Colomina and Wigley inadvertently assert an architectural interior/exterior condition coextensive with embodied sexual difference.⁹ Even though Mark Wigley claims that architecture's "subordinated femininity is produced historically" both "Untitled: The Housing of Gender" and "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism" portray an unavoidably phallogentric relationship between sexuality and architecture. In sum, Colomina and Wigley's essays in *Sexuality & Space* instruct readers in a chronic architectural reality rather than offering indications for dialectical engagement and political transformation.

In *Sexuality & Space*, the mask of interdisciplinarity covers over the problematic aspects of architecture's patriarchy. In this sense, without intending to do so, the historians castrate architecture as a symbolic system. "Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and

⁸ In two instances: 1) "A woman performs within the narrative, the gaze of the spectator and that of the male characters in the film are neatly combined without breaking narrative verisimilitude. For a moment the sexual impact of the performing woman takes the film into a no-man's-land outside its own time and space. Thus Marilyn Monroe's first appearance in *The River of No Return* and Lauren Bacall's songs in *To Have or Have Not*. Similarly, conventional close-ups of legs (Dietrich, for instance) or a face (Garbo) integrate into the narrative a different mode of eroticism. One part of a fragmented body destroys the Renaissance space, the illusion of depth demanded by the narrative, it gives flatness, the quality of a cut-out or icon rather than verisimilitude to the screen" (Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure" n.p.). 2) "The camera becomes the mechanism for producing an illusion of Renaissance space, flowing movements compatible with the human eye, an ideology of representation that revolves around the perception of the subject; the camera's look is disavowed in order to create a convincing world in which the spectator's surrogate can perform with verisimilitude" (ibid.).

⁹ interiors are feminine and therefore the space of women, exteriors are masculine and therefore refer to masculinity

Curiosity” was published two years after the initial symposium at Princeton University, and its conclusion offers a critique of the event.

I bring this final passage to our attention now as a means of framing the aspects of *Sexuality & Space* that made it of such interest to me, from a critical perspective. It is clear that rather than exploit curiosity about the condition of the feminine in architectural history, *Sexuality & Space* remains fixated on concealed spaces, hidden areas, and discursive silences. In this fetishization of the void, event and proceedings perpetuate the “refusal to accept the difference that the female body signifies” identified by Laura Mulvey as axiomatically antithetical to study of gender. Consequently, Mulvey’s paraphrased iconology of Pandora applies equally as a historiography of *Sexuality & Space*:

Out of this series of turning away, of covering over, not the eyes but understanding, of looking fixedly at any object that holds the gaze, female sexuality is bound to remain a mystery, condemned to return as a mnemonic symbol of anxiety while overvalued and idealized in imagery. (“Topographies” 70)

In response to this problem/problematic, “Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity” offers the scholarly subject-position of “feminist theory” as a type of complicated directive:

The deciphering that feminist theory has undertaken in order to analyze the female body as a sign has revealed the literal realities of spaces and images to be as elastic as the forms of metaphor and metonymy themselves. There is nothing behind the mask, no veil to tear away, not even an emptiness to be revealed, only traces of disavowal and denial, the shifting signifiers that bear witness to the importance that psychoanalysis and semiotics have had to feminist criticism. (“Topographies” 71)

The final sentence in the excerpt above gives presence to the analysis Mulvey speaks of, and then concludes using the present perfect tense. While Mulvey seems to imply a progress from an antecedent, there is no projection and nothing to follow. Recalling Frederic Jameson,¹⁰ Mulvey notes the ongoing methodological shift from decipherment

¹⁰ “This is perhaps the moment to say something about contemporary theory, which has, among other things, been committed to the mission of criticizing and discrediting this very hermeneutic model of the inside and the outside and of stigmatizing such models as ideological and metaphysical. But what is today called contemporary theory—or better still, theoretical discourse—is also, I want to argue, itself very precisely a postmodernist phenomenon. It would therefore be inconsistent to defend the truth of its theoretical insights in a situation in which the very concept of “truth” itself is part of the metaphysical baggage which post-structuralism seeks to abandon. What we can at least suggest is that the poststructuralist critique of the hermeneutic, of what I will shortly call the depth model, is useful for us as a very significant symptom of the very postmodernist culture which is our subject here. Over hastily, we can say that besides the hermeneutic model of inside and outside which Munch’s painting develops, at least four other fundamental depth models have generally been repudiated in contemporary theory: (1) the dialectical one of essence and appearance (along with a whole range of concepts of ideology or false consciousness which tend to accompany it); (2) the Freudian model of latent and manifest, or of repression (which is, of course, the target of Michel Foucault’s programmatic and symptomatic pamphlet *La Volante de savoir* [*The history of Sexuality*]); (3) the existential model of authenticity and inauthenticity whose heroic or tragic thematics are closely related to that other great opposition between

into interest in surface manifestations, and then the collapse of latent and manifest into textual play. These lines question the relevance of feminist inquiry in the postmodern era, undermining the structuralist framework of architectural theories developed by Beatriz Colomina and Mark Wigley. So Mulvey argues, by 1990 “feminist theory” had exhausted itself as a depth model: its semiotics softened by deconstruction, such inquiry could only offer ideological critique in the mode of self-reflexivity. With the privilege of age Mulvey addresses hermeneutic crisis through kaleidoscopic self-reflexivity, revising her earlier work through the prismatic refraction of the postmodern turn. To the extent that this is not possible for her younger, extra-disciplinary peers, the void that would emerge at the intersection of feminist and architectural theories resulted from the critique of an ideology that had already been redacted.

In *Sexuality & Space*, there was nothing to say because there was nothing to say.

alienation and disalienation, itself equally a casualty of the poststructural or postmodern period; and (4) most recently, the great semiotic opposition between signifier and signified, which was itself rapidly unraveled and deconstructed during its brief heyday in the 1960s and 1970s. What replaces these various depth models is for the most part a conception of practices, discourses, and textual play, whose new syntagmatic structures we will examine later on; let it suffice now to observe that here too depth is replaced by surface, or by multiple surfaces (what is often called intertextuality is in that sense no longer a matter of depth)” (Jameson, “The Postmodern Condition” n.p.). Thanks to Caroline Jones for making this connection clearer to me.

“THE SPLIT WALL: DOMESTIC VOYEURISM”
BEATRIZ COLOMINA AND THE EXCLUDED MIDDLE

In the volume *Sexuality & Space*, Beatriz Colomina’s contribution is positioned immediately after Laura Mulvey’s. In her opening quotation (below), Colomina plays with that juxtaposition:

“To live is to leave traces,” writes Walter Benjamin, in discussing the birth of the interior. “In the interior these are emphasized. An abundance of covers and projectors, liners and cases is devised, on which the traces of objects of everyday use are imprinted. The traces of the occupant also leave their impressions on the interior. The detective story that follows these traces comes into being... The criminals of the first detective novels are neither gentlemen nor apaches, but private members of the bourgeoisie.” (Colomina, “The Split Wall” 74)

As we will explore, “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism” engages the scopophilic construction of space discussed in “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” from a perspective sympathetic to the male gaze. The dialectical character of this methodology is represented through citation, and these first lines are one example. With her opening quotation, Colomina situates her architectural inquiry within sociological critique, and invests epistemological authority in the figure of Walter Benjamin. This can be contrasted with “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” a deconstruction of film which proceeds from psychoanalysis, isolating the voyeuristic activity of children, described by Sigmund Freud, as the origin of objectification in mainstream cinema.¹¹ The opening paragraph of “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism” diffuses the possible associations of its forthcoming arguments with those of “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” first by displacing Mulvey’s interest in symptoms and symbols for critique and the physicality of “traces” and, second, by invalidating the credibility of Mulvey’s theory by invoking the name of a postmodern father-figure.

Where Colomina’s first paragraph displaces the “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” *constatively*, by positioning “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism” in another historiographical context, the second paragraph displaces *performatively*: indicating an affinity between “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism” and “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” but appealing to another antecedent. In the second paragraph, “The

¹¹ Mulvey argues that visual pleasure in narrative cinema emerges from an inability to recognize one’s likeness in the human form portrayed. Objectification depends upon the misrecognition of female bodies, as subjects, from film’s straight/male perspective.

Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism,” said to reveal “the hidden mechanisms by which space is constructed as an interior,” is also described as “a detective story of detection itself, of the controlling look, the look of control, the controlled look” (74). These phrases correspond with Laura Mulvey’s description of scopophilia as “taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze” (Mulvey “Visual Pleasure” n.p.),¹² and therefore encourage association between that narrative and Colomina’s forthcoming arguments. However, immediately after alluding to “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” Colomina’s refers back to the Benjamin text quoted in her previous paragraph, inquiring “where would the traces of the look be imprinted?” and implying a scholarly method based on detective work (“What do we have to go on? What clues?”). This interest in symbolic decipherment is analogous to the psychoanalysis of “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” of course, but that affinity is less apparent than a more literal similarity to the selection from “Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century” offered in the previous paragraph.

With its opening citation of Walter Benjamin, “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism” enacts a structural dislocation between its author, as signifier, and her text’s signified antecedents. As a result, Beatriz Colomina occupies an excluded middle between the essay and its citations.¹³ The first paragraphs of “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism” circumscribe an interval of difference between two schemas, that which is personified by Laura Mulvey, and that which is represented by the figure of Walter Benjamin. By virtue of Colomina’s insinuation of their difference, each episteme is portrayed as mutually exclusive. To the extent that she is successful in constructing their dissimilarity, Colomina embodies the interval between the two systems represented. It follows that, in the selections I have addressed, Colomina’s authorship acts as if it were transparent. Insofar as this transparency is believable, Colomina is unaccountable for her prose. The author can say whatever she wants, as long as her statements she can be associated with one external referent or the other, without contradiction.

This is strategic. As I will demonstrate, Colomina’s writing expresses its intentions aesthetically and the expression of those intentions has a performative effect, silently interpolating relationships between its readers, prose, and intellectual context. This modification of reader relations has a meaningful impact on the constative content of “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism,” distorting the historical material discussed and radically reframing the discourses the essay was written to participate in.

¹² Following Mulvey’s narrative, it is “the controlling look” that transforms people into objects, “the look of control” that enforces this, and “the controlled look” which characterizes cinematic conventions; in noting that the essay is “a detective story” of these categories, it is implied that “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism” situates itself in the framework established by “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.”

¹³ In logic, the Law of the Excluded Middle states that every proposition is either true or false such that there is no third truth-value and no statements lack truth-value. In this situation an “excluded middle” exists between two mutually exclusive alternatives; what this instance contains is either untrue, or points to the artificiality of its related binary.

Attendant, substantive stylistic maneuvers

In the first paragraphs of “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism,” Beatriz Colomina’s inscription of an excluded middle instigates attendant, substantive stylistic maneuvers.

Primary among these is a calculated exploitation of intellectual context. The opening Benjamin quote is one example of this. What Colomina describes in the second paragraph is analogous to what Mulvey has written previously, but this description is couched in a different frame of reference. The excluded middle gives Colomina free-play in fashioning her text’s intellectual context. Here, a resemblance is constructed, but also denied. It is meaningful that the text’s expressed affiliation—with Walter Benjamin—corresponds to a canonical forerunner to the postmodern turn. In “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism,” Colomina often grounds that which is described in its possible characterization as or with the first entry in a series. In this case, Colomina situates her essay in relation to a genealogically primary discursive coadjutor. The effect of this constructed relation is to add meaning to theses by virtue of an implied reflection and repetition in other venues. Colomina starts by quoting Walter Benjamin to add her essay the clout of his reputation, by virtue of her affiliation, despite a more obvious affiliation with the work of another scholar (Laura Mulvey). It is as if she writes with his blessing.

For a slightly different example, consider Colomina’s claim that the Moller House (Adolf Loos, Vienna, 1928), “traditionally considered to be prototype of the *Raumplan*, also contains the prototype of the theater box” (85). This statement comes during what is perhaps the best known selection in “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism,” describing the optics of small spaces in two homes designed by Adolf Loos. In one, the Moller House, a small raised sitting area allows a woman (presumably) to watch over an entrance, awaiting intruders or a returning husband; in another (the Müller House; Prague, 1930) a small “lady’s room” (*Zimmer der damme*) is designed with an interior-facing opening, for the same effect. Drawing upon “Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century,” Colomina describes this lady’s room as a “theater box.” Famously, Colomina claims that the raised sitting area and theater box together signify the sexual power-dynamics of Loos’ architectures, simultaneously imparting femininity to the interior and masculinity to the exterior, while treating stationary women, inside the home, like objects, analogous to Loos’ built-in furniture.

This use of architecture as cultural representation is dependent upon Loos’ unique method of designing spaces, *Raumplan*. In *Raumplan*, a home is designed around its interior volumes, which are arranged freely within a constrained prismatic volume. The concept, while well-known in architectural circles, is unique to the work of Adolf Loos and has therefore never become famous enough to generate a broad hermeneutic tradition. Nonetheless, the use of the word “traditionally,” in the phrase “traditionally considered to be prototype of the *Raumplan*,” imparts to Colomina’s argument a level of gravitas not possible otherwise. Moreover in her formalist reading, the raised sitting area of the Moller House is genealogically antecedent to the “lady’s room”/“theater box;” this aspect of her argument is reinforced stylistically by the sentence “This house, traditionally considered to be the prototype of the *Raumplan*, also contains the prototype of [Loos’] theater box,” since Colomina’s claim of genealogical

relation between the two rooms of interest is mapped onto a similar evolution, unfolding at the scale of architecture's disciplinarity. Because of a related, strategic reference to "tradition" in her description, what Colomina says about the Moller and Müller houses is inscribed within a broader phenomenon.

I believe that broader phenomenon to be imaginary. No example of "traditional" consideration is given within the text of "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism." While one could try to corroborate Colomina's claim about what is "traditionally" the case, no writer can reasonably expect a reader to perform this sort of cross-referencing. The historiographical project required is potentially endless, requiring a reader not only to perform in-depth analysis of Loos' cultural context and place in history, but also to determine a meaning and philosophy of history appropriate to an analysis of whatever "tradition" actually means.

The term "tradition" bullies a reader into believing what Colomina has to say. Colomina plays the prospect of a hermeneutic tradition against her reader. What cannot be disproven appears true.

This bullying takes other forms. After a comparative discussion of photographs of the Moller and Müller houses, Colomina notes that the Müller house's production of "comfort" through "intimacy and control" "is hardly the idea of comfort which is associated with the nineteenth century interior as described by Walter Benjamin in 'Louis-Philippe, or the Interior'" (79). A lengthy excerpt of this cited text is included in a footnote.¹⁴ The title, "Louis-Philippe, or the Interior," corresponds with the brief chapter of "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century" Colomina draws upon in her opening quotation;¹⁵ also, in the footnote, it is apparent that the term "theater box" is derived from that brief text. Any of Colomina's arguments about Loos' "theater box" carry the clout of Benjamin's name, as well as a level of depth gained through the implied reverberation between his earlier text and Colomina's arguments. Moreover the implication of Colomina's casual in-text citation, of "Louis-Philippe, or the Interior," when viewed in the context of her repeated, un-cited references of this essay through the use of the term "theater box,"¹⁶ is that her audience should already be familiar with the

¹⁴ The footnote reads as follows: "'Under Louis-Philippe the private citizen enters the stage of history. ... For the private-person, living space becomes, for the first time, antithetical to the place of work. The former is constituted by the interior; the office is its complement. The private person who squares this account with reality in his office demands that the interior be maintained in his illusions. This need is all the more pressing since he has no intention of extending his commercial considerations into social ones. In shaping his private environment he represses both. From this spring the phantasmagorias of the interior. For the private individual the private environment represents the universe. In it he gathers remote places and the past. His drawing room is a box in the world theater.' Walter Benjamin, 'Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century,' in *Reflections* 154" (Colomina 79-80, note 7).

¹⁵ From the footnotes it is apparent that the two citations are only one page apart in the English translation Colomina cites; this continuity is not apparent, however, in the body text. This is not obvious however, since the footnote for this second citation is split between two spreads. The title, "Paris, Capital of the Ninetieth Century" is not visible on the page it is cited. I feel this could have been intentional, since Colomina served as editor of the volume.

¹⁶ Of which there are fourteen

selection of Benjamin's writings cited. The effect of this citation on reader relations is complicated. In reality, the reference to "Louis-Philippe, or the Interior" supports a tautological claim: readers are never told why the Müller house doesn't support Benjamin's description of comfort, or why this is important, only that it is so. The effect of this non-sequitur is similar to the reference to a tradition associated with *Raumplan*, which I mentioned earlier: in both instances, it is implied that any misunderstanding is the result of some ignorance on the part of the reader, because the intellectual tradition Colomina appeals to cannot be confirmed to be her invention, alone. In this case, a questioning reader is left to wonder what in Benjamin's text they might have missed that could explain the relevance of Colomina's comparison. Here, the tautology of Colomina's claim is veiled behind a possible, but imaginary intellectual tradition: whether or not "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century" was compulsory reading for the architectural academe circa 1990, the truth of that ordination is sustained by Colomina's stylistic treatment of "Louis-Philippe, or the Interior" as if it were a canonical work inasmuch as its citation needs no explanation. The implication here is that she shouldn't have to explain why the comparison to Benjamin is relevant, the audience should already know.

Images in this section of "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism," are employed as rhetoric to a similar and amplified effect. One image, Figure 7, depicts a plan and section of Adolf Loos' Moller house, each of which includes a dashed line tracing "the journey of the gaze from the raised sitting area to the back garden." The image is referenced at the end of a short section on the Moller house, and is used to transition to a discussion of a similar treatment of the gaze in the Müller house. Curiously, the placement of the image on page 79, above a description of the Müller house, subliminally reinforces Beatriz Colomina's argument that its "view of the exterior, towards the city... is contained within a view of the interior" despite the fact that the image refers to a different building. Additionally, it must be noted that the source of the image, *Raumplan versus Plan Libre*,¹⁷ is buried in the last page of the volume and therefore not readily apparent; therefore the fact that the drawings were not by Loos (and may in fact have been executed by Colomina herself) is left unaddressed. The overall effect of Figure 7's placement and buried citation is that Beatriz Colomina's formal analysis of specific Loos interiors appears symptomatic of his residential work generally, and the image included appears to be a sign of that symptom (rather than an illustration of one specific instance). The fact that what she is saying is corroborated by architectural drawings, which seem to have been executed by Loos, makes Colomina's novel claims in this portion of the essay look as if they were instead an objective description of Loos' own work and thought. Here word and image together assemble Loos' architectural objects as a network of performative details, with Colomina as their cipher; the actual houses, in their manifest complexity, drop out of consideration.

¹⁷ Risselada, Max, and Beatriz Colomina. *Raumplan versus Plan Libre: Adolf Loos and Le Corbusier 1919-1930*. New York: Rizzoli, 1988. Print. 10. This citation is given in the volume's final page as: "M. Risselada, *Raumplan versus Plan Libre* (1988); 10"

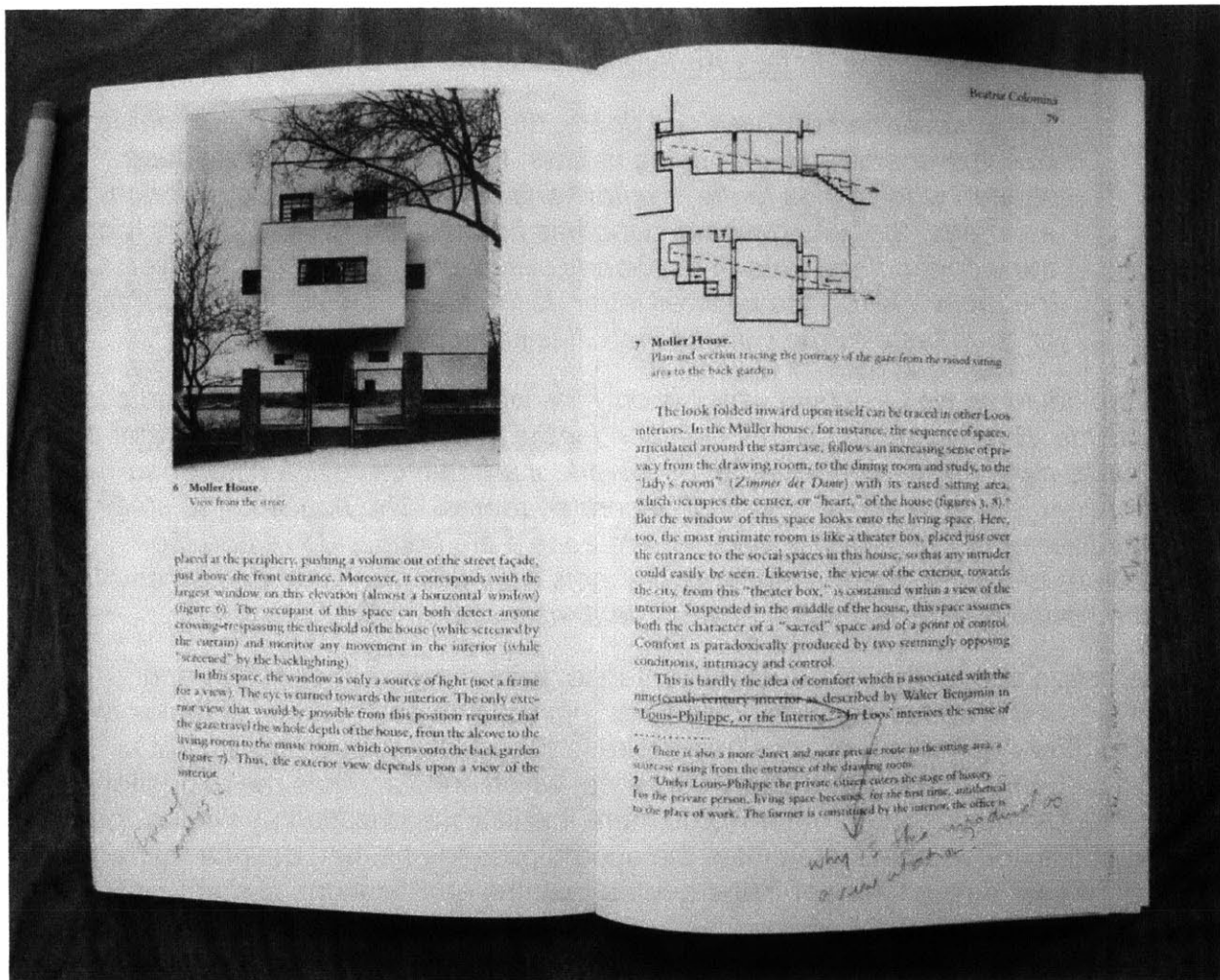


Figure 2 *Sexuality & Space*, pp. 78-9 (author's copy)

This game of legitimation is consistent with Colomina's treatment of Loos, generally, in "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism." Here is a slightly different example, where the definite article is used strategically in a manner similar to how she uses Figure 7. The following selection contains Colomina's first lengthy quotation of Adolf Loos' writings. Here, referring to a plural noun in the singular, phrases "the *Raumplan*" and "the theater box" signify a category as if it and its platonic essence are analogous.¹⁸ By virtue of this certainty, "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism" treats Adolf Loos as if he were a discursive coadjutor; through her prose, Colomina enables herself to speak on Loos' behalf:

¹⁸ This pattern is repeated throughout the essay: "In his writings on **the question of the house...**" "these are drawings neither of **the inside** nor **the outside** but **the membrane** between them," "between **the** representation of habitation and **the mask is the wall**," et cetera (emphasis mine).

In his writings on the question of the house, Loos describes a number of domestic melodramas. In Das Andere, for example, he writes:

Try to describe how birth and death, the screams of pain for an aborted son, the death rattle of a dying mother, the last thoughts of a young woman who wishes to die... unfold and unravel in a room by Olbrich! Just an image: the young woman who has put herself to death. She is lying on the wooden floor. One of her hands still holds the smoking revolver. On the table a letter, the farewell letter. Is the room in which this is happening of good taste? Who will ask that? It is just a room!

One could as well ask [sic] why it is only the women who die and cry and commit suicide. But leaving aside this question for the moment, Loos is saying that the house must not be conceived of as a work of art, that there is a difference between a house and a "series of decorated rooms." The house is the stage for the theater of the family, a place where people are born and live and die. Whereas a work of art, a painting, presents itself to critical attention as an object, the house is received as an environment, as a stage. (85)

In the selection above, the introductory sentence gives a sense of erudition and familiarity, as if the author could express Loos' opinions on any number of topics at will; while Colomina's command of Loos' repertoire is strong, it is the introduction of a particular category, in the introductory sentence, which substantiates the expository section after the quotation. In other words, here it is its categorization as writing "on the question of the house" that instantiates the quoted passage as that, despite the fact that the word "house" doesn't appear in the quoted text; the qualifications of that word, "house," subsequent to the Loos passage quoted, are only relevant inasmuch as Colomina has said they are.

It is because of the manner in which she cites his text that the reader is encouraged to see Beatriz Colomina as a medium for the explication of Loos' thought. As "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism" unfolds, Colomina continues to speak through the work of Adolf Loos, in order to enact an intellectual counter-position to the writings of Laura Mulvey.

In a section of "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism" on Adolf Loos' speculative house for Josephine Baker (1929), Beatriz Colomina projects an inversion of a traditional organization of the visual. Through the discussion of "family life" as absent, a position where relations between people follow a normative pattern of interaction in residential settings is asserted through an implied privileging of "tradition" as that which guarantees the scopophilic regulation of sexual politics, through the gaze. Consider the following,

The breakdown between inside and outside, and the split between sight and touch, is not located exclusively in the domestic scheme. It also occurs in Loos' project for a house for Josephine Baker (Paris, 1928)—a house that excludes

family life [...] As in Loos' earlier houses, the eye is directed towards the interior, which turns its back on the outside world; but the subject and object of the gaze have been reversed. The inhabitant, Josephine Baker, is now the primary object, and the visitor, the guest, is the looking subject. (88)

Here, “exclu[sion of] family life” is depicted as revolutionary because it causes a shift of metaphysical terms whereby the voyeur becomes the observed and vice versa. Considering her earlier assertion of the physical and Walter Benjamin opposite Laura Mulvey, it is logical to read this revolution of the domestic environment as an invasion of the fantastic, mythical, and collective, discussed in “Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity,” into the interior associated with “Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century.” The house for Josephine Baker is employed as a stage for a parallel, specifically architectural investigation of the figure of Pandora and of the figuration of curiosity.

Colomina's staging hinges upon the objectification of Josephine Baker as a subject through Loos' design. This conceptual hinge turns in two steps. First, Baker is interpellated as an object, objectified by the gaze of a speculative visitor to her house:

The most intimate space—the swimming pool, paradigm of a sensual space—occupies the center of the house [for Josephine Baker], and is also the focus of the visitor's gaze [...] between this gaze and its object—the body—is a screen of glass and water, which renders the body inaccessible.... [continued below]

Then, Baker's identity is dismissed in favor of a categorical description; she becomes “the swimmer,” with the sexual contact between herself and her visitor rendered in the uncertain terms of spectatorship:

[continuing] But the architecture of this house is more complicated. The swimmer might also see the reflection, framed by the window, of her own slippery body superimposed on the disembodied eyes of the shadowy figure of the spectator. (88)

The space that Colomina describes in this passage satisfies the same “primordial wish for pleasurable looking” as the cinema, as explained in “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema;”¹⁹ however, as scopophilia is made literal in the watery lens of the swimming pool, architecture is asserted as that which ultimately contains the gaze. This description of a home designed for scopophilia should be understood as an assertion of the sexism of the gaze, explicated spatially.²⁰

¹⁹ “The cinema satisfies a primordial wish for pleasurable looking, but it also goes further, developing scopophilia in its narcissistic aspect. The conventions of mainstream film focus attention on the human form. Scale, space, stories are all anthropomorphic. Here, curiosity and the wish to look intermingle with a fascination with likeness and recognition: the human face, the human body, the relationship between the human form and its surroundings, the visible presence of the person in the world” (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure” n.p.).

²⁰ This is because, as stated in Mulvey's psychoanalytic terms, here castration anxiety has been transformed from *figural* to *figured*, within a pair of people and the prototypical space they share.

Through a subsequent comparison, Colomina expands upon this *mise-en-scène* to describe a topography of feminine objectification. Extrapolating from Loos' essay, "The Principle of Cladding," Colomina postulates that "[f]or Loos, architecture is a form of covering" (91);²¹ subsequently, drawing on a 1980 Spanish-language essay by Catalanian architect Jose Quetglas, translated by Colomina for "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism," Colomina states that "[t]he spaces of Loos' interiors cover their occupants as clothes cover the body (each occasion has its appropriate 'fit')." (92) Two examples of this act of covering are given: "Lina Loos' bedroom (this 'bag of fur and cloth')" and "Josephine Baker's swimming pool." The sublimation of the physical/phenomenological here instantiates intended occupants as metonymical figures: the spaces described are no longer that which might be seen and experienced, but are instead made meaningful by their association with particular women. It seems that, momentarily, Colomina has indulged herself in the symbolic topography of Mulvey's feminist film theory, engaging space as a medium for the accumulation of signification rather than as a contained void, represented by photography, film, or prose.

It can be argued that the scopophilic architecture of the two spaces referenced is phallogentric in the terms outlined in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," where Laura Mulvey writes:

The paradox of phallogentrism in all its manifestations is that it depends on the image of the castrated woman to give order and meaning to its world. An idea of woman stands as lynch pin to the system: it is her lack that produces the phallus as a symbolic presence, it is her desire to make good the lack that the phallus signifies. (Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure" n.p.)

Taking some liberties with the quote above: the fetishization of Lina Loos and Josephine Baker, as objects of visual pleasure, "stands as a lynch pin to" their related, signified spaces, imparting a reference through the juxtaposition of their names and the spaces created for them to be gazed upon/within ("*Lina Loos' bedroom*," "*Josephine Baker's swimming pool*"). Because the women in Loos' imaginary, architecturalized gaze are functionally similar in their being objects of sexual fantasy, their two spaces are functionally equivalent. In this equivalence between projects, Loos the architect is interpellated as the subject of his sexual desire and its variegated fantasies: per

²¹ Also included is the following selection from that essay: "The architect's general task is to provide a warm and livable space. Carpets are warm and livable. He decides for this reason to spread one carpet on the floor and to hang up four to form the four walls. But you cannot build a house out of carpets. Both the carpet on the floor and the tapestry on the wall require a structural frame to hold them in the correct place. To invent this frame is the architect's second task."

Inasmuch as cladding is a primary task for the architect, as applied here, it might be possible to argue that architecture is a form of covering for Loos, but this is specious at best. The eccentricities of Colomina's styles of citation and external reference as modes of legitimation have already been covered. As such, even as the factuality of her claim is suspect it will be sustained here for the purpose of elucidating her anti-feminist theory of space-as-objectification. In any event, Loos's architectures, and theories thereon, are not of concern here beyond their reference in Colomina's writings, so the fact of the matter is irrelevant.

Colomina's description it is Josephine Baker and Lina Loos' desire to become objects of the male gaze, as imagined by Adolf Loos, that his architecture signifies.²²

Crucially, this architectural exercise of sexual fantasy is described by Beatriz Colomina as the disruption and dislocation of a pre-existing architectural order. Describing Lina Loos' bedroom and Josephine Baker's swimming pool as theatrical architecture, Colomina asserts that their design...

disrupts the role of the house as a traditional form of representation. More precisely, the traditional system of representation, within which the building is but one of many overlapping mechanisms, is dislocated. (Colomina, "The Split Wall" 92-3)

This assertion can be compared to Colomina's intention for the "Sexuality and Space" symposium, as stated in the introduction to the proceedings:

[A]rchitecture must be thought of as a system of representation in the same way that we think of drawings, photographs, models, film, or television, not only because architecture is made available to us through these media but because the built object is itself a system of representation.... To simply raise the question of "Sexuality and Space" is, therefore, already to displace Architecture. In the end, this book is but the documentation of a small event in the larger project of this displacement." (Colomina, introduction to S&S n.p.)

Drawing upon Mark Wigley's "Untitled: The Housing of Gender" (whose syntax is echoed in the passage above): if one is to understand Alberti's "theory of harmony" wherein "the house is a mechanism for the domestication of women" as the "origin of architecture on which traditional architecture bases itself," (Wigley, 352 and 357) then "the traditional system of representation, which the building is but one of many overlapping mechanisms," can be understood as analogous to that signified by the proper noun "Architecture." Therefore, Loos' disruption and dislocation of "the role of the house as a traditional system of representation" is an antecedent to the "larger project of this displacement" of "Architecture," that the volume *Sexuality & Space* documents. Consequently, Loos' displacement of "Architecture" can be interpreted as the enumeration of an anti-feminist stance in opposition to Mulvey's feminist critique, and politics. If *Sexuality & Space* can be said to have political dimensions because of its proposition of a shared (viz. "larger") project, one can extrapolate to argue that "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism" identifies with the transformation of "Architecture" into the exercise of heterosexual male fantasy, because of its displacement of the latter while participating in the former. This treatment of sexuality can be contrasted with Laura Mulvey's "[demonstration of] the way the unconscious of patriarchal society has structured film form" in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." There, Mulvey outlines a directive for a feminist counter-cinema that mobilizes the psychoanalytic theory transformed into a "political weapon" by her essay:

²² For a historicist reading of this aspect of the house for Josephine Baker, see El-Dahdah, Farès, and Stephen Atkinson. "The Josephine Baker House: For Loos's Pleasure." *Assemblage* 26 (1985): 72-87. JSTOR. Web.

The alternative cinema provides a space for a cinema to be born which is radical in both a political and an aesthetic sense and challenges the basic assumptions of the mainstream film [...] The first blow against the monolithic accumulation of traditional film conventions (already undertaken by radical filmmakers) is to free the look of the camera into its materiality in time and space and the look of the audience into dialectics, passionate detachment. There is no doubt that this destroys the satisfaction, pleasure and privilege of the 'invisible guest,' and highlights how film has depended on voyeuristic active/passive mechanisms" (Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure" n.p.)

In "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism," Colomina opposes such a project by asserting a phallogocentric spatial praxis analogous to "traditional film conventions," and negotiating architectural discourse towards the sexual imagination of Adolf Loos. As "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism" demonstrates, Lina Loos' bedroom and Josephine Baker's swimming pool displace their associated built objects as they assert for architecture the role of the representation of male, heterosexual desire. "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism" does nothing to destroy the satisfaction, pleasure, and privilege of "the invisible guest;" instead, by highlighting how architecture depends on a voyeuristic mechanism, Colomina instantiates that mechanism as the epistemological foundation of architectural inquiry.

As Beatriz Colomina fleshes out her counterpoint to Laura Mulvey's feminist theory of scopophilia, she intentionally locates crucial terms and citations outside her text's immediate frame of reference. Here is a detailed example: in the passage below, describing the "theatrical" nature of Loos' architectural practice, "traditional representation" is never defined denotatively; instead its meaning can only be gleaned through comparison:

[S]pace in Loos' architecture is not just felt [...] his definition of architecture is really a definition of theatrical architecture. The "clothes" have become so removed from the body that they require structural support independent of it. They become a "stage set." The inhabitant is both "covered" by the space and "detached" from it. The tension between sensation of comfort and comfort as control disrupts the role of the house as a traditional form of representation. More precisely, the traditional system of representation, within which the building is but one of overlapping mechanisms, is displaced. (Colomina, "The Split Wall" 92-3)

This operation structures reader relations to Colomina's intellectual advantage. Here, José Quetglas' description of Lina Loos' bedroom forms the basis of a simultaneous description of that space, as well as Josephine Baker's swimming pool, as theatrical. In context it is apparent that "traditional representation" cannot be the theatrical architecture of Loos which Quetglas and Colomina, together, describe; it must be something else because that tradition has been "dislocated" by Loos, by his designs. The full extent of this dislocating architecture, however, remains indeterminate because it is based on ambiguous concepts, identified with scare quotes. Considered with the intertextual enumeration of this argument, the quoted terms—stage set, covered, and

detached—locate themselves outside of Colomina's text, as external citations. These concepts are logically positioned as outside the bounds of "traditional representation," because that category and the architecture these words constitute are mutually exclusive. The category of "traditional representation" has therefore, by stylistic means, been made unquestionable both in its meaning and existence because neither quality can be externally verified (and therefore discredited). Because of her use of scare quotes, all that is certain is Colomina's authorship as that which gives meaning by indicating where meaning resides. This text grants Colomina epistemological agency by legitimating a hermeneutic authority, imparted by a system of citation and reference, which she herself has constructed.

That this is, itself, true can be evaluated by a comparison between Beatriz Colomina's utilization of José Quetglas, and a more complete investigation of the passage she cites. While Colomina has not mistranslated the magazine article she cites, her framing of Quetglas' essay allows for a narrow reading, which construes his argument in a manner that is more convenient to her purposes than it is accurate. Colomina's complete citation is as follows:

The spaces of Loos' interiors cover the occupants as clothes cover the body (each occasion has its appropriate "fit"). José Quetglas has written: "Would the same pressure on the body be acceptable in a raincoat as in a gown, in jodhpurs, or in pajama pants?... All the architecture of Loos can be explained as the envelope of a body." From Lina Loos' bedroom (this "bag of fur and cloth") (figure 17) to Josephine Baker's swimming pool ("this transparent bowl of water"), the interiors always contain a "warm bag in which to wrap oneself." It is an "architecture of pleasure," an "architecture of the womb."²⁶

26 José Quetglas, "Lo Placentro," *Carrer de la Ciutat*, no-9-10, special issue on Loos (January 1980): 2. (92)

The juxtaposition of the discussion of "fit", in the first sentence above, to the introduction of Quetglas' essay implies that this concept, "fit," is that which is substantiated by the text cited. It is, but since this first sentence in fact paraphrases that which occurs in Quetglas' text just prior to what is quoted, the sentence nullifies possible intervals of difference between Colomina and Quetglas as it introduces to the latter to the reader. While Colomina's statement in the sentence I have referenced differs from Quetglas' prose in the most absolute sense, in that the wording and frame of reference are inconsistent, her predicate is essentially an abbreviated translation of his, since *Raumplan* is an architectural strategy driven by the arrangement of interior volumes. In essence Colomina performatively restages Quetglas' writing as she introduces it. This can be confirmed by reviewing the line-by-line translation provided on the next page.

El Raumplan, lejos de ser un sistema de proyectar o un credo ahorrador de espacios -contra el derroche del forjado único- es la única teorización posible de ese espacio sensorial: los ambientes deben adherirse al ocupante como las ropas sobre la piel, con una presión específica a cada caso. ¿Se aceptaría una misma presión sobre el cuerpo en un gabán y una bata, en unos pantalones de montar y de pijama? Claro que no. La flotabilidad del cuerpo en su funda depende de cada caso, es condición y resultado de los movimientos y los estados de ánimo.

Raumplan, far from being a projection system or a credo for saving space—compared to the waste of the single slab—is the only possible theorization for [Loos] sensorium: environments must adhere to occupants like clothes adhere to the skin, with a specific pressure for each case. Would you accept the same pressure over the body in an overcoat as in a gown, in riding pants or pajama pants? Of course not. The fluidity of the body within its covering depends on, is condition to, and is the result of its movements and dispositions.

Figure 3 Screengrab from "Lo Placentero" with English translation by author

It should now be apparent that Colomina's performative introduction masks liberties that she takes with Quetglas' text. For our purposes it should be noted that Colomina's first, lengthy quotation of Quetglas contains an ellipsis of approximately one half of the essay "Lo Placentero," wherein Quetglas cites and then discusses "The Principle of Cladding," in a manner comparable to the preceding page of "The Split Wall." Furthermore, the portion *quoted* after the ellipses *paraphrases* rather than translates the following sentence:

Toda la arquitectura de Loos, que siempre es interior, puede ser explicada como funda de un cuerpo.

All of Loos' architecture, which is always interior, can be explained as an envelope of a body.

Figure 4 Screengrab from "Lo Placentero" with English translation by author

In effect, what Colomina has done is create an external referent for what she has already said; in the process of translating, the flow of the cited text has been altered radically. While the citation appears to add a depth of cross reference to this section of "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism," its effect is to merely repeat the argument already in progress.

Invented historiographies

As I have demonstrated, while writing about “Josephine Baker’s swimming pool” and “Lina Loos’ bedroom” Beatriz Colomina takes advantage of the disconnect between her text and that which she cites, writing on behalf of a cited author, in order to support her own points. In the past few paragraphs, I have tried to demonstrate the intentional misdirection of Colomina’s citation of José Quetglas; this section of “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism” more accurately paraphrases (and plagiarizes) “Lo Placentero” than quote it. In her practice of hybrid quotation/paraphrase, Beatriz Colomina writes in both her voice, and that of another author. Beyond stylistic resemblance, this excluded middle points to an artificially constructed binary, which is used to some effect (legitimation by appealing to an external source). Having established that Colomina uses the excluded middle to her advantage, while simultaneously asserting a phallogocentric methodology for the analysis of “the gaze,” I would like to turn how these aspects, together, can articulate a disciplinary agenda.

This articulation and agenda can be summarized as follows: in “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism,” the excluded middle facilitates a repossession of Laura Mulvey’s famed feminist interpretation of the gaze, for architectural purposes. This maneuver is staged through the aesthetic critique of Adolf Loos; a historiographical preparation of an architectural reader analogous to Mulvey’s psychoanalytic training of the cinematic viewer in “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.” Having established a shared, hermeneutic platform Colomina proceeds with an analysis of Le Corbusier’s designs as represented in film, and the camera as an agent of Le Corbusier as a hybrid architect-author. In its logical consequences, this latter reading effectively undoes the feminist counter-narrative “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” intended to facilitate, while asserting its own counter-narrative about the ontology of sight in architectural representation. These topics are discussed in detail, later in this chapter.

Now, I will explore Colomina’s historiographical training of her reader, which begins with an examination of Loos’ displacement of “traditional notions of architectural representation” through a comparison with Georg Simmel’s sociology. In the passage included below, Colomina invokes an external frame of reference as a foundation for a further, ostensibly synthetic claim. The external frame of reference Simmel’s is classic essay “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” quoted in a footnote, and the synthetic claim that Loos’ contemporary city dwellers struggled against abstraction in order to assert their individuality, a struggle staged through clothing.

Loos’ critique of traditional notions of architectural representation is bound up with the phenomenon of an emergent metropolitan culture. The subject of Loos’ architecture is the metropolitan individual, immersed in the abstract relationships of the city, at pains to assert the independence or individuality of his existence against the leveling power of society. This battle, according to Georg Simmel, is the modern equivalent of primitive man’s struggle with nature, clothing is one of the battlefields, and fashion is one of its strategies.²⁷

27 “The deepest conflict of modern man is not any longer in the ancient battle with nature, but in the one that the individual must fight to affirm the

independence and peculiarity of this existence against the immense power of society, in his resistance to being leveled, swallowed up in the social-technological mechanism.” Georg Simmel, “Das Grosstadt und das Geistleben” (1903). English translation: “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” in Georg Simmel: On Individuality and Social Forms, ed. David Levine (Chicago, 1971), pp. 324-339. (93)

Referencing “The Metropolis and Mental Life” as a subtext to Adolf Loos’ postulated critique of “traditional notions of architectural representation,” Colomina employs Simmel’s exposition on modern society to signify an abstract structure, within which Loos is immersed; this is to say that Beatriz Colomina’s creative citation of “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” above,²³ makes the critique of Adolf Loos seem as if it were a manifestation of what Simmel describes. This allusion is established by reading Colomina’s footnote, where it is apparent that the term “metropolitan individual,” which ostensibly describes the “subject of Loos’ architecture,” also refers to a category described by Georg Simmel. Importantly, by representing “the subject of Loos’ architecture” in this manner, Colomina has removed herself, twice-over, from that which is stated in her text: in the passage I cite, what Loos critiques is supported by what Simmel has written, but Simmel’s sociology has also been *made* relevant in this interdisciplinary context through its association with Loos; that Loos should have described what Simmel theorized makes his theory seem pertinent; thus, the reader associates the writings of the two men where he or she might not have done so, before. Through these operations, the existence of Loos’ critique is made to seem as if it were a response to the sociological environment.

My reading is enabled by the particular styling of Colomina’s text. Comparing the text I cite and its footnote it is apparent that the concept of “struggle” discussed is derived from “The Metropolis and Mental Life:”²⁴ the footnote marker has been placed

²³ The sentence included is actually a paraphrased reading of Simmel’s opening paragraph, which Edward A. Shils (reprinted by Levine) translated as follows, in 1948:

The deepest problems of modern life flow from the attempt of the individual to maintain the independence and individuality of his existence against the sovereign powers of society, against the weight of the historical heritage and the external culture and technique of life. The antagonism represents the most modern form of the conflict which primitive man must carry on with nature for his own bodily existence. The eighteenth century may have called for liberation from all the ties which grew up historically in politics, in religion, in morality and in economics in order to permit the original natural virtue of man, which is equal in everyone, to develop without inhibition; the nineteenth century may have sought to promote, in addition to man’s freedom, his individuality (which is connected with the division of labor) and his achievements which make him unique and indispensable but which at the same time make him so much the more dependent on the complementary activity of others; Nietzsche may have seen the relentless struggle of the individual as the prerequisite for his full development, while socialism found the same thing in the suppression of all competition – but in each of these the same fundamental motive was at work, namely the resistance of the individual to being leveled, swallowed up in the social-technological mechanism. (Simmel ed. Levine, 324)

While this passage has the same approximate meaning as the excerpt Colomina employs, the connotation she derives is less possible without the urgency of her selective quotation.

²⁴ As paraphrased by Colomina; cf. previous footnote

adjacent to the word “struggle” in the main text, and the footnote includes words such as “conflict,” “battle,” “fight,” “against,” and “resistance.” While the term “struggle” is cited, other concepts, which also *appear* to be derived from Simmel’s sociology, are not: this includes nouns such as “metropolitan,” “individual,” and “city,” as well as the term “fashion,” whose relevance here, particularly, is questionable.²⁵ To wit, clothing is not mentioned in the sentence provided from “The Metropolis in Mental Life,” or anywhere else in that essay; to this end the second sentence in the selection above is misleading.²⁶

Even without intertextual verification it is apparent that Beatriz Colomina has taken liberties with her quotation of “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” stretching its connotation beyond that which is explicitly offered in the brief excerpt she provides. It is not clear from the sentence she has included, for example, that “the metropolitan individual, immersed in the abstract relationships of the city, at pains to assert the independence or individuality of his existence against the leveling power of society,” is that which is signified by the “battle” Simmel describes. This semiotic association can be reasonably inferred of course, but the veracity of that inference is unsubstantiated. In place of clarification, Colomina provides a detailed citation of both the English translation (supposedly) featured here and Simmel’s original text. The connotation of this gesture is that, if a reader disagrees (or misunderstands) Colomina’s connection between the critique Adolf Loos and sociology of Georg Simmel, clarification can be obtained through cross-reference.²⁷ Veiling her manipulation of the performance of the footnote, Colomina inflates her citation, transforming an incompletely quoted text into an invitation to intertextual exploration. On the surface, this gesture generously incites a

²⁵ Thanks to my advisors Caroline Jones and Mark Jarzombek to bringing this to my attention during a review of this chapter’s second draft. For Professor Jarzombek’s benefit I will note that the term *mode* doesn’t come up in the original German; I will say, however, that it is very clear to me that Colomina relied on the University of Chicago 1971 edition of *On Individuality and Social Forms* for both her references to Georg Simmel, and to that end consider the matter of “fashion” here to be her invention and not an issue related to translation. As we will see in a coming paragraph, Colomina here manipulates Simmel not through translation (cf. passage on “Lo Placentero”), but by drastically editing the material she is quoting, manipulating syntax to create new meanings for the text. It is clear that Colomina sees intertextuality as fluid, freely remixing quoted passages as she sees fit. I am very critical of this practice because of its relations to issues of academic integrity; at the same time, as a strategy it is quite interesting. So, I ask: how much does it matter that “The Metropolis and Mental Life” doesn’t concern itself with fashion, in this context? I understand that Colomina has chronically warped her scholastic context vis-à-vis misquotation and intimidation; at the same time it is possible that more architectural historians have read “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism” than have read “The Metropolis and Mental Life.” From the perspective of legitimation, “The Metropolis and Mental Life” *does* talk about fashion, *precisely because Colomina says so*. Of course, this is tautological; since so much about this essay is, however, I think that tautology might be the measure of accuracy for my last statement.

²⁶ The “battle” Simmel discusses in Colomina’s the footnote is related to individual autonomy in the era of market capitalism, which, it is emphasized, is entirely novel in form even if equivalent scope to that of “primitive man.” This “battle,” furthermore, is discussed only in terms of personality, in the relative environments of the rural and metropolitan, not self-expression through commodity culture. To this end, Colomina’s insinuation here conflates neoliberal concerns with choice and self-expression with Simmel’s anti-materialist critique; aside from being manipulative it also, frankly, incorrect.

²⁷ This is only a connotation, however. As we have seen, what cross reference reveals is that Colomina fabricated a quote, and her association between Loos and Simmel convoluted—it not entirely fictitious.

reader to additional, directed inquiry; however, it is also true that the veracity of Colomina's argument can only be reconsidered with an additional (and unlikely) effort on the part of her reader. For lack of a counterpoint, the narrative appears true.

Subsequent to the last passage and footnote I quoted, a more explicitly pedagogical operation instigates reflection on gender, in an architectural context, and in opposition to Laura Mulvey's feminist politics. As "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism" proceeds, further utilizing the sociology of Georg Simmel to condition its reader's interpretation of the thought of Adolf Loos, a sexual politics of the metropolitan landscape is developed; this investigation has the effect of negating feminist depth models in the context of architectural studies.

The literary procedure I describe unfolds gradually. Before addressing gender directly, and immediately preceding the last selection examined, "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism" fabricates a syllogistic parallel between Simmel's struggle of the metropolitan being and the role of clothing in the writings of Adolf Loos. This parallel is constructed in the following excerpt:

Loos' critique of traditional notions of architectural representation is bound up with the phenomenon of an emergent metropolitan culture. The subject of Loos' architecture is the metropolitan individual, immersed in the abstract relationships of the city, at pains to assert the independence or individuality of his existence against the leveling power of society. This battle, according to Georg Simmel, is the modern equivalent of primitive man's struggle with nature, clothing is one of the battlefields, and fashion is one of its strategies.²⁷ He writes: "The commonplace is good form in society.... It is bad taste to make oneself conspicuous through some individual, singular expression.... Obedience to the standards of the general public in all extents [is] the conscious and desired means of reserving their personal feelings and their taste."²⁸ In other words, fashion is a mask which protects the metropolitan being.

Loos writes about fashion in precisely such terms: "We have become more refined, more subtle. Primitive men had to differentiate themselves by various colors, modern man needs his clothes as a mask. His individuality is so strong that it can no longer be expressed in terms of items of clothing.... His own interventions are concentrated on other things."²⁹

27 [see last block quote]

28 Georg Simmel, "Fashion" (1904), *ibid.*

29 Adolf Loos, "Ornament and Crime" (1908), trans. Wilfred Wang in *The Architecture of Adolf Loos* (London, 1985), p. 103 (93)

(note: all ellipses original; previously quoted section indicated in gray)

To the educated reader it will be obvious that the selections from "Fashion" and "Ornament and Crime" in this passage have been deployed to the effect of 1) divorcing

each from the content of its respective essay and, 2) substantiating a transposed term (“fashion”).

The frequent ellipses and non-sequitur quality of the Simmel extracts above²⁸ should alert the reader to their constructed quality. A re-reading of “Fashion” reveals that the three sentences that Colomina includes are presented out of order and to the effect of changing their meaning.²⁹ In the translation Colomina cites, the first two sentences are to be found together, mid-way through page 313; the last spans the bottom of 311 and top of 312. What this means is that the last sentence, which precedes the first two, is presented out of order.³⁰ Moreover, first ellipsis bridges a gap of approximately 435 words, or one-and-one-half paragraphs (in addition to a numbered section break). Finally, in addition to being presented out of order, and including several gaps, the “Fashion” quotation Colomina includes contains several grammatical edits that are not indicated.

In the University of Chicago Press edition Colomina cites, it can be seen that the first two sentences quoted are derived from one sentence of Simmel’s translated prose.³¹ That sentence reads as follows:

The fact that the commonplace is good form in society, in the narrower sense of the term, is due not only to a mutual regard, which causes it to be considered bad taste to make one’s self conspicuous through some individual, singular expression that every one can repeat, but also to the fear of that feeling of shame which as it were forms a self-inflicted punishment for departure from the form and activity similar for all and equally accessible to all. (Simmel ed. Levine, “Fashion” 313)

In this selection, one can observe that the first sentence Colomina quotes, “The commonplace is good form in society...” is in fact part of a dependent clause; grammatically it was never intended to stand on its own. It is an inaccurate reflection of Simmel’s argument to have led with this clause as an independent sentence. This inaccuracy is redoubled by Colomina’s use of brackets in the third quoted sentence, which implies that her capitalization of the word “The” and use of a four dot ellipsis after the word “society” appear to reflect the grammatical structure of the text from which she has pulled her cited sentence, even though they in fact do not; by indicating edits selectively, Colomina masks her alterations to Simmel’s syntax.

²⁸ Grammatically, the final sentence fails to follow the first two, because it is not clear to whom the pronoun “they” refers.

²⁹ This effect is different from that of Colomina’s “The Metropolis and Mental Life;” while Colomina’s paraphrase there modifies the tone of Simmel’s prose, and serves to emphasize what is in fact an axillary aspect of his first paragraph it does little to change the basic argument.

³⁰ The indication “ibid.” in Colomina fn. 28 hides this, specifically.

³¹ For this edition, the editor chose to reprint a translation featured in the *American Journal of Sociology* (issue 61, May 1957), and originally published in *International Quarterly* (issue 10, 1904). The translator is unknown. MIT Libraries has two copies of the 1971 University of Chicago edition in circulation as of April 23, 2013, call number HM51.S592. I relied upon the Dewey Library copy, which was purchased in 1972. There is no doubt that I have been checking Colomina’s citations against the exact edition she cites.

Continuing: as we can see above, the second sentence in Colomina's quote repeats the operations of the first with an added twist: Colomina has added two words, "It is," in order to transform this second quoted dependent clause into its own sentence. Again, while the brackets in the third quoted sentence lead a reader to believe that this addition would be noted, it is not, and with good reason: beyond acting as a grammatical convenience, these two added words change the constative nature of the (real) cited phrase. Imposing the passive voice on a quoted clause, Colomina transforms a Neo-Kantian argument into a pronouncement of aesthetic judgment. Following the quoted translation more closely, one might paraphrase the portion of the sentence Colomina has cited as follows: "In society, it is considered bad taste to make oneself conspicuous though singular expression that others can repeat;" to this end it is evident that in "Fashion" Simmel does not pronounce that being conspicuous is bad taste, only that conspicuousness can give the appearance thereof, among other consequences. When considering the essay "Fashion" in its entirety, it might be argued that the sentence "It is bad taste to make oneself conspicuous through some individual, singular expression" is an intentionally oversimplified misrepresentation of Simmel's argument that fashion emphasizes both the human tendency towards both equalization *and* individualization.

Intentional misrepresentation is equally apparent in the final quoted sentence. Colomina's citation, "Obedience to the standards of the general public in all extents [is] the conscious and desired means of reserving their personal feelings and their taste," is an adaptation of the following two sentences:

It is this phase of fashion that is received by sensitive and peculiar persons, who use it as a sort of mask. They consider blind [PAGE BREAK] obedience to the standards of the general public in all externals as the conscious and desired means of reserving their personal feeling and their taste, which they are eager to reserve for themselves alone, in such a way that they do not care to enter into an appearance that is visible to all. (Simmel ed. Levine, "Fashion" 311-312)

By transforming this phrase into a sentence using the passive voice and, also, brackets, Colomina has changed the subject and meaning of Simmel's translated text. Now, rather than refer to an eccentricity of "sensitive and particular persons," that which is quoted takes "the modern equivalent of primitive man", described earlier in Colomina's text (*not* Simmel's) as its implied subject. That fashion is a "strategy" in a "struggle" is constant between the translation and Colomina's version of it, however in the translation cited the battlefield is not "clothing" but the mind, and the opponent not a modern analog of nature but the social anxieties of a limited class of individuals. The modification is convenient, but inaccurate.³²

³² Given the location of the page break in the translation Beatriz Colomina cites I am given to wondering if, while writing "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism," Colomina opened to a portion of the essay "Fashion," strung words together in a convenient combination, and then made an intentional error in her footnote, incorrectly stating "ibid." to avoid divulging correct page numbers. Personally, I cannot disregard the ethical complications of Colomina's adaptation of "Fashion" to her purposes, which demonstrates a lack of academic integrity; however, in this thesis I focus on the issue only inasmuch as it is relevant for its effect on reader relations.

Beatriz Colomina's misquotation of Simmel's "Fashion" is effective for facilitating association between Georg Simmel's "The Metropolis and Mental Life," "Fashion," and Adolf Loos' "Ornament and Crime." For example, in the final sentence of Colomina's "Fashion" quotation, an emphasis on the possessive pronoun "their" establishes grammatically that "fashion is a mask which protects the metropolitan being:" this assertion builds upon the earlier citation of "The Metropolis and Mental Life." Then, by emphasizing a supplementary aspect of her citation—the phrase "the ancient battle with nature"—Colomina elicits a comparison between "primitive man" and "the metropolitan individual." An intertextual thesis implied by this comparison, made with the fabricated quote from "Fashion," establishes the terms for "fashion" that Loos writes about "precisely." "The Metropolis and Mental Life" does not concern itself with the decorative arts; analogously, "Fashion" does not specifically consider a dialectical model of modernity; however, by presenting a modern-primitive binary from the former along with the aesthetic critique of the latter, with a common subject ("the metropolitan being"), a composite argument about fashion and urban identity has been established.

This composite argument facilitates a comparison between Loos' "Ornament and Crime" and Georg Simmel's critique of metropolitan culture. The intellectual affiliation implied by the word "precisely," in the sentence "Loos writes about fashion in *precisely* such terms" (emphasis mine) inherently frees Loos' text from its manifest content. This is executed in the interest of exploring a dialectic, within which Loos' text is just one component, displacing Loos' translated prose for its deep meaning. Reading "Ornament and Crime" as a reflection on aesthetics as such (like she does "Fashion"), Colomina implicates the essay in the multi-causal integration of facts and values characterizing Simmel's sociological dialectic. Colomina's strategically selected excerpt from "Ornament and Crime," as framed, allows a reader to reinterpret that essay as a manifesto of self-fashioning (rather than as the critique of Viennese decorative arts in the early twentieth century it was); consequentially, in the context of "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism," "Ornament and Crime" becomes a treatise on non-positivism (analogous to the work of Georg Simmel).

Having established this possibility through comparison, Colomina expands its hermeneutic through a subsequent, lengthier reading of a separate text by Loos ("Architecture," 1910):

Significantly, Loos writes about the exterior of the house in the same terms that he writes about fashion:

When I was finally given the task of building a house, I said to myself: in its external appearance, a house can only have changed as much as a dinner jacket. Not a lot therefore... I had to become significantly simpler. I had to substitute golden buttons with black ones. The house has to look inconspicuous.

The house does not have to tell anything to the exterior; instead, all its richness must be manifest in the interior.

Loos seems to establish a radical difference between interior and exterior, which reflects the split between the intimate and the social life of the metropolitan being: outside, the realm of exchange, money, and masks; inside, the realm of the inalienable, the nonexchangeable, and the unspeakable. (94)

The final argument, above, is the result of a sophisticated language game, by which I mean to say that that argument's historical accuracy is less relevant than its substantiation in the given text. The fact that I may disagree with this interpretation of the architectural thought of Adolf Loos with respect to "fashion" is irrelevant—what is stated is substantiated performatively because a constative context has been established. It really doesn't matter that it's wrong.

Myth and adverse possession

Colomina's claim to what Loos says in both "Ornament and Crime" and "Architecture" is only possible within a hermeneutic that associates his texts with cultural critique rather than the material phenomena that is the literal meaning of the quotations selected. As I have demonstrated, the interval between this manifest content and its deep meaning is abridged intertextually with fabricated quotations from sociologist Georg Simmel. In entertaining novel readings of Loos and Simmel, Colomina parodies Mulvey's ambition for feminist counter-cinema:³³ freeing the text from its referents just as Mulvey seeks to free the look of the camera "into materiality in time and space," and freeing the mind of her reader from the implications of Loos' cultural context where Mulvey wants to turn "the look of the audience into dialectic, passionate detachment." Here the cultural product at stake—for Colomina, the text-as-representation, as opposed to Mulvey's film-as-accumulated-convention—is interpreted as an instrument of fact rather than gender and possible political change. Circumstantially, this shift engenders another: pedagogy displaces politics, as the political's regime of dynamic influence is translated into pedagogical communication of knowledge, unilaterally.

In "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism," Beatriz Colomina enacts numerous silent comparisons between work of Adolf Loos and that which is referred to in Laura Mulvey's "Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity." The shared critique of Adolf Loos and Georg Simmel can only be verified within selections that have been given, and Colomina's limited commentary. It is this quality that allows for the political implications of the reader relations engendered by Mulvey's claim for feminist counter-cinema to be transformed into Colomina's pedagogical mode. Once the hermeneutic "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism" establishes through Loos and Simmel is turned towards Laura Mulvey's contribution to *Sexuality & Space*, the political is re-inscribed into the dialogue Colomina has initiated. This comparison, which remains implicit, is made in order to establish Colomina's architectural articulation of the term "sexuality & space" as the only viable method. In sum: Colomina grants herself epistemological

³³ "The first blow against the monolithic accumulation of traditional film conventions (already undertaken by radical filmmakers) is to free the look of the camera into its materiality in time and space and the look of the audience into dialectic, passionate detachment" (Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure" n.p.).

authority in the discourse engendered by *Sexuality & Space* by performing her singularity, through the erasure of Mulvey as a potential second interlocutor.

This process occurs through comparisons of content, and then form, punctuated by critique. Expanding upon her interpretation of Loos' "Architecture," Colomina writes:

[Loos'] split between inside and outside, between senses and sight, is gender-loaded. The exterior of the house, Loos writes, should resemble a dinner jacket, a male mask: as the unified self, protected by a seamless façade, the exterior is masculine. The interior is the scene of sexuality and reproduction, all the things that would divide the subject in the outside world. (94)

That the production of identity in a given practice is dependent upon a disruption between component parts in space—its inside and outside—shares concepts with Mulvey's description of the figure of Pandora, including inside and outside, a disrupted topography, and a practice of masking which signifies gender identity:

There is... a dislocation between Pandora's appearance and her meaning. Her surface dissembles her essence. The very attraction of the visible surface suggests antimony, a "dialectics of inside and outside," a topography that reflects the attraction/anxiety ambivalence exerted by the iconography of femininity as mask. This split is crucial. (Mulvey, "Topographies" 60)

Having established a type of conceptual equivalency between the writings of Laura Mulvey and Adolf Loos, Colomina proceeds with a veiled critique Mulvey's exploration of the terms articulated above:

The suggestion that the exterior is merely a mask which clads some preexisting interior is misleading, for the interior and exterior are constructed simultaneously. When he was designing the Rufer house, for example, Loos used a dismountable model that would allow the internal and external distributions to be worked out simultaneously... To address the interior is to address the splitting of the wall. (Colomina, "The Split Wall" 95)

In discussing the "split," Mulvey remains grounded in the feminine, and therefore interior, never working through interior *and* exterior, as Loos did with his model. Mulvey is thus implied to have made a mistake of method. If one can assume from Colomina's analysis that the interior and exterior are female and male, respectively, then what is inferred here is a critique of the discussion of "the feminine" without a masculine complement and that the sexes are dependent upon each other for definition just as "the interior and exterior are constructed simultaneously." Extending upon this metonymy, to address "the interior" as "the splitting of the wall" can be read as a methodological claim that, from the perspective of the sexual being always already manifest in space, implies that to address the category of the feminine necessarily means a consideration of sexual difference.

“The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism” restages claims made in “Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity” while negating Laura Mulvey’s claim to epistemological authority through a methodological critique; the essay does this by re-composing Mulvey’s topography of the mask in the architectural terms of “the split wall.” This re-composition takes the form of architecture, first through Loos’ play with drawing conventions in sketch elevations for the Rufer house. These elevations are notable because they show “not only the outlines of the façade, but also, in dotted lines, the horizontal and vertical divisions of the interior, the positions of the rooms, the thicknesses of the floors and the walls.” Because the windows “are represented as black squares, with no frame,” rather than, we can assume, with the frames, casements, and mullions detailed, Colomina claims that the drawings portray “neither the inside nor outside but the membrane between them.” This drawing is understood as proof to her claim that “between the representation of habitation and the mask is the wall,” and that “Loos’ subject inhabits the wall” (95). In his drawing Loos represents subjectivity across the sexual dimorphism of the interior-exterior dialectic, portraying the subject, per se, as that which is between male and female; this is so because the elevation drawing represents the physical space between the domestic environment of the interior and the self-fashioning of the exterior.

This representation of subjectivity can be contrasted with Laura Mulvey’s representation of “the mask” as autonomous from its portrayal. In “Pandora, Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity,” it is argued that cinema’s media of phantasmagoria represents mythical figures that necessarily pre-exist the medium, and the power of their representation is latent in the fact of those figures’ ability to transcend history.³⁴ In “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism” it is argued that Adolf Loos inverted an analogous paradigm by breaking with pre-existing connotations and metaphors, to express a metonymy that has been articulated (by Colomina) in language. Rather than resonate emotionally, Loos’ elevations of the Rufer house materialize the regulation of gender identity within the uninhabitable interval between interior and exterior, and therefore masculine and feminine.

Between Mulvey’s interest in phantasmagoria and Colomina’s enumeration of “the split wall” in the Rufer house elevations, topography remains a constant feature. What Mulvey called “a projection which attempts to conceal, but in fact reproduces, the relation of the signifier... to psychic structures” (Mulvey, “Topographies” 56) relates just as well to *Notorious* as it does to the elevation of the Rufer house. However, in Loos’ drawing, the process of signification upon which the image of femininity depends, in “Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity,” has broken down. There, Laura

³⁴ To review, as Mulvey describes her, Pandora is one of a category of historical figures that persists over time because of their persistence in a shared psychic vocabulary, and the symbolic space of cinema allows for the resurrection of these persistent figures in the present imaginary: “The cinema, with its strange, characteristic dislocation between word and image, fulfills this psychic function beautifully, drawing on preexisting connotations, metaphors, and metonymies to achieve a level of recognizable, but hard to articulate, emotional resonance that evades the precision of language and then materializes amorphous anxieties and desires into recognizable figures who will gain strength and significance from repetition. If Pandora is a prototype of the femme fatale, she found new life in the movies” (Mulvey, “Topographies” 68).

Mulvey employs Freud's theory of castration anxiety to deconstruct psychological symptoms, signified symbolically, arguing that "psychoanalytic theory transforms ... fascinating images with their over-determined 'poetics of space' back into symptoms, within a symbolic system, deciphering signifiers rather than unveiling phantasmal space." In "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism," Beatriz Colomina has literalized this interest in topography as signification, portraying a graphic delineation of features that show their relative positions in elevation. This literalization displaces the "riddle" of symbolism Mulvey addresses in the interest of manifest content. As Colomina points out, in Loos' work there is no dislocation analogous to that which Mulvey posits, in cinema, as a dislocation of word and image, signifier and signified;³⁵ it follows that in "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism," Adolf Loos inverts Laura Mulvey's paradigm of phantasmagoria because his elevations of the Rufer house materialize the regulation of gender identity rather than connote it.³⁶

Colomina continues this investigation of the topography of the split wall with reflections on physical space. With reiterated descriptions of the "theater box," Josephine Baker's swimming pool, and the mirrored dining room of Loos' Steiner house (Vienna, 1910), Colomina moves beyond metaphor to assert "the split wall" as a phenomenological experience. This assertion is dependent on an intellectual hinge: when Loos' subject inhabits the wall he or she creates a tension on the wall, construed as the limit between interior and exterior.³⁷ In the case of the Moller house, the theater box reiterates the gender binary of the interior and exterior, and between the female observer and male "intruder," to the effect of asserting the primacy of the masculine as subjectivity:

In the Moller house [the] threshold/point of maximum tension is the raised alcove protruding from the street façade, where the occupant is enclosed in the security of the interior, yet detached from it. The subject of Loos' house is a stranger, an intruder in his own space. (Colomina, "The Split Wall" 95)

In the case of the house for Josephine Baker, the swimming pool inscribes scopophilic pleasure within the material form of the interior, manifesting the objectification of the female body for the pleasure of the masculine sexual imagination in built form:

In Josephine Baker's house, the wall of the swimming pool is punctured by windows. It has been pulled apart, leaving a narrow passage surrounding the pool, and splitting each of the windows into an internal window and an external window. The visitor literally inhabits this wall, which enables him to look both inside, at the pool, and outside, at the city, but he is neither inside nor outside the house. (ibid.)

³⁵ "In the *Raumplan*, for example, Loos constructs a space (without having completed the working drawings), then allows himself to be manipulated by this construction. The object has as much authority over him as he has over the object" (Colomina, "The Split Wall" 96).

³⁶ This drawing is considered symptomatic, like others.

³⁷ "Loos's subject inhabits this wall. This inhabitation creates a tension on that limit, tampers with it" (Colomina, "The Split Wall" 95).

Rather than function metonymically, like “Pandora’s box” in “Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity,” here containment literally manifests the privilege of the masculine in architectural space. It is made apparent that the division between interior and exterior upon which the domestic universe of Loos’ architectures depends is itself dependent upon, and manufactured for, the assertion of male subjectivity as primary and central. *He* is coextensive with the split wall around which this universe of the inside and the outside is constructed, because this masculine subject also transcends the regulation of the wall and the interval it represents. Circumstantially, that masculinity also serves as the ontological framework for Loos’ epistemological system: this evident in the *mise-en-scène* of Josephine Baker’s swimming pool, described above, where the man is “neither inside nor outside the house,” but has visual agency over both realms.

Here, space prescribes sexual identity. What you see is who you are.³⁸

In Josephine Baker, Beatriz Colomina finds her Pandora figure, a medium for the unconscious assumptions and riddles of patriarchal culture of architecture in the twentieth century. Turning from Loos’ design and writing to his representation in others’ architectural writings, Colomina transitions away from the tactical differentiation of herself from Laura Mulvey’s feminist approach, and towards a strategic reinterpretation of Mulvey’s testimony of Pandora as a cultural figure.

After a lengthy excursus on Pandora, Pandora’s Box, and their representation together in the iconography of Abraham van Diepenbeek and Paul Klee, in “Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity,” Mulvey writes,:

The Panofskys record two examples of Pandora iconography in which the sexual significance of the box is made explicit. One, an engraving by Abraham van Diepenbeek dating from the mid-seventieth century, shows Pandora “holding the fateful pyxis as a fig leaf” and accompanying contemporary text by Michel de Marolles points out that Pandora is “holding her box in her right hand, lowered to that part, which she covers, from which has flowed so many of the miseries and anxieties that afflict man, as though an artist wished to show that there is always something bitter in the midst of a fountain of pleasure and that the thorn pricks among the flowers.” The second example is a drawing by Paul Klee, dating from 1936, Die Busche der Pandora als Stilleben, “representing the ominous receptacle... as a kantharis-shaped vase containing some flowers but emitting evil vapors from an opening clearly suggestive of the female genitals. The reverberations of connotation between Pandora and her box depend on the contiguity: both the juxtaposition of the figure to the box and the topography of the female body as an enclosing space link metonymically to other enclosing

³⁸ Cannily, these instances of maximum tension between interior and exterior, and male and female, are also that which amplifies the pleasure and power of the male figures of voyeur and visitor; this is an inversion of Mulvey’s proposition for feminist counter-cinema, where the “freedom of the look of the camera into its materiality in time and space... destroys [the] satisfaction, pleasure, and privilege of the ‘invisible guest’” (Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure” n.p.).

spaces. But the reverberations also depend on substitution. The box can, itself, stand as a representation of the enigma and threat generated by the concept of female sexuality in patriarchal culture. (Mulvey, "Topographies" 62)

In her own, abbreviated, terms, Colomina rearticulates Mulvey's argument in the context of Loos, Baker, and monographs of Loos' work:

Incapable of detachment from the object, the critic simultaneously produces a new object and is produced by it. Criticism that presents itself as a new interpretation of an existing object is in fact constructing a completely new object. On the other hand, readings that claim to be purely objective inventories, the standard monographs of Loos-Münz and Künstler in the 1960s and Gravagnuolo in the 1980s—are thrown off-balance by the very object of their control. Nowhere is this alienation more evident than in their interpretations of the house for Josephine Baker. (Colomina, "The Split Wall" 96)

Colomina departs from Mulvey's psychoanalytic reading, instead beginning with the manifest content of form. That this should be occurring is consistent with the shift in media—from Mulvey's consideration cinema, to Colomina's consideration text—and also serves to inscribe the decomposition of signification that can be seen in Colomina's earlier observation of the literal. When discussing Münz, for example, "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism" retains the assumption that composition is symptomatic but asserts this through formal rather than psychoanalytic analysis, while simultaneously acknowledging the spectral possibility of the psychoanalytic as episteme:

[In his monograph, Münz writes] "Africa: that is the image conjured up more or less firmly by a contemplation of the model," but he then confesses not to know why he invoked this image. He attempts to analyze the formal characteristics of the project, but all he can conclude is that "they look strange and exotic." What is most striking in this passage is the uncertainty as to whether Münz is referring to the model of the house or to Josephine Baker herself. He seems unable to detach himself from this project or to enter into it. (96-7)

As we can see, Mulvey's premise of Pandora as riddle and rebus is retained but method and media have shifted. This is also apparent when, critiquing Gravagnuolo, Colomina recalls Mulvey's description of Pandora always having "an iconographical attribute, a large jar, which contained all the evils of the world." Specifically, where she cites Gravagnuolo, Baker is linked with her swimming pool and a related dialectics of classicism and vulgarity.

He concludes:

The water flooded with light, the refreshing swim, the voyeuristic pleasure of underwater exploration—these are the carefully balanced ingredients of this gay architecture. But what matters more is that the invitation to the spectacular suggested by the theme of the house for a cabaret star is handled with Loos with discretion and intellectual detachment, more as a poetic game, involving the mnemonic pursuit of quotations and allusions to the Roman spirit, than as a vulgar surrender to the taste of Hollywood. (97)

Colomina's shift of method and media here reveals a difference in intent. Like Mulvey's inquiry into the character Alicia in *Notorious* as an embodiment of Pandora, without discussion of Ingrid Bergman as actress or woman, Colomina's historiography of the Pandora-like figure of Josephine Baker includes little discussion of Baker herself. As Colomina reinterprets Mulvey's riddle of Pandora she asserts a phallogocentric paradigm whereby Josephine Baker is treated as if she were only as the image represented by Gravagnuolo and Münz. Here Josephine Baker is a cipher for the obfuscation of cultural bias through faulty method, and the manifestation of prejudice, as masked by objectivity, though the voice of the architectural historian:

The insistence on detachment, on reestablishing the distance between critic and object of criticism, architect and building, subject and object, is of course indicative of the obvious fact that Münz and Gravagnuolo have failed to separate themselves from the object. (ibid.)

With critic, object, subject, and architects retained as stable ontologies there is no conceptual space for the deepening or validation of Josephine Baker beyond her existence in the masculine imagination of Loos and his historical chorus. Therefore, even as she identifies castration anxiety, Beatriz Colomina fails to interpellate her reader within a feminist dialectic against patriarchy. Josephine Baker, rather than representing that which "signifies castration, inducing voyeuristic or fetishistic mechanisms to circumvent her threat" (Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure" n.p.), in order to bring readers to political consciousness, is historicized by Colomina as the hollow object of masculine fantasy and shame. As Colomina writes, "The image of Josephine Baker offers pleasure but also represents the threat of castration posed by the 'other'" (Colomina, 97-8).

In "Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity," Mulvey at length reveals the problem of containment as crucial to the topography of female identity in space and identity; the iconography of Pandora is foundational to this study. Through her historiography of Adolf Loos monographs, "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism" attempts to refute Mulvey's feminist episteme by privileging the masculine subject. Colomina's narrative addresses this refutation directly. In her critiques of Münz and Kunstler and Gravagnuolo, the iconography of the house for Josephine Baker is presented as always defined by the male gaze, and therefore a representation of the male gaze as objectified rather than a figuration of the feminine. This, as a negation of Mulvey's feminist agenda, is made clear through the juxtaposition of a claim resonating with "Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity" followed by one undercutting feminist critique as such:

The image of Josephine Baker offers pleasure but also represents the threat of castration posed by the "other": the image of woman in water—liquid, elusive, unable to be controlled, pinned down. One way of dealing with this threat is fetishization. The Josephine Baker house represents a shift in the sexual status of the body. This shift involves determinations of race and class more than gender. (98-9)

Read in the context of *Sexuality & Space*, the shift discussed not only “involves determinations of race and class more than gender,” but also *asserts* these determinations over that of gender in defining the ontology of the body. Rather than embrace Mulvey’s logocentric approach to the metaphysics of gender Colomina highlights Baker’s physical attributes as they have been described in architectural history. Synthesizing her description of Josephine Baker’s swimming pool and Garavanuolo's Colomina writes:

In the Baker house, the body is produced as spectacle, the object of an erotic gaze, an erotic system of looks. The exterior of this house cannot be read as a silent mask designed to conceal its interior; it is a tattooed surface which does not refer to the interior, it neither conceals nor reveals it. This fetishization of the surface is repeated in the “interior” In the passages the visitors consume Baker’s body as a surface adhering to the windows. Like the body, the house is all surface; it does not simply have an interior. (98)

The gaze as a metaphysical problem has been reduced to its literal experience; the puzzle of gender oppression Pandora represented in Mulvey’s “Pandora” flattened into the male gaze, and Josephine Baker’s house into a symptom thereof.

Smash cut to Le Corbusier, and cameras

Responding to Laura Mulvey’s “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” the concluding pages of “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism” contain a uniquely architectural investigation of the gaze, as addressed in the work of Le Corbusier. Where the first portion of the essay obfuscates through omission, and legitimates through citation, the final portion foregrounds architectural representation over secondary sources, while offering profuse and accessible description. While writing about Corbusier, Colomina leads her reader to conclusions with description, detail, and pedantic prose.

Colomina begins with a comparison:

If the photographs of Loos’ interiors give the impression that somebody is about to enter the room, In Le Corbusier’s the impression is that somebody was just there, leaving as traces a coat and a hat lying on the table by the entrance of Villa Savoye or some bread and a jug on the kitchen table or a raw fish in the kitchen of Garches. (98-9)

This tidy comparison provides an easy transition from one subject to the next. As it offers this comparison, this second section has also reset to the beginning of the first, staging a related but also different line of inquiry.

If the beginning of the first section of Colomina’s essay was mediation on Mulvey staged through Benjamin, this reset version has retreated towards a more direct form of engagement: an investigation of architectural historical content mediated through Mulvey alone. It is appropriate that the second section is written

in a different style and tone from the first. Where the first section obfuscates through omission, and legitimates through citation and myth, the second foregrounds architectural representation over secondary sources and offers more profuse and accessible description. While writing about Corbusier, Colomina leads her reader to conclusions with description, detail, and pedantic prose. For example, the sentence preceding the quote above elaborates on argument introduced, introducing a second level of detail:

And even once we have reached the highest point of the house, as in the terrace of Villa Savoye in the sill of the window which frames the landscape, the culminating point of the promenade, here also we find a hat, a pair of sunglasses, a little package (cigarettes?) and a lighter, and now, where did the gentleman go? Because of course, you would have noticed already, that the personal objects are all male objects (never a handbag, a lipstick, or some piece of women's clothing. But before that... (99)

This clear formal strategy complements the obscurity of the architectural representation at stake, allowing one to feel like they're "getting it" even through the details remain obscure. There is a casualness here that is new as well, conveyed through short sentences and improper grammar. Before, Colomina was carefully constructing a pedagogical/political position on the issue of the place of gender and the scopophilic in architectural inquiry, and doing so in a manner which was intentionally intimidating. Now, she's loosened up, becoming a bit more generous in her explanation and talking directly to a reader presumed to be with her in what she's saying (rather than abstractly addressing a methodological opposition). This stylistic shift inaugurates a transition in the mode of Mulvey's kaleidoscope: a turn, where the basic structure intent and content remains the same, but some elements have shifted. As the kaleidoscope turns, Colomina modifies her relationship to her reader. She gets closer to her audience, while Mulvey recedes from view, behind criticism, veiled by detail and context.

As she writes about Le Corbusier, Colomina no longer presumes we are familiar with what she is explaining. For example, whereas in the first portion the following artifact would be referenced only with its title, here Colomina writes: "In the film *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* (1929) directed by Pierre Chenal with Le Corbusier" and then includes archival information and cross-references in her footnote:

37 *A copy of this film is held in the Museum of Modern Art, New York. About this movie see J. Ward, "Le Corbusier's Villa Les Terrasses and the International Style," Ph. D dissertation, New York University, 1983, and by the same author "Les Terrasses," Architectural Review (March 1985: 64-69. Richar Becherer has compared it to Man Ray's movie Les Mysteres du Chateau du De (setting by Mallet-Stevens) in "Chancing it in the Architecture of Surrealist Mise-en Scène." (102)*

It is interesting that there is a reference to *mise-en-scène* in the note above, but no reference to Mulvey—who discusses the category both in “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” and “Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity,” at length. The impression of Colomina’s inclusions of additional detail and more informal style, above, is that this portion of her essay has inverted its focus, moving from an architectural mediation of feminist film theory to a filmic mediation of gender in architectural representation. To this end, we are led through the film described directly rather than through secondary figures like Benjamin, Simmel, or Lacan:

There is also a figure of a woman going through a house in this movie. The house that frames her is Villa Savoye. She never catches our eye. Here we are literally following somebody, the point of view is that of a voyeur. (104)

Meanwhile, our focus has shifted from women enclosed in spaces and the specter of voyeurism to the direct representation of that voyeuristic view, as it relates to a woman who moves through space. Whereas before we concentrated on the relationship between a woman and her voyeur, here we follow the point of view of the voyeur. As she describes the *mise-en-scène* of *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, Colomina uses a method of ipso-facto engagement. As with before, elision plays a key role in the construction of her argument. Rather than legitimate through obscure citations, however, here Colomina takes advantage of reconstructed reader-relations to make a particular and limited interpretation of the film in question, as a representation of the gender politics of Le Corbusier’s architecture:

We could accumulate more evidence. Few photographs of Le Corbusier’s buildings show people in them. But in those few, women always look away from the camera: most of the time they are shot from the back and they almost never occupy the same space as men. (ibid.)

In order for this claim to operate as if introduced by her summary of *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, Colomina brushes over many crucial aspects of the film. For example, , Colomina fails to mention a thirty second sequence portraying two women and one man engaging in calisthenics together, during which both women look at the camera at least once (see figure 5). With this in mind Colomina’s claim that the film is symptomatic of gender dimorphism in Corbusier’s architectural representation appears tautological. If one considers the description as part of a network of citations which includes Mulvey’s “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” however, Colomina’s intention becomes clearer. Instead of describing Corbusier’s film and related media, Colomina is constructing a performative counter-point to Mulvey’s proposition for feminist inquiry based on the psychological investigation of the gaze as symptomatic of pervasive sexism as representing in visual culture. The situation of this reaction from within a description of cinematic composition and stylistic tropes—*mise-en-scène*—is pointed considering the primacy of this aspect of cinematography within Mulvey’s proposition of feminist counter-cinema.³⁹ Rather than claim as Mulvey does that film restricts itself to

³⁹ “However self-conscious and ironic Hollywood managed to be, it always restricted itself to a formal *mise-en-scène* reflecting the dominant ideological concept of the cinema. The alternative cinema provides



Figure 5 Still, *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, dir. Pierre Chenal, 1929

the representation of the dominant ideology, Colomina's focused description implies that *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* is indicative only of that which it seeks to represent—Le Corbusier's architecture—and is emblematic in doing so.

As she discusses the architectural representation of Le Corbusier, Beatriz Colomina performs her counter-point to Mulvey's feminist proposition of the psychological investigation of the. In this counter-point, the image of the castrated woman is the lynch pin for a system of architectural representation whereby agency is invested in the masculine. As she addresses the depiction of women in photographs of homes by Le Corbusier, Colomina's descriptions reiterate the phallocentrism of her earlier argument:

a space for a cinema to be born which is radical in both a political and an aesthetic sense and challenges the basic assumptions of the mainstream film. This is not to reject the latter moralistically, but to highlight the ways in which its formal preoccupations reflect the psychical obsessions of the society which produced it, and, further, to stress that the alternative cinema must start specifically by reacting against these obsessions and assumptions. A politically and aesthetically avant-garde cinema is now possible, but it can still only exist as a counterpoint" (Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure" n.p.).

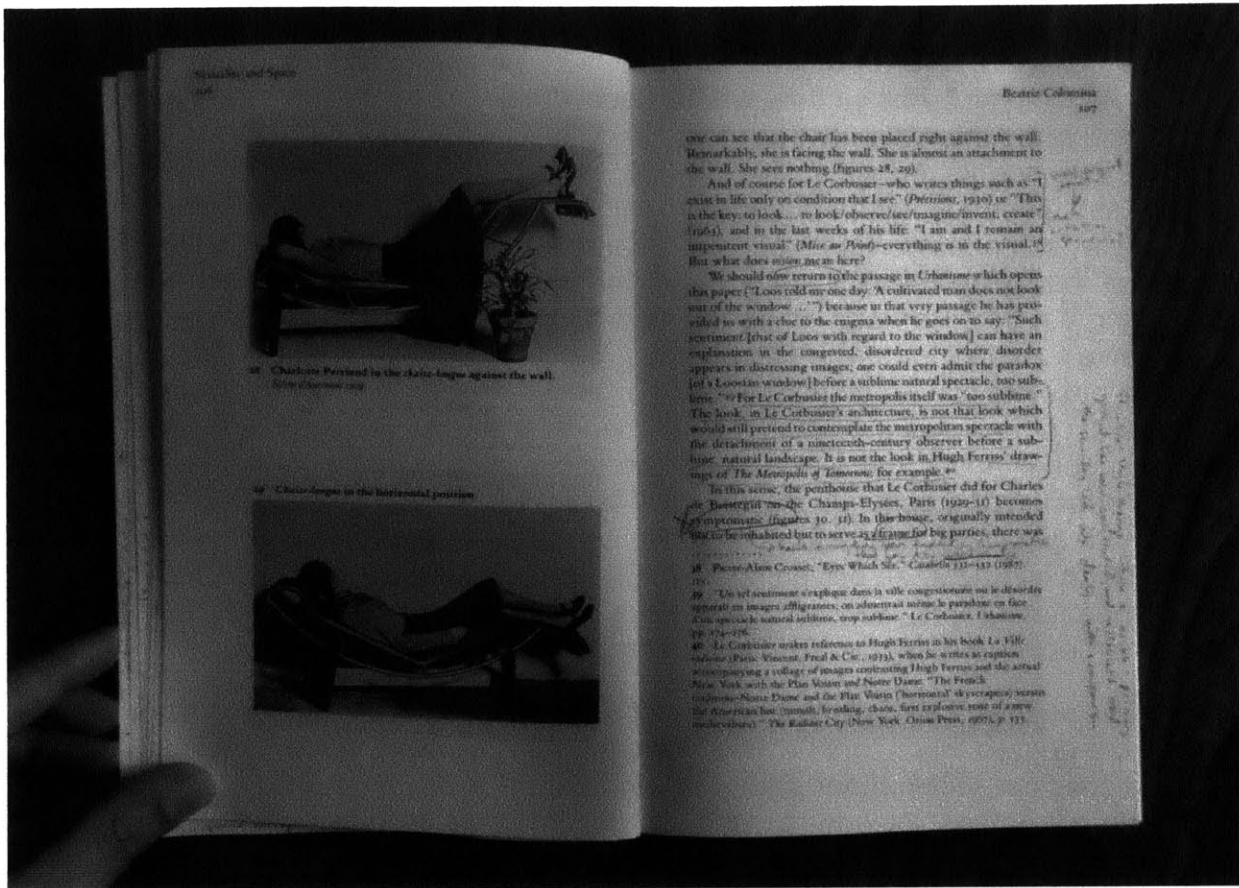


Figure 6 Sexuality & Space, pp. 106-7 (author's copy)

[...T]he woman is placed “inside,” the man “outside,” the woman looks at the man, the man looks at the “world.” [...] Perhaps no example is more telling than the photo collage of the exhibit of a living room in the Salon d'Automne 1929, including all the “equipment of a dwelling,” a project that Le Corbusier realized in collaboration with Charlotte Perriand. In this image which Le Corbusier had published in the *Oeuvre complete*, Perriand herself is lying on the chaise-longue, her head turned away from the camera. More significant, in the original photograph employed in this photocollage (as well as in another photograph in the *Oeuvre complete* which shows the chaise-longue in the horizontal position), one can see that the chair has been placed right against the wall. Remarkably, she is facing the wall. She is almost an attachment to the wall. She sees nothing (figures 28, 29).

And of course for Le Corbusier—who writes things such as “I exist in life only to condition what I see” (*Précisions*, 1930) or “This is the key: to look... to look /observe /see /imagine /invent, create,” and in the last weeks of his life—“I am and I remain an impenitent visual” (*Mise au point*)—everything is in the visual. (104-7)

Perriand here faces the wall in the same manner that Josephine Baker swims in her pool: to be looked at, as a representation of gender, as regulated by the figure of “the split wall.” As Colomina has written, where Loos’ drawings manifested the space of that wall, occupying the interval between inside and outside, Corbusier’s photography depicts the wall and its regulation literally. He, the architect, sees the blind woman looking at and blended into the blank wall, which is itself representative of his vocation. The photograph is a representation of the (male) subject of architecture; Corbusier depicts what he himself sees. Where Josephine Baker in her pool literalizes the figure of Pandora and her box, Perriand embodies architecture’s subjugation of feminine agency in Modernism’s visually-determined universe. The pedagogical ambition of the text sublimates possible counterpoints because of its self-contained tautology: what Colomina describes is, as always, tightly framed by what she chooses to include and what she chooses not to; there can be no alternative interpretation of the images described because the description is already autonomous from that to which it refers. Shaped more by latent critique than manifest content, the text asserts Corbusier’s sexism by signifying it while occluding any other possible response to his photographs, because the photographs were always already less the object of the description than the development of a response to “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.”

I surmise that “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism” is emasculating Charlotte Perriand to a degree that might be inappropriate. After all, what do the photographs and Perriand’s positions within them signify beyond the pithy claim that Perriand “sees nothing?” In her prose, Colomina does not analyze further. Meanwhile, with these photographs, Le Corbusier is given a level of intellectual agency that is perhaps greater than that of historical fact. It is questionable to what extent the representations Colomina references, through the words of another historian, could be similarly described as emblematic of “the look in Le Corbusier’s architecture,” as she does here:

But what does vision mean here? We should now return to the passage in Urbanisme which opens this paper (“Loos told me one day: ‘A cultivated man does not look out of the window...’”) because in that very passage he has provided us with a clue to the enigma when he goes on to say: “Such sentiment [that of Loos with regard to the window] can have an explanation in the congested, disordered city where disorder appears in distressing images; one could even admit the paradox [of a Loosian window] before a sublime natural spectacle, too sublime.” For Le Corbusier the metropolis itself was “too sublime.” The look, in Le Corbusier’s architecture, is not that look which would still pretend to contemplate the metropolitan spectacle with the detachment of a nineteenth-century observer before a sublime, natural landscape. (107)

In this passage, the connotation of the term “architecture” relative to “vision” remains enigmatic even as Colomina is ostensibly writing in the interest of disambiguation. Is she arguing that architecture—and the built works and representations that go along with them (or before them, or after them)—exert a metaphysical push and pull that constricts people and artists working within and around them (or “in” them) to engage with vision in a certain way? Is Le Corbusier magic? The claim would not be preposterous given the ambiguous subjectivity of the camera in Laura Mulvey’s

“Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity,” and the trope of definition through comparison to this essay in “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism.” Here, Le Corbusier’s visually-deterministic metaphysics of space is a construction of discourse, emphasized through the concept of “the look,” itself substantiated through a carefully curated series of images, which themselves only signify in the context of the discourse they support.

Like the void endemic to the phenomenon of Pandora, this process of negation and the tautology it produces is necessary for the configuration of gaze within Colomina’s argument. As with Mulvey’s “Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity,” this topography of the void is motivated by narrative; however, in “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism” the fiction developed only operates with itself at stake, rather than in the interest of work to come. In the introduction to “Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity,” Laura Mulvey emphasizes an epistemological imperative where “the desire to know by seeing with one’s own eyes needs to be transmuted into a pleasure of decipherment so that the process of uncovering is similar to the exercise of riddle- or puzzle-solving” (Mulvey, “Topographies” 66). While discussing the “look” of Le Corbusier, Beatriz Colomina draws on aspects of this imperative—for example, signifying a reader’s desire to know with rhetorical questions, or emphasizing terms like “enigma”—however, in so doing Colomina has undercut the political ambitions of that imperative by substituting a lesson in architectural history. Therefore, in “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism,” the desire to know by seeing with one’s own eyes emphasized by “Pandora: Topographies of the Mask and Curiosity” has been transformed into a decipherment of that problem, as represented by architectural design. It is instructive that where Mulvey relies on a self-constructed ground of her own previous work Colomina retreats even farther inward, moving her argument forward through language games and a redoubling of terms which have already been established. Consider, for example, the description of the Beistegui apartment in “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism:”

In this house, originally intended not to be inhabited but to serve as a frame for big parties, there was no electric lighting. Beistegui wrote: “the candle has recovered all its rights because it is the only one which gives a living light.” “electricity, modern power, is invisible, it does not illuminate the dwelling, but activates the doors and moves the walls. Electricity is used inside this apartment to slide away partition walls, operate doors, and allow cinematographic projection on the metal screen (which unfolds automatically as the chandelier rises up on pulleys, and outside, on the roof terrace, to slide the banks of hedges to frame the view of Paris [...] Electricity is used here not to illuminate, but to make visible a technology of framing... doors, walls, hedges, that is, traditional architectural framing devices, are activated with electric power, as are the built in cinema camera and its projection screen, and when these modern frames are lit, the “living light of the chandelier gives way to another living light, the flickering light of the movie, the “flicks” [...] This new “lighting” displaces traditional forms of enclosure, as electricity had done before it. This house is a commentary on the new condition. The distinctions between inside and outside are here made problematic.” (107-110)

Upon reading, we can agree with Colomina that a new condition for the design of the interior has been established by the apartment designed by Le Corbusier because she has said as much; similarly, it is reasonable that, within this design, distinctions have been made problematic and certain things displaced for others, because this is what her narrative describes. That we should agree, however, is dependent upon our subscription to the metonymic resonance between the frame, illumination, visibility, and the production of images as analogous to rhetorical signification. Instead of being an instrument of sexual politics, here the gaze is an instrument of wordplay. In the context of the disciplinary ambitions discussed in the introduction to *Sexuality & Space*, this displacement of the sexuality applies to "Architecture" as much as it does Colomina's prose. In "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism," Architecture is autonomous from the issue of sexuality inasmuch as the concept of "the gaze," always already implicated in the regulation of gender, has been made to refer *only* to what it itself sees; Colomina's language game manifests this political turning-towards-oneself by replicating it in prose form.

This intellectual shift towards architectural autonomy initiates Colomina's final critique of Laura Mulvey. Responding to "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Colomina re-inscribes the concept of the camera within an architectural framework. In the process, she undercuts the figure of the feminine as the discursive content of "the gaze" in favor of "the view" as that which regulates spatial ontology, generally. For Laura Mulvey the camera embodies phallogentrism because of the way in which it configures the look of cinema:

Camera technology (as exemplified by deep focus in particular) and camera movements (determined by the action of the protagonist), combined with invisible editing (demanded by realism) all tend to blur the limits of screen space. The male protagonist is free to command the stage, a stage of spatial illusion in which he articulates the look and creates the action. (Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure" n.p.)

For Beatriz Colomina, the camera only configures the political possibility of a landscape whose construction subjection to influence is made absent. This has the effect of evacuating the sexually-motivated spatial illusion the camera represents for Mulvey:

For Le Corbusier, "to inhabit" means to inhabit the camera. But the camera is not a traditional place; it is a system of classification, a kind of filing cabinet. "To inhabit" means to employ that system. Only after this do we have "placing," which is to place the view in the house, to take a picture, to place the view in the filing cabinet, to classify the landscape. (Colomina, "The Split Wall" 120)

Just as Mulvey's camera enables the male protagonist's command of the stage, Corbusier's architecture enables his inhabitant to command over the landscape.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ With this in mind it is not coincidental that the subjects of both Corbusier's and Loos's architectures are described as "actors." Quoting Colomina: "The subject of Loos's architecture is the stage actor. But while the center of the house is left empty for the performance, we find the subject occupying the threshold of this space. Undermining its boundaries. The subject is split between actor and spectator of its own play. The completeness of the subject dissolves as also does the wall that s/he is occupying. The subject of Le Corbusier's work is the movie actor, 'estranged not only from the scene but also his own person.' This

Through this partial consistency, Colomina is able to articulate political stakes of her argument in “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism”:

[In the work of Le Corbusier] the exterior world... becomes artifice; like the air, it has been conditioned, landscaped—it becomes landscape. The apartment defines modern subjectivity with its own eye. The traditional subject can only be the visitor, and as such, a temporary part of the viewing mechanism. The humanist subject has been displaced. (120)

Humanism, here, is a cipher. By negating the gendered aspect of Mulvey’s argument about the camera and patriarchy Colomina re-establishes the male protagonist enabled by the camera of “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” as the subject of space. Colomina transposes Mulvey’s concern for gendered subjects with the foregrounding of the interior-exterior dialectic as that which regulates gender:

The separation on which the dwelling is based is the possibility for a being to install himself. But in Le Corbusier this installation splits the subject itself, rather than simply the outside from inside. Installation involves a convoluted geometry which entangles the division between interior and exterior, between the subject and self.... The split between the traditional humanist subject (the occupant or the architect) and the eye is split between looking and seeing, between outside and inside, between landscape and site. In [Corbusier’s] drawings, the inhabitant or the person in search of a site are represented as diminutive figures ... This inhabitation is independent from the place (understood in a traditional sense); it turns the outside into an inside... “Le dehors est toujours un dedans” (the outside is always an inside) means that the “outside” is a picture. And that “to inhabit” means to see. (125)

Finally, Colomina returns to the allusion of Mulvey’s camera to assert a masculine protagonist that the production of a feminist counter-cinema is intended to oppose:

Power has become “invisible.” The look that from Le Corbusier’s skyscrapers will dominate a world in order is neither the look from behind the periscope of Beistegui or the defensive view (turned towards itself) of Loos’ interiors. It is a look that “registers” a new reality, a “recording” eye. (ibid.)

The use of the present perfect tense implies that the historical narrative in which Le Corbusier’s skyscraper’s participate has no beginning and no end: it *is*, and therefore is now just as it was then. Where Mulvey ends with projection, Colomina concludes with the implication that what she has described is now as it has always been: it is what it is.

As she concludes “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism,” this philosophy of history is made manifest through the final comparison of Loos’ and Corbusier’s views of

moment of estrangement is clearly marked in the drawing of *La Ville radieuse* where the traditional humanist figure, the inhabitant of the house, is made incidental to the camera eye: it comes and goes, it is merely a visitor” (125).

sexuality, space, and fashion. In her comparison, implicit sexual politics is again obviated by a discussion of history:

*...where Loos contrasts the **dignity** of male British fashion with the **masquerade** of women's, Le Corbusier praises women's fashion over men's because it has undergone **change**, the change of modern time. (126, emphasis original)*

While Loos spoke, you will remember, of the exterior of the house in terms of male fashion, Le Corbusier's comments on fashion are made in the context of a discussion of the interior. (127) ...etc

Sexuality is displaced by the men discussing it, the structure of sexual oppression configured by the discourse under examination remains.

**SIC ERAT SCRIPTUM:
ON “UNTITLED: THE HOUSING OF GENDER” BY MARK WIGLEY**

“Untitled: The Housing of Gender,” reframes the topic of the symposium *Sexuality & Space* within concerns for the state of architectural discourse at the end of the twentieth century. This is evident from the beginning of the essay; for example, in the introductory section of “Untitled: The Housing of Gender,” Mark Wigley asks (and responds):

What is it to talk of sexuality and space here, in this space, or rather spaces, this room but also the space of architectural discourse and that of the university, to name but two? Sexuality is not so easily accommodated here. The subject is still without title in architecture, that is, it is still without a proper place. Of course, this displacement of sexuality occurs within every department of the university, even, if not especially, in those in which it appears to be addressed in the most rigorous terms. (Wigley 328)

I'm not going to deny that what Wigley says above was true (and remains so), however in context the description offers a self-fulfilling prophecy, and this is troubling. “Untitled: The Housing of Gender” conflates gender and sexuality, by collapsing each category into its expression, in space. This collapse, which occurs through an architectural historiography of canonical texts by Leon Battista Alberti and Gottfried Semper, “displaces” (to draw on both Wigley and Colomina’s use of this verb) the attempt to “give title” to sexuality within architecture offered by the symposium, “Sexuality and Space;” by undertaking a rigorous investigation of the configuration of sexuality by architectural theory, “Untitled: The Housing of Gender” projects an architecturally-specific narrative of gender performance in architectural discourse; in its implications for texts by Beatriz Colomina and Laura Mulvey, this projection displaces the narratives it circumscribes historically, within the shared discourse of *Sexuality & Space*.

In his historiography, Mark Wigley states that the project of *Sexuality & Space* was always already a dead-end; while seemingly benign, this gesture operates through an intellectual enumeration of several deep-seated prejudices about gender and scholarship. It is in the interest of exploring these prejudices that this chapter has been written.

In “Untitled: The Housing of Gender,” Mark Wigley uses sexuality as an agent in the elaboration of a complex architectural tautology whereby what is, *is* inasmuch as it has

been described. Early in his essay, Wigley defines the terms of architectural discourse and *Sexuality & Space* such that each grounds the other:

The talk of "Sexuality and Space" here, within the academic space of architectural discourse, is therefore complicated. After all, this is the discourse that advertises itself as concerned primarily with space. In a sense, this is the space of space. The question of sexuality must be as much about the space of the discourse as what can be said within that space.⁴¹ In these terms, my concern here is to trace some of the relationships between the role of gender in the discourse of space and role of space in the discourse of gender. This is to say, with the interrelationships between how the question of gender is housed and the role of gender in housing. (328-9)

In the passage above, the delegation of such words as "gender" and "sexuality" to the ambiguities of "the question of sexuality" and the "question of gender" calls the meaning of each term into question. In this sense neither of these crucial concepts identified by Mark Wigley, which he will subsequently discuss in detail, have meaning unto themselves. "Untitled: The Housing of Gender" is allowed to circle around these words' possible signification, as informed by historical analysis (answering "the question"). This is to say, while "sexuality and space," "architectural discourse," et al have been represented as indefinite in their signification they will nonetheless circumstantially come to mean what "Untitled: The Housing of Gender" says they do.

Having said this it is also important to note that the use of the term "department of the university" in my first selection is noteworthy, because the feminist discourse that Wigley identifies with those departments "in which [sexuality] appears to be addressed in the most rigorous terms" is not given a genealogy and therefore, in this context, definition. Instead, feminism is described through its ideological and methodological tendencies; these tendencies are, in turn, utilized as the foundation for a corrective which is asserted as if its possibility was latent in architectural historiography. Per Wigley's deconstruction, feminism offers an established method for deconstructing the suppression of aspects of the human experience within the study of architecture; because of this method's already existing and having-been-followed, it was inappropriate for Wigley's architectural inquiry. Impropriety is offered as an inherent

⁴¹ A reader pointed out to me that in this thesis I seem to agree with what is stated in the sentence "The question of sexuality must be as much about the space of the discourse as what can be said within that space." On the one hand it is true that I might agree: my consideration of sexuality here is as much about the space of its attendant discourse as what was said. However, my allegiances in this matter lie more with Laura Mulvey than they do with Mark Wigley, if such an opposition could be proposed, through her more figural, formalist engagement with the category of space and Mark Wigley's more literal, historiographical method. This thesis is not a manifesto; ergo I am not claiming that the question of sexuality must be as much about the form of discourse as what is said by that form, to take some liberties with the Wigley passage that this note appends. I find that a little bossy (who is anyone to say what it is "about," and why must what it is "about" be enforced?); rather, this investigation is a type of nonce taxonomy: by configuring the discourse of *Sexuality & Space* in a certain way I hope to also reconfigure it. Therefore, finally addressing the so-called "other hand," I disagree with Wigley's statement by default, and offer no alternative; with that in mind, so far as this thesis might be a response to Wigley's sentence about space and sexuality, it is an intentional non-sequitur.

flaw, coextensive with the ideological ambition of the feminist project. To this end, in “Untitled: The Housing of Gender,” a feminist interpretation of space is offered only in terms which are, and therefore only as, negative:

...the complicity of the discourse with both the general cultural subordination of the “feminine” and the specific subordination of particular “women” can be identified, often explicitly but usually by way of covert social mechanisms that sustain bias at odds with overt formulations. Such readings would reproduce in architecture readings that have been made of other discourses. (329)

By defining feminism as discourses interested in “the general cultural subordination of the ‘feminine’ and the specific subordination of particular ‘women,’” the project is made irrelevant because of its non-adherence to a historicist paradigm. Here, feminist thought is described as methodologically flawed because it operates through the historical consistency of categories such as “feminine” and “women;” this constancy “sustains” chronic ideological biases and is therefore antithetical to a progressive project like Wigley’s architectural theory. If given the instability of “sexuality and space”—if, for example, Wigley were sensitive enough to revise “the ‘feminine’” to read “the question of the feminine,” as he has categorized “the question of sexuality”—he might not have so readily cast aside feminism as a flattening of history. The accuracy of the above passage notwithstanding, its disciplinary description is necessary to enact an epistemic rupture whereby historiography offers the groundwork for a more sophisticated, and simultaneously more architectural, line of inquiry. Wigley continues,

This work is necessary and overdue. It is equally necessary to think about why it is overdue, why this discourse has been so resistant, its silence getting louder, such that the question of “Sexuality and Space” [sic] is being asked in this way, now, here. What specific forms of resistance to this inquiry does the discourse employ? And to what extent was it established as precisely such a resistance? (ibid.)

It is reasonable to assume that when he says “equally” here, Mark Wigley in fact means “more.” Wigley tends to assert through description; appropriately, in “Untitled: The Housing of Gender,” assertions often take the form of apophasis, or mentioning without mentioning. In the passage above, Wigley implies that “specific forms of resistance” have given architecture its role in culture because architecture was given a privileged status in the perpetuation of sexism. Ironically, relationship between that status (the subject of his essay) and its effect on “the complicity of [architecture] with both the general cultural subordination of the ‘feminine’ and the specific subordination of particular women” remains unidentified despite its foundational importance to Wigley’s arguments.

Subsequently, and without establishing that which is resisted, Wigley skips ahead to investigate the form of this resistance:

Since these particular forms of resistance mark the disciplinary role of architecture in our culture, the question becomes what exactly is being protected here, in this space, for whom? To simply reproduce the analyses of other

discourses may be to preserve this secret. Architectural discourse is clearly defined more by what it will not say than what it says. (ibid.)

To be perhaps overly pithy: if Wigley's last sentence is true, then "Untitled: The Housing of Gender" is more defined by its ellipsis of that which would be described by feminist inquiry than the essay's constative historiographical study. If this form of resistance marks the disciplinary form of architecture in Wigley's scholarship, the question, for his reader, becomes how this obviation impacts the conceptual space of the essay, and to what effect.

I should say, now, that from the perspective of historicism there is worthwhile and overdue work in assessing to what extent faith in historical specificity can be considered sexist here, given the need for defining "the feminine" that Mark Wigley has chosen to ignore for the time being, as well as in the fact of his choosing to ignore it. However, in my present role as a historiographer I will turn my attentions to Wigley's writing more in the specific than in the abstract; this is to say that, in this analysis, I redouble the feminist interest in the covert by returning Wigley's question "what specific forms of resistance to [feminist] inquiry does this discourse employ?," through a close reading of "Untitled: The Housing of Gender."

The Gospel According to Mark

Like "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism," "Untitled: The Housing of Gender" establishes a political position based in pedagogy. For Mark Wigley, historiography takes on a redemptive aspect as a corrective to the circumstantial pitfalls of feminist inquiry, in order to assert a normative practice of architecture. In his essay, the fact that that which is corrected always remains undefined is less relevant than the establishment of historical concepts and their evolution, in examined texts, over an established time frame; here, as we shall see, complication takes the place of the political, and the constancy of inquiry takes the place of dialectical materialism—even as the dialectic remains in place as a rhetorical trope. Wigley's close reading of a passage from the introduction to *Feminism and Psychoanalysis* encapsulates his pedagogical politic of complication. Discussing the passage,

In recent years, feminist psychoanalytic critiques have passed beyond these issues... Emerging from the household, shifting from the illusion of privatized and public spheres, from the family to the acknowledgement of an open confrontation with the interlocutory terms of cultural mediation [sic].⁴²

⁴² Richard Feldstein and Judith Roof, eds., *Feminism and Psychoanalysis* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989), 2. (Qtd in Wigley 330).

It is not stated in "Untitled: The Housing of Gender" why this book was chosen for analysis, although from how Wigley frames his discussion of it can be gleaned that the example seemed pertinent, and was therefore exemplary. Consider Wigley's introduction to the volume: "The question of sexuality and space here is that of the structure of the mask. To interrogate this institutional mask necessitates running the risk of returning to the all too familiar scene of the patriarchal construction of the place of woman as the

Wigley claims:

Domestic space can only pose a danger inasmuch as the illusions that sustain it, like all enfranchised cultural images, are real. Indeed, the spatial rhetoric employed—"passed beyond," "emerging from," "situates," "fitting within," "closed," "open," "insulates"—restores the very space being critiqued. It reconstructs the house as the paradigm of the definition of space in the very gesture of leaving it behind. The house is literally left behind, intact, as if innocent of the violence it appears to frame. But the house is itself a third term. The specific mechanisms with which it constructs space need to be interrogated before its effects can be resisted. (331)

In the excerpt above, "Untitled: The Housing of Gender" is presented as if its goal is to repair an omission by reassessing a text's content and method. As he describes it here, the solution to *Feminism and Psychoanalysis's* excluded middle of the house is the introduction of a body of missing analysis, similar to what he has undertaken. What is accomplished is a displacement of a displacement in order to re-orient the role of the architectural in the discursive process in which it was initially dislocated; this is done to redirect what is seen occurring towards a new goal, and that goal is assumed to be coextensive with an originary disciplinary position or methodology.

The goal is, in other words, reactionary.

That which is canonical takes on a crucial degree of authority in "Untitled: The Housing of Gender." While, in the essay, Mark Wigley laments aspects of phallocentrism latent in Leon Battista Alberti's *On the Art of Building in Ten Books* and *On Family*, he nonetheless treats these texts' content as coextensive with a larger body with unassailable truth value. By ascribing to the first book the status of exemplary "canonic" text,⁴³ Wigley renders its content as metonymic for a canon as a whole; its narrative is made to be *the* narrative of architectural history. Considered with this metonymic function it can be reasoned that what Wigley writes about Alberti's texts is intended as representative of the canon, generally.⁴⁴ Mark Wigley's reading therefore reifies Alberti's

house precisely at the moment in which many dangers of such a return are being articulated. The introduction to a recent anthology on feminism and psychoanalysis, for example, describes how feminist theory domesticates itself inasmuch as it both assumes a familial relationship to other discourses, like psychoanalysis, and focuses within that theoretical couple on 'private relations.' In so doing it occupies a 'stereotypically feminine space,' 'situating' itself 'in the sexualized, emotionalized, personalized, privatized, erratic sphere of the home and bedchamber rather than the structured, impersonal, public realm'" (Wigley 330).

⁴³ "Take for example, a "canonic text like Alberti's fifteenth century treatise, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, which was crucial to architecture's promotion into the liberal arts and therefore eventually into the academy and, more recently, into the university and finally into this room" (Wigley 332).

⁴⁴ I thank Caroline Jones for pointing out that the critique alluded to in this sentence is opaque. I feel that this lack of clarity is unfair to my reader, so I would like to address what I mean by this sentence for you, through Professor Jones' comment. During a review of an earlier draft, Professor Jones asked me, in regards to my claims about metonymy here, "Is he [Wigley] wrong?" My answer to this question is yes.

“overt reference to architecture’s complicity in the exercise of patriarchal authority by defining a particular intersection between spatial order and a system of surveillance which turns on the question of gender” (332), and to that end instantiates that which is referenced in Alberti’s works as applicable to the field, generally, by virtue of the epistemological authority of the canon.

The most important consequence of Wigley’s treatment of the canon is a resulting conflation of gender and sexuality. In “Untitled: The Housing of Gender,” the two terms “gender” and “sexuality” refer to related binaries; sexuality refers to the body (for example, women) and gender to the attributes resulting from its social regulation (the feminine, etc.). In his narration of Alberti’s corpus, Mark Wigley maintains that it is the body which is regulated by gender, and that space is the medium for that regulation; since, in its historiography of Alberti, “Untitled: The Housing of Gender” refers to gendered and sexed bodies as if they are coextensive in space, the categories of gender and sexuality are treated as analogous.⁴⁵ This association is consequential because of its effect on the essay’s relationship to other, extra-disciplinary discourses. For example, when synthesizing Alberti’s commentary on separate bedrooms for “the husband and wife” in book V of *On the Art of Building*, Wigley argues that this historical text “participates the production of ‘woman’ by high discourse and therefore has, at best, a complicated relationship to the historically, geographically, and class-specific regimes of social control and forms of resistance to them” (333). In this passage, concepts such as discourse, domestication, class, social control, and resistance are given reference (Alberti) but are not pursued; like intellectual ephemera, these concepts grant context to the text but are only empty supplements. These empty supplements effectively accentuate architecture’s autonomy as an intellectual concern in “Untitled: The Housing of Gender.” By displacing certain concerns with intellectual white noise, Wigley whittles down the intersection of sexuality and space to an intersection, as such; to this end, in his writing, architecture exists in a state of suspension, which is predicated on the sublimation of gender. Given his conflation of sexuality and gender, the intersection of “sexuality and space” is precisely the limit of architectural discourse, according to “Untitled: The Housing of Gender.” Therefore, as we will see, from the

Now, there is nothing wrong with using part of a canon as exemplary for the canon as a whole—I, personally, am suspicious of the notion of a canon and its attendant metanarratives, but recognize the category of “the canon” as nonetheless *operative* in the humanities. That said, as a student of architectural studies I find the idea of an architectural historical canon suspicious. Architectural history is too small or too marginal a field to sustain a hegemonic hermeneutic tradition. Sometimes, the field is seen as part of art history, on other occasions it is seen as an instrumental supplement to architectural education; in either situation, an architectural historical canon would inherently be only a component in some other, larger body of work. I feel that Wigley is employing the idea of a “canon” here to intimidate his reader, putting the weight of written history, and dogma, on his side, without any substance to back him save some vague specter. So, I write what I have written here about metonymy to imply a rejoinder like, “Stand up for your beliefs, man!” or, “Say what you want to say; don’t hide behind history.” In the end, I recognize my discomfort with the canon to be a matter of preference, and for that reason leave aside my feelings about it and try instead to address only how the idea of a canon here functions to configure Wigley’s argument (rightly or wrongly).

⁴⁵ In other words: building off of Alberti, Wigley writes as if the social determination of the body is subject to its biological form; therefore, gender and sexuality are conflated in “Untitled: The Housing of Gender.”

perspective of Mark Wigley's architectural history "sexuality and space" is, inherently, a discourse constituted by and which itself encourages a historiography of silence.

In "Untitled: The Housing of Gender," alternative narratives for the intersection of sexuality and space are bracketed off by the construction of an originary historical ground. As written, the stakes of Mark Wigley's essay exist not in the intersection of sexuality and space as explored but with the implication of Alberti's texts in architectural history; therefore, inquiry around gender and sexuality has been displaced in the interest of architectural historiography. As Wigley claims, Alberti's writing is responsible for its own role in history—its "logic of historical placement"—because of its incorporation of late medieval arguments within the framework of classical texts; as such the text locates itself in a charged, liminal territory between the classical period and its nineteenth century interpretations.⁴⁶ As a matter of the flow of time the suspension Wigley describes is true *ipso facto*, since the Alberti wrote in the intervening period between these two eras. While banal, specifying this fact establishes a historical dialectic necessary for Wigley's argument: from an historical dialectic between two eras (the renaissance and nineteenth century) additional, related claims can be made; these claims telescope out from historical intersections of sexuality and architecture, towards foundational ontological concerns for the (dialectical) evolution of Modern Western society. In this manner, Wigley can map sexuality/gender onto an already apparent historical narrative, transforming this inherently abject co-category into an appropriate object of scholastic inquiry. One example of this is Mark Wigley's famous claim that the space of "the closet,"⁴⁷ as described, in other terms, by Alberti, is the foundation of the ideologies of both individualism and hygiene:

Alberti condemns excess pleasure or, more precisely, pleasure understood as excess. Such pleasure is dangerous because it makes men lose their reason and become the "effeminate" servants of women. Desire is itself a woman that masters men—"truly she is a master to be fled and hated"—and can only be controlled by the strict enforcement of masculine reason. Alberti distinguishes "erotic life" from "friendship" and identifies marriage as a form of friendship which resists sexuality rather than hides it: "A most appropriate reason for taking a wife may be found in what we were saying before, about the evil of sensual indulgence." Marriage is an institution of reason which transforms sexual play's confusion of gender roles into the virtuous work of procreation, which is seen to depend upon the maintenance of those roles.

But Alberti's house even veils this virtuous labor of procreation by veiling the opening in the wall between the bedrooms. It is precisely such unsupervised

⁴⁶ Displacing by establishing a state of suspension: "Alberti's text cannot easily be separated from the systems of distinctions that are applied to it [sic]. As responsible for the logic of historical placement as it is for that of spatial placement, it cannot itself be easily placed. It employs late medieval arguments to stitch together fragments of classical texts into a structure which carries within its seams traces of critical displacement that would be instituted in the following centuries. The text is strangely suspended between classical arguments it appropriates and those identified with the nineteenth century [sic]" (342).

⁴⁷ Alberti does not talk about "the closet," but Wigley writes as if he does through a complicated language game. See fn. 49

openings that make possible the new sense of privacy, beyond that of a closed room, on which the emerging ideology of the individual subject depends.

The invention of personal privacy is marked by a new attitude to the body which is written into Alberti's argument. The body now needs to be cleansed. Or, rather, social order has to be cleansed of the body. Architecture is established as such a purification [...] Purification must begin with the outer coverings, starting with the building itself. The mechanisms of this detachment, from sewers to toilets, would come to be known as "closets." They literally closet away the abject domain from the spatial representation of pure order. This masking of the abject cannot be represented as such. It is a subordinate system which makes space for the dominant representation. (343-4)

Despite its sublimation into a broader historical process, sexuality remains the hinge between Alberti's views on passion and the synecdoche of "the closet" in the passage above. Here, "the closet," becoming the icon of the interior's regulation of identity, is that which signifies conceptual flattening-into-space also seen in Wigley's treatment of gender and sexuality: in "the closet," performance, history, and the physical are all treated as if they were components of a composite entity-and-category. Appropriately, it is the words "the closet" which signify this discursively enabled collapse; for Wigley, "the closet" is a category, encompassing a series of historically differentiated entities which share common aspects, related to sexuality, hygiene, and privacy. Through Wigley's heterosexist interpretation of Alberti—whereby the gendered body is inherently configured by its role in sexual procreation (especially through marriage), as described by a historical figure—the sexual becomes implicated in the historical; this is reiterated as the substance of Wigley's argument; while discussing the denotation of sexuality by architecture (as best he can), Wigley also asserts a very limited possible context for that newly developed paradigm: architectural history.⁴⁸

Transphobia, I

The process I just described is symptomatic of "Untitled: The Housing of Gender" generally. Defined by excavated complication, "Untitled: The Housing of Gender" unfolds a genealogy of ideas, based upon Mark Wigley's narrative construction, as erected upon various cited referents. This aspect is particularly clear where Wigley writes that "[t]he invention of personal privacy is marked by a new attitude to the body which is written into Alberti's argument" (344). What Wigley is saying here is that Alberti's repulsion to sexual intimacy is implicated in his treatment of "the house," and that this is paralleled in developing attitudes about hygiene. By using the verb construction with "is

⁴⁸ Paraphrasing Foucault, Wigley says as much himself: "The privatization of sexuality, where sexuality is understood as feminine, is used to produce the individual subject as a male subject and subjectivity itself as masculine....The interrelated terms 'sexuality,' 'body,' and 'privacy' are fundamentally historical. Alberti's design should not be understood as the privatization of a preexisting sexuality. Rather, it is the production of sexuality as that-which-is-private. The body that is privatized is newly sexualized" (Wigley 345).

marked” in the independent clause and “which is” in the dependent clause, Wigley effectively negates the historical distance between himself and Leon Battista Alberti; it is this negation which allows Wigley to express expertise about Alberti’s historical situation. As his text continues the constructed ambiguity between speakers becomes the focus of Wigley’s historiography, with the term “mask” enacting necessary conceptual shuttle movements between the history of sexuality and Wigley’s writing position. Ergo, Wigley writes about the effect of Alberti’s theorization of the architectural exterior that, therein:

...distance is no longer the link between two visible objects in space but is the product of a mask whose surface is scrutinized for clues about what lies beyond it but can never simply be seen. An economy of vision founded on a certain blindness. (345)

In this passage, note Wigley’s use of the terms “no longer,” and “never simply” as key projective elements: thinking discursively, “no longer” and “not simply” describe a method and position without content or center, a position founded on a certain complication. Implied, here, then, is an autopoietic framework whereby new ideas emerge from the complication and rearrangement of those which already exist, without the participation of an external agent aside from the author, who is seen as always already existing within the regulative boundaries of the canon by virtue of his writing on canonical subjects. Building on this trans-historical instantiation, “Untitled: The Housing of Gender,” develops a narrative where the interval between “the man” and “the woman” is also that which is represented by the design of the residential interior. This instantiation is staged through the historiography of a category labeled “the closet,” which is described as having emerged during the renaissance, and whose evolution undergirds Wigley’s narration of Alberti’s theorization of domestic spaces. This category is genealogically related to “the study,”⁴⁹ described by as a space for the preparation of

⁴⁹ The explicit relation between the study Wigley describes, the writings of Alberti, and the specific “closet” of “Untitled: The Housing of Gender” is more than anything else a language game; we can judge this from the complicated machinations of following selection and its footnotes:

While one of the first signs of the growing desire for privacy for the individual, such that “a privacy within the house developed beyond the privacy of the house,”⁴⁰ was the separation of the bedrooms that Alberti prescribes, which established a masculine space, this space is not completely private, since women can enter it, albeit only when allowed. The first truly private space was the man’s study, a small locked room off his bedroom which no one else ever enters, an intellectual space beyond that of sexuality.⁴¹ Such rooms emerged in the fourteenth century and gradually became a commonplace in the fifteenth century. They were produced by transforming a piece of furniture in the bedroom—a locked writing desk—into a room, a “closet” off the bedroom.⁴² Indeed, it was the first closet.

40 Charles de La Ronciere, “Tuscan Nobles on the Eve of the Renaissance,” in *A History of Private Life, Vol: 2 Revelations of the Medieval World*, ed. Georges Duby (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 212.

41 “He passed from chamber to chamber tyle he come yn to hir secreet study where no creature used to come but hir self alone.” *Life of St. Kath*, 1430 (Roxb), p. 14, cited *O.E.D.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), Vol. X, p. 1181.

42 The word “closet” was used in this way in the sixteenth century but became a commonplace in the seventeenth century: “We do call the most secret place in the house

familial financial documents, which not only represents but also establishes a fixed power dynamic between married men and women. Synthesizing architectural history and Alberti's theory, Wigley writes that, "[t]he first truly private space was the man's study, a small locked room off his bedroom which no one else ever enters, an intellectual space beyond that of sexuality" (346); he also writes that "[t]he study is the true center of the house. The new space marks the internal limit to the woman's authority in the house [sic]" (348). In sum, this space brings together masculine intellectual agency and domestic authority, representing the man's investment with these qualities by enforcing a boundary to this room's occupation, by others.

Mark Wigley's historiography of "the closet" is complicated by his texts' relationship to other, contemporary discourses. Specifically, the historical interval between man and woman described by "Untitled: The Housing of Gender" is reinforced by a figural, flawed intellectual antecedent to its constituent analysis. For example, the opening of Wigley's essay includes the following footnote, insinuating that inquiry related to identity politics has failed to investigate the interactions between identity and typologies of domestic space:

4 *Such a complication of the "home" can be seen in some current revisions of identity politics, but still the question is not yet architectural—home, not house. The house remains unrevised. (331)*

With this footnote Wigley creates for his text a counterpoint of oversight in "identity politics," characterized by the incomplete interrogation of its historical and architectural basis. In place of the un-interrogated house Wigley substitutes "place," a cipher for the subject of his analysis of the *Ten Books*. With the concept of "place," Wigley has revised the idea of "house" to include its role in the regulation of gender identity:

Place is not simply a mechanism for controlling sexuality. Rather, it is the control of sexuality by systems of representation that produces place [sic]. The study, like all spaces, is not simply entered. Rather, it is (re)produced. As such, the issue here is not simply the existence of studies in houses but the ideological construction of the study which is at once the construction of gendered subjectivity that "occupies" it. (350)

Of course, "place" is not simply a mechanism for controlling sexuality; however the claim is necessary, grammatically, to establish dimorphism as the guarantor of the house as sexual body politic. In comparison to the footnote cited at the beginning of this paragraph, it must be noted that the middle two sentences of my second citation can be viewed as heterosexist because of a an implied relation between reproduction and gender identity, a stylistic consequence of the phrase "not simply" in the second

appropriate to our owne private studies ... a closet." A. Day, *English Secretary* (1586), p. 103, cited *O.E.D.*, Vol. II, p. 520. On the study, see Orest Ranum, "The Refuges of Intimacy," in *The History of Privacy*, Vol. 3.: *Passions of the Renaissance*, pp. 225-227; W. Liebenwien, *Studiolo: Die Entstehung eines Raumtypes und seine Entwicklung bis zum 1600* (Berlin: Mann, 1977); and Patrick Mauries, "Il teatro dell'errore," in *Il progetto domestico: La casa dell'uomo: Archetipi e prototipi*, ed. Georges Teyssot (Milan: Electa, 1986), pp. 52-55. (Wigley 347-8)

sentence. This phrase necessarily implies a negative complement—I propose that that complement is the “identity politics” referred to in that footnote. With this phrase, a straw man is erected and then excoriated in the interest of something ostensibly identical and more complicated; the effect is to reiterate the self-constructed ground of inquiry through complication. I argue, therefore, that “the study” as a subject of architectural inquiry signifies an intellectual dialectic between architectural studies and identity politics; historiography is the anti-thesis to the flawed scholarship identified in footnote 4, and the study of the concept of “place” the resolution of the dialectic implied.

Mark Wigley’s method of doubling establishes the centrality of sexual dimorphism in “Untitled: The Housing of Gender;” this is in turn reinforced by the exemplary “canonic” status of the *Ten Books*. The implied status of this text within the literature of architectural history allows sweeping claims to the identity of architecture, with Alberti as reference; for example, when discussing the canonical nature of Alberti’s writings, Wigley also claims that “domestic order” is a fundamental tenet of the architectural “tradition:”

Alberti’s celebrated theory of harmony—every part in its “proper place”—for which he was canonized by the tradition, is no more than an elaboration of the beauty of domestic order, the discrete charm of domestication. (352)

It can be extrapolated from the passage above that the interval between “the man” and “the woman” is at the very center of architectural thought. However this extrapolation fails to substantiate itself constatively, and without a recognizable canon behind his claims, claims like the following read as if they are, in fact, Wigley’s own:

The institution of architectural discourse is made possible by the subordination and control of the feminine that detaches it from the inferior bodily realm of the mechanical arts. (353)

With this sentence Wigley creates a conceptual continuity between Alberti’s sexist theory of the interior and the “institution of architectural discourse,” establishing architectural discourse as a regulation of gender identity.⁵⁰ As “Untitled: The Housing of Gender” argues, architectural discourse is dependent upon a closet which regulates gender identity. However, as I mention earlier, the closet is also an icon of that regulation. It is from here that we can trace the emergence of Mark Wigley’s own epistemology of the closet,⁵¹ a pattern where larger ideas are represented metonymically as a means of constructing a conceptual foundation, which is only real inasmuch as it has been treated as if it were. In “Untitled: The Housing of Gender,” “the closet” represents itself, and contains that which has been seen to have been contained within it.

⁵⁰ Consequentially, architectural discourse is “by man for man,” as Wigley later claims.

⁵¹ A phrase used with apologies to the late Eve Sedgwick; there is no affinity between this epistemology and her famous claim that “virtually any aspect of modern Western culture, must be, not merely incomplete, but damaged in its central substance to the degree that it does not incorporate a critical analysis of modern homo/heterosexual definition,” except, perhaps, a relative irony, posed by the issues of voice and gender I discuss at the end of this chapter.

Just as the limit of the closet is the limit of two genders, so too is the exterior a limit between the house's identities as masculine and feminine, according to "Untitled: The Housing of Gender."⁵² This connection naturalizes architecture's regulation of gender as a phenomenological entity, specifically as that of the "white wall," itself a "mechanism of purification, a filter," wherein "the feminine materiality of the building is given a masculine order and then masked off by a white skin" (345). In this scheme, the discipline of architecture occupies the interval between interior and exterior, and masculine and feminine: this time, materialized in the "white skin." Consequently, through a series of associations, the identity of architecture not only as heterosexual but as feminine is established. As Wigley argues below, the "discipline of architecture" contains that which is given unto it for the purposes of pleasure and proliferation

*But despite the fact that the discipline of architecture domesticates itself by submitting to the visual order of man, that discipline remains itself a woman, a woman giving pleasure... **The discipline of architecture, organized by man for man, is feminine...** Architecture is bound to natural order and is explicitly the mother of the arts. The pleasure she gives is precisely not sexual. It is the repressive pleasure of the image of the modest wife, a representation of purity that is necessarily violently enforced. The iconographical figure of architecture in all the Renaissance treatises was the figure of a virtuous woman, literally, "the queen of virtues." The discipline is itself disciplined, given and confined to a place, literally domesticated in the academy. (360-1, emphasis mine)*

...as executed by a heterosexual, coupled man.

Architecture is... subordinated to a prior text which presents a theory of vision that is seen to precede it. But it is a theory that cannot be separated from the overdetermined space of the study (or "studio") which detaches the theorist-father-husband-artist from the world precisely so that he can master that world by viewing it through some kind of disciplinary frame, whether a painting, a theoretical manuscript, memoir, or account book. (362)

Wigley's ascription of sexual identity to architecture in turn produces an argument for the proper participation of the women in architectural discourse. The gender identity of the discipline of architecture as feminine objectifies it as an object of the gaze—and, therefore, as an assemblage of objects—which renders that gendered mode of engagement ostensibly inescapable. In the selection below, we can see how "Untitled: The Housing of Gender" identifies the motivation of "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" to train viewers in the psychoanalysis of the male gaze as a futile endeavor (even as he pays lip service to Laura Mulvey's politics, as such):

⁵² Thus Wigley writes: "The skin effaces the transformation from feminine to masculine and maintains a division, a visible line, between structure and decoration as a gender division... surface both produces gender and masks the scene of that production, literally subordinating the feminine by drawing a line, placing the ornament just as the walls place the possessions in the house.... Like the woman in the house, it is given responsibility for sustaining the very structural order that restrains it." 354

Architecture is understood as a kind of object to be looked at, inhabited by a viewer who is detached from it, inhabited precisely by being looked at, whether it be [sic] by the user, visitor, neighbor, critic, or reader of architectural publications. This general model of visibility still dominates current critical, theoretical, and historical discourse even by those who have abandoned it, usually in favor of the "political." The assumptions about visibility and architecture which are written into the construction of theory remain unexamined and usually return tacitly to organize theoretical work. But, of course, as contemporary feminist discourse has demonstrated, the political lives precisely within the socially constructed mechanisms of representation, of which vision is often the most privileged. (ibid.)

In the context of *Sexuality & Space*, it is implied here that Laura Mulvey's symbolic topography of the veil is inherently flawed because it fails to recognize the physical referent upon which it depends (space, and therefore architecture). It is obvious that Wigley is enacting a counter-narrative whereby architecture is objectified by virtue of its gender status (as revealed in the previous passage). What is less obvious is that Wigley is proposing here that Mulvey's feminist theory disappoints because it does not recognize the work of an inherently masculine architect, because she is instead treating space as an autonomous, atmospheric entity. Rather than being a virtuous woman, in the terms elaborated by Alberti's *On Family*—her ideas confined and domesticated by that which has been produced for her by architecture of and for men—Laura Mulvey's inquiries around scopophilia are not organized around the architecture which contains them, therefore negating the epistemological authority of the production of built space in favor of a feminist political agenda. Such is her failure: Wigley still expects her to recognize the symbolic authority of architecture, and therefore by his own machinations, men; to the extent that "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" fails to do so Laura Mulvey is seen as acting in opposition to the underlying, gendered organization of architectural space.

To his covert criticism of "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Mark Wigley compares his assessment of "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism." In the passage below (which, in the text, comes soon after what is quoted in the previous paragraph), Wigley summarizes Beatriz Colomina's analogy of interior and exterior and the gender binary. Although no citation of this summary is given, in context the passage can be read as a critique of "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism:"

The theory of vision that defines institutions like architecture cannot simply be equated with theories of subjectivity in a psychoanalytic sense. At the same time, it is not coincidental that so much of the respective scenes, and the language used to construct them, is common. Some kind of relationship operates here which can be explored in a way that neither simply imposes recent psychoanalytic accounts of visibility onto architectural discourse nor simply demonstrates that those accounts are somehow already embedded within that discourse. Rather, it involves engaging with the specific constructions of vision inscribed within the architectural tradition, and that constitute it as such, in some unresolvable process of multiple translation. (364)

Wigley begins his critique of “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism” with the caveat that psychology and architecture cannot be equated hermeneutically, but chooses to overlook this transgression of architecture’s disciplinary limit. Despite his inherent disagreement, Wigley provides for “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism” a series of apologies: that there seems to be some shared interest between architectural and psychoanalytic discourses (1), that Beatriz Colomina also employs the deconstructive method of “not simply” (with her method organized around the denials of neither simply, nor simply, and rather) (2), and most importantly that Colomina makes her translation between architecture and psychology seem *unavoidable* and therefore still recognizes the inherent authority of architecture as a foundational spatial episteme (3). These apologies, together, imply that while Colomina wants to investigate architecture’s qualities as a liminal ontology, she does so through its inherent *visuality/objectivity*; to this end, while she might want to describe architecture in terms outside of its canonical objectivity, she still recognizes the tradition as a given; she may want to talk about representation but makes architecture primary: she might want to write about women in space, but does so from the perspective of how they are seen by men. She might be a woman, but at least she knows her place.⁵³

In addition to motivating a critique of contemporaneous discourses, Wigley’s condescension is also generative of a philosophy of the history of architecture. In his lengthy excursus on Gottfried Semper’s *The Four Elements of Architecture*, resistance to Semper’s foregrounding of ornament over interior-exterior dialectic, within the developing discipline of art history, is employed to define views towards architectural disciplinarity in the nineteenth century.⁵⁴ Here, the disruption of architectural history is

⁵³ In case my intention in stating this is at all unclear, I disapprove of this aspect of “Untitled: The Housing of Gender.” I have been both witness and subject to this logic for years, and I’m sick of it. Reading Wigley’s essay as a feminist, I remain astonished that such writing could enter into the discourse of architectural historiography. It is beyond me to answer why that should have been the case, as that historical question is both too complicated and too simple for consideration in a project of this limited scope. The architectural community is content to think that Mark Wigley is not sexist because he writes about women in the same way as they occasionally identify Beatriz Colomina as a feminist because of tropes involving femininity in her work. These facile identifications mask a dangerous and destructive undercurrent of misogyny and trans-phobia which continue to inhabit the collective unconscious of the contemporary architectural imagination. As a resolutely feminist and oftentimes unintentionally gender ambiguous person I cannot possibly communicate the pain and frustrations I have felt watching the logic I write of at this juncture play out again and again, and in having been subject to that bigoted régime myself. But it is so ingrained, all of it, and so covert, whatever it all is, that there’s never anything to say. With passing years my hysteria grows. At present I can say that nobody talks about it, *nobody*—and this close reading is all I have to break the surface of a reality to which I am resolutely opposed and yet also too terrified, and too tired to take on in any more meaningful, dialectical way. The epistemological system I am attempting here, now, to perform, for you, robs one affected so thoroughly of any possible vocabulary for engagement that what becomes real is what is given, and the possibilities are subscription or disappearance. It is shit, and it is my small and desperate hope that this close reading can turn all of it from the scholarship it portends to present into the shit I know it to be.

⁵⁴ “The dominant economy of vision turns on the white surface ideologically protected by the convoluted lines drawn by the institution of architecture. By defining this economy in psychoanalytic terms, it is necessary to identify the nature of that protection by tracing the way architectural discourse has attempted to resist the displacement of that ideology... This form of this resistance can be partially sketched here by looking at the response to the writing of the nineteenth-century architect Gottfried

seen as concomitant with the disruption of architecture's sexuality. This is circumstantial—it makes for a tidy essay; however, it also allows for Wigley to echo Colomina's phallogocentric theorization of the gaze, compounded by the conflation of gender role and sexuality. When discussing the origin in ornament, Wigley makes the claim that ornament is coextensive with the feminine and is therefore extra-architectural. Similarly, Semper is treated as if his history involves an inversion of the intellectual and sexual identities of architecture.

In this treatment, Wigley claims, first, that Semper's interest in ornament as the origin of architecture necessarily involves a fundamental transformation of causation in architectural history; because he engenders a history different from Alberti's, Semper is considered categorically *different*.⁵⁵ Just as he engenders an inversion of architectural history, so too does Wigley see Semper as engendering sexual inversion. Rather than manifesting a collapse of sexual embodiment and socially-determined gender performance, as he did with his historiography of Alberti, Wigley describes Semper's "Style: The Texture in Art" as subject to a resistance and falsification of both normative spatial and sexual/gender dynamics. Whereas the architectural—the closet—serves as a meta-narrative to Albert's theory, here the sexual—inversion, in the terms of Freud—undergirds the architectural; like Alberti, Semper's sexuality is left unaddressed by Wigley, but where it could be presumed before that the author and the sexual implications of his text were heterosexual, here the reader is confronted with an accusation of false appearances.

The textile is a mask which dissimulates rather than represents the structure. The material wall is no more than a prop... Architecture is located within the play of signs. Space is produced within language. As its origin is dissimulation, its essence is no longer construction by the masking of construction. (367)

Appropriately, instead of the feminine veil, Semper is written about as the figuration of a feminizing male "mask:"⁵⁶ emblematic of an architecture for and by men, whereby the field's object-identity and desire are turned towards its (now-masculine) self rather than towards an externalized (feminine) objectivity. Building on the themes of inversion and falsification, Wigley turns to Riviere's/Lacan's theory of the masquerade as feminine

Semper, who attempts to displace the institutional location of architecture by displacing the theories of ornament and vision sustained by the emerging institutions of art" (Wigley 366).

⁵⁵ On Semper's foregrounding of the ornamental, Wigley writes: "This reading involves a fundamental transformation of the account of the origin of architecture on which traditional architectural discourse bases itself. Architecture is no longer seen to begin with naked structures gradually dressed with ornament. Rather, it begins with ornament" (367).

⁵⁶ In the context of Wigley's essay the term "mask" is often a masculine analogue for "veil;" the feminizing character of this mask (viz. my description) is that which instantiates this entity as part of a form of sexual inversion.

performance,⁵⁷ to explain this masculine femininity. As he continues describing the implications of Semper's "Style,"

Just as the institution of the family is made possible through the production of domestic space with a mask, the larger community is made possible through the production of public space through masquerade. Public buildings, in the form of monumental architecture, are seen to derive from the fixing in one place of the once mobile "improvised scaffolding" on which hung the patterned fabrics and decorations of the festivals that defined social life [as described in "The Four Elements of Architecture"].⁵⁸ The space of the public is that of those signs. Architecture literally clothes the body politic. Semper identifies the textile essence of architecture, the dissimulating fabric, the fabrication of architecture, with the clothing of the body. (367-8)

This critique of Semper builds off of Wigley's historiography of Alberti and the domestic sphere, as well as the assignment of female gender to the discipline of architecture as objectified by the built environment. That the residential architecture employs enclosing/interior and white/exterior walls to regulate gender identity, and therefore sexuality, is the dialectical thesis implied by the discussion of family and masks in the first sentence of the selection above. In being architectural, this process is inherently male in its execution, and female in its outcome, per Wigley's earlier analysis; additionally, in this scheme it is the feminine only which is objectified, normatively (the

⁵⁷ At the most basic level—and as far as is necessary here—Joan Riviere's essay "Womanliness as a Masquerade" and Jacques Lacan's article "The Meaning of the Phallus" argue that feminine masculinity is a performance enacted for, and flaunted in defiance of, an audience of men.

For an excellent overview of Lacan's particular theorization of the masquerade, see Zizek, Slavoj. "Woman Is One of the Names-of-the-Father." *Lacanian Ink* 10 (1995). Available through lacan.com

See also:

Lacan, Jacques. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan XX: On Feminine Sexuality, the Limits of Love and Knowledge, 1972-73 (Encore)*, New York: W.W. Norton, 1998.

Riviere, Joan. "Womanliness as Masquerade." *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 10 (1929)

⁵⁸ As Wigley paraphrases: "[According to Semper, building] originates with the use of fabrics to define social space... Specifically, the space of domesticity [sic]. The textiles are not simply placed within space to define a certain interiority. Rather, they are the production of space itself. Weaving is used "as a means to make the 'home,' the inner life separated from the outer life, and as the formal creation of the idea of space." Housing is an effect of decoration. It is not that the fabrics are arranged in a way that provides physical shelter. Rather, their textuality [sic] defines a space of exchange. This primordial definition of inside and, therefore, for the first time, outside, with textiles not only precedes the construction of solid walls but continues to organize the building when such construction begins. Solid structure follows, and is subordinate to, what appear to be merely its accessories" (Wigley 367).

Appended to this last sentence is the following excerpt from "The Four Elements of Architecture:" "Hanging carpets remained the true walls, the visible boundaries of space. The often solid walls behind them were necessary for reasons that had nothing to do with the creation of space; they were needed for security, for supporting a load, for their permanence and so on. Wherever the need for these secondary functions did not arise, the carpets remained the original means of creating space. Even where building solid walls became necessary, the latter were only the inner, invisible structure hidden behind the true and legitimate representatives of the wall, the colorful woven carpets" (cited in Wigley 367, fn. 84).

building, the surface, enclosing space—never the process of production or producer which gave it shape, and meaning); moreover, it is the masculine, only, which is allowed mobility.⁵⁹ Here it is stated that Semper identifies an objective quality of architecture which is derived from a formerly mobile element, portraying architecture's "body politic" as "clothed." In the sense that this practice is a mask-like performance of the masculine (the formerly mobile ergo masculine textile now clothing normatively feminine buildings) enacted for an audience of men (architects, implicitly), it is a masquerade; in the sense that the performance is itself objective (theoretically constituted by feminine built objects, now clothed), it is female; in the sense that the performance is, also, executed by Semper (a man), and only through text (treated as a transparent medium of intellection), the masquerade is, therefore, a masculine performance. This performance is equated with an intentional falsification of cultural production, as objectified by Semper's resistance to the true nature of architectural production; embodied, it is implied, by the thought of Alberti. It is with this in mind that in his final analysis, Wigley claims that Semper's theory of style is a complete inversion of Alberti's canonical architectural condition:

Culture does not precede its masks. It is no more than masking. The highest art form is not that which detaches itself from the primitive use of decorative masks but that which most successfully develops that practice by dissimulating even the mechanisms of dissimulation... [Semper] inverts the traditional [read: Alberti's] architectonic, subordinating structure to decoration by demonstrating that the "false" accessories are the "true" essence of architecture. This inversion necessarily distorts the economy of vision based upon a certain figure of architecture in which what is seen on the outside articulates, and is subordinate to, some inner unseeable truth. (369-70)

Wigley sees Semper's theory of style as immensely disruptive because of its undermining of the social structure sustained by architecture. As Wigley writes, Semper's inverted architecture/sexuality is subversive because of its uncontained sensuality, which itself undermines the wall as the limit of the architecturally gendered

⁵⁹ Mobility and gender are addressed only obliquely through paraphrasing of Alberti, such as in the following passage, where it can be assumed that the discussion of the ornamental and the feminine are essentially analogous: "Symptomatically, when addressing architecture Alberti prohibits a "well-known harlot" from building a monument for her husband whereas a virtuous woman is allowed to. The woman can represent the man only when virtuous, immobile, nonexchangeable. The task of architectural theory becomes that of controlling ornament, restricting its mobility, domesticating it by defining its "proper place" (bondage to the ground, faithful representative of the presence of a building) in opposition to the impropriety of the prostitute (mobility, detachment from the ground, independence, exchangeability). The practices of ornamentation are regulated so that ornament represents and consolidates the order of the building it clothes, which is that of man. It is used to make that order visible. The domesticated woman is the mark of man, the material sign of an immaterial presence. In fact, classical architectural theory dictates that the building should have the proportions of the body of a man, but the actual body that is being composed, the material being shaped, is a woman. Clothes maketh the man, but they are woman. Man is a cultural construction which emerges from the control of the feminine." (Wigley 357)

sexes.⁶⁰ By inverting architecture's naturalization of gender through the visual, Semper subverts the patriarchal social structure that Wigley's figure of the closet sustains:

Just as the whole patriarchal order is traditionally [i.e. by Alberti] seen to depend on its enforcement within the limited space allocated the wife, architecture assumes responsibility for the very division that at once places and subordinates it. To expose the flaws in the traditional account of architecture would be to subvert the whole system. This is precisely Semper's objective. (371)

To this end Semper simultaneously undermines both the unfolding of historical change and the regulation of the sexes by negating history's hierarchical differentiations between masculine and feminine and art and craft:

Semper's account of the origin of decoration is not gendered. While the model for the historical transformation is the "primordial matriarch" of nature, she is not the source of its forms. Before the constitution of high institutions like "architecture" the adornment of the body followed that of building. The gender division only emerges with the institutions. Their gesture of appropriation is only possible when a certain gap has opened up, the gap between masculine and feminine, art and craft, form and color, structure and decoration... The feminine term in each case is produced as such in the very moment of its subordination of the other term which depends upon it and upon a veiling of that dependence. (372)

Wigley's gendered critique of Semper as a figure of architectural failure emerges from this diagnosis. By dissimulating the order of the canon Semper effaced himself from it.⁶¹ Furthermore by instantiating architecture's closet, by virtue of his masquerade,⁶² Semper made it such that his work was inherently indefensible because its superficial reality was itself the construction of inverted terms;⁶³ to describe what he had said and done would either be to sustain the lie or to incriminate oneself as belonging to the same class of masked architectural she-men.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Cf. "The surface texture that constitutes the architecture of the mask, [according to Semper] is produced by this convolution of vision and sensuality. Architecture no longer simply occupies the visual. Its sensuality is not screened off by a white surface in the name of the uncontaminated eye. Visuality becomes a construction of necessarily sensuous transactions. This disruption of vision subverts the institutional placement of architecture which turns on its division by the regime of distinctions that all turn on the originary distinction between essential object and inessential accessory, structure, and decoration" (Wigley 371).

⁶¹ "Unsurprisingly, Semper's position was completely intolerable to the tradition.... Semper is extensively criticized and dismissed by the end of the nineteenth century and is largely effaced from the canon" (Wigley 373-4).

⁶² Inasmuch as it reveals a possible but sublimated gender/sexuality fluidity for architectural practices

⁶³ "This effacement takes a pathological form.... In each case, an apparent defense of Semper is actually his displacement" (Wigley 374).

⁶⁴ "Through... complex gestures, Semper is at once appropriated and rejected.... The resistance to Semper is... symptomatic. It takes more the form of repression than rejection. His work is not so much written out of the institutional discourse as buried within it. It is swallowed, neither to be digested nor to be thrown up" (Wigley 375).

At a certain point this critique begins to fold in upon itself, to Wigley's discursive advantage. As "Untitled: The Housing of Gender" argues, the sexual politics of ornament are coextensive with a disciplinary politics of traditionalist authority: historically, Semper failed to respect the hegemony of the canon and anyone engaging with his thought would either be guilty of the same, or would only serve to reiterate his difference. Wigley's analysis of Semper is an epistemology of the closet from a heterosexist perspective.⁶⁵ When he claims that Semper's "dissimulation" effects a condition whereby "the truth of architecture is now located in its visible outside," Wigley implies that Semper's writing has changed something, enacted a shift; therefore Semper's aberration of architectural order, itself, guarantees *and* is made possible by Alberti's sexism/heterosexism. Synthesizing the narrative of "Untitled: The Housing of Gender" it can be argued that sexual self-regulation is necessary to sustain architecture's assertion of the masculine subject as subject as well as the discipline's

⁶⁵ Famously, Eve K. Sedgwick's 1990 treatise *Epistemology of the Closet* is situated "in the larger context of gay/lesbian and antihomophobic theory" (Sedgwick, 12); its perspective is anti-heterosexist inasmuch as the book deconstructs such unsettled binary oppositions as heterosexual/homosexual, (cf. Sedgwick 9-10), and therefore inherently operates against the heterosexist assumption of sexual performance, identity, and gender as composite and inherently interrelated in a fixed, diametrical relationship between men and women. The "closet," as closely as it is defined by Sedgwick (which she all but—but never actually—does in the book), consists of "relations between the known and unknown, the explicit and inexplicit around homo/heterosexual definition" (Sedgwick 3); denotatively, it is a discursive phenomenon characterized by ignorance in the following ways: 1) "'Closetedness' is itself a performance initiated as such by the speech act of a silence—not a particular silence, but a silence that accrues particularly by fits and starts, in relation to the discourse that surrounds and differentially constitutes it;" (ibid.) and "ignorance and opacity collude to compete with knowledge in mobilizing flows of energy, desire, goods, meanings, persons" (Sedgwick 4) to the effect that ignorance "can be harnessed, licensed, and regulated on a mass scale for striking enforcements" (ibid.). Because Sedgwick investigates the closet antihomophobicly, her engagement with the category is more often than not in the interest of exploring its oppressive manifestation in the lives of gay men (as explored through literature). My reasons for identifying Wigley's historiography as an epistemology of the closet stems from its discursive nature, centered on sexuality. In the specific instance I discuss here Wigley is concerned with Semper's historiographical abjection on the ostensive basis of his non-normative gender identity viz. masquerade and the mask. The heterosexist perspective applied here revolves around a subtle, homophobic emphasis on the closet as unwittingly opened; where it collapses, and reveals a truth that would otherwise (and should otherwise) have not been known. Sedgwick's definition of the closet is therefore constant with Wigley's historiography around the concept—itsself concerning a type of silence (abjection), and mobilizing meaning (the historical value of Semper's work), to the effect that ignorance is harnessed for enforcement (essentially, striking Semper from the historical record/disciplinary boundaries of art history, in order to maintain the ontological viability of "architecture"). As Wigley writes, art/architectural history is dependent upon the maintenance of an ignorance of ignorance, or in his words, architecture's "privileged role" within a "world of dissimulation" depends upon its implication in an "economy of masks it appears to stand against" (Wigley 378): "[s]pace is itself closeted" (Wigley 389) because it is the "illusion of a presence behind the representational mask" that "is the illusion of space itself;" therefore, "the image of occupiable space [that] wraps itself around the subject position" (Wigley 387) is only an illusion, and architecture sustains that illusion, in a manner that can be represented through the notion of "the closet" ("Untitled: The Housing of Gender" is that representation). It is in this way that the closet is a manifestation of self-imposed homophobia—this architectural category regulates an ignorance of the illusion architecture maintains while at the same time sublimating desires around disciplinary revelation (of "the mask," a male category, by and about interlocutors who are definitively male), while asserting an imagined, protective, alternative object of desire/identity (around transparency and "the veil," which is definitively female). My claims about Wigley's interpretation of Semper stem from this reading.

role as body politic. Semper's ostensive inversion of a normative architectural sexual politics is, consequently, disruptive because it reveals the discipline's self-regulation of sexual/gender identity as he presents his scheme for an inverted, clothed public architecture: Wigley writes, "what is so attractive in the feminine," and therefore the writings of Gottfried Semper, "is the advertised presence of the masculine;" Semper's writings are therefore problematic because, "[w]hat man is attracted to is his myth of himself. This myth is a representation that can only be sustained by concealment... Order cannot simply be exposed. Rather, disorder is concealed, removed from the eye as unsightly. The representation of exposure depends on a veil. Transparency is an effect of masking" (376). The femininity of Semper's masquerade reveals the solipsism of architecture's tautological masculine self-identification and by virtue of its disruption of normal "visuality" is considered repulsive.

Transphobia, II

Within Wigley's historiography, there are holes. One of them, ironically enough, is latent within the term "rigor." In "Untitled: The Housing of Gender," Wigley makes it clear that even though he's examining architecture through the frame of psychoanalysis he's still totally grounded in architecture's basis in the spatial; he's still going to treat it objectively; he's using psychoanalysis but he's still thinking architecturally; he's writing about this fag Semper but he's still totally *one of the guys*. In this way, Wigley's own argument can be traced as a subtext of the historical traditions it critiques.

It's complicated, of course. Let's start, as he does, with the text as mask. Just as he dismisses "recent revisions of identity politics" as not adequately grounded in the architecture of the "house," Wigley similarly undercuts Mulvey's politicization of psychoanalysis for lacking rigor. Because her "revision" of Lacanian and Freudian theories of castration and gender identity fails to locate itself within a *specific* space, Wigley identifies "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" as flawed:

The ongoing revision of psychoanalysis that explicitly examines the psychic topography of the mask, by rereading the extent to which its manipulation both effects, and is the effect of, the construction of gender, has only tacitly engaged with its spatial prop.... Laura Mulvey's seminal [sic] essay on visual pleasure, for example, in examining one of the contemporary forms of wall painting—cinema—argues that the gaze is masculine inasmuch as it produces a subject position occupying three-dimensional "Renaissance space" and directing itself at two-dimensional surfaces of which the woman becomes one. In this sense, the feminine position is precisely not a position. If this "illusion of natural space" (produced by cinematic conventions) is made possible by the specific technology of the camera, what is the status of "natural" space before the lights are turned out? To what extent is it always already an illusion produced by specific technologies of representation that are not recognized as such in order to naturalize particular structures for specific ideological reasons? (385-6)

Extrapolated, and indulging in some vulgarity, Wigley here intellectualizes the mythic figure of the sexually frustrated feminist: Unable to contain her unavoidable attraction to the (masculine) technology of the camera, Mulvey loses herself within its point of view; she herself becomes an extension of the apparatus. As a woman, her inability to resist was unavoidable—and for this reason what looks like antipathy in her non-figured indication of possible political action is nothing more than a facile attempt to question while simultaneously giving in to the sexed charm of the cinematic gaze. Thus it is implied that for the purposes of ideology—feminism—Mulvey ignores this, *but we know what she means*.

In a less cynical way, Mulvey herself admits this in her essay “Afterthoughts to Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (1981) where she famously claims, in regards to her assumption of a male viewer, that “as desire is given cultural materiality in a text, for women (from childhood onwards) trans-sex identification is a habit that very easily becomes second Nature. However, this Nature does not sit easily and shifts restlessly in its borrowed transvestite clothes.” So, Mulvey loses herself within the camera’s point of view in “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” only inasmuch as she identifies with a respective viewer in order to explain and analyze “his” perspective. I think it is Wigley, not Mulvey, who is “naturalize[ing] particular structures for specific ideological reasons.”

What Wigley is doing, here, is undermining the performativity of gender. What he is saying, about Mulvey, is that even though she’s a feminist she can’t escape the fact that she’s a *woman*; the more she tries to establish the fact that femininity is constructed the more she emphasizes the fact of that construction, and the centrality of the (castrated) man at the center of it. By this deconstructive logic, Mulvey’s feminist dialectic of the analyzed gaze in fact *re-enforces* that gaze even as she attempts to arm the female viewer with knowledge empowered towards its destruction. To this end, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” makes women see themselves as objects, as they are seen by men:

The gaze is not simply directed across a space to a surface that is detached from it. Rather, the feminine surface “orchestrates” the very gaze apparently directed at it to produce the effect of interior, the space of masculinity. This “illusory” psychic space cannot be separated from the physical space of the so-called viewer... The surface is more mirror than window. (386)

This interpellation, Wigley argues, is true of any attempt at feminist hermeneutic agency, in the face of epistemological systems wherein subjectivity is seen as always already being a *male* trait. The reason this happens is inherent in space’s regulation of the limit between the gendered sexes: if gender is contained by the white surface,⁶⁶ and masquerade occurs through the ornamentation of that surface, then ornamentation can never be fully autonomous from the split wall that supports it:

⁶⁶ “Just as the wife must wear the “ornament of silence,” the building must wear a white coat. The white wall is the mask of unmasking. Its ideological authority is bound to the production-domestication of woman, buildings, and the discipline responsible for them” (Wigley 381).

Masquerade operates by masking the absence of the very identity it appears to mask. The illusion of presence behind the representational mask is the illusion of space itself. It is the ruse of surface to appear to be framed off as a discrete representational system that simply occupies the space it actually produces.
(386-7)

...and this carries across feminist theories of subjectivity:

The Semperian sense of decoration as the production of space is clearly written into Luce Irigaray's identification of the structural role of the mask. It is the woman's confinement to the decorative surface that actually provides the "prop," the "infrastructural" role of space which "underwrites" the patriarchal order and denies her any subjectivity understood as the control of space. The imposed mask of femininity can be reappropriated through masquerade to produce another spatiality, an "elsewhere." But this "elsewhere" is not so much a place, as a displacement of place. The "distance" produced by the masquerade is necessarily improper and cannot be described with traditional theories of space.
(387-8)

However you look at it: in architecture, the feminine is always already excluded. This is Wigley's message: the intersection of sexuality and space is a void.

CONCLUSION: AFTER SEXUALITY & SPACE

Mark Wigley concludes "Untitled: The Housing of Gender" with a dismissal of identity politics, tautologically positing architecture as the metanarrative to a praxis (identity politics) for which it had been proven as inherently opposed, by his own reasoning. For this, Wigley returns to issue of "house" versus "home," referred to in an earlier footnote:

But no matter how improper, the image of the occupation of this supplementary "house," like the political arguments "behind" most theories of masquerade, inasmuch as they presuppose, even if only "strategically," the agency of a subject behind the mask who can manipulate its surface, raises the dilemma of essentialism whose complexity cannot be respected here other than to note that the question of essentialism is no more than the question of interiority. Which is to say that identity theory is necessarily spatial theory. (Wigley 388)

Pushing further, Wigley folds Beatriz Colomina's engagement of architecture and representation in "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism" into his description of a future project of sexuality and space, as initiated by the event of "Sexuality and Space" and the publication of its proceedings:

The question of sexuality and space becomes that of the multiplicity of mechanisms of representation that establish the subtle architecture of these key psychospacial closets and whose contemporary displacement by new mechanisms in the age of electronic representation marks the space of new sexualities. An interrogation of these mechanisms is required in order to reread the spatial arguments inscribed within psychoanalytic theory before that theory can be applied to architecture in a way that does not simply reproduce the abrupt separation of space and sexuality on which both institutional discourses currently appear to depend. But this involves more than simply making space the proper object of discourse by addressing its strategic role "in" theories of sexuality. As Irigaray points out, "the fact that Freud took sexuality as the object of his discourse does not necessarily imply that he interpreted the role of sexualization in discourse itself, his own in particular." Likewise, discourses are spatial mechanisms that construct sexuality before giving either sexuality or space a title. Space is itself closeted. The question must shift to the elusive architecture of the particular closets that are built into each discipline, but can only be addressed with the most oblique gestures. (389)

It is not surprising that as he concludes his essay, Wigley is positing Mulvey's flawed psychoanalytic engagement of space as the thesis of an ostensibly more rigorous counter-engagement. It is furthermore appropriate that the change Wigley implies travels through that covered in "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism:" an address of "the question of sexuality and space" by means of architecture and its trajectory representations. These things are expected because, together, "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism" and "Untitled: The Housing of Gender" configure a particular place for sexuality within architectural scholarship. I'd like to dwell on this minor fact before moving to consider what little came after *Sexuality & Space*, as a means of closing out this thesis.

I need to say, first, that in *Sexuality & Space*, psychoanalysis is used to produce a theory for the implication of space in sexuality, and vice versa. In "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism" and "Untitled: The Housing of Gender," fashion is explored as a node between the gendered individual and society, played out in the membrane between public and private spheres. Thus style, as a formal expression of biographical detail and individual eccentricity, is interrogated as the fundamental element of the gendering of spaces and therefore of sexuality and space. As Roland Barthes argues, in *Writing Degree Zero*, "the allusive virtue of style is... a matter of density, for what stands firmly and deeply beneath style, brought together harshly in its figures of speech, are fragments of a reality entirely alien to language."⁶⁷ What I have done, in this thesis, primarily, is investigate Colomina's figures of speech as they configure her adaptation of Mulvey's theory of the gaze, which is itself generative of Wigley's supporting historiography; as I have done so, I have constructed a counter-narrative that explains the mechanics of Colomina's particular and unforgiving blend of feminist film theory and phallogentrism, which, as I demonstrated, engenders an inherently self-defeating project.

Bearing in mind the centrality of the second chapter of this thesis, its composite narrative can be summarized as follows: in "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism," Colomina applies Laura Mulvey's famous theorization of the male gaze, as that which objectifies the female body, in cinema, to analogous architectural examples. Because of contradictions between her subject matter and method, Beatriz Colomina's literalization of applied theory elicits a pedagogical construct whose ultimate consequence is its own negation. Psychoanalysis is a synchronic hermeneutic methodology; it reads human thought as if its signification, while subject to dialectical sublimation, does not decay. Similarly, in "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism," the psychoanalytic reading of architecture's sexuality and sexuality's architectures operate on the assumption that architectural disciplinarity is subject to synchronically legible epistemological structures, i.e. the discipline is, itself, a symbolic system which whose signification operates independent of historical progress.⁶⁸ In the process, Beatriz Colomina inscribes within

⁶⁷ Barthes, Roland. "What is Writing?" *Writing Degree Zero*. New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 2012 [1953, tr. 1967]. Print. 11.

⁶⁸ such that an historian can read what was represented then, and always will be able to, regardless of any historical duration between the enacting of that representation, originally, and the situation in which it is being analyzed

her narrative a predetermined abjection of feminist theory within architectural discourse. This is because Colomina's assertion of a psychoanalytic metanarrative amplifies her inherent positivism, such that her essay's description of Loos and Corbusier constructs itself as an instance in a larger, but still bounded, solution to "the problem of 'Sexuality and Space,'" which is to say that, in "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism," the intersection of architecture and sexuality is defined as the shared disposition of a class of (male) architects in the first half of the twentieth century. It is with this in mind that Mulvey's feminist film theory takes on the supplemental nature ascribed to it.

It is no coincidence that Wigley follows Colomina in the volume *Sexuality & Space*, as he takes her investigation of the gaze as the foundation for his historiography of architectural discourse as "organized by man for man." It is furthermore no coincidence that, as that volume concludes with Wigley's essay, historiography is used as the foundation for further inquiry, which leaves sexuality aside in the interest of revising the history of the architectural avant-garde. Although this is by no means the conclusion of my thesis, from this last statement it can be argued that, intertextually, "Untitled: The Housing of Gender" and "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism" render sexuality as a concept whose representation by architecture is inherently symptomatic of its historical context. This is to say that in "Untitled: The Housing of Gender" and "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism" the problem of sexuality can be understood as a condition of related historical concepts (of Adolf Loos and the "metropolitan individual," of Le Corbusier and the camera; of Alberti and "the closet," or of Semper and 19th century art history), and therefore sublimated into other scholastic inquiries (namely: critical theory and historiography). That this should be so is itself symptomatic of Colomina and Wigley's narratives of the architectural history of early Modernism—when masculine subjectivity is taken to represent subjectivity as such (as it is in their essays) it is not worth discussing. In such a situation the consideration of masculine subjectivity as subjectivity is inherently the consideration of any other problem of ontology, since its gendered status is considered transparent and, therefore, inherently inconsequential. To this end, the void between feminist studies and architectural theory identified as the subject and ostensibly alleviated antecedent to *Sexuality & Space*, by Beatriz Colomina, in the proceedings' introduction, is precisely that which is asserted by her and Mark Wigley's related essays. Taking some liberties with Colomina's introduction: to the extent that "feminist theorists... conspicuously ignored in architectural discourse and practice" are addressed by *Sexuality & Space*, the "interdisciplinary exchange in which theories of sexuality are reread in architectural terms and architecture is reread in sexual terms" by its essays does little more than to reassert the very silence that its inquiry ostensibly alleviated.

Such is my thesis.

Returning to the introduction, and my motivations for performing this close reading, I'd like to take some time to consider the few projects which came out of *Sexuality & Space* in order to spell out, as directly as close reading allows, my critique of that original publication. The conclusion of Mark Wigley's "Untitled: The Housing of Gender" is written to leave one wondering, "*now what?*" In its own, complicated, way,

historiography answers this question with: nothing much; which is to say: more of the same.

The abstract included with this document might be somewhat misleading in implying that there are *no* architectural publications related to the subjects addressed in *Sexuality & Space*. There are about a dozen readers on issues of sexuality, gender identity, architecture, urban design, and planning that have been published since 1990; it should be pointed out however that these works are both largely unassociated with each other and are disconnected from that which was published in *Sexuality & Space*. More importantly, I argue that such publications fail to address the need for a comprehensive, architecturally-specific discourse on the subjects of gender and sexuality, as is outlined in the introduction to *Sexuality & Space*. Therefore, based on the *singularité* of “sexuality” that might be gleaned from that volume, I am confident in saying that very little has been written on the subject of sexuality in architectural scholarship. There is no discourse.

Here is an example of a book published after *Sexuality & Space* that proves my point. In 1999 Routledge published the reader *Gender Space Architecture: An Interdisciplinary Introduction*. Edited by Iain Borden, Professor of Architecture and Urban Culture at the Bartlett School of Architecture, the volume brings together “the most important essays concerning subjects of gender, space, and architecture.” The book is divided into 3 parts, each of which includes an introduction by Jane Rendell, Director of Architectural Research at the Bartlett. The publication is remarkable in its scope, incorporating fundamental texts by feminists like Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan, and Audre Lorde alongside the critiques of Doreen Masse, bell hooks, and Rosalyn Deutsche. It also includes texts by Diana Agrest, Alice T. Friedman, and Beatriz Colomina (specifically, excerpts from “The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism”). With its many inclusions, the publication intends to complement the understanding of architecture “within the context of its production” as a means of “providing an opening of [that] territory to future new ideas and practices.” As an introductory text, the volume instantiates a discourse to succeed it; inasmuch as this forthcoming inquiry is *forthcoming*, it is not given any reality in the immediate present. To complicate this, the rigorously interdisciplinary mode with which this volume presents its content implies a categorical division between its explicitly philosophical content and that which refers more directly to architecture. The conceptual progression between its three parts—“GENDER;” “GENDER, SPACE;” and “GENDER, SPACE, ARCHITECTURE”—implies the existence of a spectrum of related inquiries on gender and architecture, it is true, but this spectrum nonetheless spans an interval between poles of the explicitly philosophical and the explicitly architectural. As the volume traverses this interval, it also moves forward in historical time, starting Part 1 with *A Room of One’s Own* (Virginia Woolf, published 1928) to and concluding Part 3 with “Bad Press” (Elizabeth Diller, completed 1998). Although each subsequent section of the volume is labeled with an additional word, as its text progresses the intellectual purview of *Gender Space Architecture* actually narrows—from the literal and figural space of women in a tradition dominated by patriarchy to the limited description of specific, post-feminist design practices. As a whole its narrative would be beautifully poetic if it weren’t so banal in its

implications: namely that, as time goes on, philosophy collapses into particular architectural sites, projects, and ideas. History dictates silence.

The negative consequences of *Sexuality & Space*, as I have read it in this thesis, are not related to the banality of *Gender Space Architecture*, or its contemporaries. No, what *Sexuality & Space* suffers from—and what has been my interest here—is that volume’s specific *production* of silence. While it effectively instantiated a new, interdisciplinary exchange, *Sexuality & Space* facilitates no possibility for further inquiry besides what it, itself, has addressed. It is for this reason that the volume is both the first and last book-length publication dedicated to a comprehensive discourse on sexual identity and the discipline of architecture. I can prove this by pointing to its two stillborn offspring.

Two works can be said to have succeeded *Sexuality & Space*—while both are successful in their continuation of discourses initiated by the 1990 symposium, they do little to advance that discourse beyond its transformation of architecture into a phallogentric exercise of sexual identity and desire. Better known of the two is Mark Wigley’s 1995 book, *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture* (MIT Press). In this revisionist history of architectural modernism Wigley shows how the image of modern architecture as white is the effect of a historiographical tradition that suppressed the color of the surfaces of its buildings; recalling “Untitled: The Housing of Gender,” Wigley argues that this suppression results from a sexual logic that marginalized the “masquerade” of the nineteenth century’s florid tendencies towards polychrome and ornament. Less well-known⁶⁹ is the 1995 volume *Stud: Architectures of Masculinity*; employing a blend of feminist and psychoanalytic theory similar to *Sexuality & Space*, *Stud* illustrates the coding of masculinity and homosexual desire in the design and adaptation of twentieth century architectural environments. While each is compelling in its own right, neither project furthers the “displacement of Architecture” *Sexuality & Space* had intended to initiate; on the contrary...

Something, something, something. I don’t really know what to say here. I haven’t read either all that closely. I find them boring. I don’t think there’s much point in saying that modernism is an exercise of male, architectural identity. Anyone who’s been through architecture school, lately, and doesn’t have their head totally up their ass could tell you the same thing; to put it in a book (or two) just seems, to me, like chauvinism. Monumentalizing the unspoken sexism of twentieth century architecture though revisionist historiography does nothing but substantiate our field’s many unspoken sexism; written more cynically, I think that both Wigley and Saunders play to a certain illiterate naïveté that plagues the field of architectural studies, because nobody reads, really, and everybody likes being told what they already know, by smart people, in language they can barely understand. Nothing is gained, and the possibility of related counter-narratives is deferred by one more instance of more of the same. As the status

⁶⁹ Because of homophobic institutional disavowal, according an interesting conversation I had with its editor over drinks at the Cambridge bar “Paradise,” not long ago; in support of Mr. Saunders’ claim I will note that the publication is not included among the *Princeton Papers on Architecture* described on the Princeton School of Architecture website, as of April 7, 2013, and that this seems to me to be an intentional oversight.

quo re-instantiates itself, its myth becomes that much harder to demystify. From a feminist perspective, this is incredibly unproductive—not because it is oppressive (who cares about what Mark Wigley has to say, *really?*), but because it makes properly dialectical engagement more difficult.

There is one more thing to say. The fifth Google Image Search result for “Beatriz Colomina Mark Wigley” as of April 7, 2013 is the poster for a 1994 exhibition/event series “Queer Space,” hosted by the Lower Manhattan design gallery Storefront for Art and Architecture. Organized by Beatriz Colomina, Hans Urbach, Cindy Patton, and Mark Wigley, the exhibition assembled architectural mediations of questions like

How can minorities define their rights to occupy spaces within the city?

How can such space be legitimized, given a history and a future?

Is it even physical space that is in question, or is it the space of discursive practices, texts, codes of behavior and the regulatory norms that organize social life?

When I found out about “Queer Space” the first time, performing a Google Image Search, a few months ago, I thought maybe by looking into it I could flesh out the more incidental and secondary considerations I had had while drafting this thesis. Just from the title and timing, “Queer Space” seems like it could have been a post-script to *Sexuality & Space*; even though this thesis is a close reading, it might have involve something interesting, that, maybe I could use in the conclusion. Also, maybe, somewhere in the archive, I might discover some details about the working relationship between Beatriz Colomina and Mark Wigley—since neither will talk to me in conjunction with this project, and Princeton’s archivist was entirely unhelpful.

In early April I went to New York, and I went through the Storefront’s archive, and I didn’t really find what I was looking for—which is also to say that I did. In the two binders of material saved from the talks and in-house installations associated with “Queer Space,” there is only one item authored by either Beatriz Colomina or Mark Wigley. In the corner of a poster-sized, folded pamphlet there is a two-paragraph introduction signed “Beatriz Colomina, June 9, 1994.” I am a little suspicious but also unsurprised that this is all that remains from “Queer Space” with either her name or Wigley’s attached to it. As far as I can tell, “Queer Space” started as a follow-up to *Sexuality & Space*, and may have initially been related to the release of the proceedings. According to Colomina’s introduction,

The Queer Space project started as a discussion group formed in the Fall of 1992 [sic] between Dennis Dollens, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Elizabeth Diller, and myself. The initial impulse came from StoreFront’s invitation to organize an exhibition that would articulate the role of space in questions of sexuality.



Figure 7 Google Image Search result for “Beatriz Colomina Mark Wigley.” April 7, 2013.

The timing of the project’s inception—late 1992—corresponds with the publication date of *Sexuality & Space*; moreover, the language of the selection above, in particular the phrase “the role of space in questions of sexuality” resonates with Colomina’s phrase, in the introduction to *Sexuality & Space*, “the question of ‘Sexuality and Space.’” For reasons that remain unexplained, the “Queer Space project” rapidly became something different from what Colomina expected, and I don’t think that she was all that happy about this. As Colomina writes, “Even before the first meeting, the focus became queer space. I don’t think that any of us quite realized what we were getting in to [sic].” Considered with the reference to the event as “The Queer Space project” rather than with the title, “Queer Space,” this comment implies a level of derision, if not frustration, hidden behind a scrim of professional courtesy. That this should be so is accentuated by the exasperation implied by Colomina’s ambiguous and ambivalent concluding description of the exhibit/event:

The project did not initially have one single program but was always multifaceted and ambiguous. The very idea of an exhibition was repeatedly contested. Many possibilities were discussed involving the space of shop windows, billboards, video games, e-mail, symposium, fashion shows, the Circle line, walking tours, bus tours, queer kinesthetic, posters, personal ads, performances, actions around the proposed AIDS drop in center in Soho, mapping homophobic geographies, analysis of queer migrations, and so on. At a certain point we decided to begin a long series of such events by registering the diverse responses to an open call to proposals and manifestos. The resulting installation is not so much an exhibition but a forum for debate.

Similarly, collective endeavors associated with “Queer Space” are only referenced in relation to their failure to gain comprehension and validation:

What we had anticipated as a series of organization meetings to get the project started turned into a long series of discussions over Chinese rolls at a local joint across the street from Store Front. Over time, other people joined some of our discussions, including Rosalyn Deutsche, Douglas Crimp, Robert Reid-Pharr, John Ricco, Robin Lewis, Jackie Goldsby, Jeff Nunokawa, Mark Wigley, Henry Urbach, and Cindy Patton—the last three quickly becoming part of the organizing group. Traces of this organizing dialogue can be found in a series of manifestos that were produced over these months and across many fax machines as we struggled to clarify the project for ourselves and for the myriad of institutions to which we applied for funds [...] We are proud to announce that we were rejected by every institution that we applied to for financial support.

I am not surprised that, here, Colomina really isn't saying much aside from explaining what happened, while at the same time writing in a manner which implies the judgment of failure, impotence, and obscurity often projected onto both homosexuals and to queer theory.

How does this follow-up on *Sexuality & Space*? It doesn't. And that's how it helps to conclude my thesis. They said a lot of things, and I don't really disagree; I'm just frustrated by a lot of it. I think it was kind of short-sighted. This is how I feel about Beatriz Colomina and Mark Wigley's contributions to *Sexuality & Space*, and I envision that this is how Beatriz Colomina felt while organizing “Queer Space.” I like to imagine that, as she was eating her “Chinese rolls,” Colomina recognized her frustration as at least in part the result of her scholastic method, as an organizer, editor, and participant in *Sexuality & Space*; because the sort of dilated confusion, apprehension, and false starts she encountered while putting together “Queer Space” bear an uncanny resemblance to that which, I think, is encountered when one tries to continue upon that started in *Sexuality & Space* from a framework unrelated to that which is explicitly addressed in the proceedings—like, from Eve Sedgwick's perspective (or, my own, as informed by her work).

Thinking about it now, I have to laugh. Thinking again, I recognize that Colomina's response to all that is additionally uncanny in the form it took. In the last block quote, I noticed the following sentence:

Here we have reproduced one of those circulating faxes as an instances [sic] of the kind of exchanges that occurred (and may be [sic] too, of the pleasures and difficulties of collaborative writing).

To the left of the introduction, there is a reproduction of a fax from Eve Sedgwick. Is this gesture not, in its own way, analogous *my response* to *Sexuality & Space*? In the absence of having anything to say, we reproduce the original text and add some notes... hoping that, now, we have somehow been able to add something. Or, maybe we're just mad that things didn't turn out how we hoped they would, and hope that just by representing the situation others will agree about the indignity.

INTRODUCTION

The Queer Space project started as a discussion group formed in the Fall of 1992 between Dennis Dollens, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Elizabeth Diller and myself. The initial impulse came from StoreFront's invitation to organize an exhibition that would articulate the role of space in questions of sexuality. Even before the first meeting, the focus became queer space. I don't think that any of us quite realized what we were getting into. What we had anticipated as a series of organization meetings to get the project started turned into a long series of discussion over chinese rolls and coffee at a local joint across the street from StoreFront. Over time, other people joined some of our discussions, including Rosalyn Deutsche, Douglas Crimp, Robert Reid-Pharr, John Ricco, Robin Lewis, Jackie Goldsby, Jeff Nunokawa, Mark Wigley, Henry Urbach and Cindy Patton—the last three quickly becoming part of the organizing group. Traces of this ongoing dialogue can be found in a series of manifestos that were produced collectively over these months and across many fax machines as we struggled to clarify the project for ourselves and for the myriad of institutions to which we applied for funds. Here we have reproduced one of those circulating faxes as an instances of the kind of exchanges that occurred (and may be too, of the pleasures and difficulties of collaborative writing). A dossier of all the documents produced during this process, from early drafts of polemical position statements to grant applications and letters of recommendation, will be in the gallery space. We are proud to announce that we were rejected by every institution that we applied to for financial support.

The project did not initially have one single program but was always multifaceted and ambitious. The very idea of an exhibition was repeatedly contested. Many possibilities were discussed involving the space of shop windows, billboards, video games, e-mail, symposium, fashion shows, the Circle line, walking tours, bus tours, queer kinesthetics, posters, personal ads, performances, actions around the proposed AIDS drop in center in Soho, mapping homophobic geographies, analysis of queer migrations and so on. At a certain point we decided to begin a long series of such events by registering the diverse responses to an open call to proposals and manifestos. The resulting installation is not so much an exhibition as a forum for debate.

BEATRIZ COLOMINA
June 9, 1994

W
 November 21, 1992
 TO: Shirin and the "Queer Space" project
 FROM: Eve
 Thanks for the two drafts of our manifesto. I just had a few suggestions to add to Dennis's draft. How about something like this:
 All space is queer. Using it, cruising it, hiding in it, making out into it, and labelling it are some of the ways that urban spaces, both public and private, are appropriated, "perverted," and transformed into sites for the negotiation of gender and sexuality.
 While there have been islands of debate concerning the role of space and other social discourses in the fine arts, the question of sexuality in architecture and urban space has gone virtually unaddressed. Queer Space will inaugurate that much-needed discussion, be begun from the realization that urban space cannot be separated from a number of issues that have been crucial to experimental sexual activities: in particular public/private, community/fragmentation, violence/safety, culture/commerce. Place is a central mechanism in the construction of sexual identity, which is ultimately defined within scores of the individual and the public. Historically, furthermore, the development of urban space over the past two centuries has evolved in the very closest connection to the development of a variety of sexual practices, identities, and cultures.
 We are convinced that the opening of this discussion will be an important and complex undertaking. Accordingly, Queer Space will investigate these issues in four ways: with a gallery exhibition, with a symposium, with a book publication, and with some additional uses of non-traditional venues like storefront window displays, broadcast media, posters and postcards. We plan to commission new work from artists, architects, and cultural critics who have already begun isolated projects in this area, and to stimulate the coming together of a new discourse on sexuality and gender in social and urban space.
 Ultimately, Queer Space will deal with the conceptual of space and its transformative effects on the spatial ecology of all urban dwellers.
 Feel free to use, discard, or further modify any of this.

at get Beatrice's excellent version. But this my suggestions additional amendments.

WANTED

QUEER SPACE MANIFESTOS/PROPOSALS

*Flaming through outer space? Or cruising your inner child?
ACTing UP, going down, carrying on.*

Hang around, come across, put out, jerk off, log on, boogie down, work through, fashion forward, lay back.

Safety. Danger. Uptown. Downtown. Ask. Tell.

Where are the traces of all our queer ancestors? Where did they arrive, shelter, display, disport, depart?

Melvin Dixon says: "I'll be somewhere listening for my name."

Vows and disavowals. Trade, betrayal, tradition. Erasures - racisms - races, Laborers, labors: loafing, and luxuries, and loveliness. A homeless person's "right to privacy" - where does it live? Younger and older, effeminate/femme/feminine/masculine/butch. Commotions, emotions, movements.

*Dignity/pride/exhibitionism/shyness/shame/attitude/
public displays of affection.*

"All the rage"

Figure 8 Pamphlet from "Queer Space" (portion), Storefront for Art and Architecture, 1994. Courtesy Storefront for Art and Architecture Archive.

In the fax, Eve Sedgwick misspelled Colomina's first name. In the archive, I noticed this, and I snickered. *What an idiot*, I found myself thinking.

Having written all this I am brought to wonder how much, really, needs to be said. When I was in New York in early April I also met up with one of the partners of the architecture firm I once worked for; we spent most of our time talking about what it meant to be a gay architect: about the office on Canal Street he once shared with Joel Saunders and Matthias Hollwich, years ago; about his voyeuristic design sensibility; about flirtation, desire, and professionalism; bickering about Charles Renfro's media presence. It was the second item in that list which interested us the most, and it was that which we discussed for about forty-five minutes of the hour and a half we were together: what it meant to him; how others capitalize on their gay sensibility, as a practice; how that might differ, generationally. As we realized, together, the subject is not personal, but it is atomistic: voyeurism, and a related design practice based on queer marginality, is inherently based on an individual rather than communal identity; furthermore our conversation emerged from and remains defined by the circumstances of our relationship to each other, informally. Our discussion would have been changed radically by moving that it to a more formal, academic setting.

My intention in writing this is not to say that gay architectural practice, or whatever, has no discourse beyond gossip, or that there is an equivalency between the conversation that I had and the subject matter of the essays I address in this thesis. Rather, what I am saying is that the frustration of inventing a discourse to create conversation is that which is signified by the void *Sexuality & Space* has left us with. Sometimes there is nothing to say. This is what I have learned.

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