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## ABSTRACT

### LIVED BODY ARCHITECTURE: AN ARGUMENT FOR LIVED BODIES IN ARCHITECTURE AND AN EXPLORATION OF WOMEN'S LIVED BODIES IN SOCIETY

by  
Sherri A. Scribner

This thesis is about architecture's current disregard for the lived body and about the lived bodily experiences of women in Western society. Although these seem to be two different themes, they are connected. Architecture disregards the lived body, but it can never escape it. Architects design buildings from their own lived experiences of the world and architectural theorists most often write about architecture from their experience of being in the buildings they discuss. But because architecture has been built and discussed predominantly by men, Western theories of architecture reflect mainly a male interpretation. I begin by analyzing the paradigms of the body used in architectural discourse. These paradigms are not based on a female body or on lived bodily experience. Next I examine women's particular experience in Western culture to find how their lived bodily experiences might differ from those described. Finally I propose lived bodies as a new paradigm for the bodies of architecture. This paradigm would incorporate the experiences of women and other bodies into architecture.

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EXPLORATION OF WOMEN'S LIVED BODIES IN SOCIETY**

by  
**Sherri A. Scribner**

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LIVED BODY ARCHITECTURE:  
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EXPLORATION OF WOMEN'S LIVED BODIES IN SOCIETY

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This thesis is dedicated to  
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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

People's experiences in buildings are not of primary concern to architects today. Modern day architects use the body as a model but ignore living bodies; they valorize the body through anthropomorphic allusions and idealized, figural forms, but disregard the experiences of living bodies. Our lived experiences shape how we view everything in the world; the body we have determines our experiences. Whether we are a woman or a man, African-American or Asian, heterosexual or homosexual, our bodies matter. New architectural paradigms of the body should acknowledge these differences and allow for multiple bodies.

Idealized models of the body ignore the sensate experience of living bodies in the world. Our bodies are not passive masses that hold our thoughts and ideas, but rather are active elements that shape our experience of the world. We live in the world through our bodies; our interpretation of life is phenomenologically linked to our specific bodily experiences. Andrea Dworkin explains how we live through our bodies: "The meanings we create or learn do not exist only in our heads, in ineffable ideas. Our meanings also exist in our bodies - what we are, what we do, what we physically feel, what we physically know; and there is no personal psychology that is separate from what the body has learned about life" (1987: 139). This human condition of experiencing the world and learning about it through our bodies is one way of



describing the *lived body*. All that we know, all that we sense from the world is derived through the body. Our ideas about the world and our knowledge in general are all intrinsically tied to the body that we live in.

Physicality and the sensate experiences of the body have long been denigrated in our society. Descartes's theories severed the mind from the body, viewing the sensate experiences of the lived body as untrustworthy and inferior to "pure" knowledge. Architecture, like most other disciplines, was transformed by Descartes's theories. Architects began to rationalize their designs not by a reference to the body or to the experiences of the body in their buildings, but by abstract intellectual theories based on the play between styles and forms. Architecture became a thing of the mind, ignoring its integral link to the lived body.

The discipline of architecture is aligned with the mind, an association made by many other discourses in Western society as well. Because our society is based on dichotomous pairs, the association of architecture with the mind leads to architecture's rejection of the sensual body. The additional association of women with the body leads to a rejection of women's lived bodily experience. The mind is linked with man and the intellect, while the body is linked to women and the senses. Western society denigrates the body and its lived experience; it relegates those experiences and the senses to women. Women can be sensual and influenced by the experiences of the body, but men must repress these experiences. Men's access to this world of the sensual and corporeal is reached through their access to women.

This thesis is about architecture's current disregard for the lived body and about the lived bodily experiences of women in Western society. Although these seem to be two different themes, they are connected. Although architects disregard the lived body, they can never escape it. Architects design buildings from their own lived experiences of the world and architectural theorists most often write about architecture from their experience of being in the buildings they discuss. But because architecture has been built and discussed predominantly by men, Western theories of architecture reflect mainly a male interpretation. Women must begin to write their own experiences of architecture and acknowledge and appreciate the differences they find between their lived bodily experiences and what they have learned to value from the dominant culture.

Western architecture is based on one ideal of the body at the expense of other, more varied bodies. For architecture to move beyond the current ties that keep it confined in abstraction, new ideas must be introduced. These ideas will not come from the same Western male paradigms that have influenced architecture for so long; they will come from the experiences of others in our culture. Avant-garde architects have often argued for an alternative perspective from dominant views, but these alternatives have always been the views of a specific group. Mary McLeod refers to this "avant-gardism as a more polite label for angry young men" (1996: 11). To really discover an "other" would require architects to examine the lived experiences of non-dominant groups in our society. One of these marginalized groups

has always been women. Mary McLeod writes that a solution to the avant-garde's desires for "otherness" would look at women's living bodies: "Instead of celebrating . . . "otherness," architects and critics might investigate the desires of those multiple others, those actual, flesh-and-blood women. The feminine is experienced differently, at different times, in different cultures, by different people. The point is not just recognizing "difference," but all kinds of difference" (1996: 9).

My thesis starts in Chapter Two by examining what ideas about the body are influencing architecture today; these ideas are ruled by a male paradigm. In order to counter the influence of these ideas, I then examine, in Chapters Three and Four, how women's experiences in Western society might affect their lived bodies and might affect their experiences of the world. From these inquiries I suggest in Chapter Five a path towards a new architecture that might draw from lived experiences.

Chapter Two describes the paradigms of the body that have ruled architecture through written history. I have found three such paradigms and I have laid out the primary features of each. The first and most influential of these paradigms is the classical body. The ideals of this body were part of the foundations of architecture and I believe they are still ruling architecture to some extent today. The second paradigm of the body in architecture is the modern body. This body came into existence some time after the writings of Descartes and after the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century. This body was similar in form to the classical body, but very different in its conception

of the body. Criticism of the modern body has lead towards the third body paradigm in architecture, what I call the postmodern body. This body paradigm challenges the ideals of both the classical body and the modern body, but is in many ways still reliant on these earlier paradigms. The final section in this chapter analyzes these paradigms. Here I argue that these paradigms are based on idealized bodies that are purely figural; all of these paradigms ignore the lived body. I also argue that all of these figural bodies are based on the male body as an ideal form. In order to design for the lived body we must move beyond one idealized figural body and begin to design for lived bodies in our architecture.

It takes more than just acknowledging the lived body to design for it in architecture. In order to understand and design for the lived body, we need to understand differences in the experiences of the bodies we study. Chapters Three and Four attempt to discover the lived experiences of women in contemporary Western culture in order to offer one case of lived bodily experiences. I offer my discoveries, not as a new paradigm, but as a challenge to other ideas about the lived body. I do not believe the experiences of women's bodies, as they live in the world, have fully been explored or theorized. Using my discoveries of the lived body I hope to offer an alternative to architects – a new way of thinking of and designing for the body. I do not mean any of my assertions to be absolutes for all women or to define the experiences of women in general. All women are different and have varied experiences based on their own lives. I do not wish to

essentialize the experiences of women. Instead I wish to propose hypotheses based on my own readings and my own experiences in order to begin a dialogue with other women. Although much of my writing uses generalizations to express ideas, I do not believe any of these ideas to be facts or truths. On the contrary, these ideas have changed and evolved through my writing and will be altered still as I write and read other works in the future.

To begin exploring women's lived experiences, Chapter Three examines the control imposed on women's bodies in Western society. One kind of control is the absence of women in discourse. I examine this absence in three forms. The first is the absence of women's bodily experiences in language. Because language is a social form of communication and because men have held most of the power in defining Western culture and language, I believe women's experiences are not easily expressed in our present form of language. This is a serious problem for women writers and women in discourse, because it reduces the chance for women to describe their own experiences in our culture. My work is influenced by the writings of Luce Irigaray and her challenges for women to write their own language – for women to invent the words that will explain their experiences in our society. Part of the goal of this thesis is to find the differences of women's experience and to discover the words that will describe them.

The second kind of absence that I discuss in Chapter Three is the absence of women's bodies in discourses on the body. The body has been

studied and explored in Western society, but the body that is examined has traditionally been a male body. This section explores some of the consequences this bias may have had in shaping our ideas about the body. The third absence of women is their absence from architecture. The one sided paradigm presented in discourses on the body has been a generalized male body. This ideal ignores women's bodies and the debt architecture owes to the female body.

The second form of control imposed on women's bodies is the social control imposed on their movements. The second section of Chapter Three examines how social control influences the lived bodily experiences of women. There are many social controls on women's bodies, but the two most relevant to architectural design are the social controls imposed on their movements and the social controls that confine women in the city. Women's movements are watched and women are socialized to contain their actions. These regulations keep women's bodily movements confined and lead women to mistrust their bodies' abilities. The results of all of these forms of control over women's bodily movements could have many perceptual results. If perception and movement are linked, how is women's consciousness different from men's? If their movements are controlled, their perception will be different from those described by men who have fewer social controls on their movements. The final kind of control on women's movements described in Chapter Three, is the confinement imposed on

women by the built world. Women are socialized to inhabit certain areas in the city. These regulations exclude women from many areas of the city.

To further understand the lived bodily experiences of women in Western society, Chapter Four examines the pervasive belief that the body is a container and how this paradigm relates to women's lived bodily experiences. The first section of Chapter Four examines the paradigm of body as container. I start examining this paradigm by exploring the separation of the mind from the body that was decisively made in the philosophy of Descartes. From this separation and its relation to other dichotomous pairs, I outline the containment theory prevalent in Western culture – the idea that the mind is contained by and separate from the body. I explore how this idea of a separate mind and body may be experienced differently dependent on one's sexuality. Finally I briefly discuss how the separation of mind and body is not a realistic representation of anyone's experiences. The separation of mind and body is an artificial one that diminishes the important role that the body plays in our perceptions.

The second section in Chapter Four describes an experience I feel is unique to women, something I call their "double spatiality." Women in Western society have often been treated as objects or as beautiful things to look at and admire. Because of this, women's presence in the world is different from men's. Women become aware of this male view of them through their representation in the media. Through these images women have access to the male gaze. Because women have access to this view, their

views of themselves become split – they are double. This is the double spatiality or second eye that I explore. This experience of women may give them a distinctly different interpretation of architecture and a distinctive way of experiencing the world that has not yet been explored.

Chapter Five brings the architectural paradigms outlined in Chapter Two and the lived experiences of women articulated in Chapters Three and Four to define a new value system for architecture. Using the idea of lived bodies without boundaries, I examine five aspects of how bodies have been portrayed and challenge them. The first section deals with the rigid separation made between the surface of the body and its interior elements. Architectural paradigms of the body use the exterior form of the body; they rarely consider the connection between the body's surface and its interior elements. In this section I argue for a new paradigm of the body that acknowledges both of these elements of the body, the body's flesh and the body's surface.

Section Two of Chapter Five examines the soft, wet, and fluid nature of lived bodies. Architecture is designed to be hard, dry, and impermeable; it is not designed to be fluid. In this section I argue for the acknowledgment of the fluidity of bodies and for architects to use this paradigm of the lived body in their designs. The third section in this chapter deals with the movement of the lived body. In this section I argue that movement must be encouraged in building designs. As I discuss in Chapter Three, movement and our perception of the world is linked. People interpret the world through their



ability to move. Architectural paradigms of the body should stop conceiving of the body in static terms, but should celebrate the living, moving body.

Architectural paradigms of the body have been based on static, idealized images of the body. These images are based on one form of the body, a young, upper-class, white, male body. These paradigms are limiting and do not recognize the multiple bodies that inhabit buildings. These idealized paradigms of the body also ignore the changing nature of bodies. Bodies do not stay constant, but continue to evolve and change through-out our lives. In the fourth section of Chapter Five I argue for an architecture that is based on the multiple, changing forms of the body. Most architecture is designed to stay constant through time, but new designs based on lived bodies could allow for change.

The fifth section in Chapter Five deals with the senses of the body. We experience the world through all of our senses, but architecture has been primarily based on visual images; the way architecture is designed and drawn shows this emphasis on the eye. A lived body experience of architecture uses ever sense. Architects must begin to design for the other senses of the body, not just the visual. In the final section of Chapter Five I argue that architecture must address the needs of lived bodies and the multiple people that inhabit buildings. Architecture has been conceived of as a fine art, but unlike other forms of art, buildings have a purpose. Architecture should be designed to meet the needs of lived bodies as they inhabit buildings.

Architecture has been defined by a non-living, idealized, male body for too long. We, as women in architecture, must reclaim, discover, and illuminate a *female* body in architecture. We need to discover a new language, a new vocabulary for architecture that is based on the lived body. This language must not be a substitute for the body, as Luce Irigaray writes, but must accompany bodily experience, “clothing it in words that do not erase the body but speak the body” (1993: 19). Architecture must not erase the lived body anymore. New designs must begin to value the lived experiences of bodies in our world.

## CHAPTER 2

### WHAT IS THE BODY OF ARCHITECTURE?

Our buildings and our cities are extensions of our corporeality; architecture is an extension of the body's form. Drew Leder writes: "The very house in which one dwells is both a reconstruction of the surrounding world to fit the body and an enlargement of our own physical structure. Its walls form a second protective skin, windows acting as artificial senses, entire rooms, like the bedroom or kitchen, devoted to a single bodily function" (1990: 34). This definition of architecture as an extension of our bodies, made to fit and house our bodies, recognizes the important role the body has in experience. Our ability to understand architecture and to use buildings comes from our projection of ourselves and our bodies into the architecture we inhabit.

In the twentieth century, phenomenologists began to articulate the important role the body plays in experience. Writers like Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty described our dependence on the body in how we interpret everything in the world. Our thoughts and ideas are learned through our bodily senses; our observations are based on the information we receive through our bodies. This concept, named the *lived body*, refers to our learned interpretations of the world derived through our experiences. One description of the *lived body* comes from Juhani Pallasmaa. He writes, "we touch, listen and measure the world with our entire bodily existence and the experiential world becomes organized and articulated around the center of

the body" (1996: 45). Pallasmaa's description emphasizes the importance of our *lived bodies* in everything that we do. Our understanding of the world comes to us through our bodies. Our concepts of space, time, and distance are all measured by their relationship to our bodies. Every aspect of knowledge is affected in some way by the body we live in.

While the physical limits of the body's senses are an important aspect which shapes our experiences, the term *lived body* encompasses more than just our body's physiological characteristics. A revolutionary aspect of phenomenology's lived body included an understanding of the role society plays in shaping our experiences. Social regulations are learned by the body, becoming part of the lived body. These rules affect how we experience the world around us and how we interact with objects in that world. Society shapes our bodies and governs our bodies. It encourages certain behaviors which affect our perception of the world.

Much contemporary architecture overlooks the lived body in design. Architecture has traditionally been based on the human body's form and structure as a basis for scale and proportion, but not on the lived body. Contemporary architecture is based on the *idea* of the body, not on the lived experiences of bodies in space. Architects draw pictures of the body and place scale figures in their drawings in order to represent the body; but the body being represented has been stripped of its lived, sensual experiences of the world. These ideas of the body are generalized forms which lack the specificity of lived bodies; they are blind, mute, and deaf figures that decorate

architectural drawings. An architecture that values the lived body would have to do more than just conceive of the body as an idea or form. Architecture for the lived body would require architects to projection their bodies into the spaces they design. By doing this architects might discover what bodily experiences result in their building.

Although architectural theorists have used different names for describing bodies, I believe there are three different paradigms of the body that we use today. These are the classical body, the modern body and the postmodern body. The classical body can be briefly defined as figural, humanist, and anthropomorphic. The modern body differs from the classical body in that it is a mechanical body. The most current paradigm is the postmodern body which takes many forms. Each of these concepts of the body has influenced architecture and continues to affect how architects design today. In this chapter I examine the different paradigms of the body used in architecture and question if these paradigms are based on the experiences of lived bodies or on more generalized bodies.

## **2.1 The Classical Body**

The classical body refers to a concept of the body held before the Age of Enlightenment and before the advent of modern science. This classical view of the body is best exemplified in the image drawn by Leonardo da Vinci of the Vitruvian man. (Figure 1) Here the body is frontal, symmetrical, in good health, immobile and male. The classical body as represented in da Vinci's

sketch is figural; it is the external form and shape of the human body, an outline, a representation and a likeness. In addition to its frontal, figural representation it is also one singular body, represented by one ideal – the Vitruvian man. And this ideal is based on the body as a whole element. The classical body is not conceived as separate elements but is seen as a whole unit that operates and functions as one in the world.

The singular ideal of the Vitruvian man is the paradigm for all classical bodies. This paradigm is founded on the belief that God is the basis for man's form and that human beings are created in his image. Plato was one of the first to assert that the body was made in the image of a divine figure. He believed that there was a supreme model in heaven for every earthly thing that was related to its ideal form by rules of number and proportion, and these systems structured everything on earth. The supreme model of a human being was God himself and since men's bodies on earth were the closest examples of the ideal body of God in heaven, the form and proportion of male bodies were studied in order to understand the overall structure of the world (Hamlyn 1987: 49-55 and Riggins 6-10-1996).

The manipulation and control of numbers was believed to be the most direct link to the divine. Numbers were believed to hold the answers to many questions. Pérez-Gómez writes "Numerical proportions referred ultimately to the perceived order of the supra-lunar world, an immutable order that functioned as a paradigm for the human orders and which needed to be brought to appearance in the sub-lunar world" (1994: 2). Because the

human form was the closest image people had of the divine, this form was used as an ordering system on earth. Architectural theorists derived numbers from the human form and from these proportions defined a singular classical body which acted as the general model from which to extract all proportions and ordering systems for buildings.

The proportions and numbers derived from the human body were measures based on an ideal body. While the classical body is figural and the Vitruvian man appears to be an image or an object, an internal essence was always assumed. This essence is man's soul. Through the soul, all human beings were connected to each other and had a direct connection to a transcendent power (i.e. God). Because of this linkage and the classical belief in God, human beings felt a deep connection with all matter in the world. Everything was considered to be joined to each other and to the heavens. "In the popular medieval concept the body is irremediably a part of nature, and thus cannot be seen as an individual possession" (MacSween 1993: 139). Thus the emphasis of the classical body was not only on the outer form but on the spirit and the immortal. The figural representation of the body was a way to describe something much deeper than an outline or surface.<sup>1</sup>

For the classical person, body and soul were the center of the universe, the central source of power; but it was a power based on connection to matter

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of classical architecture's connection to a transcendental order and how this connection was broken by modern astronomy and modern science, see Pérez-Gómez (1983) chapter "Introduction: Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science."

and to God. The world took form through the body's living in it; without the experiences of the body the world would not exist. This connection gave classical man a sense of importance and rightness in the world. Robert McAnulty describes classical man as an "autonomous figure shaping objects in its own image" (1992: 184). The earthly world does very little to change the soul of the classical body. This body defines the world from its experience; it is complete and constituted prior to the world, a world that takes form only insofar as it is embodied (McAnulty 1992: 182).

For classical man, the world was understood from within the body; all interpretations of the world were made through experience and perception.<sup>2</sup> Prime importance was attached to the perceptions of the lived body, and rational inquiry about the world was derived from human experience rather than from abstract theorizing. Pérez-Gómez writes that, before the seventeenth century, perception was the primary vehicle for understanding the world and provided the only evidence of truths (1983: 9). Classical people did not believe in disembodied theories or abstract models to define their lives; they believed the order of the world and cosmos was to be found in the lived body, in experiences of the world and in the connection between corporeality and the soul which defined their place in the world.

For classical man, the world could be understood through experience, and the cosmos could be understood through number and proportion. In architecture the classical orders and proportional systems were based on these

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<sup>2</sup> See note 1 on previous page.



numbers and derived from the human body. The choosing of numbers and proportions for a building could not be done arbitrarily but had to conform to this higher order. The architect was not free to use random ratio systems in his buildings; his ratios had to reflect the divine order of the cosmos. Wittkower states that these proportions were used in order to embrace and express the cosmic order (1951: 101).

Classical theories of architecture from Vitruvius to Alberti, defined an ideal body type and used this figure as the basis for the design of buildings. In this way classical architects projected a human form onto the buildings they designed. (Figures 2 & 3) One famous example of the attribution of human qualities to built elements can be found in Vitruvius' *Ten Books* first published in 1486. He writes "Thus the Doric Column, as used in buildings, began to exhibit the proportions, strength, and beauty of the body of a man" (1960: 103). (Figure 4) The attribution of human qualities to buildings led architects to theorize and design buildings as anthropomorphic. Sir Geoffrey Scott writes of the value of this way of thinking in design: "The anthropomorphic way which humanizes the world and interprets it by analogy with our own bodies and our own wills, is still the aesthetic way; it is the basis of poetry, and it is the foundation of architecture" (1914: 163). These examples apply the image and form of an ideal body to architecture.

Human forms were not only projected onto buildings, but buildings were also regarded as bodies. Anthony Vidler describes this in his article

“Architecture Dismembered” where he traces the history of the body analogy in architectural theory. He describes the classical body theory as “the notion that building *is* a body of some kind” (1992: 70). Vidler writes that these classical theories were based on one idealized body that was “directly projected onto the building . . . The building derived its authority, proportional and compositional, from this body, and, in a complementary way, the building then acted to confirm and establish the body – social and individual – in the world” (1992: 70-71).

Philosophers from Plato onward hypothesized one supreme being and this God was assumed to be male. That the idealized classical body is based on the male body can be seen in da Vinci’s image. Bodies were on a hierarchical continuum with the highest version being the image of God in heaven, the human male body being the closest to the divine ideal. Next was the human female body and the lowest form of bodies were those of animals (Sennett 1994: 42). The human male body was seen as the most perfect human form on earth, with women’s bodies being viewed as less developed versions of the male body. Thus the ideal figure for deriving number and proportions was the male body. The characteristics of the female body were not important because their bodies were not totally formed. A woman’s body could never attain an ideal form because to be ideal would require her to be a man.

In Vitruvius’s ideal male body, the literal and figurative center is the navel (Sennett 1994: 106). This choice of center is very telling. The navel is where the umbilical cord once brought nourishment to the fetus in the

womb. But Vitruvius's metaphor of the navel as life-giving center does not make reference to the female body. It specifically ignores the importance of the female body in giving life to the male body; the female body is erased. Using the navel as the center and source of life shows a bias toward the male body and a desire to escape the female body. One reason for this desire to escape the female body may be because of man's dependence on it and on the umbilical cord (Agrest 1991: 184). The navel is chosen instead of the umbilical cord because it is the first clear mark of separation from the female body.

Diana Agrest sees the use of the navel as the center of the human body in classical theories as an act of transexuality.<sup>3</sup> The woman's body is excluded by making architecture in the image of the man's body and then the woman's body and its ability to reproduce are replaced and usurped by the male architect who has taken over the female attributes of conception and reproduction (1991: 182). Now he is the mother giving nourishment through his ideas and architectural creations; his navel is transformed into the womb (Agrest 1991: 184). If these classical theories had acknowledged and valued the female body, the center may not have been the navel, but something different. Possibly the womb would be a more true center of the human body because it is the first space of life and production.

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<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of this see Diana Agrest's Chapter 9, "Architecture from Without: Body, Logic, and Sex." in *Architecture from Without*.

## 2.2 The Modern Body

The classical body changed form after the Age of Enlightenment and after the advent of modern science in the seventeenth century. With the new philosophies of Descartes and others, and with the advanced astronomy of Copernicus and Galileo, man no longer assumed that he was the center of the universe. Once mankind's primacy in the universe was brought into question, people's connections to each other and to the divine became tenuous. Although the modern body maintained many figural similarities to that of the classical body, how it was theorized differently.

One of the most important distinctions between the modern body and the classical is what Susan Bordo calls "the death of a naive, egocentric relationship between self and world" (1987: 45). After discoveries in astronomy and the discovery of new worlds and cultures, modern culture became confronted with the existence of an *Other*. This awareness and the new realization of other perspectives and cultures was the first time the idea of one's own subjectivity emerged in Western society (Bordo 1987: 45). Bordo relates this cultural development to psychoanalysis's theories of individual development.<sup>4</sup> Classical people lived in a society where self and world existed in an unbroken continuum. Just as a child developmentally becomes aware of itself as separate through its discoveries of others, so too did modern European society become aware of itself as distinct from other cultures. This

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<sup>4</sup>See her book *The Flight to Objectivity*, specifically Chapter 3, "The Emergence of Inwardness." and pages 45-46.

awareness led to a new concept which viewed each individual self as discrete and separate from all that was outside of itself – outside of the body. The individual modern subject was no longer in an unbroken continuum with the world, but became distinct and separate from other bodies and from the world.

With this new concept of individual subjectivity, the connection to the divine was lost. The modern body lacks a connection to something outside of itself; it lacks a soul. The soul has been replaced by a new concept, the self, and this self is housed and contained in the body. Christine Battersby writes that the self is held inside the body in the same way the body is inside of a room or building (1993: 31). The self is independent and alone in the world, without a connection to the divine. In the modern period bodies are alone in a world that is no longer shaped by a supreme reason, but is now without a dominant logic. A deep sense of alienation results in the modern body; an enormous gulf separates what is occurring “in here” from what must lie “out there” (Bordo 1987: 55). Bodies no longer have the experience of being in the world and connected to it: “. . . instead of experiencing our being in the world, we behold it from outside as spectators of images projected on the surface of the retina” (Pallasmaa 1996: 20). Interior life becomes the most important element in subjectivity. But because the interior life of one person can never be known by another, what can be known – the exterior appearance – becomes of primary importance in interactions between people.

For the classical body the physical form of the body and the soul were connected. The physical body was only matter, but also the soul, which permeated the material body and was immortal and superior. With the paradigm of the modern body it is no longer assumed that there is an immortal and transcendent element to the body. Interior and exterior become separate and distinct aspects of the human body. Because the interior can not be seen in everyday life, the exterior becomes a reflection of the self. "The body is seen as a purely surface phenomenon, a complex, multifaceted surface folded back on itself, exhibiting a certain torsion but nevertheless a flat plane whose incision or inscription produces the (illusion or effects of) depth and interiority" (Grosz 1994: 116). This leads to an emphasis on form, shape, and color of the body as determinants of personal value. Thus the difference between how an ideal body form was conceived in classical versus modern times can be described as the difference between an ideal form connected to the divine versus an emphasis on the external image of the body.

With the emphasis on exterior form, knowledge based on sensations felt by the body became questionable. The modern person no longer relies on his or her own observations and interpretations of the universe. The body, which is no longer the center of the universe, becomes a hindrance, a fallible handicap that must be overcome. Because the body is fallible and untrustworthy, the sensations and feelings of the lived body as it moves through the world are rejected in favor of objective knowledge. Descartes's principles best represent this desire to separate out the sensations of the body

and move towards a purely logical and scientific interpretation of the world. "For Descartes . . . what one smells, sees, hears, tastes, and touches can no longer be taken as a bridge to the world" (Bordo 1987: 45). Susan Bordo writes that for modern society, the body is no longer a trustworthy measure of experience. Because the body is untrustworthy, a new idea is born in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – the mind (1987: 51). With Descartes, the mind is severed from the body and the experiences of the lived body are rejected as misleading. Corporeality is seen as a hindrance; mind becomes the primary characteristic of subjectivity and the best means of understanding the world.

With the separation and elevation of mind over body, abstract concepts became the best way to describe the world. Mathematics became the key to understanding the universe (Bordo 1987: 1), but in modern times this discipline no longer depended on the human body or a divine order. For classical man, geometry and numbers were related to the divine, but after Galileo's discoveries in the first half of the seventeenth century, a relationship between numbers and the divine was no longer assumed. As Alberto Pérez-Gómez describes, "That number and geometry were a *scientia univeralis*, the link between the human and the divine, was finally brought into question by philosophy and science" (1983: 10). Scientists like Lagrange and Laplace began to conceive of all natural occurrences as part of a regular system that previously had not been understood. "It became evident that the totality of the universe, including the sublunar world, behaved more in

accordance with perfect mathematical laws than had so far been imagined. Thus if everything could be explained by means of mathematical equations accessible to the human mind, the notion of God becomes dispensable" (Pérez-Gómez 1983: 272).

Modern science, influenced by Descartes's theories, began to examine the material body and try to figure out how it "worked". In 1614, William Harvey discovered that blood circulated through the body. (Figure 5) The center of this system of veins and arteries was the heart, which supplied life to the rest of the body. All of these parts worked together to create a healthy human being. Harvey's discoveries about the workings of the heart and the related systems of the body led to modern theories that conceived of the body as a machine. Harvey envisioned the body as a great machine pumping life (Sennett 1994: 257). This paradigm of the body as machine was also influenced by the rise of capitalism and the breakdown of Christianity. Morag MacSween describes the change in body paradigm between the classical body, based on a religious ideology, and the modern body paradigm which regards the body as a machine at the mercy of science: "The emergence of the concept of the body as a thing or commodity is further linked to the secularization of the body, in which the body is transformed from 'the object of a sacred discourse of the flesh' to the object of medical discourse which sees it as a 'machine to be controlled by appropriate scientific regimens'" (1993: 140). Through scientific discoveries, many aspects of society could be described in terms of the machine metaphor. Once capitalism began to dominate modern



economies, bodies became cogs in a larger social machine. "At the end of the nineteenth century, the body began to be understood as a mechanical component of industrial productivity, an extension of the factory apparatus" (Diller 1996: 77).

This idea of the mechanical body is very different from the classical body. The classical body shaped the world in its image. With the loss of a connection to the divine and the new emphasis on exterior, the modern body lost its ability to shape the world; it became a passive machine at the mercy of society. The modern body is a body controlled from the outside by institutions and disciplinary structures of power. The philosopher Michel Foucault identified these power structures. McAnulty describes how Foucault's work exposed this re-inverted body-world ideology: "In place of the autonomous figure shaping objects in its own image, Foucault inserts the figure of an individual fabricated by power. This new social body is formed from the exterior by its inscription within a network of complex and constantly changing cultural relationships and discursive practices" (1992: 184).

Sigmund Freud's work in psychoanalysis also defined the body as one acted upon by exterior forces. Using Freud's work as a basis, Elizabeth Grosz applies the idea of exterior influences to our ideas of gender. Grosz writes that our body image is not just a product of our sex and endogenous sensations. Because a child's body is dependent on the mother for care, the child's body becomes a sexually-designated body on which cultural fantasies of

sexuality are written. The body is like “a screen onto which the mother’s – and culture’s – desires, wishes, fears, and hopes are projected and internalized” (1994: 75).

Under the modern paradigm, the body is regarded as a machine made up of a combination of different parts all working together. The elements of the body were seen as separate but connected to form one body – one mechanical body. This body as machine paradigm carried into theories of architecture. Because of the strong influence of classical theories that conceived of the building as a body, theories of the body that construed it as a machine began to regard buildings as machines. (Figure 6) “The functional analogies of modernism theorized the building as a ‘machine for living in,’ with the implication that a smoothly running machine, tailored to the body’s needs, was modernity’s answer to the proportional and spatial analogies of humanism” (Vidler 1992: 112). The influence of the machine age also inspired architects to use new mass-produced materials. As technology developed, building materials began to look more and more like the machines that built them. These new materials helped to define a new aesthetic and began to be the generators of building design. “Machine-style architecture became the core of architectural Modernism. . . It was imagined that buildings were being made to function analogously to machines” (Trachtenberg & Hyman 1986: 487). Le Corbusier’s house as a “machine for living,” is a famous example of this paradigm. (Figure 7) His architecture was machine-like in many ways: through its materials and methods of

construction; through its machine-like efficiency in serving physical needs; and through its resemblance of the actual appearance of machines (Trachtenberg & Hyman 1986: 527).

With modern architecture's new reverence for the machine, building designs were no longer determined by the proportions of the human form. Architecture could now be generated through universal scientific laws. These laws were no longer related to the proportional systems of the human body, but were now related to the primal structures defined by Pythagoras: the cube, cone sphere, cylinder and pyramid (Taylor 1992: 109). The modern body lost its transcendent connection to something outside of itself; thus it turned to modern science and geometric universals in a search of answers. It was believed that these forms, which were the representation of abstract concepts, held the key to universal laws. The proportional systems defined by humanism and the classical theories of the body were lost as architects strove for new stripped styles based on pure forms. These rules lacked a deeper, more spiritual connection that earlier divinities, myths and rituals gave to the individual.

For classical man, bodies were on a continuum, with the male body the most sophisticated form and women's bodies being less developed. For modern man the continuum is broken. Women's bodies are no longer related to the male; they are separated from the male. With the elevation of the mind and its separation from corporeality, men aligned themselves with logic and reason and relegated corporeality to women. Corporeality was

generally denigrated, but in discourses that had to use human anatomy, like biology, science and philosophy, the male body was used as the ideal form. Women were relegated to the status of body-keepers and nurturers, but their bodies were not represented in male discourses on the body.

An example of the erasure of women's bodies can be seen in modern images of the body in architecture. Up until the modern movement the body was still represented by the image of the Vitruvian man. Other variations of this image were drawn by Le Corbusier for his Modular Man. (Figures 8 & 9) Like the classical body, the modern body is still frontal, symmetrical, in good health, immobile and male. It is still figural, represented by an image, an outline and a likeness of the living human body. The modern body is drawn as an outline, its external form and shape make it into an object. The body used in these images is a male body, the proportions are based on the male. Le Corbusier's Modular Man is based on the measurements of an *average* French man. Le Corbusier writes in *Modular I*, that the Modular was based on, "the body of a man 1.75m. in height" and remarks that this is "rather a *French* height" (1948: 56). Later Le Corbusier recognized that his measure of 1.75m. may not apply to men in other countries. He decided to adapt his measure to the tallest man so that a six foot tall man would be able to use manufactured articles which have been based on his Modular. Le Corbusier adjusted his Modular to this man because "it is better that a measure should be too large than too small" (1948: 63). But designing for the tallest man still uses an idealized model which disregards other bodies.

Le Corbusier's attitude of designing for the tallest man has also affected contemporary codes and standards. The anthropometric data found in *Graphic Standards*, (Figures 10 & 11) a book used as a guideline for the dimensions of almost everything in a building, is also based on the tallest man. Although the neutered image and dimensions of an average woman are shown in the "Anthropometric Data" section of *Graphic Standards*, none of the dimensions given as guidelines in the rest of the book are based on this image. *Graphic Standards* clearly states "space and access charts are designed to accept the 97.5 percentile large man and will cover all adults except a few giants" (Ramsey/Sleeper 1989: 2). But designing for the tallest "man" does not actually constitute designing for "all adults".

### **2.3 Postmodern Bodies**

Robert Venturi's book *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, published in 1966, marks for many the beginning of the postmodern movement in architecture (Taylor 1992: 189). This book challenged the tenets of modern architecture, based on program, function and form, and argued for an architecture that is based on the complexities of life. "I speak of a complex and contradictory architecture based on the richness and ambiguity of modern experience, including that experience which is inherent in art. Everywhere, except in architecture, complexity and contradiction have been acknowledged" (Venturi 1966: 16). The stripped aesthetic of modern architecture, based on a "less is more" attitude that valued a machine

aesthetic, was too universalizing, too simplistic. A new paradigm was necessary to describe the variety of views experienced by the late twentieth century person.

Because postmodernism values many different experiences and many different styles, the body's role in architecture is introduced in a variety of ways. There is no longer just one paradigm for the body; now there are many. Some of these paradigms return to the classical humanist model of the body for inspiration, while others take the modern body and try to rework it and dissect it, in order to arrive at a new model. These paradigms rely on past paradigms of the body as their basis. A few of the bodies postulated in postmodernism are more original. These postmodern bodies create new ways of thinking about and designing for the body.

One of the differences between the modern body and many of the postmodern bodies is the breakdown of the distinction between internal elements of the body and the body's external form. While the classical body emphasized the spiritual life of the person and the modern body emphasized external appearance, some postmodern bodies make a connection between the two. Subjectivity and physical become equally important. These bodies no longer have a definable difference between exterior appearance and interior life; they are now connected: "this body no longer serves to center, to fix, or to stabilize. Rather, its limits, interior or exterior, seem infinitely ambiguous and extensive" (Vidler 1992: 70). These postmodern bodies are not solely defined by one element. Control of these bodies does not come

from either a spiritual source or an institution, but is distributed among many different sources.

The postmodern body is no longer a whole body or a singular ideal. Bodies in postmodernism take many forms, shapes, races, and genders. One paradigm of postmodernism uses a fragmented body. The work of Coop Himmelblau and Bernard Tschumi shows this new interest in the fragmented body. The body they use is no longer the body of classical tradition but is now "a body in pieces, fragmented, if not deliberately torn apart and mutilated almost beyond recognition" (Vidler 1992: 69). Tschumi's La Villette uses the fragmented body as a basis for his designs of the "follies" in his park. (Figure 12) Anthony Vidler writes of Tschumi's work, "the folly stands for a body already conditioned to the terms of dissemination, fragmentation, and interior collapse. Implied in every one of his notations of a space or an object is a body in a state of self-acknowledged dispersion, without a center" (1992: 111). These postmodern bodies have a variety of parts which are not centered. This paradigm of the body, fragmented and in disarray, is a direct critique of the classical body and the Vitruvian man (Vidler 1992: 79).

For the modern body the social significance of different bodies is erased in an attempt to analyze, interpret and essentialize how bodies function universally in society and in buildings. For some postmodern bodies, the meaning of individual bodies in society takes on a new significance. In the beginning of the twentieth century Ferdinand de Saussure introduced the

idea of the word as an arbitrarily chosen sign that has culturally determined meanings. Saussure's successors took his theory of signs and applied it to everything from kinship groups to myths.<sup>5</sup> In postmodern discourse the meanings we attach to the body and the role of the body as a sign have become a major subject of debate.

Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio's work challenges and questions the role of the body as sign in our culture, in an attempt to bring this critique to architectural discourse. They write: "architecture consistently fails to recognize the body as a political economic construct – one which *it* tacitly helps to produce" (1994: 39). In their book *Flesh*, they examine the social controls enforced on the body in different forms. They write that their project "Bad Press" is an examination of the cult of efficiency and the controls placed on the domesticated body. This domesticated body is best exemplified in the image of the fifties housewife and in the chores she was expected to perform in the household. (Figure 13)

Another project by Diller and Scofidio, the "Bachelor and Bride" performance, uses Duchamp's work as a basis from which they examine the domestic couple. Unlike most of their other work which only alludes to the body, this performance uses the image of the body and actual bodies in the performance. During the show, the "Bride" and "Bachelor" are separated by a wall but connected by a mirror that shows a reflection of the other. With both

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<sup>5</sup> For an overview of the history of Structuralism, the meaning of the sign, Saussure's work and his successors, see Geoffrey Broadbent *Deconstruction: A Student Guide*. pages 31-36.



performers visible, they recite a dialogue that is a dramatization of a typical married couple. (Figure 14)

Although the language of these works is persuasive and the stated goals of the works are provocative, these performances do very little to challenge the actual significance of the body in our society. Although their work is supposed to challenge the role of the body, most of their work lacks any recognizable figures. The bodies they challenge are very outdated. Their "Bad Press" project examines the cult of efficiency, but this cult is not relevant to women today; their "Bachelor and Bride" performance uses married couples from the fifties as a model for contemporary marriages. Although provocative, these images and performances are too abstract and too socially removed from contemporary experiences to offer a challenging critic of the meaning of the body in society today.

In some postmodern architecture, meaning is represented through the use of geometry. This form of postmodern architecture is based on a combination of geometric systems that are superimposed on each other. Usually these grids are a combination of an old grid – of the city or of a previous building – with a new grid superimposed on the old, creating points of intersection. (Figure 15) Other variations of this geometrically driven architecture take the 'pure' forms of modern architecture and distort them in some way. (Figure 16) These geometrically driven designs are still fundamentally part of the modern paradigm; this form of postmodernism makes no reference to the human form or to the lived experiences of the

body. This geometric game-playing is not a new paradigm, but merely an extension of the modern ideology. The body is disregarded in preference of geometric ideals that are supposed to have some deeper meaning.

The modern body lacked a deeper meaning which gave it a purpose in the world. This lack of significance has led postmodern architects to search for some deeper meaning in the forms of their buildings; they attribute living qualities to their designs. Architectural theorists have begun to regard buildings as living, breathing entities. In architectural discourse buildings become not just form and structure but are now creatures. One example of this animism can be found in the architectural critic Pérez-Gómez's description of John Hejduk's Masques. He writes, "they establish their own distance with the spectator and become contradictory to *traditional* ritual participation" (1986: 28). For Pérez-Gómez, Hejduk's objects almost become sentient beings; they look back at the spectator and contradict traditional practices. Architecture is no longer a representation of man, made in his image; buildings are now living, thinking objects. But architecture can not be a living being; it is a place for people to live. Attributing human qualities to architecture allows designs to take on their own form without any reference to the living bodies that inhabit it. Hejduk's work is interesting as art, but it does not meet the needs of buildings; it has no purpose beyond art-for-art's sake.

Coop Himmelblau's work is another example of this animism. Anthony Vidler writes that Coop Himmelblau's work tries to merge the body

completely with design. (Figure 17) Coop Himmelblau writes of his architecture, "we want . . . architecture that bleeds, that exhausts . . . cavernous, fiery, smooth, hard, angular, brutal, round, delicate, colorful, obscene, voluptuous, dreamy, alluring, repelling, wet, dry, throbbing. An architecture alive or dead" (in Vidler 1992: 75). Himmelblau believes his architecture is alive and sentient. He uses metaphors of a living body to describe his buildings. This merging of the body and architecture uses an uncomfortable body as its paradigm for the body.

In postmodernism the meaning of the body in society can be discovered through examining an individual's social situation. This approach examines the role of gender, race, and class in the production of bodies and architecture. During the feminist movement in the nineteen-seventies, women questioned their role and representation in society. Women realized the representation of women's bodies in Western culture did not take their experiences into account. Artists like Carolee Schneemann and Cindy Sherman used performance art as a medium for questioning their representation in society. (Figures 18 & 19) These artists, and many others, used art as a way to challenge the meaning of bodies in Western culture. For them the body "is foremost a site of social markings, physical parts and gestural signatures of gender, race, class, age, sexuality – all of which bear ghosts of historical meaning, markings delineating social hierarchies of privilege and disprivilege" (Schneider 1997: 2).

Recognition of the difference between how women's bodies have been idealized in society and women's actual experience has introduced a new critique of the body in postmodernism, but architectural theorists have been very slow and cautious about using this new critique of the body. Although many women have written about women's experience in architecture and how architecture perpetuates the social control of women, these works do not examine the experiences of lived bodies of women in space. Beatriz Colomina's book *Sexuality and Space*, Agrest, Conway, and Weisman's book *The Sex of Architecture*, and Francesca Hughes's book *The Architect Reconstructing Her Practice* are all books with provocative essays on the social place of women and how this affects their position in architecture. But none of the essays in these books talk about corporeal experience or address women's bodily experiences. These new books on architecture bring gender to architectural theory, but they are overly theoretical.

Earlier feminist writings in the journal *Built Environment*, Leslie Weisman's book *Discrimination by Design*, or Matrix's *Making Space: Women and the Man-made Environment*, all addressed women's bodily experience in the built world in a very practical way. These books were fundamental in describing women's experiences but they focused on practical solutions. Women's lived bodies experience can not be treated in only theoretical or only practical terms. Addressing the needs of women's lived bodies requires a blending of practical and theoretical. As postmodern discourse has moved toward the abstract and theoretical, feminist discourse

in architecture has followed its lead. These new books are troubling because they are no longer concerned with women's lived bodily experiences in the built world. Women in architectural discourse should re-examine their own experiences and use these as a basis for their writing. Architectural discourse based on these experiences will no longer be too theoretical, because it will be based on a lived body.

#### **2.4 The Lived Body in Architecture**

Although new concepts of the body have come into existence since the time of Descartes, architecture has not been able to incorporate these new ideas into the built form. After Galileo, new sciences tried to substitute a perfectly intelligible, reasonable and logical world for the infinitely diverse world we live in. Things became numbers, not in terms of the Platonic or Pythagorean essences they once symbolized, but objective, intelligible forms that could be dominated and controlled by man (Pérez-Gómez 1983: 19). This epistemological change affected ideas about the body, but did not change the form of the body that was designed for. Even today, after the influence of psychoanalysis, phenomenology, existentialism, and post-structuralism, architects still design using old paradigms of the body. Postmodern architects' attempts at dismembering the classical body show how fundamental the classical body still is in the design of buildings (Vidler 1992: 78). Anthony Vidler writes that we are led to believe that the idea of architecture as embodied and as a representation of the human body has been abandoned

under modernism. "The long tradition of bodily reference from Vitruvius through Alberti . . . seems to have been definitively abandoned with the rise of a modernist sensibility dedicated more to the rational sheltering of the body than to its mathematical inscription or pictorial emulation" (1992: 69). But the body is still an element of architectural design. Whether architects consciously or unconsciously use the body, a body paradigm still governs their work. Moreover, architects are still designing buildings for a figural, abstract body. The body we design for today is an object, an outline, without a deeper connection to something beyond the body to provide meaning.

Ideas of the body have been a continuing theme in architecture and architectural discourse but it is not the messy, fleshy body that we live in which is used as a model for architecture today. The model architects use now is an abstracted, perfected body. The classical body is one of these ideals used in contemporary design. This paradigm is an idealized model based on a singular corporeal experience. The connections that classical society made between the body's proportions and a deeper, more spiritual meaning has been lost to us. Therefore using this model as a paradigm today misses the most important element of the classical paradigm. Using the classical model can only result in a superficial, object fetishization of the body. The actual experiences of the lived body in contemporary society and the variety of these experiences must be used as a model, not the figure of a Vitruvian man long since desiccated and decayed.

The modern paradigm is another ideal used to describe the body for architecture. This paradigm ignores lived, thinking, freely-acting bodies in favor of an ideology which regards the body as a machine. In dominant modern architecture the lived body was almost wholly lost as a driving force for design. Program, function, technology, were the elements that became omnipotent in the designs of most modern architects. This ideology resulted in the failure of buildings to provide for the fundamental needs and enjoyment they once provided. In their overzealous infatuation with the machine, many modern architects forgot the primary occupation of the architect – to design a place in the world for living bodies. In a dialogue with Jean Badovici, Eileen Gray talks of the role of architects and how this was forgotten by modern architects in her time. She says “It’s always the same story: technology ends up as a principal preoccupation. The end is forgotten by thinking only of the means . . . We must build for people so that they can find once more in architecture the joy of enlarged powers and self-fulfillment.”<sup>6</sup> Using the machine as a replacement for the body in design resulted in uncomfortable and disturbing environments for the modern person to inhabit. A radically new ideology must be developed for architecture to readdress the lived bodies that were disregarded with modern paradigms.

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<sup>6</sup> Dialogue “From Eclecticism to Doubt.” Badovici and Gray, page 20 in *L’Architecture Vivante*. Albert Morance, Autumn 1929. As quoted in Colin St. John Wilson, page 23.

Postmodern paradigms are a reaction to the modern paradigm. These multiple paradigms have the most potential to return to the lived body, but most examples of this paradigm have only continued old figural paradigms of the body. Postmodern designs based on the play between geometric grids are not a return to the lived body. These designs merely carry on the modern fascination with abstract rules, trying to justify their designs by referencing them to grid systems. Geoffrey Broadbent critiques these geometrically driven designs when discussing the work of Peter Eisenman. He writes, "Eisenman makes extraordinary use of pure, geometric syntaxes to give his Apartment 'semantic' meanings which you can't read directly from the forms – in fact you can only 'read' them after you have perused Eisenman's explanation!" (1991: 14). The reification of geometry and abstract forms in architecture is not a progressive step for architecture.

Another influential paradigm of the body governing postmodern architecture is the fragmented body. This paradigm views the body as dissected, in pieces, and torn apart, in order to create designs that look like fragmented bodies and give the sensation of being torn apart for those who inhabit them. This paradigm is also disturbing because of the results it has on the lived body. While dislocation and discomfort may be interesting and a fascinating exploration for a museum exhibit, actually making buildings that give these sensations and expecting people to work and live in them is cruel. Architecture is not a jungle-gym for people to play in. Buildings must be designed with the living body's needs and sensations in mind.



One of the reasons architecture disregards the lived body may be found in how architecture is taught in schools and in the way we represent architecture in drawings. With the advent of Gaspard Monge's descriptive geometry in 1795, architects were first able to describe effectively and precisely the buildings they designed (Pérez-Gómez 1983: 279). Descriptive geometry allowed mathematicians and architects to reduce any three-dimensional object to two-dimensional space (280). Although this invention greatly improved communication between architects and builders, it severely limited how architects thought about buildings. For two hundred years architects have designed buildings using descriptive geometry to communicate their designs. This has led architects to rely on two-dimensional images and to think of their drawings as representing reality when they are merely abstractions of reality. Architects believe that their plans and sections actually "represent lived space finally transformed into a concept" (Pérez-Gómez 1983: 308). Using this grid has lead architects to "the misconception that man inhabits not qualitative places, but a homogeneous and universal geometric space" (Pérez-Gómez 1983: 308).

Another element of architectural representation, invented by Brunelleschi during the Renaissance, is the one-point perspective. As Eisenman (1992) points out, this form of perspective took firm root in architecture because it provided a rational ordering system in drawing that represented both the eye and the body. This monocular and anthropocentric form of drawing solidified vision as the dominant representational form in

architecture from the sixteenth century to the present. (Eisenman 1992: 557). But our bodies are constantly moving, our eyes are continually shifting; time does not stop for us as we go about our lives in the world. In one-point perspective, there is no movement, no understanding of a body moving through space. The subject is always stuck in one moment in time, in one position in space, an experience few of us experience in our every day lives. This attitude has affected how we design our buildings. As Eisenman describes, even in modern architecture the subject is always stuck in one monocular position in space: "the subject remain[s] rooted in a profound anthropocentric stability, comfortably, upright and in place on a flat, tabular ground. There was no shift in the relationship between the subject and the object" (1992: 558). We have stopped designing for the moving body, but it is the moving body that is so essential to the experience of architecture. "It is the possibility of action that separates architecture from other forms of art. A bodily reaction is an inseparable aspect of the experience of architecture" (Pallasmaa 1996: 44).

A couple of postmodern body paradigms do seem to show some promise for architecture. Mark Rakatansky's "gestic body" is one of these paradigms that respects the lived body in design. While modern architecture has reduced the body to a series of standard measure, behaviors, and formulas based on "already socially determined reductions of the body" (1993: 70), Rakatansky suggests that architecture stop managing these bodies and start listening to them. "A gestic approach finds as its site the conventional, the

hegemonic form of the gesture . . . It finds social and psychological narratives already within the physical form of conventional gesture, in order first to reveal them and then to operate on them. The gest is never general. The gest is a specific gesture situated within the general field of the social" (1993: 71). This approach to architecture sees built elements as actors in the environment which operate at the level of "local singularities" and "local events".

Examples of Rakatansky's gestic body can be found in his built architecture. His design for a railing and bench in an institutional space shows a respects for real people and real bodies. Elements attached to his railing are positioned at many different heights, some for those in a wheelchair, while others are at standing eye-level. (Figure 20) At another point the railing turns into a special place for coats and hats. Each hook is different, offering a personal place for each person's belongings. (Figure 21) Designs like this value and incorporate the lived body in design, giving a personal and individual experience of place to each person who uses the building.

Another promising aspect of postmodern architecture is a new interest in the role gender plays in our inhabitation and interpretation of space. In the classical and modern paradigms gender was ignored. These paradigms adopted only one ideal as a model and this ideal was based on male bodies. Postmodern paradigms can no longer dismiss the importance gender has in our perceptions of the world. There are many different bodies and a variety of body paradigms from which we can draw our architecture. To stay married

to old ideals and paradigms is to miss the pleasure and reward of discovering something new.

## CHAPTER 3

### CONTROL AND CONTAINMENT OF WOMEN'S BODIES

Part of the power of the concept of the body as a *lived body* is that it expresses the individuality of experience of each person. No two bodies are lived exactly the same. In architecture, as in many disciplines, only one lived body experience is assumed and used as a paradigm. In order to challenge this singular ideal, I would like to turn to a different lived bodily experience from the norm – that of women in our society. Before we are able to explore how women's lived body experiences are different from the generalized model of the lived body, it is necessary to examine how women's bodies are socially controlled and contained in Western society. These social controls imposed on women's bodies are an integral part of their experiences of the world. This chapter identifies some of the kinds of control and containment imposed on women's bodies in Western society. From these discoveries, the following chapter will develop a new lived body paradigm based on women's bodily experiences.

#### **3.1 The Control of Women Through Absence**

Women's bodies are controlled in a number of ways in contemporary Western society. One of the more covert ways women's bodily experiences are controlled is through their absence. Women have traditionally been absent from almost all discourse. Women have been physically absent in

academia (by not being allowed into institutions of higher learning); they have been underrepresented (their art work, writing and philosophies have not been published and valued); and their experiences have been described through male paradigms that are not their own. Although many of these circumstances are changing, the long history of women's absence has resulted in discourses and ideologies that still erase women. Western society has been under a phallogentric ideology for thousands of years. It is now time for women to critically challenge this phallogentricism by using their own experiences.

In this section I examine women's absence in three areas. The first is women's absence in language. This absence is the most disturbing because language is the basis of all discourse and is the medium through which we describe our bodily experiences to others. The production of a language over thousands of years under a male-dominated society has resulted in a phallogentric language. Women's experiences are unthought, and possibly inexpressible through this language. The next absence of women I discuss is their absence in discourses which discuss the body. Even in Phenomenology, which defined the lived body, gender's affect on the lived body is not explored. The final absence of women I will discuss in this section is the lack of recognition given to women's bodies in contemporary definitions of space. The very concept of space in Western society is based on the bodies of women. Without women's bodies as a model, the Western idea of space would be very different in philosophy and architecture.

The choice of these three kinds of absence may seem arbitrary, but it is not. This thesis is about the body in architecture and the absence of the lived body in architectural design. Examining the absence of women's experiences in paradigms of the body is an important step in discovering which bodies are being represented in discourse. Showing the important role women's bodies have had in shaping Western society can be the first step in obliterating the absence of women's bodies.

The link between architecture and women's absence in language may seem tenuous, but it is an important connection. Language ties all discourses together; without language, discourse would not exist. I also believe there is a fundamental connection between language and architecture. Language is social; it allows us to communicate with others. Architecture provides a space for the social to happen. Architecture carries meanings, just as language does, through symbolically marking and hierarchalizing the social arrangements and bodily interactions that happen within its spaces. Both language and architecture create and perpetuate cultural meanings; both create a space for bodies to interact socially. Without language these social engagements would be nearly impossible; without architecture there would not be a protected space for these embodied interactions to happen.

### **3.1.1 The Absence of Women's Bodily Experiences in Language**

John Berger's book, *Ways of Seeing*, begins with the statement, "Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak" (1973: 7).

Here Berger is alluding to the reality of seeing. The acts of looking and seeing, in their purest form, before they are influenced by society, are not dependent on other people's opinions or attitudes but are completely individual and independent. The bodily act of seeing is not confined by the institutions of language. What we see, what we hear, what we touch, are all individual experiences that we have everyday, but in order for our bodily excitations to become thoughts, they must accede to language (Grosz 1994: 30). Speaking and language are social and cultural. The institution of language uses symbols to carry meaning and all of these meanings are derived from the culture they are in. Each symbol and the meaning implied by it is dependent upon the attitudes and values of that culture.

Meaning is not universal, it is not innate; it is, instead, learned. Saussure in his famous *Course in General Linguistics* describes what language is: "It is both a social product of the faculty of speech and a collection of necessary conventions that have been adopted by a social body to permit individuals to exercise that faculty. . . Language is not a function of the speaker; it is a product that is passively assimilated by the individual" (1964 [1916]:55). Language is a system that allows people to communicate what they see, what they have seen, and other bodily sensations, but like any system, as Saussure is careful to illuminate, language has been created and has developed in a certain cultural setting. This setting shapes what ideas and thoughts can be created and in essence, how people think. This is what Saussure means when he says that language is "passively assimilated". As a



system of communication, language will always be conservative because it must remain imbedded in tradition and the past. It is the traditional nature of language which makes it hard for radically new ideas and thoughts to come into being. New thoughts can not always be communicated, because the structure of language is not set up to express them.

Pérez-Gómez writes, "Everything that is, is known through language" (1986: 26). All of our bodily senses allow us to experience the world in our own ways but we must use language to describe them. Our perceptions are singular, but to explain them we must use a culturally determined form of signs – language. As we experience the world, we absorb images and sensations and transform them into language. Filtering these images, senses and ideas through the sieve of language modifies them. The greater our mastery of the cultural system of language, the easier it is to describe our experiences.

Language also acts in a reverse way through communication; it explains our experiences for us and generalizes them. As our experiences are expressed by others in books, television, advertisements and in conversations, we relate to these descriptions and appropriate their interpretation – their words. As we are exposed to more of these images and words, we generalize our experiences and ideas. We may ignore experiences that do not fit a more generalized description.

One of the problems that result for oppressed groups in our society is that they do not have access to a language that will express their bodily

experiences. The inability to express ideas is especially problematic for groups that do not hold power within the major institutions of culture. Women and other oppressed groups find it difficult to describe their bodily sensations because language is not set up to articulate their experiences. Andrea Dworkin identifies the male construction of language and the difficulty this poses for women: "Our bodies speak their language. Our minds think in it. The men are inside us through and through. We hear something, a dim whisper, barely audible, somewhere at the back of the brain; there is some other word, and we think, some of us, sometimes, that once it belonged to us" (1987: 135). When the primary source of communication is invented by a group that oppresses women and ignores women's bodily experiences, this medium can not fully express what women experience or think.

According to Jacques Lacan, when women learn language they learn that they do not have access to it because they lack the phallus; women's relation to language is a lack. In "Is the Gaze Male?", E. Ann Kaplan describes this theory, "For Lacan, woman cannot enter the world of the symbolic, of language, because at the very moment of the acquisition of language, she learns that she lacks the phallus, the symbol that sets language going through a recognition of difference; her relation to language is a negative one, a lack. In patriarchal structures, thus, woman is located as other (enigma, mystery), and is thereby viewed as outside of (male) language" (1983: 310). This concept of women as other is prescribed and legitimated by male discourse, by male language, and by male theories of the body. Under phallogocentric discourse

and language, woman is either passive or she does not exist (Cixous 1975: 64). Her experiences are unthought and unthinkable in the male language that has been taught.

Women's ideas and feelings are not experiences that are represented in the external world, because the external world has been created and produced by men, in the image of men, using the thoughts of men. A woman can not always use language to express her experience, because this language has ignored her experiences and made them seem alien even insane to her. "Only if someone has a dream, and a voice to describe that dream, does what looked like nature begin to look like culture . . . For until then only the language of the oppressor is available, and most oppressors have had the wit to teach the oppressed a language in which the oppressed will sound crazy."<sup>7</sup>

Influenced by the persuasive writings of Luce Irigaray, Iris Marion Young argues that we must subvert patriarchy, through the speaking of our own desires and experience. "Speaking for ourselves to one another from our own female flesh and imagination, our creation of a different voice can pierce the smug universality of transcendental subjectivity" (1990: 181). To do this women must speak of things that they know, things that have been devalored and ignored, things that have been labeled "feminine." These facets of women's culture must be utilized to subvert patriarchy, "We can mine traditionally female social practices and experiences and find in them

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<sup>7</sup> From Richard Rorty. "Feminism and Pragmatism." *Michigan Quarterly Review*. 1991, quoted in Ahrentzen, page 105.

specific ways that we as women relate to one another and to ourselves, female-specific intrinsic values" (Young 1990: 181).

As women and feminists, we need to create new words, new signs, a new language, that will express our feelings and ideas. The thoughts in our heads, that seem unclear or distant, can not be communicated because, our language, our system of words can not express our thoughts. As Luce Irigaray writes, "We also need to find, rediscover, invent the words, the sentences that speak of the most ancient and most current relationship we know – the relationship to the mother's body, to our body – sentences that translate the body between our body, her body, the body of our daughter. We need to discover a language" (1993: 18-9).

### **3.1.2 The Absence of Women's Bodies in Discourse on the Body**

Since the time of the Greeks, Western male bodies have been used as the generalized model for all bodies. This has led to theories of corporeality which either describe women's bodies as inferior versions of the male or to theories which ignore women's bodies altogether. Ancient Greek society saw the distinction between male and female bodies as a difference in temperature. Bodies were on a hierarchical continuum with the male body being superior because it was composed of hot elements and therefore was considered to be more fully formed. The Greeks believed that women's bodies were on the opposite end of this continuum, being cold, sluggish, and

slower in reacting to stimuli.<sup>8</sup> With Cartesian dualism in the seventeenth century, the differences between male and female bodies were no longer on a continuum; male and female were now oppositional. Continuing the Greek bias, male bodies were seen as the ideal form while women's bodies were viewed as imperfect. Theories and philosophies of the body were based on male experience, while medical and scientific studies of the body were based on the male form. Knowledge was accumulated and taught from the perspective of men.

Today most of our knowledge is based on male experience. Sherry Ahrentzen discusses how this male bias or phallogocentrism still pervades our thinking today. She believes that such thinking is not "a conscious exhortation of 'I am male; I shall construct a theory or building or space that only a man could create,' but instead from the habit of deriving ostensibly universal truths from their particular – namely, privileged male – viewpoint" (1996: 78). Discourse and theory have been written by men for over two thousand years. Their specifically male experiences have colored all interpretations of the world and have been given as the general, universal norm.

Using the European male body as an ideal leads to the denial of other body forms. When bodies are hierarchalized, those forms that rank lower are eventually overlooked. Richard Sennett discusses the consequences of hierarchically ranking bodies and how this eventually results in the erasure

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<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of this Greek theory see Sennett, pages 42-3.

of body forms which do not meet the master plan: "Master images of 'the body' tend to repress mutual, sensate awareness, especially among those whose bodies differ. When a society or political order speaks generically about 'the body,' it can deny the needs of bodies which do not fit the master plan" (Sennett 1994: 23). Master images of the body, which use the male model to describe all bodies, actively repress bodies which do not fit this generalized model.

Throughout the history of Western discourse on the body the use of a master body based on the male has led to the erasure of women's bodies. The sexually-specific perceptions of women and their experiences in societies of the past were not pondered or written about until recently. Historically, when women's bodily experiences were described, it was usually by a male writer or philosopher, who had little understanding of how women's experiences might differ from men's. Throughout discourse on the body, women's bodily experience has been ignored; their divergence feared.

The overlooking of women's bodily experiences can be seen in the work of Drew Leder, an author who specifically brings attention to the absence of bodies in our society. In *The Absent Body*, the subject of sexual difference never enters into Leder's explorations of the body's self-effacement. Leder suggests that for all bodies, "dwelling within the power of sight as my primary mode of world-disclosure, I relegate much of my body to the status of neutral background" (1990: 25). Although women's bodies may sometimes be

relegated to the background, when their bodies are present, they are not neutral. Discussing the body as a “neutral” background fails to acknowledge the specificity of bodies or how individuals interpret the world differently dependent on their race, class, and gender. The term “neutral” describes only one kind of experience – one based on a male experience. Bodies are never neutral. As Elizabeth Grosz writes, “[The] body is still marked by its disciplinary history, by its habitual patterns of movement, by the corporeal commitments it has undertaken in day-to-day life” (1994: 142).

Leder’s emphasis on sight may also be misleading. As I will discuss in Chapter Five, women’s primary sensory organ may be sight, but the dependence women place on vision compared to their other senses may be proportionately different than it is for men. Women may place more emphasis on their other senses, allowing sight, which is a sense that orders and abstracts, to take a lesser role in their interpretation of the world.

Another example of Leder’s one-sided body paradigm can be found in his description of the prominence placed on different regions of the body. Leder notes that there is an emphasis on the frontal areas of the body, because of our stress on objects which lie spatially ahead of us. This leaves the back of the body to be forgotten, as it is absorbed in background disappearance (1990: 29). This may be true of men, who pay less attention to their bodies and how they appear in society, but for many women in the public realm, all areas of their bodies are surveyed and examined. In fashion and clothing, women’s backs and buttocks are often emphasized, exposed, and eroticized. For

women, "The back literally avoids confrontation, yet it may no less (and perhaps even more) invite the gaze."<sup>9</sup> Leder's claim that the back is forgotten by the occupant of the body is an argument made in reference to a general model which is based on the male body. The exterior of a woman's body does not totally disappear when she is around others. Many women are often overly aware of their bodies in public, because they are gazed at, commented on, and fetishized by Western society.

In Western society the male body has been used as the norm or neutral for all bodies. The reduction of all bodily forms into one paradigm, that women do not fit, leaves women as a mystery for men to ponder. This mystification leads to a fear of women which encourages their further oppression. In discourse, men create an idealized image of the body as their own, and when women's bodies do not fit neatly into this definition, men become confused and fearful. Woman is seen as unreasonable and irrational, because her body does not conform to a model that men have invented. Thus men develop a different model to describe women. But this model of women is an ideal and is not based on the experiences of women; it is based on a male interpretation of women's experience. This leads to the further mystification of women. Woman is not consulted or asked about her experience, she is told what her experiences are. "The enigma that *is* woman

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<sup>9</sup>Quote from *Bare Witness*, the catalogue to an exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, page 7. For some examples on how fashion displays the ankles and legs, the bust, the back, and the navel of the female body see this catalogue.



will therefore constitute the *target*, the *object*, the *stake*, of a masculine discourse, of a debate among men, which would not consult her, would not concern her" (Irigaray 1985: 13). Grosz writes, "the enigma that woman has posed for men is an enigma only because the male subject has construed itself as the subject par excellence. The way (he fantasizes) that Woman differs from him makes her containable within his imagination (reduced to his size) but also produces her as a mystery for him to master and decipher within safe or unthreatening borders" (1994: 191). Examples of this male misconception can still be seen in modern philosophies and phenomenological studies like Drew Leder's work as well as in the work of Freud, Lacan, Merleau-Ponty, Foucault, Deleuze, and Guattari.<sup>10</sup>

Part of the reason for the erasure of the female body may be that it is a threat to established patriarchal forms. Because women's bodies are a threat, they are defined by the male; they become fetishized in the media and cinema according to a male paradigm. E. Ann Kaplan describes this male fear of female difference and how this results in their being related to the phallus: "for whatever reason – the fear of castration (Freud), or the attempt to deny the existence of the sinister female genital (Horney) – men endeavor to find the penis in women. . . the camera (unconsciously) fetishizes the female form, rendering it phallus-like so as to mitigate woman's threat" (1983: 312). Iris Marion Young also discusses how the female breast must be phallusized

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<sup>10</sup> See Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*. for a discussion of how each of these philosophers generalize the body.

in order for it to be sexually valued. This is because the phallus can be the only measure and symbol of desire in patriarchal culture. Thus the breasts that are valued most are those that resemble the phallus – those that are hard, high, and pointy (1990: 190). In the ways women are exposed in the cinema and the demands made on their bodies through clothing, we again find male culture's need to convert different bodies to a singular form – to the male form.

### 3.1.3 The Hidden Presence of Women's Bodies in Western Conceptions of Space

Much ancient architecture was conceptually based on the female body. As Mimi Lobell shows in her article "Buried Treasure," most sacred architecture is based on feminine principles:

Most of the world's sacred architecture is modeled on Neolithic prototypes or on the archetype of the feminine principle: not only the apse and crypt of the Gothic cathedral, but also the *garbha-griha* or "womb-house" of the Hindu temple, the *anda* or "cosmic womb" of the Buddhist stupa, the "Great Womb Store" of the Japanese Shingon sect, the *kiva* or "womb of the Mother Earth" of the Pueblo Indians, and the dome of the Islamic mosque (1989: 143).

As Lobell goes on to explain, the "womb-cavern" is the archetype of the holiest of forms. It is the symbol of the human spirit's journey into the cavern of the underworld, symbolizing everyone's destiny – to reunite with the feminine principle "in order to transcend duality and attain wholeness, oneness, and enlightenment" (1989: 143). Not only was ancient architecture based on the female body, but it was often built by women. Margrit Kennedy writes that women were the original builders in most early civilizations:

"That architecture was once primarily a woman's field has been suppressed until very recently" (1981: 12).

If we look at the woman's body, we can find one source of inspiration for architecture. Just as Lobell and Kennedy have pointed out, the womb-cavern has been the sacred form in almost all ancient cultures and the unconscious sacred form throughout the history of Western architecture. This form is based on the body of a woman because it is the woman who gives birth. Her body is the first architecture; it is the first space that we, as sentient human beings, inhabit. The womb is the first space we understand. Irigaray writes of this erasure and denial of women's bodies extensively. She writes that male culture replaces the womb – the first architecture – with his matrix of language, but in doing this, he ignores, "that first body, that first home" (1993: 14). She sees the placenta as the first home (1993: 15). This debt that men owe to women's bodies results in the mystification and longing that men feel toward women. They fear, "the mystery of the crypt", and long for this original dwelling place, "the happy time when he had a space in her and she in him" (1993: 32). In intercourse, the man is trying to re-discover that space, he is trying to climb back into the womb. Dworkin described woman's body as a literal place: "Physically, the woman in intercourse is a space inhabited, a literal territory occupied literally" (1987: 133).

The sexualization of space and its conceptualization through the body of woman can be traced back to the time of Plato, and probably much earlier. Plato's writings solidified a metaphorical connection between the body of

woman and Western ideas about space. Plato wrote of space as a receptacle similar to a woman's body. Plato describes this space: "it continues to receive all things, and never itself takes a permanent impress from any of the things that enter it, it is a kind of neutral plastic material on which changing impressions are stamped by things that enter it, making it appear different at different times. . . we must make a *threefold* distinction and thinking of that which becomes [birth], that in which it becomes [womb], and the model which it resembles [father]. We may indeed use the metaphor of birth and compare the receptacle to the mother".<sup>11</sup> Plato's threefold distinction can be broken down into matter and the sensible: "that which becomes," the intelligible and the mind: "the model which it resembles," and the linkage between these two realms: "that in which it becomes". This connecting realm is the original model of space, and is later named *chora* by Plato (Grosz 1995a: 47-49). As Plato describes in the *Timaeus*, this first space has no characteristics of its own: "It functions primarily as the receptacle, the storage point, the locus of nurturance in the transition for the emergence of matter" (Grosz 1995a: 50). This idea of space owes its conception to the body of woman, particularly the womb. As Sue Best writes, "Plato's notion of space would not be possible without the understanding that, for the Greeks, women played no active part in gestation" (1995: 186). The Greeks did not understand the importance of a woman's body in the development of the fetus. This belief, that women's

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<sup>11</sup> From Plato. *Timaeus and Critias*, trans. Desmond Lee (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965) page 69, as quoted in Boyer, pages 99-100.

bodies were merely receptacles and a place devoid of any markings of its own, is the genesis of Plato's *chora*. Woman is not simply compared to space, her body is integral to the production of a concept of space (Best 1995: 186).

### 3.2 Containment of Women's Movements

We experience the world through our movements and interactions with our surroundings. When we move, we are learning something about the exterior world and about our place in it. Our first movements teach us who we are – whether it is a baby's movement towards a breast full of milk that eases its hunger, or an infant's flailing arms and legs trying to communicate a need. These first movements establish our place in the world. Our body and its abilities and limitations are the first forms and structures we understand.

As children we explore our bodies through movement and touch, learning our limitations and abilities. As we move and explore at this early age, we encounter barriers. These are the physical barriers of our crib, the walls of our houses, or the screens our parents erect to keep us contained and within their view. All of these barriers teach us where we are allowed to be and where we are physically able to go. As we grow older and come to understand physical barriers, our limits become more psychological. These barriers come in the form of suggestions or commands from parents, peers or advertisers. The barriers tell us how to act, what is appropriate, where it is safe to roam and what is our socially accepted behavior. These new limits are not visible and thus are harder to recognize than physical barriers once we

have absorbed them into our behavior. Once learned, we take these limits for granted as a part of our lived bodily experience; they become part of our unconscious.

In this section I examine these limits and how they affect women's bodily experience. Women's bodily movements are restrained by social rules that they learn from an early age. Girls are taught to stay still, to keep their legs together and are not allowed to play games and activities in the same ways that boys are. This results in a containment of their bodily movements which can be seen in how women move in our society. Women's bodily movements are also more hesitant and less graceful in many activities, because they have not been given the same opportunities to practice these movements as men. All of these social controls on women's bodies result in a different lived bodily experience and a different way of perceiving the world from the male paradigm of the lived body.

Part two of this section examines how women's sexuality has resulted in their containment in the city. Women's bodies have not been given the same freedom to move in the city as men's bodies traditionally have. Since industrialization women have been placed in a separate realm from that of men. This sphere is the private space of the home or the suburb. In this location, men can monitor and control women's sexuality while still being able to move in the public realm. Creating this separate sphere has imprisoned women and made them feel unsafe in the public city.

### 3.2.1 Women's Bodily Movements Confined by Society

In order to understand how women move differently from men in patriarchal culture, we must begin by examining their social role in society. In her book *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir distinguishes between men and women in patriarchal society according to two forms of subjectivity: transcendence and immanence. Transcendence is defined as a subjectivity that freely determines its own nature. A free subject moves out boldly into the world, takes initiative, and creates its own individual life. The transcendent subject is allowed free activity, has the ability to fashion artifacts, and has all manner of projects open to him. In patriarchal society, Beauvoir concludes that men are the only ones allowed such transcendence.<sup>12</sup> It is not masculinity or the biological make-up of men that identifies them with transcendence. Instead, it is the sexual roles patriarchy has created, which operate in dualistic opposition with each other, that allow men active and unlimited subjectivity.

In patriarchal culture, the counter to man is woman and she is confined to immanence. According to Beauvoir, immanence designates being an object or thing with a predetermined nature. The term "femininity" is a set of attributes that define a social class. This class restricts women to

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<sup>12</sup> My interpretation of Beauvoir's theory of transcendence is derived from Young's article, "Humanism, Gynocentrism, and Feminist Politics," pages 75-76 in *Throwing Like a Girl*.

immanence and defines them as the other of men.<sup>13</sup> Women are not allowed to act or move freely in our culture. From birth, they learn to restrict their movements and control their behavior. While men's movements are for themselves – are acted out for their own desire or enjoyment – women's movements are watched and monitored by other people. Women make themselves into objects that are watched; they are not free to move out into the world. “To become the object, she takes herself and transforms herself into a thing: all freedoms are diminished and she is caged, even in the cage docile, sometimes physically maimed, movement is limited” (Dworkin 1987: 140). When a woman moves, she is observed and sometimes censored by others. Unlike men, who have all manner of activities open to them, women learn through socialization from an early age that the world of choices and free activity is not open to them. “Girls learn early that the world of action and daring is closed to them, learn not to move freely and do not develop an ability to fight” (Young 1990:76). This socialization becomes more than just a set of attributes; it becomes a cage around women's bodies, keeping their movements confined.

Women's controlled movements are not innate biological characteristics of the female body. On the contrary, these reserved actions are learned and enforced through socialization. Boys and girls, as they grow older, are taught to inhabit the world differently:

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<sup>13</sup> My interpretation of Beauvoir's theory of immanence is derived from the previously cited work.



Boys are raised in our society to be spatially dominant. They are encouraged to be adventurous, to discover and explore their surroundings, and to experience a wide range of environmental settings. . . Girls are raised in our society to expect and accept spatial limitations. From early childhood their spatial range is restricted to the "protected" and homogeneous environment of the home and immediate neighborhood. They are taught to occupy but not to control space (Weisman 1994: 24).

Sue Heinemann recounts a story in which she watched a little girl with her mother and grandmother. The little girl was, "running around doing cartwheels, moving freely, naturally. The girl's mother called her over to walk beside mother and grandmother. The little girl's body stiffened, her 'activity' constricted, as she readily assumed the pose of 'woman' in imitation of her mother and grandmother. Three generations – a legacy of how to behave as woman" (1977: 13). Iris Marion Young's essay, "Throwing Like a Girl," examines this difference in body comportment and how learned social rules affect each gender's physical movements. Young finds that women have the same passive and confined attitudes in their bodily movements and comportment that Beauvoir gives to women's presence.

Even in the most simple body orientations of men and women as they sit, stand, and walk, one can observe a typical difference in body style and extension. Women generally are not as open with their bodies as are men in their gait and stride. Typically, the masculine stride is longer proportional to a man's body than is the feminine stride to a woman's. The man typically swings his arms in a more open and loose fashion than does a woman and typically has more up and down rhythm in his step. . . . Women still tend to sit with their legs relatively close together and their arms across their bodies. When simply standing or leaning, men tend to keep their feet farther apart than do women, and we also tend more to keep our hands and arms touching or shielding our bodies (Young 1990: 145).

Young also finds that men's bodily experience and movements are different from women's in some of the ways that Beauvoir began to illuminate in her descriptions of transcendence and immanence. Just as

men's presence implies action and what they are able to do, their movements are about active participation in the outside world. Women's presence, which is dependent on an other, and on what can and can not be done to her, can be seen in her movement in sport. "Men more often move out toward a ball in flight and confront it with their own countermotion. Women tend to wait for and then *react* to its approach, rather than going forth to meet it" (1990: 146). Young explains women's timidity and hesitancy when engaging with objects and things by saying that, "We lack an entire trust in our bodies to carry us to our aim" (1990: 146).

All of these examples show a woman's monitoring of her body and how her immanence can be seen in her movements. Women confine their actions so they will not move too freely or openly in the world. Women's confined movements show that the world is not theirs; they are not really free to move around in this world, and their gestures express this knowledge. "Woman's motion tends not to reach, extend, lean, stretch, and follow through in the direction of her intention" (Young 1990: 146). Women do not allow themselves to push out into the world. They hold themselves back and remain confined in their own spatial cage. "For many women as they move in sport, a space surrounds us in imagination that we are not free to move beyond; the space available to our movement is a constricted space" (1990: 146). Because women have been socialized to contain their gestures, free and open bodily movements are not practiced by women.

In *The Absent Body*, Drew Leder explains that we monitor our bodily actions when we first learn how to do something. We think about what we are doing, and our body reacts, our movements are ungraceful, hesitant, and we are explicitly aware of our bodies. Once we have mastered an activity, however, our bodies become effaced, the activity comes without conscious effort (1990: 31). This is not wholly true for women. For women, physical activities are often limited and they are taught to sit still. Thus when women are asked to play sports or participate in physical activity, their unpracticed movements may be ungraceful and hesitant. Also, women's bodies are not always easily effaced once they learn an activity. Because society is watching and observing them, women are often aware of their bodies and how they look in each activity. It is rare that women are able to totally forget their bodily actions and move freely in the world.

Also, women's position in society limits their mobility: "women are less mobile than men because they have less money, less access to transport facilities and more responsibility for other less mobile persons such as children and old people" (Boys 1984: 29). Women often have to care for small children or the elderly, who have limited abilities moving through the environment. "We are actually less mobile because of less access to transport and resources. We are also less mobile than men because we take the major role in caring for young children and old people who cannot go so fast or so far" (Matrix 1984: 40-1).

Not only do women's roles in caring for children and the elderly limit their movements, women's clothing also controls their ability to move. Clothing like high heels and short tight skirts inhibit women's ability to move or walk comfortably. The clothing women find acceptable often makes them appear as static and fragile objects, because these articles of clothes are invented for the benefit of the male onlooker, and not designed for mobility (Matrix 1984: 41).

The social containment of women's bodies has resulted in a different lived body experience for women. Perception and movement are linked. Perception is a motor activity that is only possible for beings that move through space (Leder 1990: 17). For women, whose movements through space are regulated and controlled, their perceptions are different from men's. Their interpretation of the world may be less spatial, less dependent on exterior objects. Referring to the work of Merleau-Ponty, Leder writes, "Consciousness is in the first place not a matter of 'I think that' but of 'I can'" (1990: 20). It is only through people's movements and activities that they are able to understand the world. "Only by projecting across a spatial and temporal distance can the sensorimotor body open up to the world" (1990: 21). This idea of consciousness is highly dependent on the movement of the subject. Without this exchange, the body, as well as the consciousness, becomes limited – unable to understand the world outside of its body. Leder explains the effect of this in his description of a weakened or paralyzed body:

“the quality of the world is equivalently transformed; objects now recede, mock me, proclaim my inability” (1990: 23).

This is the conscious state of many women every day. The exterior objects of the world, created by men, mock women, taunt them, proclaiming their paralyzed state in patriarchal society. Just like a body in pain or suffering women have, “nowhere to go, nothing to do, no escape. Space loses its normal directionality as the world ceases to be the locus of purposeful action” (Leder 1990: 75). I do not mean to imply that women are paralyzed in our society but rather that male definitions of the lived body may cause women to interpret their bodies as handicapped. Women’s lived bodies are not actually handicapped, but they are different from men’s in some of the ways I have described.

### **3.2.2 Women’s Bodies Confined in the City**

Women’s and men’s roles in society have determined their physical position in the city. Social rules have informed men and women where they are allowed to be in the city. The concept of a private sphere in which women dwell, and a public sphere, controlled and inhabited by men, has shaped the location of each sex in Western culture. In ancient Greece this separation of spaces for men and women was articulated by the dichotomy between the goddess Hestia and the god Hermes. Pérez-Gómez writes that this pair was a religious articulation of space and movement: “While Hestia refers to domesticity, femininity, the earth, darkness, centrality and stability – all

qualities of interior “space” – Hermes is identified with the masculine values of mobility and threshold, of changing states, openness and contact with the outside world, the light and the sky – qualities associated with the external, public “spaces” of action” (1994: 6). This mythology reflects the practices of ancient Greek society and the physical locations men and women were allowed to inhabit. In ancient Greek society, gender determined a person’s location in the city. “The Greek understanding of the human body suggested different rights, and differences in urban spaces . . . These differences cut most notably across the dividing line of gender . . . Women did not show themselves naked in the city; more, they were usually confined to the interiors of houses, as though the lightless interior more suited their physiology than did the open spaces of the sun” (Sennett 1994: 34). This separation of men and women into two different locations in the city still determines the place of bodies in the modern city.

While the city was an orderly and democratic public place in ancient Greece, by the nineteenth century this had changed. As modern cities grew, new dangers became a threat to individuals in the city. The unruly density of the city allowed thieves to become invisible and the mob became a revolutionary threat (Wilson 1991: 6). All types of people – men, women, rich, poor – could interact in the city. This mingling of social classes, gender and ethnic groups resulted in descriptions of the city as unruly and unstable. Journalists and government figures described the city as a new version of Hell and sought to control and manage the movement of the lower classes and

women in the city. Elizabeth Wilson writes that the emergence of the town-planning movement in the nineteenth-century can be seen "as an organized campaign to exclude women and children, along with other disruptive elements – the working class, the poor, and minorities – from this infernal urban space altogether" (1991: 6). Men wanted to reclaim the public space as they had had it in ancient Greek times – pure and male – a space free from the contamination of women and the lower classes.

The containment of women into a private sphere in nineteenth and twentieth century cities can be seen as an attempt to control a woman's sexuality and keep it safe for one man. Unattended women in the city could not be regulated, "the very presence of unattended – unowned – women constituted a threat both to male power and to male frailty" (E. Wilson 1995: 61). Therefore, strict social regulations were enforced on nineteenth century women in order to keep them "protected". Young, marriageable women under thirty years of age were the most rigorously chaperoned in the city (E. Wilson 1995: 61). The movements of middle class women were also successfully restricted through the development of the bourgeois suburbs. This "haven of privacy" was designed "to 'protect' middle-class women from the rough-and-tumble of the urban street" (E. Wilson 1995: 61).

In the early twentieth century sexuality became a new and increasingly confusing problem for individuals in the city. Elizabeth Wilson writes "sexual unease and the pursuit of sexuality outside the constraints of the

family were one of [the early twentieth centuries] major preoccupations” (1991: 5). The problem of women’s presence in the city was their ability to tempt men; their presence symbolized the promise of sexual adventure. A woman in public was a questionable. The only women with free access in the city were prostitutes; they were public women. Thus the problem for women in the public sphere was “whether every woman in the new, disordered world of the city . . . was not a public woman and thus a prostitute” (E. Wilson 1995: 61). The prostitute represents the commodification of all aspects of the modern city. With the onset of capitalism, everything could be bought. Elizabeth Wilson writes that “prostitution became, in any case, a metaphor for the whole new regime of nineteenth-century urbanism” (1995: 71). The prostitute symbolizes the mass production and commodification of every aspect of the modern person. In modern society, even the body could be bought and sold for a price.

The opposition of the private and public realm reached a peak in the United States during the nineteen-fifties. Joan Ockman, in her article “Mirror Images: Technology, Consumption, and the Representation of Gender in American Architecture since World War II,” discusses how American corporate capitalism and the suburban single-family ideal went hand-in-hand. “In a society that sought simultaneously to promote maximum productivity and maximum consumption, the public and private spheres had separate but complementary roles to play” (1996: 205). Women were encouraged to remain in the private sphere of the suburbs but in return were



offered the ability to buy gadgets and gizmos to decorate and maintain their prison/homes. Men's compensation for working long hours in another man's corporate firm was a suburban dream house to go home to and an attentive wife to wait on him. Ockman also regards the suburban dream home as a compensation for the sacrifices endured during World War II (1996: 199). A persuasive element of this suburban ideal was the age-old promise of a woman's body, kept safe until the man's return, by her imprisonment in a supervised sphere controlled by the gossip of neighbors.

The city is a space produced, inhabited and designed in the image of men. "The city is 'masculine' in its triumphal scale, its towers and vistas and arid industrial regions" (Wilson 1991: 7). The modern city is a space constructed for and by men. In this way, the city is a locus for their production of power. In her article "Bodies-Cities," Elizabeth Grosz writes, "the city's form and structure provides the context in which social rules and expectations are internalized or habituated in order to ensure social conformity" (1995b: 109). Thus cities are designed to control women's presence. Contemporary cities are locations of power and control for men and women's bodies are regulated and controlled by these structures of power.

Cities contain and control women's movements in a number of ways. As outlined above, women's historical relationship with the city has been one of inaccessibility. Another way women's bodies are controlled in the city is through their absence in the designing and building of the structures that contain them. Architecture is based on the male-as-norm experience just as

all discourses are based on the male experience. It is based on the male in two ways. One is that men overwhelmingly control decision making for the built environment and for architecture. As Sherry Ahrentzen writes, "With power, social position, and money, men overwhelmingly control environmental decision making and often based this decision making on male-experience-as-norm" (1996: 73). The second way is alluded to by Ahrentzen: men who build the environment base their decisions on the assumption that their experience is normal and universal. Jos Boys writes "men are socially conditioned to base their decision making about the environment and their behavior within it on male experience-as-norm so that even when women are present in the decision-making process 'we lumber around ungainly-like in borrowed concepts which do not fit the shape we feel ourselves to be'" (1984: 28). Boys believes that it is the goal of feminist architecture to unlock these two male aspects of architecture by showing that the physical fabric contains one set of ideals about social relations at the expense of others, namely women and minorities (1984: 29).

A third way women's movements are controlled in our cities is through penalties. Women who do venture out in the urban environment are frequently approached or harassed by strange men. For many women in urban environments, harassment by men is a daily occurrence. This harassment ranges from harmless "cat-calling" and sexually explicit comments to actual touching (Franck and Paxson 1989: 129-30). There are also stereotypes that make fun of women who try to venture out into the world.

One example of these stereotypes is the joke of female car-drivers (Matrix 1984: 41). These jokes, stereotypes, and forms of harassment clearly show women what their place is and when they have crossed the line into male rights and privileges.

A far more severe penalty that controls women's movements in the city is their fear of crime – its most extreme penalty being rape or murder. Women fear crime in the city and lack confidence in their ability to protect themselves from it. Women are not as confident in their bodily movements as men are, this leads them to fear a physical attack. Through social learning, women have come to perceive themselves as the weaker sex and know that most crimes are committed by men. Women's fear of rape is one of the strongest deterrents for women to move out of the private sphere. Historically women in public were considered to be prostitutes. This perception still persists in our culture. Thus, many men still perceive women's sexuality as defined by their location in the city (Matrix 1984: 49). Jos Boys writes "in this male-defined view of the world women's sexuality can be redefined by *the place in which she finds herself*" (1984: 31). This means that any woman who is not in her home, or with a male escort, is looking for some sort of sexual encounter. This perception by men and women's fear of rape, keep women contained in their assigned sphere. Leslie Weisman writes "Rape is the most paradigmatic means of social control. Its unmistakable intention is to keep all women in 'their place,' in 'line,' and in a constant state of fear" (1994: 69).

By ignoring women's experiences and by containing women's movements in society, men control women. A woman is told how to act, where to be, and what she is; she is never consulted about her experience. But women's experience may be very different from the one that has been described to us by men. Women may not feel their bodies are contained, or they may fight the controls placed on their bodies by reacting to the containment paradigms that have been described to them. In the next chapter I explore the containment paradigms that have described all bodies in Western society and argue that they may not apply to the experiences of women's bodies.

## CHAPTER 4

### WOMEN'S BODIES BREAK THE CONTAINMENT PARADIGM

*I don't understand all this theory on the body. These people talk about it like it's a different thing, something separate, uncontrollable, I don't understand. I have never felt like this, even when I'm clumsy. My body is me. My mind is not Separate. My mind is me. They are the same, not different. When I'm sick, when I have my period, when my breasts swell, when I stub my toe, that is not some stranger, not some alien. That is me!! I am experiencing that. My mind and my body at the same time. They are inseparable. I have never felt my mind controlling my body. They are the SAME thing. Not separate.*

*I look down at my legs, I look in the mirror and see my reflection, I touch myself. I feel the sensation of my hands touching myself. This body is mine. I do not feel alien to it. I do not feel separated from it. It is me, my mind and my body. The separation is ridiculous.*

*Sometimes I look at myself in the mirror, and I'm unhappy with my appearance. Maybe I see too much fat on my thighs, maybe my breasts are too small, maybe I've found a white hair. This does not mean I'm unhappy with my equipment, that does not reflect my body, I am unhappy with me. These are not disappointments with my mental abilities, but this is irrelevant, because they are unhappinesses with me. They affect everything! They affect how I feel about my intellect, my confidence in myself.*

*I think through my senses. I live through my senses. I do not think through my mind. Sometimes I need time to figure a concept out, but this is not time for my mind to work, but it is that I need time for my senses to experience the concept, for my body and mind to understand.*

*My mind and my body are not separate. They are a WHOLE!!! One Thing!!!!  
(entry from Sherri Scribner's journal, Jan. 18, 1996)*

#### 4.1. The Body as Container

Western society has been structured on the premise of dichotomous pairs. A pervasive example of this pairing is the opposition between the mind and the body. In this section I explore the roots of the separation between the mind

and body. From this base I will examine the metaphor of the mind as contained and housed within the body. Using this cultural paradigm, I will apply concepts of the body as a container to people's actual lived experiences of their bodies. I will argue that this paradigm may be more reflective of men's experience of their bodies than women's. As I will explain, this paradigm does apply to women's experiences some of the time, but may not express their lived bodily experiences all of the time. Finally, I would like to challenge this separate mind and body paradigm altogether. Lived experiences of the world do not give the sensation of a separate mind encased inside the prison of the body. As my quote above illustrates our minds are not separate from our bodies but are tied together, possibly being one and the same thing. Looking briefly at how women's experiences have developed differently from men's in our society, I describe a new paradigm which incorporates the mind and the body into a single element through which we live in the world.

#### **4.1.1 Mind and Body Separation**

The relationship between mind and body has been a difficult subject for philosophers to resolve. Morris Berman writes "The separation of mind and body, subject and object, is discernible as a historical trend by the sixth century before Christ."<sup>14</sup> This trend persisted in Western culture in the writings of the

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<sup>14</sup> From Morris Berman. *The Re-enchantment of the World*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981) quoted in Bordo, page 48.

ancient Greek philosopher Plato. Plato's philosophy developed two worlds: the world as perceived by the senses and the world constructed entirely by the intellect (Broadbent 1991: 37). But Plato's philosophy did not limit experience to these two realms. A third world was the space in between the intellect and the sensible world, a realm that provided a connection between these two worlds, the space he called *chora*. But Plato and his successors focused on the realm of the sensible and the realm of the intellect, eventually privileging the intelligible world: "ever since Plato's time his exclusive concentration on his 'intelligible' world has permeated Metaphysics and indeed much of Philosophy" (Broadbent 1991: 37). Philosophers have written about two separate realms for two thousand years but they always acknowledged a connection between these two realms.

Descartes's writings in the seventeenth century severed the two realms and promoted the attainment of a purified mind that could transcend the body. According to Susan Bordo, the idea of a separate self, "conscious of itself and of its own distinctness from the world 'outside' it, is born in the Cartesian era" (1987: 7). Medieval people did not view themselves as distinct from the world; they trusted their senses to give them a dependable view of existence. But this trust in the senses and the body was lost as new discoveries were made about the world. The period between the fourteen hundreds and the sixteen hundreds was one of the greatest crises through which European society passed.<sup>15</sup> The power of the Catholic church was

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<sup>15</sup> From Jose Ortega y Gasset. *Man and Crisis* (New York: Norton, 1958) quoted in Bordo, page 13.

decreasing and increased levels of exploration and commerce with other cultures had radically altered the eurocentricism which prevailed during medieval times (Bordo 1987: 13). With inventions in astronomy and science, what was once a finite universe exploded and the most intimate mode of human access to the world, the naked senses, could no longer be trusted (Bordo 1987: 13). Susan Bordo writes that this “loss of faith in the senses signals the recognition of a breach between body and world that had not existed for the medievals, for whom the body was regarded as a quite dependable epistemological guide” (1987: 45).

Descartes’s focus on the ‘cogito’ created a disembodied rationality in which the body was relegated to a secondary or oppositional role while an incorporeal reason became valorized (Leder 1990: 3). From that time forward, subject and consciousness were separated from the world and from the body. “Descartes, in short, succeeded in linking the mind/body opposition to the foundations of knowledge itself, a link which places the mind in a position of hierarchical superiority over and above nature, including the nature of the body” (Grosz 1994: 6). Not only were mind and body separated, but now man was separated from nature. The mind was linked with knowledge while the body was linked to the earth and death.

The mind and body are not categories free from outside association. On the contrary, the mind/body pair carries with it a number of related affiliations. The mind has often been associated with culture, reason,



transcendence, truth, and psychology, while the body has been associated with nature, passion, immanence, appearance and physiology. Each member of these pairs of opposites stand in direct contrast to its partner. For Plato, these pairs stood as end points on a continuum, but with Descartes's writings they evolved to become distinct entities. To be affiliated with one member of the pair often means a rejection of the other. Western culture barely acknowledges connections or linkages between pair members. Each element must stand on its own, separate, independent, and in opposition to its other.

Descartes's rational, disembodied mind is a male mind. Women in patriarchal culture have not been associated with the mind; they have been associated with nature and the body. Just as the body is identified with irrationality, unruliness, disruption, lack of judgment, and described as needing direction, so too are women (Grosz 1994: 3). Medieval Christian ideology defined women as the bearers of the realm of the flesh and sin. For women "flesh was what defined them. Men could escape the flesh by an avoidance of women; women were fundamentally trapped" (MacSween 1993: 129). Susan Bordo believes that this association of women with the body became even stronger in the seventeenth century. She believes that Descartes's rationalism was a reaction to his separation anxiety about losing an organic female universe through modern scientific discoveries (1987: 5). The organic universe he was losing was the universe of the medieval world, whose truth was in dire question, and this medieval cosmos was a "mother" cosmos (Bordo 1987: 101).

The separation of mind from body leads to problems for women. Women have learned from philosophy and psychoanalysis that their minds are something separate and different from their bodies. They are led to believe that in order to become a being with free subjectivity and transcendence the body must be ignored and disregarded as an unnecessary element. Women have learned that their bodies are weak and mortal, unpredictable and inconstant. In order to earn respect and accolades in Western culture, women must use their minds somehow independent of their bodies. But women, in patriarchal culture, have not been given the same opportunities to use their minds as men. Here lies the irony: women learn from men that the mind is the preeminent element of their existence rising above the muck and mire of corporeality, but women are assigned to this realm of the flesh. Their place in the world is often not to think and use their minds, but to be attractive, to use their bodies, and to care for others. Elizabeth Grosz writes that this association of femininity and corporeality "leaves men free to inhabit what they (falsely) believe is a purely conceptual order while at the same time enabling them to satisfy their (sometimes disavowed) need for corporeal contact through their access to women's bodies and services" (1994: 14). Thus men can attain the realm of the body through their access to women, but women are not given free access to the world of the intellect.

### 4.1.2 Container Theory

When Descartes elevated the mind above the body, what was left was the body as a husk to be viewed as an object and as a container for the mind. Western theories that view the body as a container can be best exemplified in Mark Johnson's account of the mind/body pair: "the self is inside the body in much the same way that a body is inside a room or a house. Bodies are containers that protect against and resist external forces, whilst also holding back internal forces from expansion or extrusion. All that is other is on the outside".<sup>16</sup> This notion of the mind as an inner area of ideas and the construction of experience occurring deeply within and bounded by the self are ideas born in the Cartesian era.<sup>17</sup> These Cartesian definitions lead men and women to believe that their minds are contained somewhere within the boundaries of the body.

Women learn that their minds are something separate and enclosed in their bodies. This knowledge is cultural as the hierarchy of mind over body is a patriarchal construct. However, the concept of the body as a container for the mind is not universally experienced by women. In her book *The Woman in the Body*, Emily Martin discusses the medical definitions of the body learned and absorbed by middle-class women. These models teach women that their bodies are containers that hold their reproductive organs. This idea of the body as container can be seen in how middle-class women describe

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<sup>16</sup> Johnson's work as summarized by Battersby, page 32.

<sup>17</sup> See the work of Richard Rorty and Stephen Toulmin as cited in Susan Bordo, page 49.

menstruation. Most of these women's definitions describe the mechanics of menstruation and the elements involved – blood, eggs, ovaries – as elements separate from themselves. Their definitions are removed from the actual event of menstruation in a kind-of disembodied explanation of this monthly occurrence (Martin 1987: 104-107).

Martin finds that working-class women's definitions about menstruation, on the other hand, are more phenomenological. Working-class women describe the bodily experience of menstruation – their cramps or the look and smell of the blood (107-112). These women reject the scientific model of the body as a container which middle-class women have come to internalize through their greater exposure to scientific discourses. From these findings, Martin concludes, that when women use containment imagery to describe their bodily experience, it is an attempt by educated women to incorporate the medical and scientific ideas they have learned about female bodies into their own bodily experience. If women with more education tend to identify their bodies with the abstract model of bodily containment more than women who have less exposure to these descriptions, we can conclude that bodily containment as a separation between the body and the individual self, is a culturally created model. This model disregards women's experience of their body and must be learned by women before they can think of their bodies as separate from their minds.

### 4.1.3 Sexuality's Effect on Corporeality

When the mind is separated from and contained by the body, the body itself becomes an object. All containers, when viewed from the outside, are objects. How this body – as object – manifests itself differently for men and women shows what is socially expected of each sex. All bodies are viewed as objects in our society. The male body as an object is expected to be reserved and in control. Men stress the mind; this is the place where one's subjectivity and personhood are found. Men's bodies emphasize the importance of their minds by not over-emphasizing the appearance of their bodies. Women, on the other hand, are expected to emphasize the appearance of their bodies. Women's bodies are considered containers, but they are not viewed as containers for the mind. Because women are associated with the realm of the body, their bodies have become the only element Western society sees of them. Thus, women's bodies become *only* objects. As Luce Irigaray writes, "female beauty is always considered a *garment* ultimately designed to attract the other into the self. It is almost never perceived as a manifestation of, an appearance by a phenomenon expressive of interiority" (1993: 65).

Not all women may view their bodies as containers, but the association of women's bodies with containers is often made in western culture. Just as a container has an occupiable space, so does a woman's body. Jennifer Bloomer writes "I know what it means to be constructed as a thing and to be a container. I am convinced that this has to have an influence on the way that one sees things and containers" (1996: 240).

While women may not experience their bodies as containers, they are contained by social rules and restrictions on their movements. What women feel as a container is a metaphysical space that surrounds them, "a space surrounds us in imagination that we are not free to move beyond" (Young 1990: 46). Since women do not trust the outside world they must construct an exterior container around themselves. This container is not the barrier of the skin, or a container for the mind – as men have described it – it is more psychological. Christine Battersby suggests that we construct this barrier because our bodies are not a boundary. "I construct a containing space *around* me, precisely because my body itself is not constructed as a container" (1993: 34).

For Western men what is constrained is emotion. Men have largely abandoned their emotions and chosen to live in their abstract, socially constructed minds. Sherry Ahrentzen suggests that the "Marlboro man myth" form of masculinity values individuality, control, rationality, and emotional distance (1996: 73). These qualities separate men from their emotions and allow them to transcend their bodies.

In Western culture men fear the body because it has been so denigrated. The body is viewed as unclean and messy; it is the place where mortality resides. Men have repressed their ability to live sensually and to reach out into the realm of the corporeal world by staying in the abstract world of ideas. The bodies they create to contain their minds have become atrophied. "The men, civilized, in shells of identity and abstraction, are imprisoned in

loneliness, unable to break out of their self-preoccupation" (Dworkin 1987: 33). In order to gain access to the corporeal world, men must use women; they must live sensually through women's bodies. Men sacrifice their access to the body in order to reap the benefits of patriarchy, but this sacrifice comes with its own reward, access to women's bodies. "Women's bodies are the socially guaranteed compensation for men's acquisition of phallic status, the repositories of men's own lost corporeality, and the guardians of men's mortality" (Grosz 1995a: 56) Women's bodies are used by men so they may obtain access to the corporeal.

Another important difference between men and women that may affect how they perceive their bodies is the way they experience sex. Men's bodies are contained in sex. Christine Battersby sites the recent work of Michèle Montrelay and Paul Smith in their study of male sexuality and its connection to the male psyche. They "suggest that the repressed of masculine consciousness might be the sense of 'flowing out and away' of ejaculated substances. On this model, the boundaries of normal male selves are secured against flowing out . ." (1993: 34). Men often idealize their bodies as hard and dense, without an interior corporeal space. This fantasy allows men to transcend the body's faults and create an indestructible form of the body. Examples of this can be seen in how male body builders idealize their bodies as lacking an interior space, and as just being solid, lean meat (Ian 1996: 191).

If we examine women's sexuality, we begin to find explanations for why women might not experience their bodies as containers. "There is the

outline of a body, distinct, separate, its integrity an illusion, a tragic deception, because unseen there is a slit between the legs. . . A woman has a body that is penetrated in intercourse: permeable, its corporeal solidness a lie" (Dworkin 1987: 122). It is this aspect of the body, not as a container, but as something permeable and open, that I think needs more exploration in studies of the body and studies of architecture.<sup>18</sup> This theory of the body stresses fluidity and flow. Women know sexuality as something more than two separate bodies linking. During sex, two bodies merge, their skin comes off, bodies lose their boundaries. What we touch during sex, is the corporeal, the unthinkable visceral aspects of our body, "raw, blood and fat and muscle and bone, unmediated by form or formal limits. . . The skin collapses as a boundary – it has no meaning; time is gone – it too has no meaning; there is no outside" (Dworkin 1987: 22).

#### **4.1.4 Minds are not Contained or Separate from Bodies**

Our bodies do not contain us and separate us from the outside world, our interactions and experience are more fluid than that. We feel the world and sense the world – through movements, vibrations, textures, temperatures and liquids. Our experiences are dependent on bodily senses, not the mind. "Touch is the meaning of being human. . . the way of knowing what being human is, the way of knowing others, the world, anything outside the self,

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<sup>18</sup> Many writers are exploring this area of study. See the work of Elizabeth Grosz, Diana Agrest, and Luce Irigaray to name a few.



anyone else who is also human; touch is the basis of human knowledge” (Dworkin 1987: 31). All bodies learn about the world through their bodies; the mind is not separate.

Patriarchal theories on corporeality have led us to believe the mind and body are separate. But the experiences of lived bodies show that our mind and body can not be so easily divided. Bodies are the source through which people learn about the world. Human’s existence – their subjectivity – is intrinsically tied to their corporeality. For women this is physically inescapable. Women give birth, women menstruate, and women care for the body. Women are often more open to experiencing the world through their senses than men. “Women’s intuition” is not a reasonable reaction to situations; it is something tied to feelings, emotions, and sensual bodies.

The human mind is not disconnected from the body; it is intimately tied to the senses and the corporeal perceptions. No matter how far human beings stray into the abstract realms of the mind and thought, they are still tied to their bodies. This may be more apparent to women because they have not had free access to the realm of the mind. The work that women have traditionally done in Western society keeps them tied to their bodies and to the bodies of others. As Deena Metzger explains, “No matter how abstract, no matter how formal, women’s work is connected at one point at least to the fundamental realities, to our bodies, to our everyday, to our dreams” (1977: 4).

Bodies are always individual. Women are able to value this difference, while patriarchal society often tries to erase individuality in an attempt to make all bodies conform to one European male model. This attempt to erase difference leaves Western society at the mercy of categorical thinking. This often results in generalizations that do not acknowledge differences and inconsistencies in categories. Women's experiences do not always lead to abstraction. As the caretakers of other people women see differences between personal experiences and are often more willing to adjust and redefine categories to fit each individual situation.

Many writers have questioned the Cartesian divide between the mind and the body. While this work is helpful, it sometimes results in one-sided views of the body and generalizations based on old sexist theories. As feminist writers and theorists on the body we must be careful that these old ideas do not discredit new interpretations of our bodies. Women have traditionally been the keepers and guardians of the body and we should not let men take over this realm of the corporeal too easily. Luce Irigaray believes that we should not let men take over our bodies as they come out of their silence and servitude. She writes "Historically we are the guardians of the flesh. We should not give up that role, but identify it as our own, by inviting men not to make us into body for their benefit, not to make us into guarantees that their body exists" (1993: 19).

## 4.2 Women's Double Spatiality

Since the invention of photography in the nineteenth century, our view of the world has become increasingly defined by images produced by the camera. In these images, the view point of the author is unconsciously expressed in what they produce. Because many of the images that have influenced Western society in the twentieth century have been produced by men, our view of the world, derived from these images, is colored by a Western male perspective. Many feminist writers have discussed the results of this one-sided perspective and have named it a "male gaze". In this section I will discuss how this gaze is produced and how women internalize this gaze. Because women have access to this other gaze, women are able to view the world from the viewpoint of men and women. I describe this particular ability of women as their "double spatiality". Because women are viewed by a male gaze in society and because they have access to this gaze through the images they see of themselves, women have two "eyes" through which they can view the world and themselves. The first eye is a woman's own view of the world derived from her experiences. The second eye that women have is a disembodied male perspective of themselves as men might see them. I believe this "double spatiality" is a unique experience of women which has not yet been elucidated by feminist writers. Men do not possess this experience; this "double spatiality" is a different lived body experience of women that breaks down the paradigm of the body as a container.

#### 4.2.1 The Gaze

Women and men are defined differently in society. The social construction of the male as powerful and transcendent creates a presence that women are not able to emulate. As Berger writes "The social presence of a woman is different in kind from that of a man" (1973: 45). Berger asserts that the difference lies in their "presence" which has two forms. The first is the idea of a man's presence, which is "dependent upon the promise of power which he embodies" (1973: 45). A woman's presence, conversely, is always linked to the man and "defines what can and cannot be done to her" (1973: 46). The man's presence is external and refers to his activities "what he is capable of doing to you or for you" (1973: 46). The woman's presence is internal and intrinsic to her person. It does not refer to what she can do or how she interacts with the external world; her presence refers to herself, to her body, and her presence is passive.

One element of this difference in presence is the construction of a male gaze. This male gaze is a familiar concept in film criticism, but can be seen in all aspects of social interaction. E. Ann Kaplan describes how the cinema is structured around three male gazes: the view of the camera, the gaze of the men in the narrative, and finally the gaze of the male spectator who watches the film (1985: 311). All of these gazes are constructed by a male-dominated media which projects a view of women that conforms to male ideals. Women who look at these images take on the position of the male spectator.

They are able to see the world as men do but they lack the power that goes along with the male gaze. As Kaplan explains, “men do not simply look; their gaze carries with it the power of action and of possession that is lacking in the female gaze” (1985: 311).

Through socialization, women learn to cater to this male gaze; they are able to visualize themselves through this male perspective. A woman watches herself as society is watching her. Most of her actions, her movements are monitored and contained. She can not do, she can not act; she must maintain her passivity and allow men to do things for her. Because a woman monitors her behavior, because she judges herself and imagines how others are seeing her, she becomes split. Berger explains it this way: “A woman's self being [is] split into two. A woman must continually watch herself. She is almost continually accompanied by her own image of herself” (1973: 46). The woman who constantly checks her makeup in the mirror, or fixes her skirt, is performing this act of self-surveillance. Luce Irigaray describes how this self-surveillance is never for the self, but is for another: “We look at ourselves in the mirror to *please someone*, rarely to interrogate the state of our body or our spirit, rarely for ourselves and in search of our own becoming. The mirror almost always serves to reduce us to a pure exteriority” (1993: 65).

#### 4.2.2 The Second Eye

Hélène Cixous believes that women are outside of language and outside of culture. They are considered mad, perverse, neurotic, ecstatic, but at the same time, they are the bearers of the greatest norm, they bear children. Because patriarchal society has defined culture and the rules for admittance, and because women are admitted into society to perform some of their roles, but denied access for many other roles, women become double (Cixous 1975: 7-8). Women also become double when they survey themselves through a male gaze. With this second gaze women can perceive themselves and the world. This gaze or second eye is a perspective that men do not have. Men do not have a similar female perspective on the world because a female gaze has not been constructed in our patriarchal society.

While this second voyeuristic eye that women use to judge themselves is male, the body that moves and is surveyed is her own, is female. "The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female" (Berger 1973: 47). This second eye, the critical male eye, is one aspect of women's oppression which confines them in their movements. This is the eye that limits women – keeping them self-conscious and giving them the appearance of passivity. Women's only weapon against this second judging eye, the critical eye of society, is to maintain a passive appearance.

The two eyes which women possess give women the ability to view the world from the perspective of men and women. Often, this second eye – the male eye – is a detached view; it is disembodied. The best example of this

second eye is psychology's description of the experience of autoscopy. Elizabeth Grosz gives a description of autoscopy that comes close to the split experience of women in patriarchal society: "When autoscopy occurs, the subject may see itself as it were from the outside . . . the subject may experience itself as outside its own boundaries, looking on in a detached manner" (1994: 43). This description of autoscopy resembles E. Ann Kaplan's description of women's fantasy experiences of sex. In the female fantasy women take the position of spectator, outside the event. In this way "the woman places herself as either passive recipient of male desire, or, at one remove, positions herself as *watching* a woman who is passive recipient of male desires and sexual actions" (1985: 316). In sexuality, as in life, a woman can detach herself from her body with a voyeuristic male eye.

#### 4.2.3 Double Spatiality

Other examples of women's ability to view the world from more than one position can be found in the work of Merleau-Ponty. Iris Marion Young discusses Merleau-Ponty's theory of the "here" and the "yonder" in terms of a *double spatiality*. Young believes women possess this *double spatiality* but in a different way from men. Merleau-Ponty's concept of a "here" and "yonder" are contingent upon this pair's connection. Merleau-Ponty sees the body as not *in* space and time, but belonging to space and time. Each action the body makes in the exterior world results in the body's psychological link to this exterior space. "Each instant of the movement embraces its whole span, and

particularly the first which, being the active initiative, institutes the link between a here and a yonder, a now and a future which the remainder of the instants will merely develop" (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 140). The body that Merleau-Ponty sees being able to embrace both the "here" and the "yonder" is the male body.

Merleau-Ponty's "here" and "yonder" have a different result for women. For women, the "here" is the woman – her body and the space around that body. A woman's perceptions of the world arise through her senses – her sense of sight, taste, smell, touch, and hearing; this subjectivity is enclosed within that "here." This first spatiality, or first "eye", is similar to men's subjectivity in that it comes from the body and is directed toward the outside world. This first "eye" is contained by the parameters of the body and its physical abilities. The "here" is also the *object* of the second voyeuristic eye that she critiques; it is the self that she judges and monitors. But women have another spatiality – a second "eye" – that men do not have.

The "yonder" is women's second eye, the voyeuristic eye, constantly monitoring their subjectivity. Unlike the first eye which is limited by the confines of a woman's surroundings, the second eye has the potential to move through space and time. This second gaze allows a woman to view herself from a near position or a distant position concurrently.

This split in women's spatiality is disturbing because it develops from patriarchal views of women that make her into a sexualized object for the male gaze, but at the same time this split allows for remarkable possibilities.



Because women are able to view the world from more than one perspective – because they have an intimate understanding of a male perspective – they are able to understand men in a way that men can never understand women. This is not only true for women but is also true for other oppressed groups. The generalized view which individuals derive from the movies and the media is a white male heterosexual gaze. Women and other groups who do not physically possess this gaze are able to view the world and perceive themselves through their own perceptions *and* through this second oppressive gaze. Although access to this other gaze allows oppressed groups to understand the world their oppressors see, it does not necessarily lead to the disembodied second eye that women are able to appropriate. The male gaze sexualizes and judges the *body* of a woman; she becomes an object. Oppressed groups are surveyed in our society but can escape this surveillance by conforming to social rules. These rules require them to remain silent and to disappear into the background. Oppressed groups also escape this surveillance when they are in their own environment – at home, with friends, ect. Women are almost always objects in Western society. When women are with other people, especially men, they are not able to escape being viewed as a sexual thing. Their bodies are objects for public voyeurism.

The double spatiality of women is only possible for the sense of sight. For other senses, it is not possible for women to achieve a disembodied perspective of the other because our culture has not found a way to mimic these senses. Through photographs and mirrors, we are able to get a view of

ourselves that other people see. Once women have access to this other perspective – after years of looking at ourselves in the mirror or seeing photographs of ourselves – women are able to construct a continual male gaze view of themselves. Although this gaze can manifest itself as the position of a person who is actually looking at the woman, it can also manifest itself into a virtual position – one that nobody is inhabiting at that time. This gives women the ability to simultaneously be in many positions and time periods synchronically.

One of the results this may have for architecture is that women are able to design from more than one perspective. Because women have two eyes through which they can view the world, they are not confined in their architectural thinking to one position in space. Charles Moore and Kent Bloomer describe the ability of the eye to roam and project itself in architecture as the difference between the path the body takes and the capacity of the eye to take other more varied routes (1977: 88). Women know this other path well. Women's ability to project into other spaces and view themselves from a disembodied perspective requires architecture that provides a number of places and positions for the body to inhabit.

The final chapter describes an architecture that values women's bodily experiences. Using women's bodies as they have developed in Western culture, I articulate a new paradigm for architecture based on women's lived bodies without barriers. Examples of this new architecture can be found in built examples from the past and present but still needs development.

Architecture needs a new paradigm which will lead it away from abstract design proposal and towards valuing the experiences of the lived body.

## CHAPTER 5

### LIVED BODIES WITHOUT BOUNDARIES AS A NEW PARADIGM FOR THE BODIES OF ARCHITECTURE

Overemphasis on the intellect and the visual in contemporary architecture has led to an erasure of the lived body in design. (Figure 24 & 25) The physical, sensual and embodied aspects of architecture have been ignored, leaving our buildings sterile. In order to create buildings that regain a connection to bodies and the visceral, architects need to redefine their value system for architectural design. New models can be used which emphasize the body; new ideals and designs must be reintroduced into architectural discourse if we are to create environments that value human interaction, human sensations and the lived body. (Figure 26)

The preceding two chapters on women's lived body experiences showed how these experiences might differ from those usually described in our society. In this chapter I suggest what implications these experiences have for a new kind of architecture. This paradigm of the body would not emphasize a solid, figural, idealized male body, as most modern and postmodern paradigms of the body have, but would emphasize the flesh of the body, the fluidity of the body, the body as it moves, the multiple and changing forms of the body, the sensual experiences of the body, and the needs of the body. There are architects who have emphasized these aspects of space and form in architecture. By examining their work I explore a new body paradigm for architecture, one based on lived bodies. Although not solely

feminine, I believe these aspects of design are all aspects of women's lived bodily experiences as they have developed in Western society. By inverting the typically masculine values in architecture, I hope to explore an alternative architecture that values and enhances the lived experiences of all bodies in design.

### **5.1 The Lived Body is Flesh, not just Surface**

The paradigms of the body used in architectural discourse have been based on the external surface of the body. These paradigms view the body as an object. The body's visible exterior is used as a model, while the internal elements of the body are ignored. These paradigms idealize and objectify the body, dismissing a deeper understanding of the body which would involve physical and psychological sensations. By separating bodily experience from the form of the body and ignoring this experience, architects use a limited paradigm. They miss a more all-encompassing paradigm which would value all aspects of bodies. They miss the important contributions that experience has on the body's perceptions and they miss the connection between the sensual aspects of the body and its external form.

The body paradigms used in architecture have been based on Western concepts of the body that have viewed it as an object to be studied and deciphered. These theories define the skin as the line that separates an individual from the bodies of others. Andrea Dworkin describes the skin as "a line of demarcation" (1987: 22). Drew Leder describes the body's surface as

the place where the “self meets what is other than self” (1990: 11). The surface of the body – the skin – has been one way of defining a boundary between a body and what is outside that body.

The skin is seen as the covering for the body, an epidermal layer that separates the outside world from the flesh of our interior bodies. But what is the flesh of our body? If our skin is form, as Andrea Dworkin describes it (1987: 27), the flesh is all of the soft, muscular material held inside of our bodies by our skin and supported by the skeletal structure. Everything that is left over is contained in the category of flesh, but this simplistic definition of our bodily parts does not work when describing the lived body. Part of this dilemma can be seen in our definition of the word “flesh.” The *Oxford Encyclopedic English Dictionary* defines flesh as “1 a the soft, esp. muscular, substance between the skin and bones of an animal or a human.” But it also defines flesh as “2 the body as opposed to the mind or the soul” and as “4 a the visible surface of the human body” (1995: 530). These last two definitions, especially the latter, incorporate the skin into the definition of flesh. In these definitions flesh and skin are not separate elements of the body but overlap and merge with each other.

The lived body does not experience the skin and flesh as separate elements. When we touch something, when we feel the sensations of cold or hot, these are not just registered by our skin. The sensations that our bodies feel on the surface penetrate into our bodies. This intertwining, this penetration of surface and depth, “characterizes the entire body to a degree”

(Leder 1990: 51). We feel the wind chill our bones; we feel the warmth of another person's hand penetrate and warm our whole body. Children's first understanding of their bodies (according to Lacan's mirror stage) is of their skin as the limit of their spatial location, but Elizabeth Grosz points out that this observation by children is a misrecognition because their sensory and motor abilities are limited (1994: 39). The skin may appear to be the line that separates our bodies from others but it is merely a visual line. Our skin is not a barrier; it is a permeable film that allows our flesh and bodies to experience the exterior world.

The definition of skin as barrier may work in the visual field but not in the tactile. The sensations felt on the surface of our bodies are the most primitive and concrete of all of our sensations but they are not merely peripheral. As Elizabeth Grosz explains, "the information provided by the surface of the skin is both endogenous and exogenous, active and passive, receptive and expressive, the only sense able to provide the 'double sensation'" (1994: 35). This double sensation creates an "interface" between the inside and outside, not a border. The skin and the flesh are both inside and outside simultaneously; they function as both subject and object. "Subject and object, mind and body, the visible and the invisible, are intercalated . . . [flesh] is the chiasm linking and separating the one from the other" (Grosz 1994: 103).

Architecture has based its body paradigm solely on the exterior form and appearance of the body. A lived body paradigm for architecture would

consider the flesh of the body, the internal elements of the body, and the inter-connection between skin and flesh. It would acknowledge personal experience in the shaping of bodies instead of only noticing a body's form, color, or gender. A lived body paradigm for architecture would design for the whole body, its physiological needs and its psychological needs. Bodies have always been much more than just a surface. It is time for our body paradigms to acknowledge the body's depth.

## **5.2 The Lived Body is Soft, Wet, and Fluid, not just Hard and Dry**

Contemporary architecture does not value the fluidity of the body – its permeability, its wetness, or its softness. Architecture has been based on a body paradigm that ignores these aspects of bodies in favor of a hard, dry, and impermeable body. As Jennifer Bloomer describes, “Western architecture is, by its very nature, a phallogentric discourse: containing, ordering, and representing through firmness, commodity, and beauty” (1992: 72). Architects develop buildings that are very different from lived bodies. These designs ignore the fluidity of the body in favor of an architecture which strives for permanence and immortality. This architecture theorizes time as a single frozen moment, as opposed to a continuous, ever flowing wave. These designs are the result of Western society's repression of the fluid aspects of lived bodies.

Patriarchal culture ignores the wetness, softness, and permeability of bodies; it finds bodily fluids troubling. This is because body fluids do not



conform to the clear divisions between inside and outside that have been carefully preserved in Western dualistic society. Body fluids are both part of the body and separate elements; they are at the same time us and not us. "Body fluids attest to the permeability of the body, its necessary dependence on an outside, its liability to collapse into this outside (this is what death implies), to the perilous divisions between the body's inside and its outside" (Grosz 1994: 193). These fluids and parts of the body that are detached from it retain some of the value of the body. There is still something of the subject bound up in these objects (Grosz 1994: 81). Thus body fluids can not be defined as either part of the body or separate. Body fluids challenge the separation between our body and what is not our body.

Mucus is an undefinable element of bodies. Mucus and other body fluids are neither subjective nor objective. There is an indeterminacy in these fluids. When people's bodies touch and a layer of fluid forms between them the boundaries between self and other become undefinable. It becomes unclear as to which body is touching and which body is being touched. The division between subject and object breaks down (Grosz 1994: 107). Body fluids are at the same time solid and liquid; they attack the boundary between self and other.

The fluids of the body and gender are often associated with each other in Western culture. Women's bodies are associated with the fluids of the body, while men try to deny a connection between their body fluids and their bodies. Men's bodies are often regarded as solid and impermeable, while

women's bodies are described as leaking. Elizabeth Grosz writes that there "are virtually no phenomenological accounts of men's body fluids" (1994: 198). Men do not write of their body fluids, but plenty has been written on women's bodies propensities toward the production of fluids and their menstruation.

Much can be learned about the repression of the body's fluidity from how Western culture describes the body fluids of each sex. One of the only body fluids recognized from men's bodies is seminal fluid. The way seminal fluid is described in Western culture emphasizes the active, independent nature that men are assumed to have. Elizabeth Grosz writes "Seminal fluid is understood primarily as what it makes, what it achieves, a causal agent and thus a thing, a solid: its fluidity, its potential seepage, the element in it that is uncontrollable, its spread, its formlessness, is perpetually displaced in discourse onto its properties, its capacity to fertilize, to father, to produce an object" (1994: 199). Seminal fluid is regarded very differently from women's reproductive fluids. As Grosz points out, seminal fluid is an object, a creator, a thing. The liquid nature of men's reproductive fluids is hardened and solidified in order to erase the connection between the body and its seepages.

Body fluids are often associated with both women's bodies and women's sexuality. This association and patriarchal society's disdain for women and for bodily fluids can be seen in this statement by a professor of gynecology: "woman is an animal that micturates once a day, defecates once a week, menstruates once a month, parturates once a year and copulates

whenever she has the opportunity.”<sup>19</sup> Women’s corporeality itself is “inscribed as a mode of seepage” (Grosz 1994: 203). It is not that women’s bodies leak or seep more than men’s; it is just that women’s bodies have been given the task of representing fluidity. Elizabeth Grosz writes “there remains a broadly common coding of the female body as a body which leaks, which bleeds, which is at the mercy of hormonal and reproductive functions” (1994: 204). Women’s bodies are related in our society to their bodily fluids; they are considered unstable and constantly changing.

The devaluation of the fluidity of the body in patriarchal society is related to the valorization of the solid and determinate. Solid bodies are valued; thus men try to maintain solid, muscular bodies. But it is not acceptable for women’s bodies to attain this ideal. Women body-builders who attain a solid body are regarded as too masculine, lacking femininity. Women’s bodies are supposed to represent the softness of bodies, but this fluidity must be controlled and contained when interacting with others. In order for women’s bodies to attain this semi-solid model, their bodies must be confined and constrained. Thus women’s breasts are solidified by bras and the breasts that are valued are firm. Women also can solidify their bodies with girdles and tight undergarments which harden the softness of their bodies.

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<sup>19</sup> From W. Somerset Maugham, *A Writer’s Notebook*. (New York: Penguin Books, 1984) as quoted in Dworkin, page 194.

Architecture perpetuates Western culture's devalorization of the body's softness, wetness, and permeability by building architecture that is hard, dry and impermeable. An architecture that valued the lived body would acknowledge the fluid nature of bodies. A lived body paradigm for architecture might move away from phallogentric goals like permanence and hardness and develop new forms of architecture which were not so rigid. Architecture might change and evolve; it might be soft and wet. An architecture that used the lived body paradigm would design for the fluid, soft, and wet body. It might allow for the expression of these characteristics of bodies in the built form.

### 5.3 The Lived Body is Moving, not just Still

Most paradigms of the body in architecture regard the body as static. These bodies are represented in the static images of the body used in architecture: the Vitruvian man, the Modular man, and the figures drawn in *Graphic Standards*. These bodies are idealized and drawn in one position. According to Kent Bloomer these paradigms do not express the moving nature of bodies. For Bloomer the Vitruvian man is bounded, "singular, static, and idealized." (Figure 27) The modern paradigm of the body, represented by the Cartesian man, is "ignoble and pathetic," based only on concepts of weight, height, and measure. (Figure 28) The Modular man is merely an extension of the Cartesian man, being "too abstract" and "a little scary." (Figure 29) (Bloomer

1986: 23) These static images of the body have been the paradigms that have governed architecture.

The lived body is not static; its movements are an essential element of how a person lives in the world. As discussed in Chapter Three, the body moves and must move. Our very perceptions of the world are based on the ability of our bodies to move through space. Architecture must allow the movement of bodies; it must encourage movement. As Robert Yudell writes, "All architecture functions as a potential stimulus for movement, real or imagined. A building is an incitement to action, a stage for movement and interaction" (1977: 59).

An architectural paradigm of the body that expresses this movement can be found in Kent Bloomer's drawing of the Charles Moore man. (Figure 30) Bloomer describes this man as a figure that "might be expanding, turning, or contracting, and their might be two or more men functioning in a multiconcentric grouping with some standing still and others walking, ascending, or descending" (1986: 23). This paradigm of the body no longer ignores the moving body or tries to stabilize it. The Moore man paradigm expresses the movement of the lived body and the many positions the lived body can be in. Rakatansky's "gestic" body, discussed in Chapter Two, is another example of a body paradigm that acknowledges the movement of the lived body. Both Rakatansky and Moore develop architecture based on a moving body. Their designs value the lived body and use it as their body paradigm.

The work of the architect Bianca Lepori emphasizes and encourages the movements of the lived body in a specifically female environment. Lepori promotes the free movement of women in birthing places. Her designs challenge the doctor-centered designs of most birthing areas in hospitals and typical birthing rooms. By examining the actual movements of women who are allowed to move freely in a space, Lepori's work discovers women's natural movements when giving birth. Lepori finds that women who give birth in their homes rarely give birth in their bedrooms or on bed-like platforms in the center of a room. Women choose an individual territory which is protected and sheltered. Also a woman's path toward this spot is not direct, but is a spiral motion. (Figure 31)

Another discovery Lepori made about women who give birth at home is their need to move freely in a space. Lepori writes "The only thing they really need is not to be forced into a particular position. Even pain dissolves with movement; pain killers are a consequence of stillness" (1994: 84). Lepori's designs for two Italian hospitals allow for this free movement. Her designs incorporate the use of a birthing stool, a rope hung from the ceiling, and a pool. These features allow women to give birth in her own most comfortable position: to hang, kneel, bend over, or sit while giving birth. (Figures 32 & 33). By looking at women's actual bodily movements while giving birth, Lepori's architecture finds a solution for one type of space that is no longer based on the needs of doctors and institutions, but is based on the physical moving needs of women's lived bodies.

Another example of architecture that acknowledges the movement of the body through space can be found in the work of Eileen Gray. Gray's designs for spaces recognize the movement of the body, not as a direct line, but as a combination of paths. Gray's work acknowledges the lived body in design. Eileen Gray did not focus on abstract formulas or machine concepts to guide her designs; instead, her work revolves around the human being. She writes "Formulas are nothing, life is everything. . . Nowhere did we search for a line or a formula, for its own sake, everywhere we thought of the human being, his sensitivity and his need."<sup>20</sup> Her furniture was designed to open and to move in many different ways; it was often designed to adjust to the body's needs. "The primary focus of each object's design is the physical movement and comfort of the user" (1981: 70). In her designs for a wardrobe or chest of drawers, Eileen Gray allows some drawers to pivot while others pull out and still other spaces are revealed through a concealed door which might provide a space for shoes. (Figures 34 & 35)

An example of architecture that allows for the movement of the lived body between interior and exterior spaces can be seen in the work of R. M. Schindler. His house on King's Road in Los Angeles, California is an example of encouraged movement between interior and exterior spaces. Schindler uses patios and gardens as a liminal space between the interior spaces and the world outside of the house. Schindler surrounds the patios

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<sup>20</sup> From "E.1027: Maison en Bord de Mer." in *L'Architecture Vivante*, Paris/Winter 1929 quoted in Adam, page 225.

with the rooms of the house, creating a protected and sheltered outside space for the body to enjoy. (Figure 36) All of the rooms surrounding the patio spaces have glass doors which can be pushed to one side allowing the natural world to infiltrate these rooms. (Figure 37) The patios become exterior rooms of the house, while the interior rooms can be opened to the outside allowing a connection to the natural breezes, temperatures, and smells of nature. Interior and exterior are challenged in Schindler's house creating spaces that are neither fully inside nor totally outside. The lived body's need for movement are acknowledged.

#### **5.4 The Lived Body is Multiple and Changing over Time**

The paradigms of the body that have dominated architecture are of one singular body that stays constant over time. Architecture itself is assumed to stay constant and is idealized as staying exactly as it was originally built. But architecture and bodies change over time. A lived body paradigm for architecture would value change and the multiplicity of bodies: the different forms of bodies, changes of the body as it ages, changes of the inhabitants of a building, and changes in the materials in a building.

There is not one idealized form of the body; there are many bodies and many experiences which shape bodies. Philosophers have written of the body as one substance that is the same for all people, but the body is not singular. Chapters Five, Six, and Seven of Elizabeth Grosz's *Volatile Bodies*, examine how philosophers since Kant have seen the body as a surface which is written



on by society. These philosophers see the flesh as a formless, raw material, a "primary material" which is the point of departure from which all bodies are written on (1984: 118). This concept views the body as a *tabula rasa* (blank tablet or clean slate), or as an *a priori* element which is the same for all bodies. But not all bodies start the same; the body is not merely a generic lump which is then formed by society. Each body is different, not one substance but many different constructions of flesh. Philosophers' concepts of an *a priori* body perpetuate the same generalized body that other discourses have assumed. The idea of flesh as *a priori* assumes all bodies start from one form that is usually based on the male body. An alternative to this dominant philosophical view of the body as an *a priori* element is offered by the philosopher Spinoza. For him, the body is not a concrete element that can be known or essentialized in this way. Instead, the body is a product of its individual experiences. Moira Gatens describes: "The Spinozist account of the body is of a productive and creative body which cannot be definitively 'known' since it is not identical with itself across time. The body does not have a 'truth' or a 'true' nature since it is a process and its meaning and capacities will vary according to its context" (1996: 57).

Our phenomenological experience of the exterior world is not constant. Our bodies change over time, therefore the filter through which we experience the world is continually altered and modified throughout our lives. As Drew Leder explains in *The Absent Body*, "the body as a whole is always shifting . . . A phenomenological anatomy cannot then be thought of

as fixed over time, or even confined by the physical boundaries of the flesh. It must take account of the body as living process" (1990: 30). Our view of the world is in flux, and this is partially because our bodies are in a continual state of change. The size and shape of our bodies vary at different periods of our lives; our eyesight and hearing deteriorate as we age. All of these changes affect our conception of the world around us.

The lived experiences of people change as their bodies change, but lived experience is also affected by the bodies people have in society. The social rules governing how different bodies should act affect how a person lives in the world and how she or he experiences that world. Differences in race, class, gender, and sexuality all manifest themselves in the experiences of the lived body. The lived body is shaped by society: our interpretations of the world are not just biological, but are also affected by our social position. These differences generate a variety of experiences of the world. Therefore two people will not have the same experience. There is not just one way of knowing the world; there are many.

The work of some contemporary women architects leads us towards a more fluid and changing sense of space that acknowledges the needs of different bodies. Susana Torre shows an interest in rethinking the traditional dualistic concepts of architecture. She writes of trying to think of space as a "matrix", as something that changes but endures through time. This matrix space modifies the traditional divisions of space into enclosed rooms and critiques the hierarchy of spaces in the house (1981: 51). Torre does this by

creating rooms and spaces that are multi-functional. In her designs for a house for a family in Santa Domingo, she places three connecting rooms in a zigzag pattern and designs sliding doors in these rooms. These rooms can then be divided in many different ways. (Figure 38) Her design also allows for the changing needs of the family. The car entrance is an area left open for future additions. This space can be converted into a separate more private space for the young sister when she is older.

Instead of continuing the hierarchical ranking found in most houses, Torre challenges this hierarchy by creating her own. She breaks down the conventional distinctions between private and public, individual and shared, and proposes interaction between opposites (1981: 51). Her design for a house in Puerto Rico contains many different types of rooms, some private, others for shared, multiple uses. In this house Torre designs an opened living arcade which connects to most of the private rooms. (Figure 39) This shared space allows collective activities to happen and to extend into the private rooms. Two separate rooms are totally separate from this shared space. These rooms, a closed courtyard and a skylit room facing the ocean, allow a deeper sense of privacy for the family members. Here they can be alone or be more intimate with others.

A lived body paradigm for architecture would allow for the changing needs of the body and for the different inhabitants of a building. Noel Phyllis Birkby and Leslie Kanés Weisman recognize women's need for change. Through their workshops, they found that women's fantasy environments

often require and encourage this kind of change and adaptability. Three of their statements describe the need for change in architecture. They write that architecture should allow for “flexibility, adaptability and change” (1977: 116). Spaces would acknowledge that architecture is not static and monolithic, but is “manipulable, expanding and contracting” (116). An architecture based on women’s varied experiences would also regard “life as a mosaic of continuous experience” (116). These designs would use multicentered, fluid spaces as opposed to linear forms. Finally, these designs for architecture would recognize life’s complexity and ambiguity (116). Forms would be “open-ended and inclusive” instead of fixed and determinate. All of these requirements described by Birkby and Weisman assume a lived body paradigm for architecture. These design criteria recognize the changing and varied needs of people and their bodies and use this changability as the basis for design.

### **5.5 The Lived Body has Many Senses**

In modern Western society, sight has taken primacy over the other senses. Our other senses have been relegated to a periphery status, while our ability to see images has become our primary way of knowing and understanding the world. Since the time of the Greeks vision has been seen as a direct link to the mind and to knowledge (Grosz 1994: 97). Peter Eisenman describes this connection: “when I use the term vision I mean that particular characteristic of sight which attaches seeing to thinking, the eye to the mind” (1992: 557). The connection between sight and knowledge has encouraged the

development of visually-oriented technologies. But these technologies are not based on how living bodies perceive the world as they move; they are instead based on a fixed, unmoving eye.

The singular view point, expressed in perspective drawings and in photography, does not express the lived body's experience of the world, a moving experience. Susan Bordo writes, "The 'point of view' of the perspective painting, moreover, spatially freezes perception, isolating one 'moment' from what is normally experienced as part of a visual continuum" (1987: 64). The use of one point from which to draw a perspective or to take a photograph limits the descriptive image to one milli-second in time. Pallasmaa finds a better way of representing the lived body in a moving eye found in Baroque paintings. These paintings have "hazy edges, soft focus and multiple perspectives, presenting a distinct, tactile invitation, enticing the body to travel through the illusory space" (1996: 23).

A lived body paradigm for architecture would stop designing solely for the sense of sight and would begin to design for the others senses as well. Images of architecture have been based on the view of the eye represented either by a perspective drawing or a photograph, but our lived body experience of architecture requires all of the senses. Deena Metzger writes "to know everything at once requires that we utilize every sense" (1977: 5). Each sensory mode provides a different apprehension of one's embodiment. All of our senses open up into the external world in different ways. Without these senses – vision, hearing, touch, smell, and taste – we would not be able to

experience the outer world and ultimately our bodies as in that world (Leder 1990: 15).

The basic-orienting system, recognized by Gibson in the nineteen-sixties, allows us to balance our bodies in the world and gives us our postural senses of up and down and our knowledge of the ground plane (Bloomer & Moore 1977: 34). The basic-orienting senses help us to know the world in relation to our bodies: we are able to center ourselves and relate to the location of other people and objects through this system. The basic-orienting system is fundamental in the design of architecture. This system can distinguish the subtle slope of a floor or the slight tilt of a wall or ceiling. This system also warns us when a structure appears unstable. If the structural supports of a place we are standing seem under-supported, we feel uncomfortable and unstable. The basic-orienting system allows us to physically process our visual images of the world.

Another sense that allows us to process our visual images of the world is touch. We know the world through touch. Even sight is dependent upon touch. "Our first sense and the one that constitutes all our living space, all our environment: the sense of touch. . . Everything is given to us by means of touch, a mediation that is continually forgotten" (Irigaray 1993: 59). Without the ability to touch, we would be unable to gauge distances, outerness, or space. Unlike the other senses, which can be filtered out by closing our eyes or plugging our ears, or can be lost through blindness or deafness, our ability to touch defines us as living beings. If the tangible sense does not function, if we

are not touching, then our bodies are in a state of unconsciousness. To describe the importance of the sense of touch for our lived bodies, Didier Anzieu gives the example of burn victims who die when only one seventh of their skin has been destroyed. He states "The skin is so fundamental its functioning is taken so much for granted, that no one notices its existence until the moment it fails."<sup>21</sup>

Our ability to know the world through hearing sounds is often overlooked in contemporary architecture. This is probably because hearing is regarded as temporal and passive, while patriarchal society values the permanent and the active. Sound is the first sense that a baby uses to define what is outside of itself. Elizabeth Grosz writes that a child's first realization of something outside of themselves is the reaction to the voice of another (1994: 93). Whereas sight isolates the observer, sound incorporates and joins individuals. We communicate with each other through our ability to hear. The spoken word connects us and allows us to interact with others in society. Unlike vision which is focused in one direction, sound is omni-directional. It is everywhere at one time; it comes from many places. Sound bounces off surfaces and reverberates; it envelopes our bodies and surrounds us. Unlike sight which creates a sense of exteriority and distinction, sound creates the experience of interiority. Sound is felt inside of our bodies, it permeates us. We feel sound waves to the core of our bodies. A loud yell or sound can

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<sup>21</sup> From Didier Anzieu. *A Skin for Thought: Interviews with Gilbert Tarrab*. (London: Karnac, 1990) quoted in Grosz (1994) page 36.

physically jolt our bodies. Hearing is a spatial experience; it defines and aids the eye in describing the shape, depth and surfaces of spaces. Sound can measure space and define its scale (Pallasmaa 1996: 35). The reverberations from a wall give us a bodily understanding of how large or small a space is. Unlike vision which defines and makes distinct, sound mixes, joins, and merges. Whereas two images can be seen at the same time and can be clearly distinct, sound is often blurred and combined. Sounds mix with each other, creating new sounds.

Smell is a sense that can transport us through time and space. Often our most persistent memory of a place or a person is related to our sense of smell (Pallasmaa 1996: 37). When we smell a familiar scent, memories of past settings and experiences flood back to us. We re-enter the space or place where we first experienced that smell. Taste is linked to our sense of smell but relies on the mouth. Babies place objects in their mouths, not only to gauge their size and texture, but also to experience their variety of flavor and taste.

A lived body paradigm for architecture would value and design for all of these senses in design. Our modern ideas for architecture have revolved around the reification of the eye. Le Corbusier's emphasis on mass and form defines an architecture of purely visual sensations. Architecture has turned into advertisement; buildings are based on their ability to catch our attention and architects their skill at creating images and objects (Pallasmaa 1996: 19). The loss of tactility and detail in architecture has led to buildings that are



“repulsively flat, sharp-edged, immaterial and unreal” (Pallasmaa 1996: 20). New architecture must be designed without this emphasis on sight; architecture must design for all of the senses of the lived body.

How light is used in architecture can enhance the body’s sensual experience of a place. Many modern architects, like Le Corbusier, conceived of light in overly mechanical terms. “For Le Corbusier, light is the mechanism that delineates forms clearly as geometric objects” (Colin St. John Wilson 1995: 18). But this limited perception of light misses the bodily effects it has and the complex, ever-changing nature light possesses. Architects who understand the complex nature of light view it, not as a mechanism, but as a “subtle constantly changing medium that envelops and vivifies all our activities at all times and all season” (Colin St. John Wilson 1995: 18). Light is often seen as an element that affects only what we see, but the qualities light can provide go well beyond our ability to see. Our bodies react to light; our haptic senses respond to different levels of light. The sunlight on our bodies provides a very different experience from the cool sensation of being in the shadows. Light also affects how a room smells. When we enter a space that has been warmed by the sun, we smell the warmth; when we are in a dark, cool space our sense of smell triggers a different reaction.

Because architecture is an art for the body in space, it must try to engage all of the senses; it must be for more than just visual pleasure. Eileen Gray was a keen observer of the short comings of modern architecture. Her work provides a provocative challenge to dominant modernism. Gray followed

the aesthetics outlined by the modern masters but did not lose the importance of the bodily senses in design. She designed for more than just the eye's pleasure; she designed for the whole body's comfort and enjoyment. She writes "The poverty of modern architecture stems from the atrophy of sensuality. Everything is dominated by reason in order to create amazement without proper research. The art of the engineer is not enough if it is not guided by the primitive needs of men" (quoted in Adam 1987: 216). Her buildings allowed light to caress her clean forms and furniture. Movable metal shutters at the ceiling level allowed the inhabitant to control the amount of light in the room for different seasons. (Figure 40)

Her buildings and her furniture were designed with the pleasure of all of the senses in mind. Gray was sensitive to the unpleasant smells that some rooms would produce. She designed her kitchens to be remote from the rest of the house and provided ample ventilation to air-out the smells that often collect while cooking (Adam 1987: 214). Gray also designed her furniture with respect for our sense of hearing. She designed a dining room table out of cork, in order to decrease the noise of dishes and silverware being placed on it. (Figure 41) Gray's work also emphasized the sense of touch. Her designs for buildings included luxurious rugs and her furniture was often made of rich, warm materials like lacquered wood, leather, and fur.

An architecture of the senses incorporates more than just the experiences of the senses; it provides room for the imagination to roam. An architect whose architecture embraces the sensual qualities of lived bodies

and provides space for the imagination is Charles Moore. Moore writes “what is missing from our dwellings today are the potential transactions between body, imagination, and environment” (Bloomer & Moore: 1977: 105). Architecture must invite the body’s interaction by providing spaces to touch, lean, sit, or gather within the building. Architecture must also invite the body through color, texture, and variety of spaces. Moore’s design for his own condominium in Los Angeles expresses a sensuality of textures and colors. Moore provides a comfortable place for the body to sit and rest while looking out a window, and provides clear-story windows which allow light to filter down into the space. (Figure 42) His house in Sea Ranch, California is richly detailed and colored. His use of multi-story spaces give the sense of openness in this design. (Figure 43) His use of richly colored redwood paired with the painted walls of the kitchen invite the inhabitant to touch the wood.

Bernard Maybeck is another architect whose work triggers the imagination and the senses. His designs for the Christian Science Church in Berkeley combines sensual elements that invite bodily interaction with their surfaces and designs that push the imagination to new levels. In his Christian Science Church, Maybeck used a combination of natural materials from the area and modern factory-made materials. He used asbestos panels and factory sash for the exterior walls of the church and combined them with cement and redwood trusses. (Figure 44) This rich combination of materials incorporated modern technologies while still retaining the beauty and sensuality of an older era. His redwood trusses and detailed cement columns

in the front of the church are subtly detailed and imaginative. (Figure 45) The patterning of the columns and the warm color of the redwood invite the body to touch the textures of his buildings and provide visual variety that entices the imagination. Maybeck's incorporation of naturally growing vines brings another sensual element to the building. The vines provide smells for the body to enjoy and with a light breeze the sound of leaves rustling can be heard.

The work of the Greene brothers in Pasadena, California also offers a rich architecture for the senses. Their Gamble House is an elegantly detailed work of craftsmanship. The joinery of the wood work is exposed in many place of the house encouraging the inhabitant to examine and reflect on how the wood was combined. (Figure 46) The wood was also rubbed to a glass-like finish in order to invite the touch. The entry space of the house gives a warm, inviting feeling to the inhabitant, offering spaces to sit and wood joinery to touch and examine. The beautifully detailed stained glass doors of the house also stimulate the senses. The glass allows the light to enter the space with a variety of colors, and the hand is encouraged to touch the beautiful wood work of the door and the design of the glass. (Figure 47)

All of these architectural examples emphasize and encourage the body's enjoyment in a space. These buildings are not just an architecture for the eye, but use aspects of material, light, color, and texture to design for all the senses of the lived body. Contemporary architecture must stop designing only for the eye. The past eighty years of architecture have led to cold

buildings that alienate the body. The next phase of architecture must learn from the mistakes made in the past. Our buildings must be designed for the lived bodies that inhabit these spaces today.

### **5.6 The Lived Body has Needs that Must be Addressed**

Unlike other art forms that can exist only for their own sake, architecture is an art that has to address human needs. Many architects using the modern and postmodern paradigms of the body have regarded architecture as a fine art. These designs have focused on the form and image of a building with little regard for the needs of the people who will use the buildings. Architecture that has not focused exclusively on formal strategies and stylistic play but has been based on the practical needs of lived bodies has been relatively ignored by architectural historians and critics. Architecture must be based on meeting the needs of bodies that inhabit buildings. Architecture is not just decoration; it is a practical art that fulfills a purpose. "A practical art always has promises to keep; in the sense in which it is answerable to a way of life, architecture is grounded in the ethical" (Colin St. John Wilson 1995: 41).

Architecture for lived bodies would be designed for the needs of the people who inhabit buildings. Architecture can fulfill these needs through a variety of solutions; there is not one stylistic answer to a lived body paradigm for architecture. Form is less important in design that values the lived body; many forms can be used. What is most important in designing for the lived

body is meeting the needs of the inhabitants of the building: programatically, physically, and emotionally.

An architectural team whose designs addressed the many needs of lived bodies is Alvar Aalto and Aino Aalto. Their design for the student residence hall, Baker House, at MIT shows an attention to detail and an understanding of how students live in a residence hall that are rarely seen in contemporary student housing. Their design revolves around the specific needs of students in a residence hall but provides for more than just these practical needs. The form of Baker House itself expresses the movement of the students inside. (Figure 48 & 49) The side of the building that faces the river is curved, allowing the largest square footage possible for rooms to face the river. In this way the Aaltos provide visual enjoyment to the students and a visual connection to the city of Boston. The other side of Baker House is more geometric and houses the stairwells and storage spaces necessary for a residence hall of this size.

The stairway is an important element of the Baker House design. Aalto designed a "cascading" staircase which ascends from the lower level and connects all of the floors. This staircase connects to the smaller lounges on each floor, allowing multiple points of contact and meeting which are so important in creating a sense of community. The program did not include student lounges, but the Aaltos included three on each floor. These smaller intimate spaces, added to the recreational rooms on the first levels, create

many gathering spaces for students to meet, study, talk, play games, or watch television.

Another element of Baker House that moves beyond merely solving practical needs, are the different shapes of the rooms produced by the curved form of the building. (Figure 50) The rooms are labeled as either a "pie", "coffin", or "couch" by the students because of their shapes. These differences in room shape promote a sense of individuality and this encourages the students to make the room their own. As Colin St. John Wilson writes, "the variations in shape and size of the individual rooms stimulated a rich framework for improvised participation by the inhabitants. The rooms ranged from one to three occupants and the diversity of the shape is reflected in the way the students labeled them" (1995: 100).

The examples in this chapter present architecture that values the lived body in design. Many of these architects have been cited in more than one section because their architecture acknowledges more than one of the lived body's needs. Architecture must be designed to acknowledge the flesh of the body, to meet the needs of the fleshy body. Lived body architecture would also be designed for the needs of the fluid, wet, and soft body. Another need of the lived body is freedom to move. Architecture should allow for free comfortable movement, and architects should be careful that their designs do not restrict the movement of some bodies while encouraging the movement of other bodies. A lived body architecture would also value the multiplicity and changing qualities of bodies. No two lived bodies are exactly alike or will

stay constant. This adaptability and change must be acknowledged in architecture. Architecture must also be designed for the senses. Our lived body experience of architecture is so much more profound that can be described in visual images of architecture. People live in architecture; they grow, change, learn, and die in buildings. These experiences involve all of the senses of the body. Architects must design for the many bodies that use their buildings to enrich the experiences of these multiple bodies as they lived in the world.



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