# WOMEN AND THE CITY
Women's Studies in Architecture in the Post-Feminist Era
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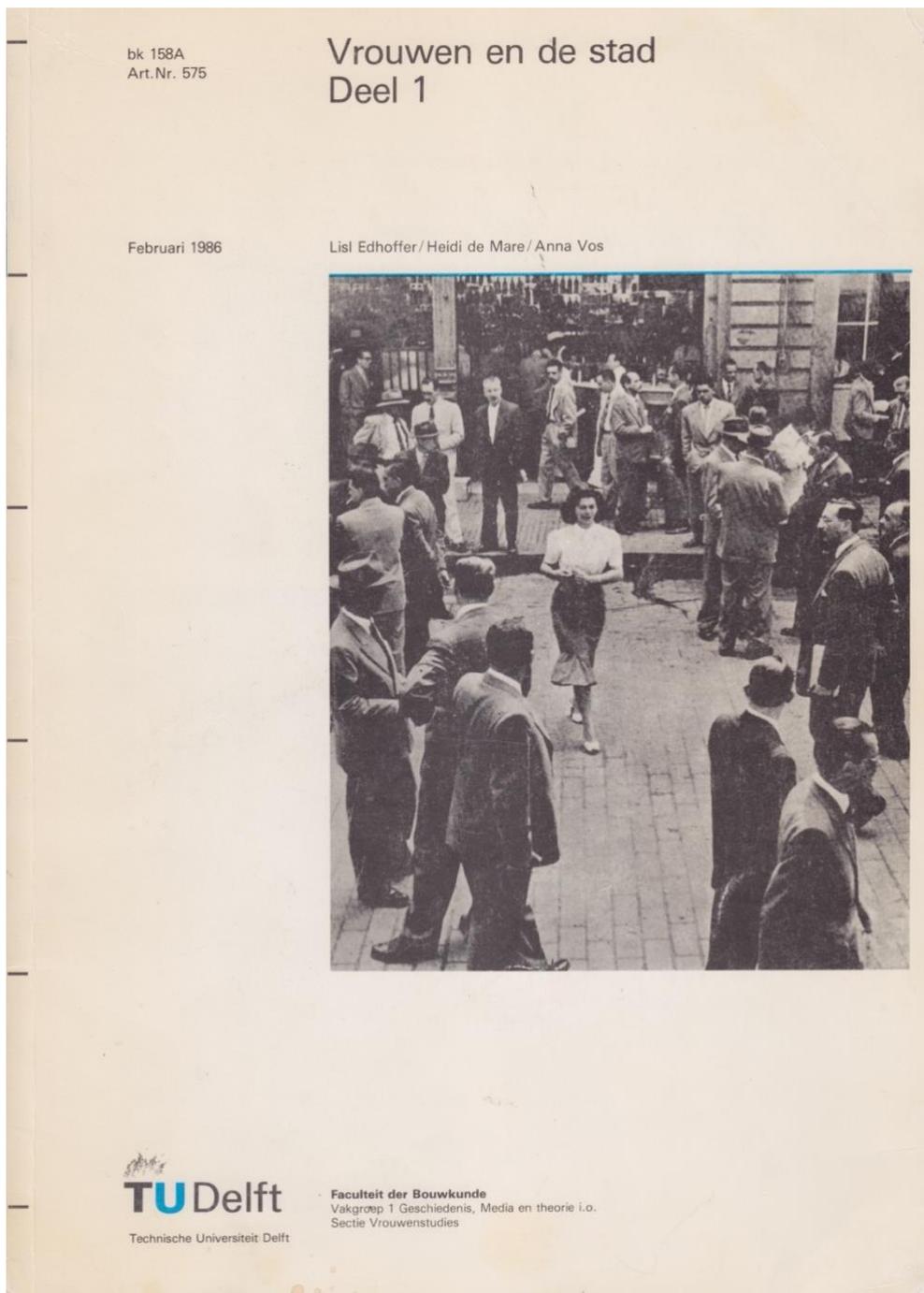
WOMEN AND THE CITY

CONTENT

Heidi de Mare – Anna Vos – Lisl Edhoffer

Women and the city

Heidi de Mare

From housewife to women's house, from men's house to houseman.
A first delineation of the object of women's studies in architecture

Anna Vos
From housing to architecture, from urban design to city

Heidi de Mare – Anna Vos – Lisl Edhoffer

Women and the city

A PHOTO JOURNAL
RUTH ORKIN
Author of
A WORLD THROUGH MY WINDOW

1981 New York: The Viking Press. Photo on cover: 'American girl in Italy' 1951

WOMEN AND THE CITY

CONTENT

Compared to the original text, the references have been arranged in a different way. Additional explanations or comments have been added in the notes. Illustrations have been adapted.

Women's Studies in Architecture in the Post-Feminist Era

The topic of building and dwelling has been in the spotlight of the women's movement and women's studies for a number of years. In the Department of Architecture, that history dates back to 1978.[1]

During the Summer University for Women's Studies (in 1981 at the University of Amsterdam), women met for the first time specifically on this topic. At the Winter University (in 1983 at the Catholic University in Nijmegen), the interest appeared to have become even greater. In the same year, the *Stichting Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen* [Foundation Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen] was established, uniting all women who feel involved one way or another in the area of building and dwelling. More 'limited' consultative bodies are the NIROV association (1983), and the G.S. thematic network 'dwelling and the position of women' (1979).[2] By now, 10 years after the turbulent start of the second feminist wave, the theme of building and dwelling seems to have become established in the women's movement. But not just that. Public opinion has also become woman-building-sensitive. The day, on which the *Stichting Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen* was launched, made it to the national TV news, where the woman-friendly undefined floor plan was also shown. Two exhibitions have been held in the meantime: *Ruim onvoldoende* [Ample insufficient] (1984) and *de ZIJ-kant van BOUWEN* [the (Ot)HER-Side of BUILDING].[3] And last but not least, on a more official and institutional level, some things have come through: there is no longer a civil service without a women's group, no report is published anymore, no theme day is organized without the representation of 'the women's point of view', there is no University of Technology rector anymore who is not proud of 'his women'. And so, the vacancy for women's studies at Architecture has been filled for a year now.

At first glance, this is a positive development, given the years of toiling and sputtering on the margins. As difficult as the beginning was, the tide is now favorable. At second glance, however, a number of problems do appear to have arisen. The popularization of the theme makes 'the women's point of view' accessible to everyone; 'people' already know in advance what that is, what women think and want, in short, what is good for women. The 'woman' may well be technical and have knowledge about building, but she remains special: her interest, her point of view, she herself, can be added to anything: the compact city and women, high-rise buildings and women, the zoning plan and women, etc. and women.[4] Is sex difference merely confirmed, albeit in a different way?

The fact that the number of women, studying at the University of Technology and in particular in the Department of Architecture, is steadily increasing – this academic year 1985/1986, 40% of the first-year students are women – could be interpreted as a success; the tide has really turned. But at the same time, this makes it look as if there were no longer any problems at all. Who cares about the women's movement in 1985? The women's movement itself has become established, women's issues have been integrated into everyday life, women's studies has become a core elective. Has the post-feminist era arrived? Is this, paradoxically, the other side of the coin of popularization?

In the Department of Architecture, things are indeed a bit different than they were some 10 years ago. Apart from the new generations and the reprogramming in the two-phase structure, a number of factors are of interest: first, the developments in the discipline of architecture/urbanism itself, and second, the developments within women's studies in general.[5]

Women's critique of 'building and dwelling' is comprehensive in several senses. First, building is quite different from dwelling. But building and dwelling are not the same for everyone either. In short, there are quite a few people in various positions involved. At various gatherings, such as that of the *Stichting Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen* or on the occasion of the opening of the exhibition *de ZIJ-kant van BOUWEN*, we meet everyone: female architects, carpenters, contractors, 'woonbewustmaaksters' [dwelling awareness makers], members of the women's advisory committees, municipal officials, policy officers, residents, researchers, etc..

Second, if we then limit ourselves to those women who are engaged in education and research on the topic, it appears that several disciplines have 'access' to this field: social geography, urban planning, sociology, psychology, andragogy, (art) history, traffic engineering, and we, architecture.

Third, the object on which the feminist critique focuses can hardly be delineated. The whole range, from house to city to regional plan, in short, the whole of spatial planning, is denounced. Numerous 'general' themes are associated with that range, from labor and domestic labor to sexuality and sexual violence. Moreover, it involves issues as diverse as program, concept, form, practice, management, and regulation.

Fourth, the question is whether a denominator can be found under which the divergent goals could be brought together. The denominator 'women's interests' or 'women' does not simply bridge differences between contractors and architects, between policymakers and researchers, differences that have to do with the limits and possibilities of their positions, in which they can sometimes find themselves at odds with each other.

It will be clear that women's studies, and in particular women's studies in the Department of Architecture, cannot be, or rather does not want to be, 'everything' mentioned here. This introduction aims to delineate our part of the whole, to describe our specific position and hence our possibilities and responsibilities for and towards *Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen* on the one hand, and 'Architecture' on the other.

1. WOMEN BUILDING DWELLING

1.1. Women and Building and Dwelling, the feminist critique

A brief look back into the past. In 1977 the first feminist articles on the built environment appeared in the Netherlands. Nellien de Ruiter, in 'Bouwen op Vrouwen: letterlijk en figuurlijk' [Building on Women: literally and figuratively], presents 'incitements to a feminist building philosophy' (1977: 21). She argues that feminism, in contrast to emancipatory developments, is capable of transforming the masculine dwelling and lifestyle culture as well as the construction industry. To this end, the feminine characteristics (of women ánd men) must be developed and recognized. The aim is:

> 'to raise human society to a qualitative level, without disregarding the intellectual qualities, respecting the natural, the essential and the emotional in man' (Idem: 22).

More concrete, but also more straightforward, is a second article: 'Het is altijd rustig in de nieuwbouwwijken' [It's always quiet in the suburbs] also from 1977. In it, Henriette van Eys and Hedy d'Ancona point out the important role that the dwelling situation plays with regard to the possible development of women, respectively the obstruction of it. The starting point for the argument is the suburban area, which, with its functional separation of dwelling-working, is characterized, among other things, by the absence of various facilities that, in connection with its exclusive residential function, are not considered efficient. This is a residential environment that 'reflects our capitalist, paternalistic society'. At the same time, this residential environment offers the perfect guarantee that everything else will remain the same: paid jobs for men, housewifery for women. In addition to measures with regard to employment, reduction of working hours and the division of labor in the household, drastic changes must also be made in the field of spatial planning in order to promote the emancipatory tendencies: integration between dwelling – working, improving and expanding facilities, a multitude of housing types, and more attention to variety and recognizability (D'Ancona and Van Eys 1977: 31).

From the outset, a number of issues and tendencies have emerged in feminist criticism, which to this day largely define it. In the following, these basic aspects of feminist discourse will be explained through a reordering and systematization.

The working method that has been followed needs some clarification. What we do nót do is (re)tell a chronological story from the beginning (1970s) to the end (today) and indicate the developments. What we do, is provide one specific reading of a number of texts. This is based on a few presuppositions:

1. We assume that there is a feminist discourse on building and dwelling that constitutes a unity despite the heterogeneity of the stories. In this feminist discourse, different stories can be told, which may function as each other's alternative, elaboration, etc., but which continue to move within, and comply with the framework, which we call the feminist discourse.

2. To the feminist critiques we count all possible views on and descriptions of the relationship between women and architecture, which can differ both at the same time and over time. That is, views that are now considered 'outdated', for example, as belonging to an earlier phase of theory formation, are also part of the feminist discourse.
3. Despite the differences, there is one framework – the feminist discourse – within which the critiques are articulated, in order to understand each other. That is, there must be agreement on the issues that are addressed, the kinds of questions they are cast in, the connections that are made. In this way, a kind of internal logic is established.

By just following the texts 'literally', we would merely be telling the same story again. However, we want to accurately trace the composition of feminist discourse. To do so, it will be necessary to interrupt the historically logical flow of statements itself. Only then can the structure of a text and its relationship to other texts be named. Only then can all the elements that compose the women-building-dwelling-ensemble – regardless of their historical differences in terms of the dates of the statements – be related to each other. Thus, a major progress in thought may turn out to be nothing more than an alternative of the same story, leaving the foundations of thought unchanged. In short, what we are attempting to do is reordering the sequence of feminist critiques. As opposed to a chronological one, we are carrying out a structuralist analysis, i.e., a synchronous approach to the text(s).[6]
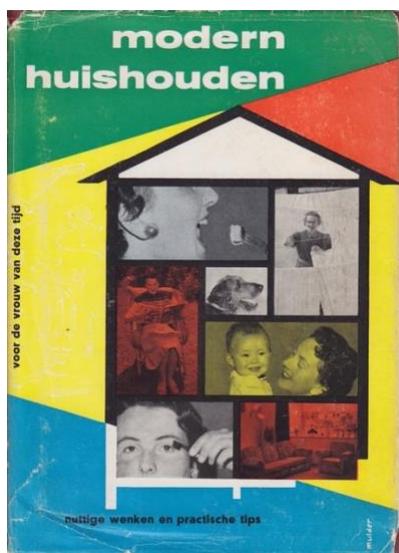
ca. 1950   1970   1980

a. Women's oppression and power inequality between the sexes.
In this analysis we use quotations from texts written in the context of *Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen*, but which are of a more far-reaching, general character, i.e., express a vision of the position of women.

> 'In the context of women's studies, it is important to recognize that relationships between the sexes in the private sphere are not "natural" relationships, but power relations that have acquired their specific form in conjunction with and under the

influence of a specific form of society. These power relations have existed much longer than capitalism, but the specific form of relations as they exist today developed during capitalism and the related process of industrialization and urbanization' (Van Schendelen, Vehmeyer and Verloo 1982: 15).

Patriarchal power is multifaceted and works in many areas to keep women in a subordinate position; women are often economically dependent on men: the man is cost winner and carries out his (paid) work outside the home, while the woman is expected to perform (unpaid) household work, while also having a nurturing and educational role as a mother. Due to the lack of opportunity for many housewives to use the car (which the husband needs for his job outside the home), running errands by bicycle or walking with the children, confirms their subordinate position. As public transport is not well organized, visiting hospitals, relatives, or friends, attending courses or having a (paid or voluntary) job outside the home becomes an almost unfeasible (luxury) event for these women. Consequence: isolation.

> 'For both man and woman, the separation of dwelling and working is an inconvenience that strengthens isolations and robs time and energy' (De Ruiter 1977: 23).

In addition to this power inequality based on division of labor by sex, which gives men more power and status than women, there are other mechanisms that produce and reproduce this oppression of women.

> 'To regulate this "division of labor", there exists in our society a system of values and norms that encompasses not only the division of labor between men and women, but also the social relations by which it is determined that men should behave "masculine" and women "feminine". This manifests itself in dominant ideas about attitudes and behaviors inside and outside the home with an accompanying complicated process of socialization through upbringing and education' (Van Schendelen, Vehmeyer and Verloo 1982: 11).

These ideological ideas and processes determine, for example, what sexuality is (namely: heterosexual and masculine: female sexuality is suppressed). But it also conditions, for example, the choice that girls make for 'girl professions', and boys for 'boy professions.' In short, patriarchal-capitalist society produces a difference between man and woman, whereby women have less power and are excluded from that which is allowed to men.

> 'The world of men, the public sphere of politics, state, law, politicians, army, science, and culture is considered the world of power. Women do not have access to it; they belong to the private sphere: the sphere of emotions, nurturing, household and family' (Idem: 14).

Some feminist demands aimed at eliminating this oppression of women can be summarized as follows. There should be a redistribution of paid work outside the home between the two sexes, but also domestic work inside the home (and unpaid) should be done by both men and women. In addition, more women should hold public positions, where they can exercise

power and influence in areas that particularly affect them (including building and dwelling). But along with breaking role patterns by appropriating what has always been attributed to men, there is a second feminist demand.

> 'We assume that traditionally feminine values in our society are undervalued compared to traditionally masculine ones' (Loeffen and Overdijk 1983: 36).

And it is these values that need to be revalued within the framework of feminism, and this for both men and women.

1977   1977   1982

b. The 'spatial side of women's oppression'.[7]

The starting point of the feminist critique of the built environment coincides with the first steps of feminist theorizing: the 'discovery' of the function of domestic labor for capitalism, of the private sphere, provides the first theoretical underpinning.

Our society divides the population into two categories: the 'powerful' men working outside the home and the housewives who are locked up and plodding inside the home. Together with the important place that the theme of the 'nuclear family' occupies within theorizing, a framework is created from which spatial policy and planning are challenged.

> 'That the problems are also related to our way of dwelling remains invisible, because walls cannot move, and we cannot change our dwelling. (...) It is logical that we women often translate our dwelling problems into problems with ourselves, our relationships, children, unemployment, finances, etc. (...). That's were solutions are sought and frustrations are passed on, which actually belong to the dwelling situation' (*Vrouwen Bouwen & Wonen* 1983: 63).

In recent years, women's experiences with all kinds of aspects that occur in modern society have been increasingly associated with architecture and urban planning.

> 'Our life together takes place against the backdrop of the built environment. Moreover, the built environment is a reflection of the way people live (Loeffen, Overdijk et al. 1985: 6). The space in which we live is ordered by building in a

tangible way. This ordering has a historical character. So, the built environment does not always give a recent picture of society, but also reflects the social life of the past. Because our society is changing at a rapid pace, the environment can impede this development' (Idem: 8).

'The built environment has become a petrified version of society and can therefore lag behind social developments' (Idem: 6).

'We can (...) state that in the current housing and urban planning it is already impossible to live in an emancipated way. What we build today we cannot demolish tomorrow, we are stuck with it for decades, if not centuries' (De Ruiter 1977: 23).

Van Meijel et.al. (eds.) 1982   The (ot)Her side of Building 1985   1980

Initially, the oppressive nature of the 'single-family house in the suburb' was the main point of criticism. This criticism extended to problems such as the lack of amenities in the residential area, poor public transport, inadequate and inaccessible employment, street safety, allocation policies, legal regulations, and the building process as a whole.

> 'The built environment proves to be important in all kinds of issues raised in the women's movement. Goals and demands, such as the pursuit of equality in power between men and women and related equal opportunities inside and outside the home, are impeded by the design of the built environment. For example, the location of the home determines the degree of accessibility to all kinds of facilities outside the home. Both the layout of the home and the spatial organization of neighborhood, district and region closely match and confirm the prevailing power relations within and outside the single family' (Van Schendelen, Vehmeyer and Verloo 1982: 9).

The insight of the far-reaching separation between private and public as one of the mechanisms through which the oppression of women is organized can, it turns out, be concretely proven and demonstrated at the level of the arrangement of spaces. In this

context, the separation of functions (dwelling, working, traffic, recreation), the 'inaccessibility' of public spaces for women, the home as 'shelter and refuge' (for the man) versus the home as 'the place of hard work, isolation and oppression' (for the woman), the hierarchical distribution of spaces within the home (in accordance with the power relationship between the sexes) respectively the lack of a room 'of their own' for women, are the key points of criticism. This approach renders the built environment as a reflection or expression of the already existing societal system in which sex differences hold a specific place and function. However, the built environment would not only be a materialization of this sex difference, but also active in maintaining it: it is capable of dictating and organizing the sex relations of a society or impeding changes. Stahl argued the connection between architecture and the ordering of human life as follows:

> 'When we assume that:
> a) every human society takes place within a certain – also depending on societal conditions – architectural framework, and
> (b) the architectural framework in turn is the visible expression of changes in human traffic patterns, and
> c) the architectural framework is instrumental in creating and respectively changing human interactions,
> then we can assume that changes in the family form through mutual changes in societal relations are expressed in corresponding architectural conceptions. Therefore, a history of the home must also reveal a history of the family' (Stahl 1982: 56).

In summary, we would characterize such a view of architecture, prompted by insights into the societal position of women, as *the reflection theory*. Consistently in light of the reflection theory, 'functionalist thinking' in architecture and urban planning is then identified as the source of all evil.

> 'Designing as a means to achieve a building product organizes space through functions. This thinking in categories of residents and activities has a restrictive effect on the possibilities of people to use the built environment' (Loeffen, Overdijk et al. 1985: 11).

Urban design and architecture based on the distinction of functions – dwelling, working, traffic, recreation, and dwelling, eating, cooking, sleeping, playing, sitting – thus determines (and limits) the lives that people lead/ suffer. Or as Van Eys states, extending this to Spatial Planning in general, it is after all the decisions made there that largely determine our lives (Van Eys and Van Wijk 1984: 54).

A third step taken is to see urban design and architecture as exclusively the result of this functionalist thinking. The form of the buildings would be derived from the functions they contain; on the other hand, buildings allow due to their form only a limited selection of utilitarian functions. Because the functions included are part of a far-reaching societal program, architecture is in its form able to reflect and make productive the societal intentions. With which the circle is then complete. As a way out, the existence of an 'other' architecture is postulated.

'The question is in what way changing the power relation between women and men can be expressed in the approach to the building process and in the design of the built environment' (Loeffen, Overdijk et al. 1985: 13).

So, it should be possible to formulate a feminist 'societal' program and translate it into design. The designed products should both reflect and be an instrument of the societal order, in which sex and power relations are organized 'differently'. In line with the reflection theory (in a negative sense), is the suggestion of a built environment that would reflect the 'real' expectations, wishes, demands and desires of women. The connection made between a particular arrangement of spaces and the specific experiences of women in this space is causal in nature. And this allows the idea of the existence of a built environment that could play an active role in the 'liberation' of women or as a 'woman-friendly' environment.

1977 [1903]   1977 [1948]   1982   1986
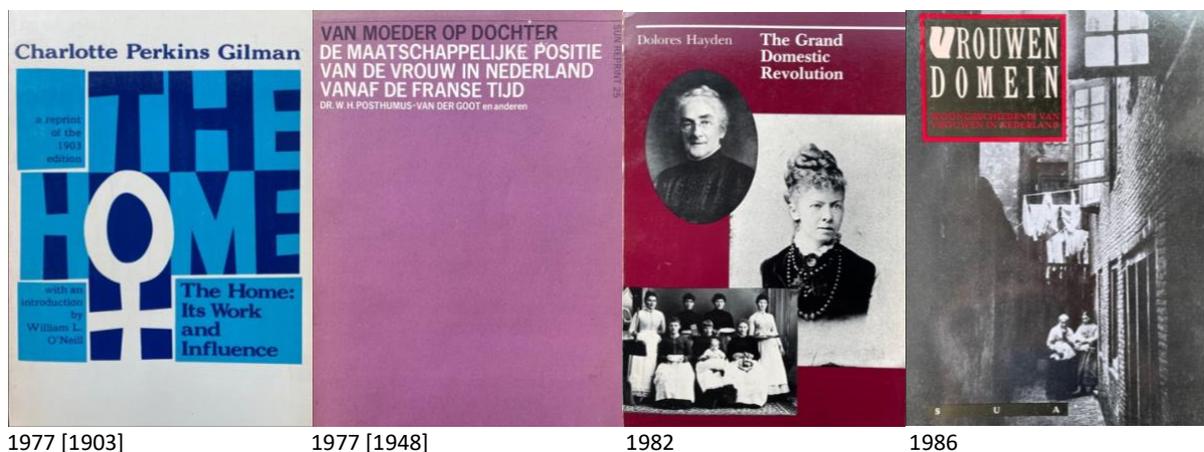
c. Women ánd ... typically female issues?

'Public space has so far been naturally examined as a male sphere, and not problematized as such. (...) Women's association with the private sphere, according to Zaretsky, is the earliest and most persistent source of male domination and misogyny. As a result of the private sphere being seen as women's territory, not much research has been done into the dwelling as the private space par excellence' (Van Schendelen, Vehmeyer and Verloo 1982: 14–15).[8]

While in the preceding paragraph, following Mossink (1981), one is somewhat critical of the comprehensiveness and self-evidence of the conceptual couple of private-public, at the same time one claims these concepts 'to indicate the *spatial* separation of the sexes' (Van Schendelen, Vehmeyer and Verloo 1982: 14, italics in original). Research into the dwelling thus remains research into the dwelling as private space, while 'public' becomes something outside.

'In researching the field of dwelling, it is important not to limit oneself to social relations and the material environment outside the house, in other words outside what is called the private sphere. The distribution of space within the dwelling and

the social relations within the dwelling are also essential in this respect' (Van Schendelen, Vehmeyer and Verloo 1982: 15).
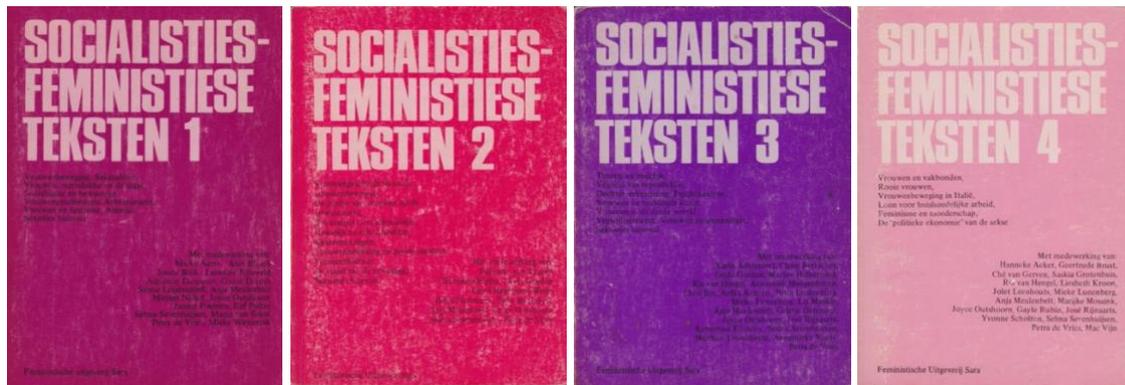
1978   1978   1979   1980

In the period 1978-1989 11 nrs. were published

In short, the spatial separation is taken for granted (and thus reproduced), as the following excerpt from *de ZIJ-kant van BOUWEN* (Loeffen, Overdijk et al. 1985) shows:

> 'The notion of "dwelling" can be illustrated by two films. "Les rendez-vous d'Anna" by Chantal Akerman shows a woman who is on a continuous journey. She exists in the encounters with others. Because she is constantly on the move, it is not clear in the film whether Anna "dwells".
> The lack of a "dwelling"-place makes it difficult to identify with her. After all, it is hard to imagine a life without a place of rest, without a place where you can fully come to yourself. Such a place need not be linked to a dwelling; not always is the dwelling actually a "dwelling"-place. Moreover, living can encompass a much wider area than the dwelling, such as a city or a region.
> Another movie is "Nathalie Granger" by Marguerite Duras. In this film, two women are constantly in the same house. No actual encounters with the outside world take place. In this film too, there is little identification possible with the main characters, at most with the little Nathalie who leaves the house and goes into the forest. The two women remain strangers.
> For the concept of "dwelling" two aspects are important, namely that there is a more or less place of one's own – "what it is all about" – and that from there relationships are made with the surrounding world' (Loeffen, Overdijk et al. 1985: 6, 8).

The issues scrutinized in feminist criticism are an extension of the above view on the world (and on films), in which women and men are spatially separated in places outside and inside the dwelling.

But moreover, the issues inside and outside the house to which feminist criticism attaches itself are characterized by the fact that it is (critical) women who 'run into' and 'stumble over' them. It is a series of obstacles and barriers that present themselves to the feminist eye as a matter of course. These include 'the single family', 'the kitchen', 'the outdoor-working-husband-with-car', 'curbs', and 'sexual violence in parks and tunnels', which will be looked at in more detail here.

A thorn in the side of feminist criticism is the policy of the government, which, while statistics show that the number of families in our country is in constant decline, focuses the vast majority of its housing program on the construction of family homes. Oddly enough, feminist criticism also focuses preeminently on the family, and feminist historical research regarding the built environment also exhibits, with few exceptions, the same fixation on the family. The history of public housing remains the history of the family, where parallel to the development of housing types it is possible to describe how all women became housewives (Stahl 1982). The question of 'deviant groups' comes up only on rare occasions, and even then, continues to relate to what it is not: the nuclear family as norm (Bentinck and Vos 1981; Cremers 1982).

In addition to interest in the single family, attention is paid, for example, to the history of the kitchen, as a traditionally typically female domain. For example, in 'De "rationele" keuken in Nederland en Duitsland' [The 'rational' kitchen in the Netherlands and Germany], Boot et al. examine how the (discussion about the) rationalization of housing proceeded (Boot, Hamersveld, Roding 1982). They sketch a picture of the backgrounds of the zeal for rationalization in housekeeping and in doing so reveal much that is worth knowing. However, the moment they ask about the meaning of this development for women, the concern to reconstruct leads to unrelenting thinking in terms of cause and effect. History provides evidence for the ever-increasing separation of public and private spheres, for an ever-closer attachment of women to the house – as slaves of the household, 'met als enkel *recht* het *aanrecht*' [with the sole *right* to the *kitchen sink* = women belong to the kitchen]. 'Thus, the circle is complete', they (rightly) observe at the end of the article (Idem: 347).

Moving now from indoors to outdoors, we can see that many feminist critiques implicitly assume that women do not have access to a car. The suburban areas would be 'pleasant to live in' for car users (i.c. men), Van Eys and Van Wijk argue, 'after all, one can easily get out for all kinds of activities' (Van Eys and Van Wijk 1984: 51). However, since it would always be the man, and not the woman, who would need the car (in connection with work outside the house), the spatial planning of these urban areas would have to be changed. It is also Van Eys who provides evidence for this distribution of the car.

> 'The accessibility of these different areas is mainly geared to the car and therefore worse for women than for men. Research shows that women use other means of transport. They walk 2.5 times more often than men and cycle 1.5 times more often, while men use the car 2.5 times more' (Van Eys, in: Lünneman and Bussemaker 1983: 4).

To equalize this accessibility gap somewhat between the two sexes, Van Eys proposes a wholesale reordering of new housing estates.

> 'She intends to make a design to improve the accessibility of facilities to better meet the needs of the population groups. By improving the quality of public transport, through flexible transport, different signage, relocating stops and changing the layout of streets, more priority should be given to cyclists and pedestrians and the car should be reduced' (Idem: 4).

To make it even more convenient for pedestrians in these areas, Van Eys suggests tackling the curbs as well.

> 'I want the streets without sidewalks, so that the elderly and women with children don't have to go up and down the curbs all the time, and children have more room to play nicely' (Idem: 5).

However, that such a measure does not immediately come across as feminist, woman-friendly or even human-friendly is demonstrated by a more recent feminist astonishment regarding the lack of sidewalks in the town of Geldrop:

> 'There they don't have sidewalks anymore, who knows because of what new movement in planning. Which does have the consequence that you can no longer teach your child to stay on the sidewalk' (Smit 1985: 11).

Finally, the topic of 'sexual violence', both outdoors and indoors, which is in the feminist interest, and which needs to be solved in all kinds of (societal and architectural) ways. Or, at least, women's fears of sexual violence should be eliminated by providing architectural facilities, so that women can feel comfortable in all kinds of (public) places, especially at night. For, for example, it is stated,

> 'In West Germany, a woman is raped every 7.5 minutes' (*Vrouwen Bouwen & Wonen* 1983: 83),

an argument that appears to make the importance of a spatial measure, however limited, obvious. For despite this, one knows that

> 'building safer for women (...) will never be able to prevent the phenomenon of sexual assault and rape' (Idem: 89).

> 'Although it is clear that rapes, for example, do not only take place in alleys and remote areas' (Lünneman and Bussemaker 1983: 4),

design proposals are made anyway. Safe would then imply that

> 'you, your daughter and your grandmother should be able to pass by at all times, without running the risk of being raped' (Garming and Van Schendelen 1983: 18).

Specifically, this would mean closing off construction sites at night by 'well-connected fences or hoardings of sufficient height' (*Vrouwen Bouwen & Wonen* 1983: 86). A similar cut-off should also apply to tunnels, while both roads and sidewalks, as well as routes through green spaces, should be well lit at night. With regard to parks, for example, the following suggestions are made: keep vegetation as low as possible and without interruptions, while more precise suggestions are made elsewhere:

'Paths in parks should not dead end and there should be no unexpected side paths. (...) A path is safer if it is not enclosed on two sides by shrubbery. You should be able to have an avoidance option. (...) There must be choices. If a certain path doesn't appeal to you or if there is a nasty man (or group of men) there must be another route possible' (*Veiligheid buitenshuis voor vrouwen* 1985: 15).

So, in short, feminist building measures are conceivable. But as mentioned, not only outside the house should the fear be removed, also indoors because it turns out

'that most violence against women takes place not on the street but inside the house' (Loeffen and Overdijk et al. 1985: 29–30).
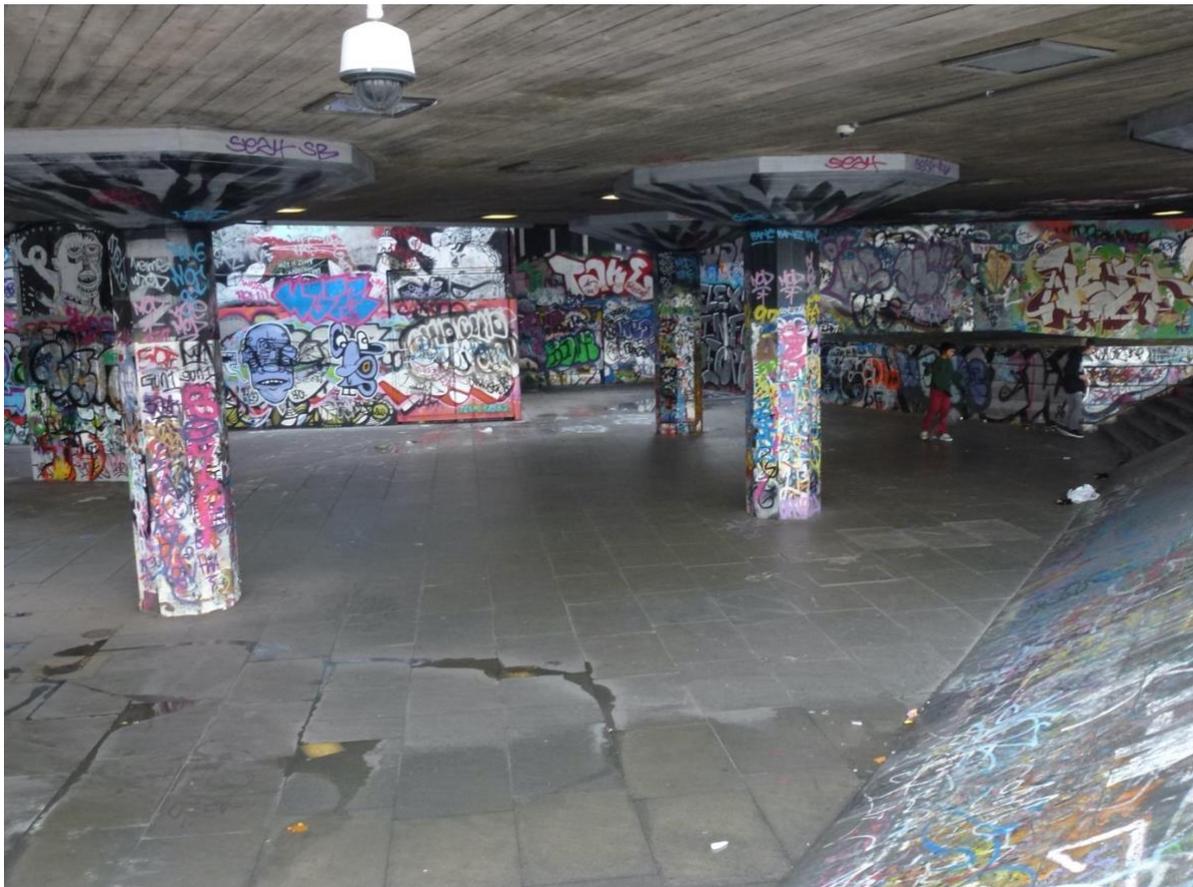
London 2011 © Anna Vos

The proposal is therefore that:

'in addition (...) efforts should be made to break down the existing separation between private and public in the built environment' (Idem: 30).

The very fact of thinking in terms of a separation between private-public, makes women conceal their problems (which range from rape to undesirable intimacy, as well as child maltreatment in the family), *de ZIJ-kant van BOUWEN* argues (Ibid.).

In addition to these explicit 'architectural' proposals, which do not provide a real solution to sexual violence because it is a societal issue, interventions have to be made in that area,

such as increasing social control. An initiative proposal in Utrecht (by Dutch political middle and left parties CDA, PvdA, CPN and PSP) mentioned in this context, among other things: 'police surveillance at "threatening" places', in addition to other suggestions, such as running night buses and having the last train connect with the last bus, establishing cab facilities for women working at night (*Vrouwen Bouwen & Wonen* 1983: 88). All of these forms of social and societal regulations contribute

> 'to make people more likely to adhere to existing norms and values, but this does not eliminate sexual violence against women. Nights remain generally taboo for women. There are only a few places left in the city where one can truly enjoy the night, the silence, the darkness and being invisible and unreachable; places where women can be alone after dark without danger. However, women have recently made a clear start in reclaiming public space by meeting there in the evening and at night' (Idem: 87).

Thesis Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam 1982   Doctoral thesis University of Amsterdam 1992

d. Male expertise, men's expertise?

The built environment that provokes previous criticism from women can in fact be considered the work of male architects and urban planners. They start from the stereotype of the modal family (housewife-mother, two children and a father-with-car working outside the house). Norms and stereotypes which, as may be clear from feminist criticism, no longer correspond to actual relationships and therefore put women at a great disadvantage. In response to the question of whether it is mainly men with whom she, as a female architect, has to deal in practice, Hartsuyker says:

'Yes, for the most part, and they always know exactly what women want. They pretend to know the housing needs of all Dutch women like the back of their hand. They have no idea! No idea of the fact that the way in which building is done is hugely prohibitive for women' (D'Ancona and Van Schendelen 1983: 24).

The obstacle, according to Hartsuyker, lies in the overly rigid layout, determination, and enclosure of the Dutch home, where architects determined exactly what family members (and the woman) were expected to do in the home.

'That defining of rooms, which means you can never, ever do anything else with those spaces. This is where food will be eaten, thát is where the parents will sleep, thát is the children's room. There is nothing left to choose or change. Pens that are closed off with doors' (Idem: 22).

Van Moorsel notes in her article on the *Stichting Goed Wonen* [Foundation for Well Living] that:

'In addition to the rationalization of the house plan and of the kitchen (...) by the architects of the Nieuwe Zakelijkheid [Neue Sachlichkeit], united in "De 8 en Opbouw" (1932–1943), much attention (is) given to the "needs of the residents"' (Van Moorsel 1982: 214).
'At the same time, they (and social scientists) are searching for the material and mental needs of the (anonymous) inhabitants' (Idem: 210).

However, that this is not directly about an anonymous resident but explicitly about fathers and children is, according to Van Moorsel, clear from what *Goed Wonen* imagines. And it is the woman who is the great absentee in the whole.

'Mothers occupations are not taken as a starting point in this process. She is being characterized as a housewife and mother as a matter of course, regardless of her other pursuits' (Idem: 217).

At the end of her article, Van Moorsel concludes the following regarding the good intentions of male architects:

'In fact, every fictional family at Goed Wonen can be narrowed down to one type of model family. Thus, the paradox becomes clear that the idealistic striving of architects to build responsibly for everyone implies a regulation of everyday life. (...) In doing so, they establish a pattern of living, even though the solutions may seem to be quite flexible' (Idem: 229).

Thus, feminist criticism gives credence to that which is indicated as function in the floor plan. In other words, the indication of a function would also determine how life would be lived. It is the function, which is attacked from within the feminist critique, in the name of other functions which would be ignored or forgotten.

When the focus is now turned to further specifically masculine traits in architecture, this also appears to be true of the way of designing and the way of building.

> 'Building flats has to do with a male vision of building: with the challenge that it had for them to build in height and with the idea that they consider a house as a place to store people rather than a place to actually "live"' (Lünneman and Bussemaker 1983: 5).

In contrast, female architects would engage in designing and building substantially differently. As Hartsuyker talks about her work in an interview:

> 'She laughingly points out the lack of an exterior: "I'm so occupied with dwelling, with the usability of the home, that I only get around to the exterior at the very end. With this maquette I simply forgot to have a facade made. That wouldn't happen to a man. Male architects, no matter how flexible, always value the impression the building makes. (...), it's not that I don't value the exterior, but I simply wouldn't think of coming up with the exterior first. Usually, the money is almost gone by the time I get to the outside" (...). It doesn't look like anything, she often says about her work' (Hartsuyker 1983).

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Two other female architects articulate the essentially female approach as follows:

> 'It can be compared to drinking tea: not the cup, but the hot tea that can be poured into it, is essential. If making cups is your profession, but you don't drink much tea, you can't really make good cups, because in making them you don't sense, so to speak, how you will be drinking them together with a girlfriend' (Loeffen and Overdijk 1983: 37).

There would be two views (one feminine and one masculine) when it comes to approaching space, described by Coppola-Pignatelli as one based on experience and one based on abstraction and rationalization (1983: 29).

Parallel to this 'different' relationship to space there is also a 'different' attitude in designing: women design from small to large, analyzing spaces from the inside out; men start from an overall plan and later fill in the requirements for use in this plan (Idem: 30). Kennedy (1979) suggests the possibility of a third 'androgynous' approach to space.

The feminist critique assumes that women were never taken into account precisely because there would have been few 'who have been building' in the past. And this while it is precisely women who, because of her history, know more about dwelling and the living environment than men.
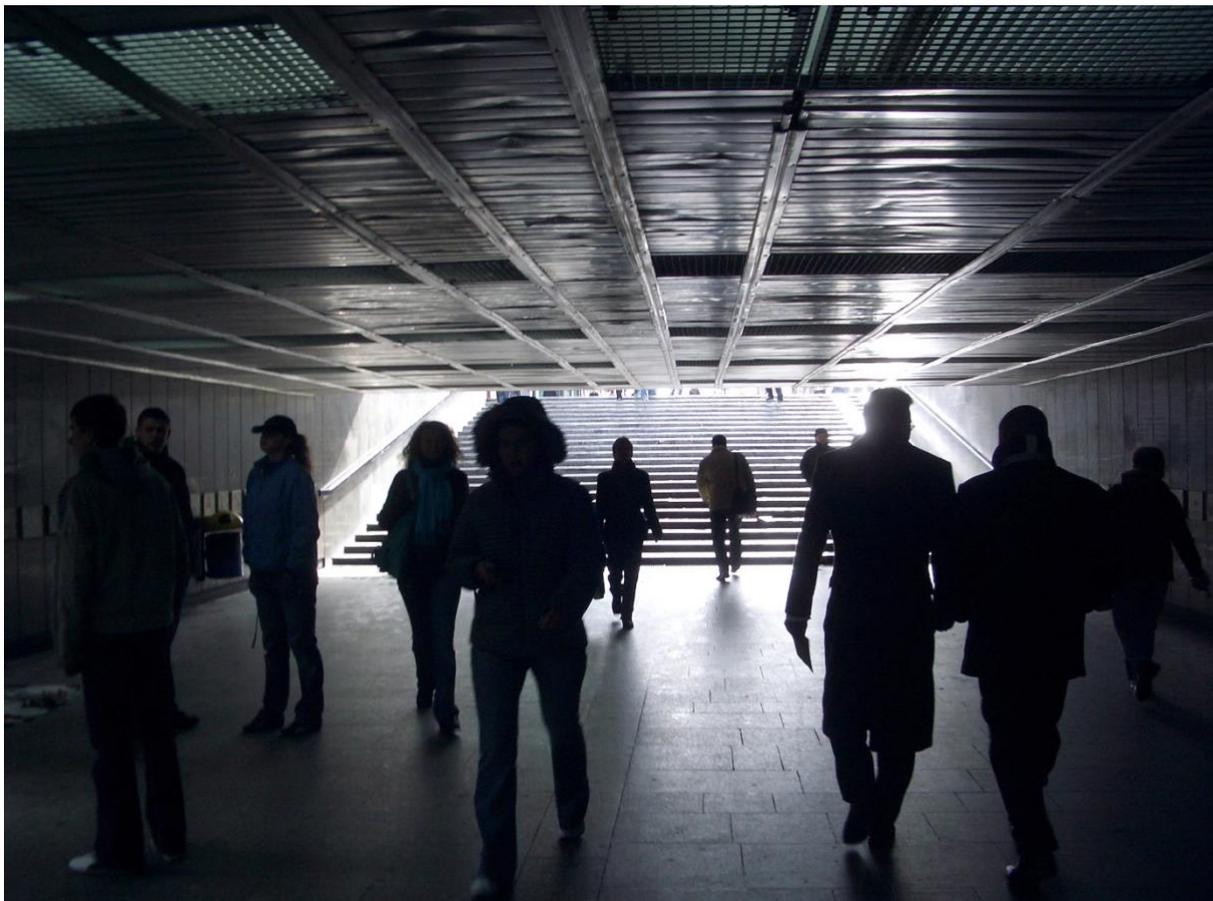
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> 'The far-reaching specializations and division of functions led to the fact that the man hardly dwells (...). A time-space budget of a worker shows that the man dwells 4 hours a day (...). The woman dwells, she is the home-maker par excellence. She must therefore know a great deal about dwelling. Put differently, she is the only identifiable person who could know about dwelling' (De Ruiter 1977: 25).

They are even the only ones who could know what it means to be locked up all day in a 'leisure fantasy' invented by men. They also know the connection between (too high) sidewalks and baby carriages, the objections of bridges in connection with bikes loaded with groceries and children; they themselves experience the threat in tunnels. And they know what it means to be appointed 'mistress' of an entire domain, but nevertheless not to have their own room which for a short time creates distance to 'ruling'.

But women derive this expertise not only from their long histories and experiences with dwelling. Several female architects attribute their expertise to their upbringing, which, according to Loeffen and Overdijk, 'makes it easier' for women 'to identify with the "home role"' (1983: 35).

Van Eys also has similar ideas:

> 'I think that women – whether they are feminists or not – are often more useful in spatial planning. Their upbringing as girls has made them look at the world differently, for example, have a greater eye for the small, for the detail. Women are less likely to skip steps, they have a better idea of how other people live and how spatial planning can limit people. Even (sic! HdM-AV) if you are a woman doing paid work outside the home and using a car' (Lünneman and Bussemaker 1983: 4).

De Ruiter, however, does not so much put her faith in women as in feminine qualities:

> '(...) also a temporary preferential treatment of women (confirms) the masculine culture more strongly (...) than when it is omitted. I argue the same with respect to more women in architecture and urban planning on quantitative grounds alone. It is not about the woman as a category (...). It is about the total quality of life, which is very dear to us as bearers of it. This presupposes a permanent preferential treatment of feminizing forces and ideas of both men and women' (De Ruiter 1977: 25).

However, the question is also to what extent from the lack of 'women who have been building' in the past, the lack of influence can also be directly deduced. For example, in the past women and women's organizations had a large share in housing for single people; they were active as housing supervisors in the late 19th century. And women in the 1920s had no insignificant share in the movement for household rationalization (Bentinck and Vos 1981; Komossa and De Jong 1981).[9] The question is also what is the point of a history that, with a few exceptions, shows only the absence of women or the oppression of women, and sets aside the various ways in which (different) women have functioned.

The feminist idea is that as more women are penetrating a traditionally closed 'male stronghold' (such as education at a University of Technology, and the building industry in general), they are also beginning to take hold on women's living situations. This is all in contrast to the past, where it would have been only a few exceptions.

e. Dwelling is building (?), or use and living?

But to what extent is feminist criticism about building, and to what extent is it about dwelling? *De ZIJ-kant van BOUWEN* considers 'dwelling' to be very important, as was already apparent from the film descriptions quoted earlier. There seems to be no distinction between building and dwelling (and living) in their view:

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> 'Dwelling is living. Dwelling exists not only in the interaction between individuals and society and between staying and being, but also between building and dwelling. Dwelling includes not only the neighborhood you live in and the chat on the street corner, but also the pigeonhole you build yourself' (Loeffen, Overdijk et al. 1985: 6).

> 'Our living together takes place against the backdrop of the built environment. Moreover, the built environment is a reflection of the way people live. That building can also be a form of dwelling can be seen, for example, at the back of some houses' (Ibid.).

Dwelling, using spaces and the unfolding of life itself are central.

> 'Living and dwelling are very close to each other, especially if you consider dwelling as an active process. The way in which you live expresses itself, as it were, in your

dwelling. (...) Living is an active process, in which growth and change continually take place. If you want to consider dwelling as an active process, then you will have to intervene actively in this petrifaction all the time. The petrified situation will, however, in turn influence your life. There is an interaction between life and matter, between human being and built environment' (*Vrouwen Bouwen & Wonen* 1983: 63–64).

And, as Overdijk and Loeffen argue, the ever-changing life will be coloring the spaces.

'"Place" is space, as it is experienced tangibly in its use by human beings. Space as a place, as a sphere, as an event. The space that is different when you are there alone or together, that changes with your mood or with your activity. When you cry the room around you becomes gloomy, a tidy house gives you a cleaned-up feeling. Space that is determined by the "now", but also by a repetition of the same activities and so, as it were, settles into you. Dwelling binds you to a place precisely because of its everydayness' (Loeffen and Overdijk 1983: 36–37).

Making dwelling central means that every human being should be able to live as he/she wishes, which would imply the existence of a fundamental freedom of choice for residents. This would require a thorough inventory of dwelling preferences, with residents to be encouraged to express their genuine dwelling desires (for example, through housing awareness courses). This inventory implies

'identifying problems experienced by women in our society due to ideas in the field of building and dwelling, clarifying the consequences of certain theories and research methods in this field for the position of women and signaling problems faced by women as a result of measures in the field of public housing and spatial planning' (Van Schendelen, Vehmeyer, Verloo 1982: 9).

By bringing together bottlenecks, insight can be gained into those issues that need to be better regulated in spatial planning in general, for example.

'Spatial planning should specify the forms of cohabitation of people, their age, sex, and income. It must take into account changes within societies – for example, that small children grow up – and the composition of population and occupations. If these differentiations are not expressed, the plan is flawed' (Lünneman and Bussemaker 1983: 3).

As an aside, it should be noted that precisely in the experiences it appears that the 'women' do not all want the same thing, as it is depending on age, with/without children, with/without a car, with/without a husband, with/without a group and so on. Sex, however, appears to remain decisive in this kind of inventory: feminist criticism continues to consider all women as belonging to the same group. So, in other words, what one needs to know very accurately is the

'activity pattern of people: who does what in a particular place and what are the distances between those places' (Idem: 3),

rather than establishing 'functions'. One way of obtaining this information is public participation, which has become commonplace for some time.

> 'For its assignments, the design office of Bakker and Bleeker has regular contact with groups of residents. They experience public participation as an enrichment because they receive a lot of local and specific information. (...) Most important is that your work ultimately functions well, that people feel comfortable' (Garming and Van Schendelen 1983: 17–18).

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A second way to gather this knowledge of things is through 'housing awareness courses' in which women are encouraged to put their real dwelling desires on the table, something that doesn't come by itself, hence the course.

> 'It is a well-known fact that in response to questions about desires and needs, people usually initially give an answer that corresponds to socially accepted norms or familiar examples. To break away from that takes time and space. Moreover, many women have never thought about what they themselves – as a woman – desire in terms of housing. To start thinking about that does take time and space. Time and space that is usually not available within the framework of a building team. (...) In the meetings we do not want to base our assumptions on instant housing preferences. In our experience, the answer will then come down to a standard newly

built house. It has already been said: it takes time to formulate genuine wishes, independently of existing examples and standards' (Diederen 1985: 11–12).

There is a strong desire among the supervisors to extract 'less common wishes' from female residents instead of ordinary ones (Ibid.). As for these supervisors, they too first subjected themselves to a housing awareness survey.

> 'We decided that before we could do anything for and with other women, we needed to look more clearly at ourselves. When you understand more about that, you can better feel how this works for others' (*Vrouwen Bouwen & Wonen* 1983: 68).

> 'Even though you are involved with dwelling every day, you still sometimes wonder: am I not making something up, what is the relationship between women and dwelling really like, is there any relationship at all? If you have these kinds of doubts, it is highly recommended to tell your dwelling story, to write it down and share it with other women! The relationship is then suddenly very clear and "close to home"' (Idem: 69).

The *Vrouwen Advies Commissie* [Women's Advisory Committee; in short *V.A.C.*] is one of the organizations that wants to organize women's participation on a somewhat larger scale. The *VAC* wants to:

> 'reduce the distance to the future residents (...). The V.A.C. wants women to be more aware of their opportunities to participate and wants to support women to participate. When certain projects in the neighborhoods come up for discussion, women will be asked or invited to meet. By giving instructions and advice, we expect to be able to increase women's participation' (Veranderingen in de V.A.C. 1984: 174).

1976   1978   1979   1980

f. Female perspectives.
Also among architects who claim to be explicitly feminist architects, doing justice to women's (and people's in general) own wishes, and thus not imposing their own ideas, is paramount. This is in contrast to what happened in the so-called single-family housing. Imposing a program 'is wrong', Hartsuyker believes:

'You also have to make it possible that a house is used in another way, for example to practice a profession or to take in a family member. Of course, you should not impose anything; such a house should also be suitable for traditional living' (Hartsuyker 1983: 24).

Offering place and space to other household compositions is precisely the goal being pursued, to find possibilities 'which are *not* determined in advance and from above' (Van Schendelen, Vehmeyer, Verloo 1982: 11, italics in original).

The female architect would be the one to create conditions for the lives of the residents.

'You can create conditions that make it easier to combine a number of different things (for example, dwelling and working) and to change or arrange in one's own way (houses that can be divided in several ways). But the conditions for change that you create as a female architect will have to be filled in by the (f/m) residents themselves' (Lünneman and Bussemaker 1983: 7).

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In this sense, then, feminist architects clearly want to distinguish themselves from their male colleagues.

'In our designs we have left as much space "open" as possible for the future residents. We prefer to be "co-thinkers" and "co-builders" rather than experts. That co-building we want to do from our own person, from our womanhood. We believe that this side of us is still hardly recognized and acknowledged as a value in the man's world that the building industry still is' (Loeffen and Overdijk 1983: 37).

Loeffen and Overdijk, from whom these words are taken, further explain this position using drafts they have produced.

'We did not want to divide the rooms so that the residents can arrange the space according to their own wishes and needs (for example, depending on the type of living together, the number of residents and their respective ages). (...) Some residents will choose to maintain open contact (…) between the different rooms. (...) Over the years, the house can grow along with the wishes of the residents. When children in a family grow older, it may be more pleasant if the staircase is no longer open in the living room but starts in the kitchen or from a corridor. (...) Everyone can further divide the space according to their own wishes. For example, one may want to live, eat, and sleep in one large open space, while another may want to keep these areas more separate. It is even possible to set up two separate sleeping areas' (Idem: 42–46).

In short, architects working from a feminist point of view want to respect all the wishes of female/ male residents, by not fixing anything in their floor plan designs. They just want 'the drawings to show the different possibilities of use as well' (Idem: 42).

Hartsuyker:

'Spaces that you can close off at will if you want to be alone, but that you can include as well. Openness, movement, flexibility' (D'Ancona and Van Schendelen 1983: 24).

Van Eys:

'A dwelling should give people the opportunity to do something in it, both indoors and outdoors. There must be room to carry out your own interests. If the composition of a household or the income changes, it must be possible to make changes by building or removing a wall. The building materials should be appropriate to do this, so no reinforced concrete, but wood or pure brick. Not a tiny balcony where you can't get around, but a garden with a shed where you can mess around' (Lünneman and Bussemaker 1983: 5–6).

Van Eys and Van Wijk:

'In all those thousands of single-family homes side by side, people cook, wash, tinker and children are being cared for and kept busy. Each household owns the "necessary" equipment to do so, and behind each door many hours are spent on housework. It would save a lot of time and money if more people would turn to joint activities and/or joint ownership (washing machine, lawnmower, etc.). From a point

of view of efficient use of time and sharing the responsibilities for some things, which have to be done anyway, we came to the topic of collectivization of household labor. To achieve this goal, there are many variations between a commune and a dining group for two evenings a week. The problem is, for communal activities, space is needed. One could think of annexes for collective use or the use of empty houses. However, this will result in extra costs for the user. It is therefore wiser to strive for greater flexibility within the existing building volume. (...) An internal renovation of the single-family dwellings (as is sometimes done nowadays with large blocks of flats) can offer a solution. However, the costs of this can be high. It is better to build from the start dwellings that are easy to adapt. No stairs in the living room, a large kitchen, and for the rest rooms of equal size. (...) Taking future changes into account in advance is cheaper: and provides a more flexible residential area. That is why it is extremely important to critically design residential areas that are yet to be built, with possibilities for use for the various (future) groups of residents' (Van Eys and Van Wijk 1984: 53).

Loeffen and Overdijk:

'By making dwellings in which one can live or eat at the front as well as the back, where one can sleep downstairs and upstairs, where the living room does not have the maximum and the kitchen has the minimum dimensions, where functions can be combined or separated as desired, where movement (corridors) need not be separated from residence (rooms). Housing in which the space can be used differently depending on the season or time of day' (Loeffen and Overdijk 1983: 35).

And Els Smit interviewing Loeffen and Overdijk states:

'An Open House, with contact between all floors, so that everyone can have their own place and still shout at each other. With the possibility for people who don't want that open space, to close it themselves at relatively low cost. Flexibility in the dwelling is what it's called' (Smit 1985).

Is this a case of propagating a feminist view of life or also of pushing through an architectural policy under the guise of feminist choice and flexibility?

A 'change in mentality' needs to be achieved,

'in which the colorful range of human values can be done justice in its entirety' (Loeffen and Overdijk 1983: 35).

Building and dwelling must go together more, self-building is necessary, because awareness and pleasure should be strengthened; people are alienated from dwelling and the home must again become the center of their living environment. But also commonality between people should be possible (if they want it), domestic labor should be efficiently regulated, because everyone ('all independent people, whether they live together or not') has to do domestic work (Lünneman and Bussemaker 1983: 6).

'Spatial planning should be designed in such a way that everyone would not have to do paid work for more than four hours a day' (Idem: 4).

But even inside the house, a lot of things have to be done (i.e., finally, a lot of things are not allowed).

'We let people live together in a different way (sic HdM-AV) (...). No separation of functions (dwelling, working, circulation), but rather everything mixed together. Not women separated from the rest of life during the day, as in those implemented plans' (D'Ancona and Van Schendelen 1983: 25).

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And, finally, what is necessary most of all, in contrast to dependent and isolated women we must become/be people who 'independently – even in changed circumstances – are able to give shape and content to their lives' (Van Eys 1984: 172); people who have 'more opportunities for autonomous, individual choices' (Van Schendelen, Vehmeyer, Verloo 1982: 13). 'Or would this create new restrictions again?' is then rightly asked (Ibid.). After all, why shouldn't the modernist (and not just feminist) demand to have to present oneself as a fully independent individual also mean coercion?

Departing from a similar critique of the single-family house that 'is (to be) inhabited solely by the nuclear family, Ter Horst et al. sought in their graduation project to search for

'dwellings (that) had to be able to be inhabited and used in multiple ways' (Ter Horst, Brouwer and Fortuyn 1982: 3–4). However, this did pose a number of problems, in their own words, when we look at the developed plans.

> 'They look weird, these floor plans. Series of flat, rectangular, spatially unexamined cells attached to a circulation network. (...) The project is idealistic in the sense that it assumes that a room for oneself is a prerequisite for moving forward. Not only for women, but for all who is small housed. An idealism that remains stuck in an image that is not very concrete and that should be given more substance. (...) The strength of our graduation project lies in blowing up the single-family floor plan, in simplifying a hierarchical house into a group of cells. What is left between the cells, the cell block, the rest? Where is the sociability? *What sociability*?' (Idem: 9, emphasis in original).

1.2. Questions on feminist criticism

The foregoing has reorganized the constituents of feminist discourse on the built environment. Despite the comprehensiveness of the field of the built environment, as we noted in the introduction, and despite the divergence of the provenance of the quoted statements, feminist criticism exhibits a certain coherence that makes the story of *Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen* a story with a beginning and an end, a problem and a solution. When something does not fit the narrative, this is acknowledged at best (although..., but...) so that the narrative can then continue undisturbed:

- Women are oppressed. True, not all women are the same, but despite their different positions, they are all oppressed.
- Women are trying to liberate themselves from their oppression and in doing so they come up against obstacles that the built environment, as a reflection of a now obsolete society, puts in front of them. It is true that not all women are equally fanatical, but that is a matter of awareness, which is made more difficult precisely by such obstacles.
- It is logical that the built environment is an obstacle to women's liberation/ emancipation, because the men, who are responsible for it – and in this field even exclusively – have never paid attention to women, the dwelling, the private sphere.
- The built environment and building itself are a monolithic block of masculinity and wickedness. True, women have also done some work in that area, but those are exceptions.
- Women are eminently knowledgeable about the built environment, because of their years/centuries of experience with dwelling. Admittedly, building is now completely isolated from dwelling, but that is exactly what should change.
- The built environment and building must feminize on all fronts, women want space, literally and figuratively. True, some want their own house and others their own room, some in the city and others in the countryside, some want to ride a bike and others a car.... but we all want the same thing.

But at what cost can such a narrative be coherent? What problems lie behind this logic? The recurring 'admittedly' already denotes a number of problems, which have also been discussed in our reordering. Here we want to discuss them somewhat systematically.

The first set of problems is related to the way in which concepts 'women' and 'femininity' are used in the feminist discourse on the built environment, the second with the concept(s) 'building, dwelling' in this discourse. The problem *is* therefore *Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen*.

a. Women and femininity.
Women as persons may well be in different positions and situations, but they remain women, thus oppressed, and thus, when aware of this, in possession of the one and only truth. As long as SHE interferes in the built environment, all will be well. Thus, the feminist critique.

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One could think of a different concept, unlike the current masculine built environment, a female-friendly, non-oppressive concept. (…) Then, it would be precisely 'other' than the actual overvalued masculine skills and attributes, i.c. the until now undervalued feminine skills and attributes, that could achieve this.

In the case of the feminist critique of the built environment, the primary concern seems to be the revaluation of age-old feminine attributes. The pre-eminent female expertise is legitimized from her years of experience with housing/ dwelling: woman and dwelling are

almost identical. But doesn't this place the critique in a dilemma, since feminism in general actually resists the categorization of women as housewives and stay-at-home moms?

What is the content and status of a denominator like 'woman' and 'femininity'? Is it about its political use, about the legitimacy for wanting to break the established male tradition? Or is there, in addition to a strategic goal, also an issue of content? What does the difference between masculine and feminine mean?

In the pursuit of equality, the difference would be based on purely external factors (political, economic, etc.), which must therefore be fought. The issue then is the equality of men and women, but not making/being women equal to men. Is it then about a specifically feminine tradition, which after centuries of oppression and undervaluation is taking up the fight for a fundamentally equal valuation of feminine traits, skills, and aspects? Is it about something essentially feminine, which has been hidden until now and which can finally break through to the surface? Is the difference 'essential' after all, independent of place and time, in short something natural?

The suggestion of the existence of something essentially feminine is reinforced by a second maneuver: women are actually outside society, that is, conscious women. Women, refusing the traditional image of the housewife-mother, escape the fate that society has in fact assigned to them. Implicit in this is the suggestion of an opposition between traditional versus progressive, of a 'being inserted into the societal order' versus a 'being able to stand outside the societal order'. It is from the latter position that reality can be viewed, and the truth is there for the taking. Should therefore all 'imprisoned' women also be helped to liberate themselves, to become conscious? Women who have become aware of all this, have the 'new', 'real' femininity at their disposal, from which they can produce their own new imaginings.

Apart from the fact that we can ask ourselves where the search for 'own' imaginings of femininity leads – a new image of women, but exclusively belonging to women, which risks leading a 'natural' life, linked to the biological sex? – it also turns out that it is not really easy to come up with something new, something from 'outside the societal order'.

For if it is really the case that the built environment literally and figuratively frustrates women in every way, then surely a few trees more or less, a curb higher or lower, a room or door or wall more or less, will not suffice. If the connection between the built environment and people's daily lives is really as causal as is suggested, then only a radically different proposal would suffice as an alternative to the solely male environment.

But for now, there are more feminists who write than feminists who design. And the words with which the feminist critique expresses its ideas, sound somewhat familiar: woman (child/ human) friendly – human values – individual choices – room for oneself – 'true' dwelling – dwelling is living – engagement – the architect who creates the conditions – personal developing – liberation – accessibility – the surrounding world ... words, which also have characterized certain architectural narratives since the 1960s (Vos 1986). Taking that into account, the question is to what extent the feminist critique is genuinely new.

b. Building, dwelling.
The question is what problems are in fact addressed by feminist criticism. Of what order is the knowledge that can be derived from the multitude of women's experiences in the built environment?

- Are we talking about division of labor, sexual violence, employment, dwelling, and/or space, building, architecture?
- Are we talking about problems at the level of the housing development program or about the problems of the physical arrangement of spaces?
- Are these problems to be solved at the level of political decision-making or through a different design?
- Are these problems rooted in an 'oppressive' society or is the 'oppressive' also in the built environment?
- Does it involve social scientific knowledge describing women's relationship to architecture?
- Or is it about architectural knowledge that involves a description of architecture?
- Is there even an analysis of spatial form, of designing itself?
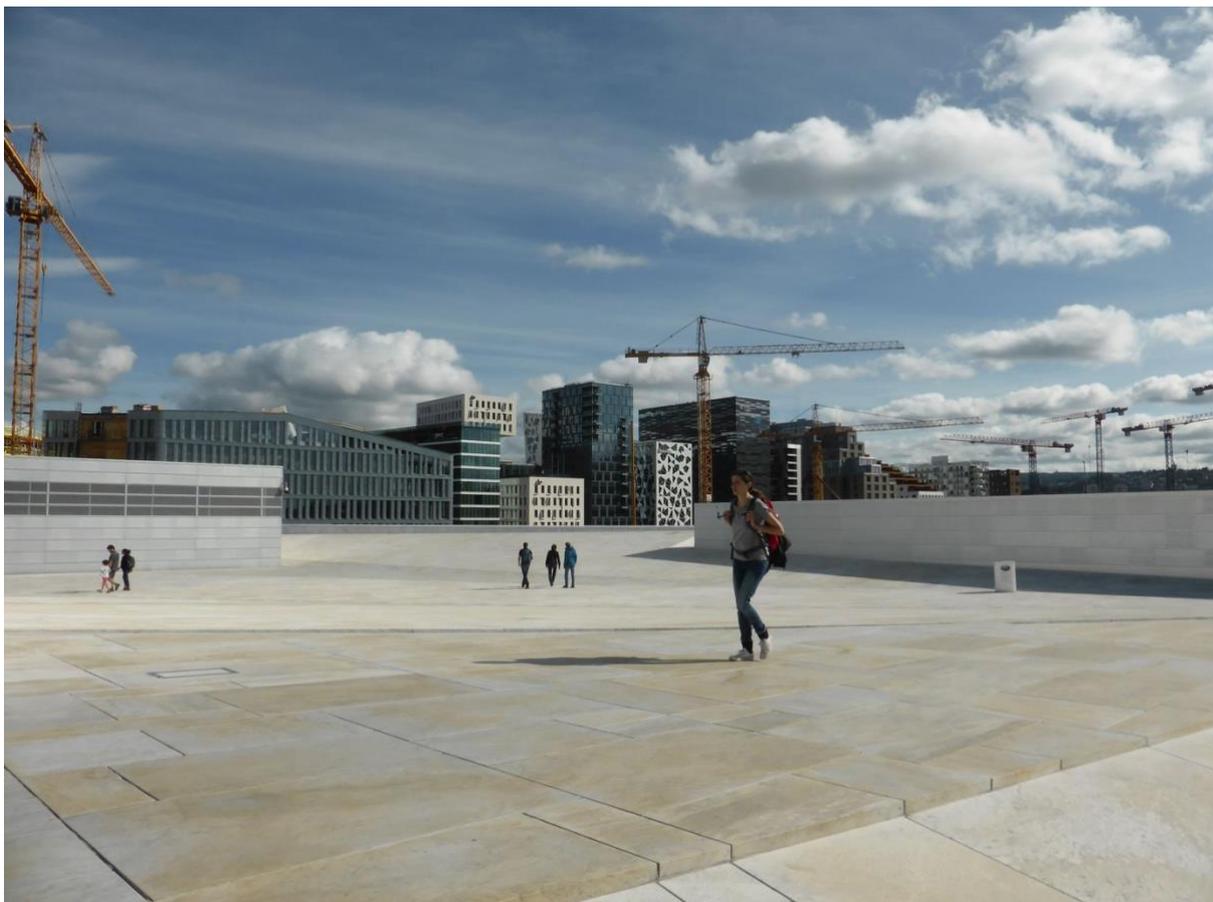
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The reflection theory, as discussed above (1.1.b), ensures that such questions could not, and did not, need to be asked in feminist criticism. Two sets of different concepts, division of labor, sexual violence, employment, and dwelling on the one hand, and space, building, built

environment, architecture, and urbanism on the other, are linked in feminist discourse in an unambiguous, causal way. Architecture is being used to identify completely different kinds of problems. It is admitted that the problem of employment can never be solved on the level of traffic and transport alone, the problem of sexual violence can never be solved on the level of locks on doors or lighting in parks and tunnels alone. Nevertheless, in the feminist critique on architecture the view remains dominant, that architecture reflects patriarchal society, thus cherishing the expectation that a different architecture would stimulate a different way of life.

In feminist criticism, architecture shapes social life. The interpretive framework for spatial aspects is formed by statements from 'outside' the architectural discipline. However, this is a very specific (and incidentally historically colored) conception of architecture. Is architecture the equivalent of that which is blamed on her or what is attributed to her as possibilities? Is it not precisely the reflection theory that makes architecture read as a social book, for which it is completely unnecessary to understand the architectural language; after all, the social glasses translate the architecture for the reader. Is it not precisely the reflection theory, which, when the physical objects are considered, makes architecture a mere representation, of male values and norms? What prevents feminist criticism from asking what kind of object they are dealing with, from asking themselves what architecture is?

A similar lacuna becomes apparent where designing is concerned. In line with the reflection theory, the task of feminist architects is to design a 'feminist' built environment/ dwelling/ zoning plan, in short, woman-friendliness itself. But how do you design 'liberation'? Suppose it is possible to draw up a 'program of requirements'. By the way, this will necessarily have to be generalized, and so the question will be whether 'everyone' will agree to it. So, then the designing begins.

Following the reflection theory, this would just be a matter of finding the right translation and ideally there would be only one right translation. But if the program is clear, why should men be unable to perform such a purely technical act? Because they cannot read the program properly (because they are not wearing the social glasses?). Or is there also a crucial moment in the designing itself? Or is there already an implicit idea of what a feminist environment should look like? In what way would that environment differ from a 'masculine' design? In the representation of the feminine, perhaps the human, rather than the masculine?

In summary, we can conclude that two questions are avoided by the feminist critique of the built environment: the question of what is 'woman', female, and the question of what is 'architecture'.

Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen has been dominated by social scientific research (with all the implications for the objects studied, i.e., anything that women have experiences with). The critical content of *Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen*, which is based on social sciences, can be understood as an addition to the social sciences up to that point: missing information with regard to 'women' is now being filled in by *Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen*, by getting women (including the researchers) to speak up and systematizing this knowledge, often through

policy reports. This knowledge, like all social scientific knowledge, is a necessity for the modern form of the exercise of power and in that sense one could call *Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen* not critical: the question is whether *Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen* does not in fact contribute to a more perfect inclusion of women by delivering women's experiences to this technology of power. In this respect, it is useful to take a look at how *Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen* relates to developments within women's studies and the way in which a critical position is claimed therein and, secondly, more specifically, to the developments of women's studies in Architecture (De Mare 1986).

In addition, we note that in feminist discourse, in accordance with the social science dominance, the reflection theory is dominant in their conception of architecture. The discussions within the architectural discipline itself about what architecture is, what designing is, are addressed in Vos 1986.

In these two articles later in this volume, we will therefore ask to what extent developments in women's studies and in architectural thinking offer clues to answer the questions left by feminist criticism – what do we mean by woman? and what by architecture?

But first we turn to the two conceptual worlds that we – as women's studies in architecture – have learned to think in: women's studies (2) and architectural thinking (3).

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2. WOMEN'S STUDIES

Introduction
The prevailing discourse of *Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen* shows quite a bit of discrepancy with ways of thinking and developments within women's studies in general.

While *Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen* seems to be caught in the premise of oppression (and thus the concept of liberation) of women, through architecture, within women's studies questions are raised about taking a concept such as women's oppression as a premise. What is the usefulness of research that repeatedly, for all times, in all fields, provides evidence for its existence? In the discussions on this subject in the *Tijdschrift voor vrouwenstudies* [Journal of Women's Studies] and the *Jaarboek voor vrouwengeschiedenis* [Yearbook of Women's History] from 1980 onwards, the commitment of women's studies and its relation to the women's movement, that is, the relation science-politics, is central.

In addition, a second discrepancy exists, namely between *Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen* and the history of Women's Studies in Architecture, which dates back to 1978. Partly this has to do with the specific problem that Architecture is a design engineering study (and not a social scientific education). Partly with the strong orientation of Women's Studies in Architecture towards theoretical developments in women's studies. This seems contradictory. After all, from a technical study you could/ should expect 'solutions' to the problems identified by social sciences. The discussions about architecture held at the Delft department of Architecture itself at that time reinforced the somewhat uneasy feeling evoked by the expectations of feminist critics. Was our 'profession' even then too important to us to be handed over to the wishes of social scientists?

The problem becomes clear when we read the policy paper Women's Studies in Architecture, written in 1980. Some excerpts from this Policy Document are reproduced here in full. At the conclusion of this paragraph, we pick up the thread of theoretical discussions within women's studies, which afterward have not ceased.

1980   1981

2.1. Development of Women's Studies part I

In 1980, a discussion started in the very first issue of the *Tijdschrift voor Vrouwenstudies* about the content and function of women's studies.[10] One of the hot topics, when we read the contributions of the next two years, appears to be the relation between women's

studies and the women's movement, or the relation science and politics. In 'Lof der Rede' [Praise of Reason], Bleich, Jansz, and Leydesdorff criticized women's studies for relying on 'women's experiences of oppression' because this would not be a sufficient basis for developing a science (1980: 217). This position, according to the authors, does not sufficiently distinguish between the development of the science of women's studies and the 'strengthening of feminist ideology' (Idem: 222).

> 'The distinction between being a woman and being an intellectual, the fact that scientific activity requires specific skills and a specific attitude, is in our opinion often neglected in the discussion about the relationship between women's studies and the women's movement. This happens from a too simple reasoning: all women are oppressed, I am a woman and therefore also oppressed, and therefore there should be no difference between me and the others. This is a reasoning that complicates the understanding of the relationship between science and movement. Furthermore, much, for example historical, sociological or politicological, research leads to results that cannot immediately be applied by action groups, but which provide important insights and are therefore useful' (Ibid.).

Even more fundamental is the critique in Pleiter and Zijp's 1981 article 'De politiek van de relatieve autonomie' [The Politics of Relative Autonomy]. Here the notion of women's oppression is attacked as a given, as a foundation on which women's studies develops. The fact that women are oppressed cannot simply be taken as the basis for the development of a theoretical object of its own.

> 'We must realize that a "feminist science" that bases itself directly on women's oppression and struggle is (...) in danger of wanting to establish what the right ideas for that struggle are' (Pleiter and Zijp 1981: 254).

Even in the case when it is not about women but about 'the societal organization of sexism', this appears to be based on the concept of an already existing sexist society (Idem: 256). As an effect of these positions, they note

> 'that a long series of "facts" are put forward that show where "women" are "oppressed" by "men" and indicate as their flipside "moments of resistance"' (Ibid.).

What Pleiter and Zijp consider a crucial mistake is precisely taking the feminist experience as an unproblematic starting point. As a result, they argue, all possible differences are dropped in favor of the agreement, that all women are oppressed. They criticize this primarily in light of the relationship of feminist researchers to (feminist) investigated persons, insofar as

> 'the ideal of *positive* identification or recognition is elevated to the proper way of doing research' (Idem: 261, italics in original).

In conclusion, they state:

> 'In our view, it is not right to start from one given, mutually recognizable position of womanhood and being oppressed as the basis for a feminist methodology' (Idem: 264-265).

In contrast, they advocate the following:

> 'It seems important to us to utilize the many different views of women rather than suppress them in favor of one, supposedly feminist view. We think it is politically important, that more women engage in research, abandoning the ideal of recognition as a dogma in the sense described' (Idem: 264).

Less focused on the method of feminist research than on the object of women's studies, but in fact concerning the same problem of the premise of women's oppression, is the article by Josine Blok, who in the third *Jaarboek voor Vrouwengeschiedenis* introduces an article by Michelle Rosaldo from 1974 (Blok 1982). She too describes that the desire to explain oppression is understandable, but that on the other hand an oversimplification, as if everything could be reduced to one single form of women's oppression, does not help the understanding of its functioning. Both history and anthropology now show that 'major differences in the nature and influence of this inequality' can be observed in human societies (Blok 1982). What Rosaldo is doing now is introducing the concept of 'sexual asymmetry' instead of speaking of 'women's oppression', and this is because it can do more justice to all the differences that occur in universal sex inequality.

Instead of focusing only on two groups (men and women), with one holding more power than the other, other relationships can be described.

> 'In reality, the relationships are more diverse and diffuse: the powerlessness of one group of women may be related to the power of another, and the impossibilities of a group of women in one area to its capabilities in another' (Blok 1982: 165–166).

In order to understand how 'women's oppression' works, we must avoid the term 'women's oppression' as well as 'female' and 'male' as two opposing poles, because otherwise we are affirming something we want to analyze and change. What becomes the object of research is no longer the cause of women's oppression, but 'the form and function of *specific* (women's) oppression' (Idem: 166, italics in original).

> 'In other words, the object of research is *the structure of inequality, in which sexual inequality occupies a specific, to be determined, place. This inequality can have both an asymmetrical and a hierarchical characte*r' (Idem: 169, italics in original).

Blok, i.c. Rosaldo thus makes a proposal here that, as Pleiter and Zijp also already concluded, disintegrates the common object of women's studies. However, this is no reason not to continue to defend 'women's studies' on political grounds, Blok concludes her article.

1981   1982

## 2.2. Women's Studies in Architecture Policy Document 1980[11]

'(...)

I.   Women occupy a subordinate position in current societal relations. (...)
The notion of oppression, which suggests a relationship between an oppressor, who possesses power, and an oppressed, without power, does not offer the possibility of analyzing the way in which the enrollment in women itself works, how the straitjacket functions. Nothing and no one, including women, escapes patriarchy. That is why, for the time being, we stick to the concept of subordination to indicate the position of women in societal relations; but without giving up the political element, the struggle of women to break down, to transform the existing relations, which seems to be more connected to the concept of oppression.
(...)
In the women's movement, women's studies find its 'inspiration'. Central to this is the possible significance of the acquisition of knowledge for the political goal of the women's movement: the destruction of patriarchal relations. The discussion on the relationship between theory and practice, on the question how science can be transformative, moves between two extremes, according to Komter and Mossink (1980: 355). On the one hand, there is the view: 'to know the world you have to change it', which leads to what is called action research. Maria Mies is an important spokeswoman for this direction (Mies 1977). The other view: 'to change the world, you have to get to know it' appeals more to us (Bleich, Jansz, Leydesdorff 1980). The latter view notes that science has an 'autonomous' moment in relation to political movements. Research cannot and need not always lead directly to results that are applicable. Results of a research inspired by a political movement 'must not necessarily please that movement' (Idem: 211). Perhaps needless to say, science is not value-free: 'The choice of the object to be researched and the scientific theory employed by the researcher are influenced by his/her mode of observation, her/his political views and the (a-)political culture within which she/he moves at the university or elsewhere' (Ibid.).
(...)
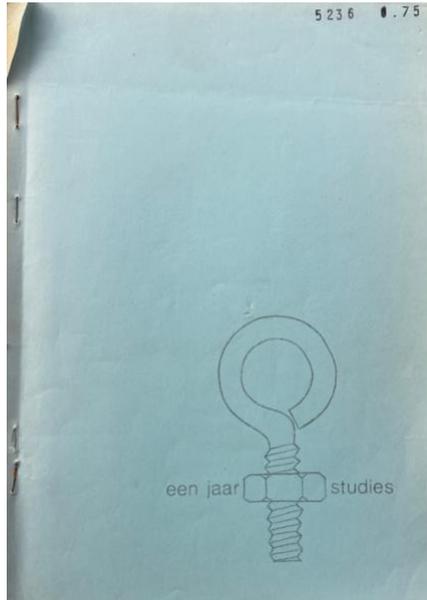
One year Women's Studies in Architecture 1978 TU Delft

II.   Architecture, urban design, and public housing are 'far more than building houses'.

The confrontation between, on the one hand, the problem of design, which traditionally conceived of itself as the integral moment in the process of creating space, and, on the other hand, the notion of the socialization of architecture, urban design, and public housing, led to the question of the content and functioning of the disciplines within specific societal formations. The research of the transformations in the discipline proceeds along two separate lines.

There is the research on the design issue itself. Through the analysis of products of the design discipline, an attempt is made to identify the tools that design itself produces and employs in the 'translation' of (social) programs into spatial concepts, into a form, a material design. In contrast to the conception of designing as an inexplicable, intuitive moment, and/ or as the shaping of human behavior, the research focuses on the historicization of current design issues.

There is the research on the social tasks assigned to architecture, urban design, and public housing. For example, social groups striving for political change (i.e., the women's movement) seem to attach a significance to literally building change. 'Architecture has been cornered and since then seems only to be legitimized through other disciplines: it seems sociologized, psychologized, ecologized, biologized, semiologized, politicologized, psychologized, anthropologized, economized, historicized' (Weeber 1979: 27). Architects now seem to be able to discuss their products only in social science terms. This line of research focuses on the analysis of architecture, urban design, and public housing as factors in the realization of a number of strategies – a set of practices and policies, which effectuate the disciplining of people. Underlying these strategies are the results of psychological, sociological, economic studies

concerning, for example, public health, demographics, etc. The 'normal' family, for example, the object of countless social scientific investigations and the target, the tactical element in the disciplining of people into (for example) regular workers and thrifty housewives, good mothers, and educable children, is also constituted at the level of housing. Some even go so far as to ground the object of their research not in architecture or design, but in the disciplining strategies, into which it is absorbed. This research attempts 'to explain in what way the various strategies, by whom and against whom, have been produced' (De Heer 1978: 865).

The coexistence of the two lines of research has emerged from the development of historical research. The step that historical architectural criticism takes, by letting go of a 'direct relationship, of servitude or mutual fertilization, with the design practice' – as is presupposed to be present in so-called operative criticism – seems methodically the only way out for, on the one hand, examining what societal pretensions are assigned to architecture, urban design, and public housing, on the other hand, the research on the design discipline and its products. The historical (architectural) critique includes (among other things) 'the destruction of outlived myths', of new ideological pretensions of architecture – which forces architecture to return to 'form without utopia' (Tafuri 1978: 11). '(...) we cannot achieve a clear understanding of the current situation by raising illusory expectations. (...) The destruction of the surviving myths does not yet leave a glimmer of hope on the horizon for an alternative architecture or a technique "of the working class"' [and of the women's movement, HdM-AV] (Ibid.).

In line with the above, it goes without saying that we reject the suggestion that things would be much better if only more women, who have 'different' experiences than men, would get involved in spatial planning. First, this means reaffirming, defining women given what is called feminine in current relationships. Secondly, it seems to us that women do not or cannot use design tools in a fundamentally different way, just as a woman's use of a hammer does not lead to feminist carpentry.

If we connect these two notions, that women occupy a subordinate position in societal relations – and that science is an important factor in its reproduction – and that architecture, urban design, and public housing are *far more than building houses*, we can formulate the starting point of Women's Studies in Architecture as follows: the conditioning of women (and men) takes place, among other things, in the field of architecture, urban design, and public housing: the politics and ordering of spaces express and at the same time produce the subordinate positions that women occupy in specific societal formations.

There are two practices, namely the practice of the women's movement and the design practice, with which the research field of women's studies is in (distanced) relation. Without extensive studies having been done, we can already see that

spatial organization is partly responsible for many malpractices, such as, for example, the isolation of women in so-called dormitory suburbs, the commuting distance that makes it impossible for many women to work outside the home, 'a woman was raped here', the problems faced by a residential group when they want to rent a home, etc..

It has been the women's movement not least that has brought these malpractices to light. In addition to taking action, for example against rape, and to developing an understanding in which the malpractices are rooted in, among other things, discussion groups, questions are being submitted to women in universities. For example, we have been asked whether we can/ will design collective housing – a question that stems from the 'discovery' of domestic labor as an important factor in the reproduction of labor force and (re)production relations and the search for possible other forms of organization of reproduction.

Just as designing a series of single-family houses poses different problems than designing a hospital, an office building, or a tower with units for singles and couples, a communal residential building might pose its own specific puzzle problems that are of interest to us as designers, but not at all to the women's movement. For the development of alternatives, in my opinion, women's studies are not needed in the first place. It is only disillusioning that the city is full of buildings, which would be perfectly suitable for collective housing without being specifically designed for it, but which have been (made) inaccessible (financially), but that is another problem.

To the suggestion that, based on the understanding that a neighborhood is organized around domestic labor, we should be able to say something sensible about urban planning, my head does not yet get any further than producing images of explosions (De Vries 1979: 226).

Proposals for short-term improvement and change in the planning and management of spaces are conceivable, already now, and more grounded after further research, and they are important insofar as they create some conditions and open perspectives for possible changes at the socio-economic level, for example. But in doing so, we must realize that 'there is, therefore, a simultaneous and concomitant production of social forms in their different dimensions and, in particular, in their spatial and cultural dimensions. One may pose the problem of their interaction, but one cannot set out from the proposition that one of the forms produces the other' (Castells 1977: 83).

The presupposition of possible causal links between forms and types of behavior excludes the possibility of understanding the contradictions within a society on which urban forms and social behaviors graft.

To continue on the example of communal dwelling – it seems to us that women's studies is primarily concerned with:

- The analysis of societal programs, which underlie realized plans, concepts, new social questions.
  In this case, they should link to questions such as:
    - Wherein the women's movement's demand for communal dwelling is rooted? (division of household labor, anti-individualization, ability to work outside the home, sharing the raising of children).
    - What are the presuppositions regarding the role of the built environment, the building in achieving the desired changes?
    - To what extent is there a fall back on already existing (residential) concepts?
    - To what extent does the concept of communal dwelling itself remain trapped within the boundaries of thinking in oppositions: collective-individual, public-private, live-work?
    - In what way is such a demand responded to, for example, what is the significance of *Centraal Wonen* [a type of communal dwelling] and the special units for singles and couples?

- The examination of plans – built or drawn.
    - how did the plan or concept function,
    - on the one hand, regarding the social programs it had to meet: how was the plan organized, how was the use organized, what were the intentions, what is the reality and to what extent did it change and for what reasons?
    - on the other hand, with regard to the discipline: what is (has been) the significance of the plan or concept for the production of new or other plans and concepts?

More in general, we want to understand the way in which problems are brought up by social movements (in particular the women's movement), how they are rooted in a changing societal context, in which way the boundaries, with which incitements to change are conflicting, themselves move and (possibly) enclose resistance. We are less inclined to pick up pen and paper and try to change the world while drawing.

Women's Studies in Architecture is aimed at developing an understanding of the ways in which the conditioning of women works, through the analysis of the interrelationships of societal and spatial dimensions.

For this, it is important to ask:
- what societal meanings (by whom, at what time) are attributed to the spatial dimension.
- What societal meanings the disciplines of architecture, urban design, and public housing ascribe to themselves.

Historical research therefore occupies a central place in the development of Women's Studies in Architecture. The entrance of historical research is particularly important for women's studies because of the possibility and necessity of historicizing 'eternal' truths and values. The subordinate position of women in

patriarchal relations has undergone numerous transformations throughout history. Without falling into the glorification of the myth of a possible 'original' society, in the distant past and future, the point is to trace these transformations. The history of architecture, and more recently, that of urban design, and public housing, offers a (hidden) treasure of material on the basis of which the transformations in social life can be studied. And vice versa, the insights developed by women's studies in the social sciences will provide an entry point to detect and interpret the transformations taking place at the level of spaces. At the same time, in order to describe the conditioning of women in housing, the development of a theoretical apparatus of concepts is necessary. The language and concepts offered by mainstream science do not allow us to escape thinking in oppositions within a unified system – what is not good is bad and what is not feminine is masculine. In this, too, women's studies in the social sciences is of great importance to us.

Women's Studies sets itself the task of analyzing the ways in which the subordination of women is functioning/ functionalized. Women's Studies in Architecture concentrates on analyzing the 'contribution' of the arrangement and management of the spaces.
(...)'.

Thus, the main excerpts from the 1980 Policy Document Women's Studies in Architecture.

1982   1983

2.3. Development of women's studies part II

With the changes in the principles of women's studies described in 2.1., a reversal also took place in another direction. In addition to the introduction of a more neutral and undefined determination of the relationship between the sexes as 'asymmetry', in 1981 a start was made to transform a negative formulation as 'women's oppression' into a positive one as 'the construction of "the feminine"', or even better, 'the construction of sex difference' (Adams 1979; Pleiter and Zijp 1981). At issue is the nature of the relationship between 'feminine' as a figurative notion and 'woman' as a biological body.

What generally contributed to the further research of the emergence and functioning of 'the feminine' in relation to female bodies were notions such as 'ideology', introduced by Althusser. Furthermore, psychoanalysis helped to understand the working of the human psyche more in general. Both fields offered insights that became of great interest to feminists. Feminism came up against the question why it is that 'conscious' women are

unwilling/ unable to break free from their 'oppression', as if it is fused with our own bodies and heads. And why is it that people do seem to need something as pernicious and oppressive as the family.

Within orthodox Marxism, the concept of ideology has primarily the meaning of illusion, of false consciousness, imposed on the working class by the ruling class, which deprives them of a view of their own position in society. Marx already argued that it is not people's consciousness that determines their being, but conversely that societal being determines consciousness. Gramsci was the first within the Marxist tradition to break with the notion of ideology as false consciousness, and to emphasize its reality. He observed that the ruling class in the West not only rules through oppression, but also enjoys the support of the people. The masses voluntarily submit to their leadership.

Althusser, following Gramsci, conceives of ideology as a separate instance of societal reality (in addition to politics and economics), consisting of institutions and practices such as religion, education, family, communication, culture, etc., which together form a unity, namely of the prevailing ideology (Althusser 1978). He talks about the relative autonomy of ideology, but situates its origin in the base, the relations of production (the existence of classes). According to Althusser, ideology constitutes human subjectivity, that is, makes people form an image of their own relationship to the societal process. What is objective and necessary – determined by historical developments – is experienced as subjective and freely chosen. People conceive of themselves as a unit and as the center of action, which is in fact an imaginary relation to reality, but nevertheless necessary. Necessary like the air we breathe. Ideology also determines our actions, our gestures and as such ideology is material. Thus, in its materiality and its necessity, ideology has acquired a positive meaning with Althusser as opposed to a manipulative nature with Marx.

> 'Every ideology represents – in a necessarily imaginary distortion – not the existing relations of production (...), but above all the (imaginary) relation of the individuals to the relations of production (...). What is represented in ideology is thus not the system of real relations that govern the existence of these individuals, but the imaginary relation of these individuals to the real relations under which they live' (Althusser 1978: 86-87).

Psychoanalytic theory too problematizes the unity of the subject.

> 'Speaking requires one to make a choice among the terms that are possible. The choice is not "free" but takes place according to certain rules of the language to which one must subject (sub-jection) if one is to speak at all. Nor is this choice fully conscious (as evidenced by slips of the tongue). (...) Because speaking involves selection, it also means that things are constantly left unsaid; speaking reveals and conceals at the same time. There are "holes". According to this conception, the unconscious is not a mysterious or original content, but can be interpolated in the "holes" of language. (The unconscious is structured like a language). In the analytic situation, the unconscious is brought to speak, however, without being dissolved by it. A subject can never express itself fully and definitively' (Lammers 1981: 73).

The notion of the construction of the feminine and of the sex difference appears in two articles by Mieke Aerts and in the 1984 report on women's studies at the University of Amsterdam, called *Het Miljoen* [The Million] for short, and can be described as a farewell to the negative formulation of the problem of 'women's oppression' (Aerts 1981; Aerts 1984; *Het Miljoen* 1984). On the contrary, these formulations explicitly focus on the emergence and working of different forms that sex difference takes in different cultures.

In her 1981 text, Aerts conceives of 'construction' as 'curriculum' and she no longer wants to talk about women as a category because that 'refers too much to individual experiences' (Aerts 1981: 133). Thus, women's experiences still constitute only part of the story, and Aerts is now concerned precisely with the more general story that speaks from it.

> 'I am not concerned with the individual experiences of women in these organizations, but with the way politics was made. I am not concerned with party politics or with the complications of policy and organizational history, but with the politics of the personal, the curriculum for 'life', hidden or not. Hence 'in search of constructions' ('curriculum') of femininity (...)' (Ibid.).

In her analysis, Aerts considers various Catholic women's organizations, which she conceives of as producers of 'femininities' that were appropriated to different groups of women:

> 'Each organization appeals to a different category of women: the RKBV mothers, the Grail daughters, and the Sleutelbos aunts' (Idem: 141).

Moreover, there are different types of 'femininities' that correspond to the separation public/ private:

> 'On the street, a different kind of femininity is needed than between the four walls of the single-family home' (Idem: 144).

The different types of 'femininity' are distinguishable from each other in that either the 'being different'-of-women is emphasized or being-'the same' is propagated. This 'politics of the personal' is thus twofold, something Aerts elaborates on in her later article. Here, too, a duality regarding the question of what the woman actually is, is assumed. Aerts notes the existence of a fundamental dilemma that divides feminism into different, opposing camps, a dilemma that is said to have its origins at the end of the 18th century. That is, she does not want to assume the existence of a category of 'women' (and 'men') as known, but she wants to question those categories.

What Aerts detects at the end of the 18th century is a planned approach to previously 'scattered differences in position and behavior between men and women'. She speaks of a coherent 'program' for sex constitution and elsewhere even of an 'action program'. Here too there is a policy which creates an order between what is considered 'male' and 'female', here too there are societal institutions which try to transfer this and successfully do so.

> 'Not only the "old" institutions such as the churches and legislation, but also "new" ones, such as the sciences (anthropology, biology, and medicine) and literature (the

novel), play an important role. (...) That the program has been highly successful, need not be argued here' (Aerts 1984: 7).

The politics of these institutions is aimed at establishing the social sex difference, that is, behaviors and positions of 'femininity' are assigned to the biological (female) sex. These politics turn a pre-social level into a social one, thus creating the category of woman. The reason for this is

> 'that the polarization of the sexes is the junction in the (re)structuring of societal relations in Western societies after the overthrow of the booth society, the junction in short, in the establishment of the socio-cultural and political hegemony of the bourgeoisie, while retaining male dominance' (Idem: 8).

When we consider *Het Miljoen*, we see that here, too, the establishment of the connection of 'femininity' to the 'female body' in different periods and cultures is especially prominent.

> 'The many studies produced in the field of women's studies in recent years have increasingly undermined the idea of an unambiguous meaning of sex difference. Within women's studies there is a growing awareness that the preoccupation with 'the' difference between women and men is thoroughly place- and time-bound. Particularly from the angle of language and cultural philosophy, the question of the meaning of valuing "the" difference is being posed anew in order to replace unambiguous answers with a complex of ambiguous ones. This is not about noting the existence of sex difference per se, nor about questioning its importance as a general structural principle. This will be disputed by few. The unanimity disappears, however, when the notion of sex has to be defined or when it is necessary to specify what the difference(s) consist of.
>
> (...) Another problem lies in the fact that the relations between women and men are seen as unequal relations that are both universal, that is, occurring in about all societies and cultures known to us, as well as historically specific. Following the latter, the changeability of that relationship is claimed, while the former, on the other hand, gives the idea of an 'eternal' – despite all its different elaborations – everywhere prevalent and thus immutable relationship. The universality of difference is based on an "immutable" (biological) difference (reproduction in particular), historicity on the societal determinacy of sex. It is questionable whether the two explanations are as different as they seem at first glance. Both have to expound on the relationship between "sex" and "gender" and both contain notions of linking biological difference to various societal positions of men and women. The choice for one of the two explanations can also hardly function as "the") solution of the indicated contradictions because for both the question remains: why "the small difference" (the biological difference) has such large societal consequences (first explanation) or why with regard to the different positions of women and men again and again is thought in terms of an opposition and inequality relation (second explanation)' (*Het Miljoen* 1984: 16–17).[12]

The central framework of research programming for *Het Miljoen* is then formulated as,

'femininity/ being a woman: ambivalences and contradictions' (Idem: 17).

'Furthermore, within the central framework, we can ask why sex exists as such an important societal category. Both the design and content of the difference between the sexes can be the subject of research as well as the obviousness of the difference, of the dichotomy between women and men. The question is how does sex besides all kinds of other differences (class, ethnicity, etc.) always emerge as a dichotomy, despite the differences between women among themselves and men among themselves?' (Idem: 17–18).

1983　　　　　　1984

In 1998, the *Tijdschrift voor vrouwenstudies* changed in *Tijdschrift voor genderstudies*

2.4. Questions on the Policy Document and Women's Studies

Now, five years later, we can say that Women's Studies in Architecture did not want to surrender itself to the whims of a modern phenomenon, never wanted to be the executing agency without question of women's demands, but rather claimed a critical position in relation to these demands and desires, precisely from the point of view of architecture. Explicitly, the Policy Document stated that it did not want to take the political starting point for the women's movement, namely women's oppression, as a point of departure for research, for women's studies in architecture. In this sense, a similarity can be noted with the debates in women's studies in general.

In terms of architecture, the Policy Document is somewhat 'evasive', ambiguous. Albeit in a different way than in the story of *Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen*, here too the relationship of the architectural with what was called the 'social' is central. Architecture (and urban design, and public housing) is not, as in *Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen*, a reflection of the social, nor can it be expected to shape, reflect, or mirror the 'new life'.

However, architecture, urban design, and public housing are considered in the Policy Document as a kind of intermediary bodies, as institutions, through which a number of social policies are being realized, and as a result sex difference is constituted. Inspired, among other things, by the theoretical debates in women's studies, such a formulation is not exceptional.

Designing, in the Policy Document conceived as translation work, could not be changed by feminism. However, the research into design itself was not the task of women's studies.

Central to Women's Studies in Architecture was the historical research on how the architectural discipline is intertwined with other kinds of social policies and strategies, with the aim of developing 'insight into the ways in which the conditioning of women operates'.

Thus, the efforts of Women's Studies in Architecture were formulated in the Policy Document entirely as a contribution to women's studies. As far as a specific problem of architecture was recognized, it was put aside, or at least not considered to be part of the task of Women's Studies in Architecture. Although it was stated that the entry level for research was formed by 'that which the disciplines of architecture, urban design, and public housing produce and have produced', we can still wonder to what extent the architectural material was not mainly presented as illustrative material....

A first change in relation to the Policy Document took place in the early 1980s, when, under the influence of, in particular, developments in literary theory within women's studies, a new approach to architecture was proposed, namely, to break the 'fixed' associations between spatial and social aspects and to develop other 'reading methods' of architecture. This was prompted, among other things, by the experience of writing 'dwelling stories', as it was done in seminars at the time. The question is to what extent, with the development of female representations, one enters a territory full of pitfalls.

Second, over the years it became increasingly clear that the students, who participated in the seminars, were primarily interested in the design problems and – raised by mothers who read the feminist magazine *Opzij* – came up with the question of how the widely known feminist critique of the built environment could be deployed at the level of design. In short, the discrepancy between the narrative of *Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen* and Women's Studies in Architecture became an urgent problem. The narrative of *Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen* became commonplace through feminist and other media that Women's Studies in Architecture became increasingly caught between the expectations placed on it on the one hand, and its own line on the other, which was much more affiliated with the theoretical debates within Women's Studies and thus sent students home with a mountain of questions rather than a new toolbox.

Meanwhile, a new generation of women (and men) seems to have already entered the department, who are again focusing exclusively and wholeheartedly on design, and are biting into a new modernism of form and rejecting anything that refers to politics as being from 'before their time'. The 'architectural debate' has not ceased in the meantime either, although the 'center' seems to have shifted from the department and the complicated books to the world of journalism, the competition, and the exhibition. Back to the drawing? Back to the design? So that Women's Studies too cannot 'stay behind' or remain 'outside'? In view of these developments and the dilemma they pose for Women's Studies in Architecture – caught between the narrative of *Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen* and the question of Design – it seems at least inadvisable for Women's Studies in Architecture anno 1986 to avoid questions relating to architecture itself as being someone else's responsibility.

Like *Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen*, Women's Studies in Architecture can therefore also be blamed for not having asked the question of what architecture is, or at least for having left it to others. In part, this has to do with its orientation towards theorizing within women's

studies, in which a number of obstacles appear to be present, making progress difficult, as we shall see, especially when it comes to a cultural phenomenon such as architecture (or literature, or film).

When we look at the shift from the term 'women's oppression' to 'construction of femininity' or 'concept of sex difference' it can be seen as a positive reversal. Positive in the sense that it is now no longer a matter of observing that society does not function for (modern) women, but rather a matter of how 'femininity' and the 'sex difference' come into being in society. However, the opposite can also be asserted. There can, despite this shift, still be spoken of a similarity between the terms, because even when it comes to notions such as 'construction' and 'concept', these are used to emphasize the distinction (the sex difference; femininity versus masculinity). To continue to hold on to this distinction is precisely obscuring an understanding of the creation and functioning of two sexes and the creation of 'femininity' and 'masculinity'. Thus, if we focus primarily not on the (apparent) progress of the conceptual change, but on the similarity evident in the concepts, a number of observations can be made.

1. The negativity of 'oppression', 'difference' between the sexes, and the 'masculinity/femininity' distinction predominate. This is caused by the fact that the feminist experience still is at the root of this in an unproblematic way. For, although it is recognized that the feminist experience is not always the same, and different experiences are 'accepted' as coexisting truths, the truth of each experience individually is no longer questioned. That is, questioning the ambiguity of the experience is not addressed. It is true, that feminist experiences in modern society are negative in nature is truth (namely, that there are conflicts between what modern women want and what is expected of them). At the same time, these expectations must also be seen as a modern phenomenon that appears as a result of changing cultural patterns (and as such, the negativity of the experiences is not measure of the truth of the universality of 'women's oppression' or the 'sex difference', but only measure of the modern, Northern European/ American middle-class position of women in a changing culture).

It is precisely this relationship (the feminist experience vis-à-vis the nature of the culture in which it appears) that should be interrogated. Or as Lévi-Strauss puts it more generally:

> 'That which is experienced must be understood as it appears, raw and bloody, in the consciousness of Peter, Paul, Charles or Mary ... What is going on in the consciousness of man is very interesting, but only insofar as it gives us, when examined critically, information about how things take place outside consciousness: not the subjective mush, but the competing orders of organic, intellectual, or social nature, whose affective character is only an expression of clashes, conflicts, and difficulties of adaptation in individual consciousness' (Lévi-Strauss 1980: 216).

2. It is questionable whether notions like 'construction' and 'concept of sex difference' are the neutral notions they are meant to be. When a concept like construction is followed by 'deconstruction', for example, this indicates an additional meaning of the concept of construction: construction of femininity as something that is learned, imposed, or attributed to (parts of) the biological sex, which could then be unlearned, discarded, or written away.

As if it were really a 'form' placed over the body or a 'content' internalized in the head, which can be removed and of which one can become aware. And as if research that 'deconstructs' could be helpful in doing so. Let us take a closer look at the use of these concepts as elaborated by Aerts and *Het Miljoen* (Aerts 1981, Aerts 1984, *Het Miljoen* 1984).

3. In both cases, the question of construction and concept consists of a relationship established between biological sex on the one hand and societal agencies or structures that attribute to this biological sex a 'construction' or a 'concept', which would then create a societal or social sex. Thereby taking into account different interests and societal forces, which would lead to different 'constructions of femininity' and 'concepts of sex difference'. Despite the different 'constructions of femininity' and the different 'concepts of sex difference', in the end, it is always about a universal message that connects two poles (biological – societal): namely, institution of societal sex difference or establishment of femininity/ femininities. That is, the way in which the message appears is ultimately subordinate to the universal meaning as such. In this sense, we may wonder to what extent the problem that was attached to the concept of oppression has been solved with the introduction of these concepts. For, instead of seeing women's oppression everywhere, now sex difference is seen as structuring any society. Or, as A. Richters begins her article:

> 'Feminists have clarified in many studies how various aspects of the "biological-societal sex-system", as the organizing principle of societies past and present, structures or has structured social life and thought' (Richters 1985: 27).[13]

Even the discussion conducted in the *Tijdschrift voor Vrouwenstudies* under the title 'Difference and Equality' does not escape this dilemma: 'difference' would be based on 'equality' and vice versa. The dilemma is posed by the fact that the debate about equality and difference must rely on the categories of man and woman.

> 'Both of the feminist positions mentioned imply, in addition to a critique of sex difference (which presupposes 'sex difference', HdM-AV), also a critique of equality between men and women (which presupposes 'men' and 'women', HdM-AV) as equality plain and simple' (Sommer 1985: 384).

However, assuming the presupposed categories of sex difference, men, women contrasts with questioning them, which, although formulated, is not developed as a problem:

> 'So, what do we mean by "men" and "women"? (…) What distinguishes all women from men? Could you talk about that when:
> 1. The differences between women and men are at least as great as the similarities,
> 2. What "male" and what "female" is called is so different historically and culturally?' (Idem: 383).

Because the article, from which we quote here, expounds itself in relation to the two distinct feminist (political) positions, that of equality and that of difference, it does not allow itself to elaborate precisely on these questions. If we did, we would have to examine primarily what words, what representations, what images are attached to bodies in a culture. In the distribution of representations and words among bodies, the biological

distinction between the sexes presents itself as one of the fundamental problems (alongside death – life, old – young, own – strange) that must be symbolically articulated in every culture. Thus, the biological distinction is precisely to be taken seriously, in contrast to what would be agreed upon within women's studies, namely that the 'differentness of women (...) is explicitly not (assigned) to biology' (Idem: 387). And, on the other hand, women's (modern) experiences, instead of being taken at their word, should also be questioned, and historicized precisely in all their ambiguities.

That is, the cultural formations must be examined and only then the relationship of words to things, i.c. bodies, can be determined.

As far as architecture is concerned, we could say that architecture too only appears in a cultural order. Just as sex difference cannot be reduced to either biological or societal sex, neither can architecture be reduced to either what is called the 'autonomous' or the societal. Both men and women and architecture must be regarded as cultural phenomena. And in this sense, they can be related to each other as comparable quantities.

The point, then, is not to look at architecture from women's point of view, nor to look at women from architecture's point of view, but to look at both from and in a cultural arrangement.

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3. ARCHITECTURAL THINKING

Architecture and urban design can be considered difficult objects of research. That is, they are empirically assignable objects that everyone has to deal with. And one can indeed research architecture from different disciplines: from sociology, psychology, or economics, but as such they are sociological, psychological, and economic studies. They explain a relationship (of man, capital, the market, etc.) to architecture rather than explaining architecture itself. What does the discipline of architecture say about itself?

In the architectural (design) discipline different positions are taken regarding the meaning of architecture and design, ranging from architecture understood as the bearer of socio-cultural meanings, to which the ability to bring about social change is or is not attributed, till architecture understood as a sign, referring only to itself, its own history and idiom. These two positions mark the extremes of a more differentiated field, within which the way of defining object and stake of architectural research, as well as its relationship to design, is variable.

> 'Architecture is no longer a domain that must be related to a supposed "society" in order to be thought and understood; (...) The need to speak about nature, about function, about social mores, about anything that goes beyond the nature of the architectural form itself, has disappeared. (...) This, of course, does not necessarily mean that architecture in this sense no longer has a function, no longer satisfies needs beyond the whim of a l'art pour l'art designer, but simply that the main conditions for the creation of objects and environments do not necessarily include a uniform exposé of the relationship between form and use' (Vidler 1982: 7).

Thus, in 'De derde typologie' [The third typology], Vidler quotes the architectural approach of what he calls the new rationalists in the field of diverse architectural approaches. The words themselves refer to the antithesis of such an 'autonomous' architectural approach, which situates its starting point in architecture, namely to an approach, which situates its starting point in 'society'. To continue immediately with a reservation because it is not that simple.

When an attempt is made to describe the much more differentiated positions in relation to each other and to determine their relationship to each other, some general terms are necessarily invoked. Concepts such as functionalism, realism, rationalism, and other -isms, predominate in the architectural theory debate. No one will argue that these flags cover their charges, but more often than not they remain a flag parade and the charges are not unloaded.

When Gandelsonas tries to describe post-modern architectural approaches, he distinguishes two 'main streams', which he designates neo-realism and neo-rationalism, as mutually different architectural views and as distinct from the functionalism of modern architecture (1976).

It is precisely how such concepts are developed and elaborated in relation to each other that determines how a debate can be conducted and made 'productive'. Constantly the

relation object – man (society) appears as a reference point with respect to which the different positions would be determinable. Differentiated mutual differences could all be reduced to a 'basic difference'. Either one situates the point of departure in the (human) society and conceives the relation object – society 'positively', in the sense of productive, or one situates the point of departure in the object and conceives the relation 'negatively', in the sense of non-productive for the realization of objects, at least for the design.

In this respect, the architectural theory debate seems to construct its own dilemma, similar to the one faced by women's studies. Its negative (denialist) approach to the relationship biological – societal sex difference as opposed to the positive (affirmative) approach by 'bourgeois' science can only reproduce the premise of societal sex difference rather than interrogate it. Just as we propose for women's studies to take both poles seriously in order to understand whether and how a relationship is articulated in a culture, something similar we propose for architectural theory. That is, we consider architecture as a cultural phenomenon, showing whether and how a relationship object – society is articulated. With this digression into the architectural theory debate, we want to find out what starting points for such an approach to architecture are present behind the -isms in which the debate is conducted.
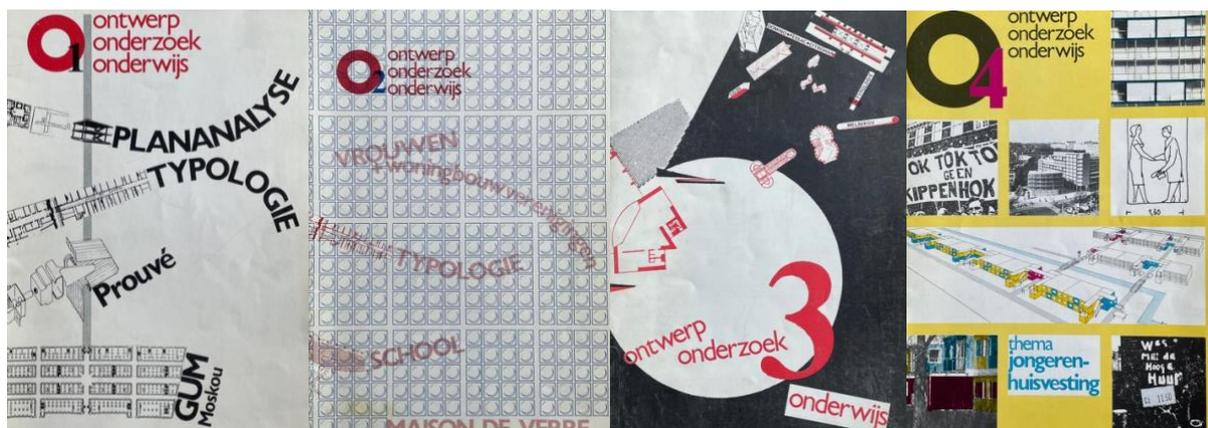
O Ontwerp Onderzoek Onderwijs nrs 1-4 1981-1982

Gandelsonas describes the two main streams, which he distinguishes as follows. Neo-realism is:

> '(…) historical and cultural, it cares for the present, for the other aspects and practices of culture, such as pop art, advertising, cinema and industrial design, to which it exposes architecture' (1998 [1976]: 7).
> 'Neo-rationalism depends on the idea of an architecture that is "autonomous", that is, on an architecture which, in the eyes of the most radical architects within this tendency, transcends history and culture; an architecture which is a force in itself, a language that speaks about itself and which does not communicate ideas other than its own' (1998 [1976]: 7).

According to Gandelsonas, neo-realism would have predominated especially in the 1960s, while he characterizes developments in the 1970s with the term neo-rationalism. The paradoxical thing now, Gandelsonas argues, is that both movements have a common ground in their anti-functionalism. While functionalism in the period between the two world

wars was an 'efficient means of creating a language of architecture', later, after the Second World War, applied in a different context, namely 'in the service of massive urban reconstruction', functionalism has proved regressive (1998 [1976]: 7).

> 'The anti-functionalist position of neo-realism which continued to persist in neo-rationalist ideology was, in this context, justifiable and, in itself, progressive' (1998 [1976]: 7).

Neo-realism wanted to do justice to a new reality, neo-rationalism to a more complex rationality, according to Gandelsonas. He calls Venturi a neo-realist, Hejduk, Eisenman, and Rossi neo-rationalists.

As explicitly as Venturi in *Learning from Las Vegas* analyses architecture as a communication system and conceives of it as a carrier of (literal) messages – and cannot be accused of any nostalgic yearning for the 'other'/ good/ etc. – no similar exponent of this movement can be pointed out in the Netherlands. The Forum group shows some affinity, insofar as importance is attached to the social message of (good) architecture, to the communicative quality of architecture, albeit that according to them the message of (good) architecture had to be 'good'. In this they are no different from their fiercely criticized functionalist predecessors (Vos 1986). In this sense, the name idealists or 'ideologists' would be more appropriate (Van Eijck 1981).[14]

It is precisely in the face of this idealism of the Forum group and their unintentional double legacy, the 'truttism' and the glorification of all scientific -isms, that a Dutch exponent of neo-rationalism, Weeber, profiles himself.[15]

One of the members of Forum was Van Eijck, the main spokesman for 'The Story of Another Thought' (Van Eijck 1959). Van Eijck, in opposition to the post-war uniform lifeless mass housing practice, tried to make room for an architecture, which could, as an ideological authority, convey new cultural values. Against the unambiguous meaning of form as function, in functionalism expressed in a monotonous heterogeneity, Van Eijck put forward the principle of reciprocity: 'the simultaneous presence of complementary or opposite aspects or qualities' (Van Eijck 1982: 42). He is concerned with 'the multiple and multifaceted meaning (ambiguity) of each twin phenomenon' (such as open – closed, inside – outside, far – near, etc.) (Idem: 42). Or, in Barbieri's words, with 'a cultural program: to reclaim the dimension of dwelling as the antithesis of housing' (Barbieri 1979: 42). Paradoxically, this commitment would also be made productive in large numbers by the Stichting Nieuwe Woonvormen [Foundation for New Residential Forms]: Van Eijck's 'dwelling images' could be pasted as ornamentation upon the standard housing, that meets the legal requirements of the *Voorschriften en Wenken* [Regulations and Directions]; the 'alienation' wrapped up in liberation and empowerment (Idem: 43).

Precisely the connection established by Forum between architecture and its social responsibility – namely the transmission of new cultural values – carries the seed of a notion that architecture can contribute to the realization of social qualities, such as democratic developments, that good architecture promotes the 'good' life, in short holds the happiness of mankind in its hands. As for the design practice, this meant that such architecture could

only be produced by architects who were aware of the far-reaching nature of their interventions and who therefore had to meet specific requirements as a person: social concern, creativity, humanity. Nothing could be expected from the 'controllers', who gave themselves up to the bureaucratic bulwarks.

Whereas Van Eijck's concern was architecture itself, the development of new images, 'The Story of Another Thought' turned out not only to degenerate into pettiness itself, but also to herald the beginning of a period in which architecture was only discussed in non-architectural categories, under the guise of science. Social concern was not just the exclusive right of Van Eijck and Forum but was claimed by a much broader socio-critical movement. The difference, however, is that the problem as well as the solution were no longer situated in architecture – which in its totally socialized form could no longer mean anything anymore, because there is nothing left to design, according to Jan de Heer (1973) – but that all blame and salvation was allocated to the social sciences, economy and politics. This has provided a lot of insight into the position of architecture (and of the architect) given the changing relationships in which architecture is produced – and of which Women's Studies in Architecture is one of the results –, but in which architecture itself has been sidelined.

Weeber may be called an exponent of that new approach to architecture (and urban design) which Gandelsonas calls neo-rationalism. Weeber, in line with the socio-critical notions of the 1970s, makes a distinction between social, economic, political problems on the one hand and architectural problems on the other, each of which should be solved in its 'own' field (Weeber 1979). The fact that the architectural discipline neglected its own work for a while is all too evident in what has been built in the Netherlands. There is no point in meddling with problems of a different kind than those of one's own field, nor in trying to find in them a legitimation for designing (as Forum argues) or not designing (as socio-critics argue). Weeber claims the existence of a problem field specific for architecture and urban design, which has the task – precisely as a supplement to and critique of the *words* of social scientists – of developing *images*, i.e., of researching 'objectifying formal design techniques' through design itself (Weeber 1979: 32). How this is done remains theoretically unresolved by Weeber himself. The same applies to the relation of the architectural problems to the other problems that all are pushed back on their own territories.

After this Dutch excursion let us return to Gandelsonas, who identifies some individuals as neo-rationalists, and are more explicitly theoretical in their approach to architecture, such as Eisenman and Rossi. This does immediately indicate the broadness and vagueness of a term like neo-rationalism. There is quite a difference between Eisenman and Rossi.

Eisenman takes a radical position. He calls all classical and modern architecture essentially equal, namely in their humanism. Bosma and Van Winkel articulate Eisenman's critique as follows:

> 'Both start from the same two fundamental presuppositions: first, that the architectural object can have a meaning; second, that the object is the end point of a rational design process' (Bosma and Van Winkel 1985: 16).

1979   1978   1984   1986

In classical architecture, it is a process of composition, in modern architecture, a process of transformation.

> 'The meaning of the architectural object lies in the reference to a schematic archetype, which was at the origin of the design process. (...) In both cases there is essentially the same kind of historical relationship between object and archetype. (...) Human rationality is always at the fore, and the point is that a viewer, starting from the architectural object, can read the design process as clearly as possible in order to return to the original archetype' (Idem: 16).

According to Eisenman, such ideals are obsolete (and Eisenman will therefore not call himself a rationalist...). What he advocates is an architecture

> 'whose ambiguity is so great that it can no longer convey a "message". An architecture that cannot be regarded as the result of a rational design process that starts from a schematic archetype, but that is itself such an archetype, because it cannot possibly be reduced to something simpler, and then understood' (Idem: 17).

Eisenman's decomposition method is based on ambivalence and fragmentation rather than on unity and composition, according to Bosma and Van Winkel.

> 'House X should be understood primarily as a symbol. It symbolizes the torn and uprooted position of post-modern man, his existence without any essence and his doubtful future' (Idem: 17).

So, a message after all?

Rossi himself describes rationalism, 'at least in my architecture', as

> 'a way of grasping and understanding things, that is, of making an architecture, which accounts for history as well as for technology, in which time connects with the new work' (Rossi 1981: 234).

Precisely this factor of time distinguishes the rationalist from the functionalist. Rossi cites Adolf Behne to indicate the difference between rationalism and functionalism.

> 'Functionalism (...) prefers to focus the goal on the one-off, on the moment – for every function a house! – the rationalist understands the goal broadly and generally, as serving many cases, precisely because he thinks of the duration of the house, which has to deal with several generations with perhaps changing requirements and therefore cannot live without leeway. (...) Does the functionalist look for the most precise adaptation to the most specialized purpose, the rationalist looks for a solution that meets many cases' (Idem: 236).

> 'The architect should provide the main lines of the design, but he should not "teach, how one should live"' (Idem: 237).

> 'Rationalist architecture relates first of all to a way of life, and it does so by means of various architectonic solutions, types' (Idem: 236).

Unlike in functionalism, where the typology is one of (necessarily reductive) schemes, simplifying people's lives and subjecting them to constraint, here a typology of architectural forms (the central plan, the courtyard, the gallery, etc.) is proposed that is connected to the life that takes place in it, changing over time.

This new typology, according to Vidler, who refers to Rossi, would be the defining element of the new rationalist architectural approach.

> 'We could characterize the fundamental feature of this third typology as a commitment, not to an abstract nature [the first typology, HdM-AV], not to a technological utopia [the second typology, HdM-AV], but rather to the traditional town as the central point. The existing city provides the material for classification and the forms of its artefacts through time provide the basis for re-composition. This third typology, like the first two, is clearly based on reason, classification, and a sense of the public in architecture; unlike the first two, it does not propose a panacea, a final apotheosis of human in architecture, a positivist final judgment' (Vidler 1982: 2–3).

Whereas Eisenman notes an ambiguity precisely in this – rationalism, in his view, is essentially humanistic despite its object orientation –, Vidler tries to circumvent this problem and states: the designs refer to nothing

> 'more but also no less (...) than the character ('nature') of the city itself, stripped of any specific social content from any specific time (...)' (Idem: 6).
> 'Columns, houses, and urban spaces (...) refer only to their own nature as architectonic elements (...)' (Ibid.).

This radical 'autonomous' approach to architecture is relativized just as much a page later – the ambiguity that Eisenman reproaches it for and wants to avoid remains – when Vidler states:

'When typical forms are selected from the past of a city, they cannot, however fragmented, be stripped of their original political and social meaning. The original meaning of the form, the layers of implication deposited on it by time and human experience, cannot easily be swept away and it is certainly not the intention of the new Rationalists to disinfect their types in this way. Rather, the embedded meanings of these types can be used to provide a key to their newly inserted meanings' (Idem: 7, capital in original).

In short, therefore, forms cannot be stripped of their meanings, and in new forms these old meanings come together with the newly inserted.

The detour that Vidler makes shows that Vidler identifies a 'problem' that a rational architectural approach would unfortunately have to deal with; his choice of words also indicates a negative approach to this 'problem'. But is it not equally possible to look at the 'problem' in a positive way?

1976   1976   1981   1983

For Rossi the architectural autonomy is not threatened or disturbed by the social. He is primarily interested to understand the connections of experiences to forms we can call types:

'The relationship of form and function, in the sense of numerous functions having a form, i.e., the relationship between one and the same form and its different meanings, is thoroughly and closely connected with the understanding of the city. The use of the city in different times displaying changes and constants shows the essential characteristics of architecture' (Rossi 1981: 236).

That is exactly what Rossi is looking for in *L'Architettura della città* (1966). According to Rossi, 'partial studies' (of economic, political, and social determinants) are not enough for the analysis of the city; the task of the architectural discipline is indeed to understand how the city is constructed in its complexity. This complexity lies precisely in the fact that the city is both a human-made object and precedes human.

On the one hand, he is concerned with clarifying which factors are always and everywhere affecting the development of a city. One of these factors is referred to by the notion of 'permanence', which has both material and intellectual aspects: the city lives in its history. The permanence is expressed in the primary elements such as the geographical character,

the monuments, the street system, the city plan, etc.. On the other hand, the always and everywhere present factors do not leave the same signs: the uniqueness is determined by space, time, location, and stature; and finally, because the city is the scene of long or short-lived events and the memory of them. Rossi places autonomy in a historical context and traces, based on analogies, the architectural laws that influence the development of spatial structures. Rossi conceives of the city as an artifact and as a continuous building process. All that exists has something preceding it; nothing can emerge from nothing. The whole of the city, both in space and in time, therefore, is important to him in order to understand the relationships between its parts.

Thus, the city can only be truly understood by understanding the interaction between all urban phenomena: the interaction between each small element and the complex urban phenomena, including the city as a whole, up to and including the experiences of people moving through the city. But as he realizes that a multiplicity and versatility of experiences flow together in the city, Rossi at the same time excludes from his theory all characteristics based directly on subjective experiences. Instead, Rossi speaks of a specific quality of space that is related to the conception we have of a building, its significance for the collective memory and the relationship it establishes between us and 'society'. Experiences, whether individual or collective, define the city. Involving this specific quality in the research would presuppose a way of analysis more fundamental than the simplified psychological tests, which only reveal something about an unproblematic perception of forms.

Comparing Van Eijck and Rossi, there is a similarity insofar as they acknowledge the existence of ambiguous meanings of architecture. However, in the case of Rossi, the ambiguity has to do with the time in which architecture functions as a stage of changing processes and experiences, in the case of Van Eijck the ambiguity has something unambiguous. Namely in the sense that it concerns ambiguities that are (or have to be) always present simultaneously, and that seem to have a kind of fixed (eternal) value, open – closed, inside – outside, light – dark and male – female? Isolated, Van Eijck argues, they mean nothing; precisely in their reciprocity, which is seemingly contradictory, they signify. As we noted earlier about the concepts of masculine and feminine, indeed the concepts only acquire meaning in relation to each other, but this is not fixed, but part of a specific cultural formation; there is not something essential to which they would refer. In Van Eijck's case, the concepts do seem to have a fixed meaning; in this sense, Van Eijck's narrative would require further analysis to understand how the meaning he attributes to them is related to the cultural context, in which he operates.

But there is a second difference between Van Eijck and Rossi: whereas Rossi attempts to pave a theoretical path to understand the city, and to do so appeals to the collective experiences stored in the city, Van Eijck is more concerned with the articulation of a design process, a way of working on the one hand and a way of living on the other. He appeals to the individual human experience, which is (subjective). For Van Eijck, architecture appears only as a 'medium' for the creation of these experiences.

Comparing Eisenman and Rossi, it makes sense from Eisenman's position that in the introduction to the U.S. edition of Rossi's book, he labels the book as 'the written analogue

of yet another analogous process: the unconscious revelation of a potential new relationship of man to object' and Rossi as a humanist (Eisenman 1982: 11).

In a way, the further descriptions of some positions indicate the impossibility of a discussion in two/three terms (neo-realists, neo-rationalists and neo-functionalists...). Would the term neo-rationalist fit Eisenman, then Rossi would deserve a different approach (…). Rossi goes much more in the direction of what Gandelsonas himself introduces as a third concept, neo-functionalism. When Gandelsonas with respect to the two main streams in post-modern architecture notes a similarity between neo-realism and neo-rationalism, namely in their critique on functionalism, he notes a second paradox in the fact that both isolate one element of functionalism.

Neo-realism transforms the concept of function into a broader, more complex understanding of societal reality, to which justice must be done regardless all its contradictions and ambivalences. Neo-rationalism attempts to trace the inherent laws of form, without any concern for the utilitarian nature of architecture. Functionalism however, in its form follows function-thesis, reveals a historically understandable but simplistic conception of meaning, of the symbolic dimension of architecture, namely function as one possible meaning, which can be articulated through form. This leads Gandelsonas to suggest the possibility of a new approach that incorporates both neo-realist and neo-rationalist notions, as 'the historical perspective and theoretical means to conceptualize the role of meaning in architecture, have been created', which he names neo-functionalism (1998 [1976]: 8). It is precisely the contradictions that were inherent in functionalism that need to be taken seriously rather than 'resolved' and thus ignored.

Gandelsonas' term neo-functionalism, according to Engel, seems to apply to the work of Castex, Depaule and Panerai (1984), insofar as it links an investigation of social and cultural determinants in architecture – architecture not only refers to itself, but can be read as a 'social' book – with research on the historical city which – 'as the only real example of a structure, which allows urban life' – provides a basis of comparison for new architectural models (Engel 1984: 278-279). Castex, Depaule and Panerai write to be engaged in

> 'the analysis, (...), of (...) the physical structure and organization of spaces, in order to subsequently consider the consequences that these arrangements may have for certain aspects of the practice of the residents' (Castex, Depaule, Panerai 1984: 7).

Second, they want to uncover the development of architectural models:

> 'With this point of view, we do not wish to deny or conceal the fact that the architecture and form of the city are dependent on the society by which they are produced. But although numerous studies have been undertaken on the historical causes of the urban crisis, few have addressed the component of the specific means utilized by the architects in this development' (Idem: 7).

Unlike Rossi, who proposes a kind of 'integral' study of the city, their approach has something ambiguous. They propose a study of the city from a 'double perspective', for which H. Raymond (1974) provides them a method.

'To this end, a distinction is made between architectural models which have determined the production of the living environment for the last hundred years, and cultural models which structure the possibilities of social practices. (...) Architecture should not be considered only in its material capacity, as a monument, but also as something that exists in the form of images and words. While in the design process visual means take a dominant position in order to define the physical dimension of the space, on the part of residents we are dealing with verbal statements and markings of the space in and around the dwelling, expressing the link between the space and a social practice. According to Raymond, the mode of habitation can be understood as crystallization of cultural models' (Engel 1984: 286),

thus, Engel articulates the method, which Castex, Depaule and Panerai rely on.

1982 [SUN]   1982 [SUN]   1983 [Uitgeverij 010]   1984 [SUN]

Others express their concern regarding 'pure' neo-rationalism, which, after the neo-realism of the 1960s, is said to be the dominant architects' ideology and is in danger of turning into a kind of formalism. Thus, Bolte and Meijer state:

'In other words, the formal research must not lead to a "formalism". By now it is clear that architectural "image values" do not have the direct emancipatory effect assumed by culturalism. But that does not alter the fact that they can indeed have specific societal effects, just as the architectural production of images has specific societal provisions' (Bolte and Meijer 1981: 385).

They continue with a recommendation:

'The formal research should be related to an investigation of these effects and approaches, of the articulation of the architectural practices in the other practices' (Idem: 385–386).

If we now recall how architecture is discussed within *Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen*, namely as a reflection of a (sexist etc.) society and at the same time implying the possibility of presenting a new, different, that is, non-sexist society, we can state that the story of *Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen* is closely related to the idealistic story of the 1960s, as articulated by the Forum architects. *Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen* criticizes housing – conceived as one

continuous uninterrupted flow from its functional principles until now – as being exclusively suitable for one specific way of dwelling, namely by the standard nuclear family. As such, *Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen* criticizes essentially functionalist thinking, from which such uniformity is the outcome. But paradoxically enough *Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen* itself adheres to this thinking in terms of cause (function) and effect (form), when it imagines a new architecture that can satisfy (new) social tasks. Or, formulated less dogmatically feminist and risky, a 'flexible way of life' would presuppose a 'flexible way of building'. Then, when it comes to the good (feminist) program, the causal linking of 'program' and 'form' is no longer a problem. In short, the feminist critique is not about the unambiguity of the form-follows-function-premise of functionalism, but about the wrong program, from which the wrong architecture follows as a matter of course and as such would not need further analysis. Insofar as the form of today's architecture is in feminist sight, it is merely a translation of an outdated (sexist) program (for the nuclear family), and/or refers exclusively to meanings of the masculine. Just as Forum claimed a place for the human in architecture, *Vrouwen Bouwen Wonen* claims a place for the feminine in architecture.

In accordance with the Policy Document of Women's Studies in Architecture (1980), we still resist this over-simplification. That is to say, we do not simply want to take women at their word and prove them right. And we wouldn't be able to do so through architecture either. In this respect we feel more akin to those positions that grant a certain autonomy to architecture. This does not mean, however, that we do not want to take women's experiences seriously, as some 'autonomous' architects think they have to do.

4. WOMEN'S STUDIES IN ARCHITECTURE ANNO 1986

In short, we are facing quite a challenge. What do 'sex difference' and 'architecture' have to do with each other?

What to do with 'women's studies' which, in its fixation on sex difference, necessarily puts (the experiences of) people at the center and thus sets itself on a humanities position?

What to do with 'architecture', which in its fixation on the formal on the one hand, on the 'human' on the other, is in both cases simply built and may or may not functions 'well'?

Precisely formulating the question 'what do "sex difference" and "architecture" have to do with each other?' is an impossible starting point.

For then, do we know what sex difference and architecture are?

Can we just put ourselves in a special position, within women's studies and within the architectural debate, and continue on that?

The very act of choosing a position seems to exclude any possibility/necessity of asking ourselves what 'sex difference' and 'architecture' are.

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Summarizing the problem, this would mean that Women's Studies in Architecture finds itself at the crossroads of two crises, or rather, two transformations: of the relations between individuals in modern society and of architecture. In order to understand how the two aspects interact, two genealogies must in fact be described: on the one hand, the experiences of modern women must be historicized (experiences that appear at a time when women have more freedom than ever), but on the other hand, the way in which nowadays architecture, design, the position of the designer and any social commitment relate to each other.

Is it imaginable to conduct research that includes both the historicity of architectural forms, and more than that, of architectural knowledge, and the historicity of socio-cultural phenomena ('woman' and 'man'), in all their complications and contradictions, and moreover, that can understand their mutual relationship(s)?

When we take the cultural, the ordering and patterns of a culture as our starting point, we can understand what the 'feminine', the 'masculine' and the 'architectural' mean in a culture, in that precisely delineated culture. And this not by looking at the chronological sequence of manifest facts, but by identifying the (unconscious) orderings, which account for all those cultural facts. That is, those orderings that evade direct (conscious) observation. 'Feminine', 'masculine', 'architectural' in themselves mean nothing. They only acquire meaning in relation to other elements in a culture.

The two articles that follow should be considered as two attempts to find an entry point to the problem posed above. Heidi de Mare, in 'From housewife to women's house, from men's house to houseman', presents a cultural-theoretical approach in which 'sex difference' and 'architecture' are not taken as presuppositions but rather interrogated as cultural phenomena. The article is available as PDF.

Anna Vos rereads, from the situation in the 1980s in which a number of problems are posed in a specific way, (part of) Dutch housing history. The article questions this history on the ways in which architectural problems have been formulated at different times, by whom, in which positions, with what kind of references, and what transformations manifest themselves therein. This article, 'From housing to architecture, from urban design to city' too is available as PDF and at https://annavos.nl/.

Vrouwen en de stad
Deel 2

Tekstfragmenten

Samenstelling: Lisl Edhoffer / Heidi de Mare / Anna Vos

AFTERTHOUGHT 2022

Why do we want to reissue this 1986 publication?
We notice that nowadays there is ample renewed attention to 'women and architecture', and this is in the context of the so-called 'fourth feminist wave'. And women again are claiming a place as experiential experts in urban development.[16]

Although decades have since passed, we think it worthwhile to see if and to what extent insights from the second feminist wave can contribute to increasing insights and possibilities for action nowadays. Besides, we realized that these articles date back to the pre-digital era, so it is not surprising that they are not known. We therefore want to make our findings from the years 1975-1995 accessible in the form of an English translation and share them with younger generations of women.

For now, we would like to highlight a few notable and, in our opinion, crucial differences here in this epilogue. For example, we made an explicit distinction between our involvement in the women's movement and our responsibility as scholars. And we still do.

Anno 1986, in feminist discourse in the Netherlands, the concept 'gender' was still barely used. We did look for ways to express ourselves, because we realized that besides biological sex differences, there was evidence of societal articulation of 'femininity' and 'masculinity', whether or not based on biological differences. But we lacked words.

With primatologist Frans de Waal (2022: 46-69), we read in his recent book about the history of the concept of gender.[17] 'Gender' was used until 1955 only to denote the grammatical sex of words. De Waal quotes the psychologist Money who then introduced 'gender' to express, in distinction to biological sex, 'all the things a person says or does to make oneself known as possessing the status of boy/man or girl/woman' (Idem: 47). With Simone de Beauvoir, biological sex effectively disappeared from the picture when she argued that one is not born a girl, but made a girl. In feminist circles, gender then became a 'social fabrication' (Ibid.). De Waal summarizes that *gender* is 'the culturally prescribed role and position of each sex (is) in society,' in distinction from *sex*, understood as 'the biological sex (…) of a person based on genital anatomy and sex chromosomes (XX for female, XY for male)' (Idem: 64). By the way, De Waal notes that nowadays 'in the United States ... the term "gender" (is) increasingly used for the biological sex' (Idem: 65).

If we now look back to our search in the 1970s and 1980s, the then only sporadically used concept of gender was a means to think about the impact of the changeable, time- and place-bound societal interpretation of biological differences between (the) sexes: every society, every culture, every group, every individual, will have to set itself apart with the biological differences that are there.

Meanwhile, since the beginning of the 21st century, the concept of gender has become commonplace in the Netherlands, as well as internationally. But from being a conceptual tool for thinking along, from being an analytical concept, the notion of gender has been

understood as a social or cultural 'construction' that, depending on the individual's desires, can be replaced by another, more personal designation. More recently, there seems to be a shift in connotation: sexual orientation, whether or not combined with a biological sex, has become a new criterion for gender differentiation. The range of possible 'genders', understood as sexual orientations of people regardless of their biological sex, has thus exploded.

At first glance, once again, as in the 1970s and 1980s, the 'personal' is being made 'political', but this has two very different consequences anno 2022:

- On the one hand, in the current 'gender' concept, the societal component – which is precisely what we were looking for in the 1970s and 1980s – has been substituted for the individual and psychological. Gender identity today primarily indicates the individual feeling of sex, and it will be clear that this feeling need not coincide with a biological category. This feeling manifests itself, on the one hand, in the sphere of a search for individual recognition and inclusion.
- On the other hand, from that personal world of experience, there is a call to revise and adapt the language with which we communicate, the history we share, the cultural expressions that elevate us above ourselves, to those personal experiences. And thus in recent decades, imperceptibly, both historical awareness and the shared understanding of what a society is – the common ground of what we call civilization – have been lost.

This latter development is also discernable in that the distinction between two other concepts also seems to have disappeared, as we noticed while translating the Dutch text into English. In the 1970s and 1980s, we distinguished more than we do now between *maatschappelijk* [societal] en *sociaal* [social]. *Social* concerns the dealings between people, between individuals. *Societal* is about the collective dealings of people in groups, institutions, organizations, thus on a supra-individual scale level. But in the Dutch language today, the term *maatschappelijk/* societal is rarely used, *sociaal/* social on the other hand, all the more so. Personal involvement and one's own identity are paramount.

That change seems to have already begun in those same 1970s and 1980s. Dutch thinking on urban design and architecture shows the beginning of that change. The postwar 'Wijkgedachte' [Neighborhood Concept] – in which all possible (members of) societal groups are included in their mutual relationships – has been substituted in the 1970s to 'Een Andere Gedachte' [Another Thought] of the Forum Group – in which the humane environment must provide space for meaningful encounters between individuals. Then, with the neoliberalism that became the dominant ideology in the Netherlands, but also beyond, from the 1980s onward, many social institutions were stripped down or even dismantled and individualization was fueled and became the new normal as witnessed also by the rise of identity politics (Van den Brink 2020).[18] Not least in feminism and women's studies.[19]

After 1986, we both continued to pursue our own path, in which we remained committed to feminism. But in distinction to what has become the mainstream, we continued on the above exposure and our two other articles in this 1986 'Women and the city'-volume.[20]

In 1993 we published together the volume *Urban Rituals in Italy and the Netherlands*.[21] In it we asked a number of scholars to reflect on the city as habitat and the city as habitus from their own discipline: as historians, as anthropologists, as urban designers and as architectural historians.[22] Instead of narrowing down to a one-dimensional reality grafted onto the personal as its center, all this research actually expanded our horizons and we discovered how important it was to examine and understand different dimensions on their own merits and their own developments.

In the years since, we have continued our research separately, as an architectural and art historian and as an urban designer-anthropologist respectively, resulting in two dissertations.[23] And recently we launched a new joint research project in which we, inspired by the current focus on sustainability, will explore what common ground architecture and urban design can offer society. And as far as we are concerned, this sustainability is not only about nature, but also about sustainability of the societal ánd the cultural.[24] In the article 'Rethinking the Social' [forthcoming], we have presented our principals in more detail.

18.10.2022   Heidi de Mare & Anna Vos
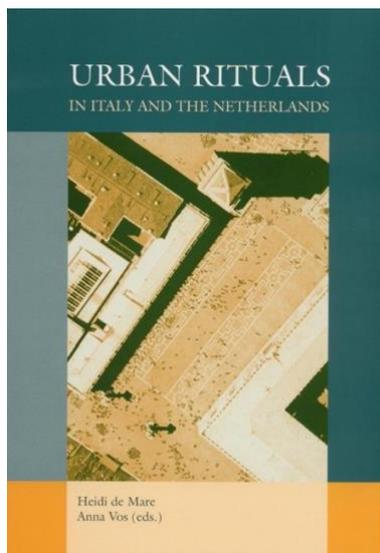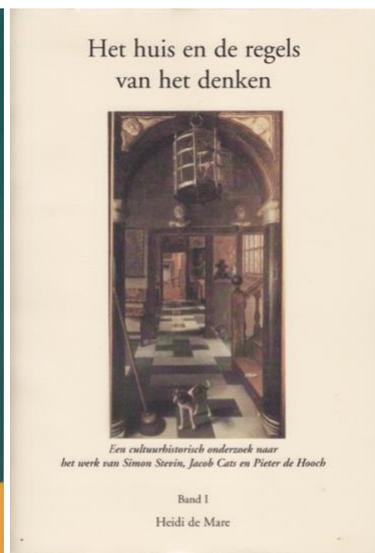
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NOTES

[1] This article was published in 1986 in Dutch, in the eponymous internal publication *Vrouwen en de stad*, deel 1 [Women and the City, Volume 1], by the Section for Women's Studies at the Faculty of Architecture of Delft University of Technology (Edhoffer, De Mare, Vos 1986). The same publication additionally included De Mare 1986 and Vos 1986, as first elaborations of the problems outlined here. Volume 1 was accompanied by Volume 2, a reader with crucial text fragments. For the present digital adaptation, some annotations/ notes have been included for clarification. Also, the text has been adjusted for spelling and misspellings. The references and especially the notes have been rearranged.

[2] The NIROV working group *Vrouwen en de ruimtelijke ordening en volkshuisvesting* [Women and spatial planning and public housing] (1983) unites women who work in that field (planners, urban planners, architects, etc.). The theme group *Wonen en de positie van de vrouw* [Housing and the position of the woman] is part of the *Interuniversitair werkverband Stichting Gestruktureerde Samenwerking Interdisciplinair Onderzoek Gebouwde Omgeving* [Interuniversity working association Foundation Structured Cooperation Interdisciplinary Research Built Environment]. This includes staff from various departments, such as ecology of dwelling (Wageningen University & Research), planning (University of Amsterdam), sociology of the built environment (University of Amsterdam), building and dwelling (Utrecht University, sociological institute), city and country (University of Amsterdam, socio-geographical institute).

[3] Exhibition *Ruim Onvoldoende*, Stichting Amazone, Amsterdam, November 25, 1983 – February 11, 1984. Exhibition *de ZIJ-kant van BOUWEN*, Studium Generale, Eindhoven University of Technology, May 1985, supported by a publication (Loeffen, Overdijk et al. 1985) and the presentation of a number of projects.

[4] For example, 'Vrouwen en de compacte stad' [Women and the Compact City], NIROV Working Group, August 1985 and 'Toetsingskriteria op bestemmingsplan nivo, vanuit de vrouwelijke gebruiker gezien' [Review Criteria at the Zoning Level, Seen from the Female User], NIROV Working Group, August 1985.

[5] By two-phase structure is meant a mode of organization of scientific education in the Netherlands, which was in effect between 1982 and 2002. The first phase was ended with the introduction of the Bachelor-Master system. The second phase was related to research training, the current PhD system.

[6] For further explanation of what a structuralist approach implies, see De Mare 1986.

[7] Van Schendelen, Vehmeyer and Verloo 1982: 15.

[8] Reference is made to Zaretsky 1977.

[9] As studied in the thematic seminars of Women's Studies in Architecture, 1979-1981.

[10] De Mare and Vos were both involved in the founding of the *Tijdschrift voor vrouwenstudies* [Journal of Women's Studies] and thereafter as members of the editorial board (2022 addition, HdM-AV).

[11] The text in this section is taken from the original version (October 1980) which was later included in abbreviated form in the Policy Document of the Projektraad (Faculty of Architecture TU Delft) (1980). The original notes have been changed into literature references.

[12] The concept of 'gender' was not yet generally in use within women's studies. See the AFTERTHOUGHT for a clarification.

[13] See the AFTERTHOUGHT.

[14] Van Eijck calls himself an 'ideologist from head to toe'.

[15] 'Truttisme' in the Netherlands indicates architecture that is embellished with frills only to avoid any functionalist appearance. Probably 'pettiness' is rather close.

[16] A.Zine 2021. Ms. The Architect. Available at A-zine.nl [Last accessed July 5, 2022]; Ciorra, P., Motisi E. and Tinacci, E. (curators) *Donne in Architettura / Women in Architecture.* Exhibition MAXXI Roma December 16, 2021 > September 11, 2022; *Here we are! Women in Design 1900-today.* Kunsthal Rotterdam 18.06.2022 > 30.10.2022; Vitra Design Museum Basel 23.09.2021 > 06.03.2022; The New Institute. *Feminist design strategies.* Available at https://ontwerpvanhetsociale.hetnieuweinstituut.nl/feministische-ontwerpstrategieen [Last accessed 21 May 2022]; WomenMakeTheCity. 2021. *A female perspective on the Amsterdam 2050 Environmental Vision.* https://amsterdam2050.nl/womenmakethecity-een-vrouwelijke-blik-op-de-omgevingsvisie-amsterdam-2050/ [Last accessed 7 August 2022].

[17] De Waal, F. 2022. *Anders. Gender door de ogen van een primatoloog*. Atlas contact. 2022

[18] Van den Brink, G. 2020. *Ruw ontwaken uit een neoliberale droom en de eigenheid van het Europese continent.* Prometheus Amsterdam.

[19] Illustrative is the change in the Netherlands from the *Tijdschrift voor vrouwenstudies* to the *Tijdschrift voor genderstudies* in 1998.

[20] De Mare 1986 and Vos 1986.

[21] H. de Mare & A. Vos (eds.) 1993. 1993. *Urban Rituals in Italy and the Netherlands. Historical Contrasts in the Use of Public Space, Architecture and the Urban Environment*. Van Gorcum.

[22] H. de Mare & A. Vos, 'Urban Rituals in Italy and the Netherlands': 5–25.

[23] Heidi de Mare, *The House and the Rules of Thought*. A Historical-Comparative Research into the work of Simon Stevin, Jacob Cats, Samuel van Hoogstraten and Pieter de Hooch, 2021 (**cum laude** 2003, in Dutch). Anna Vos, *The eternal making of cities*. People and stones interacting in Testaccio, Rome (2020, in Dutch).

[24] Because the same is true for cultural articulation: artifacts – novels, films, paintings, music, rituals and also architecture – always do something with biological differences: they 'rework' them in their own way (affirm, but also magnify, undermine, invert, delete, make (in)visible), by virtue of their own rules, codes and conventions. See for instance: Heidi de Mare, 'Visual Rhetoric and the Potencies of the Image' (2021) and 'WHEN THEY SEE US (2019) and the Contemporary Sense of Visual Rhetoric' (2021).