6 Gender

> I came to see that most of my interlocutors felt uneasy because my reasoning interfered with their dreams: with the feminist dream of a genderless economy without compulsory sex roles; with the leftist dream of a political economy whose subjects would be equally human; with the futurist dream of a modern society where people are plastic, their choices of being a dentist, a male, a protestant, or a gene manipulator deserving the same respect.
>
> (Ivan Illich 1983: 9)

Introduction: the missing component

In *The Form of Cities*, I referred to the chapter on Gender as 'the missing component'. Whereas many of the other elements in the book had at least some discussion in the context of urban design theory and practice, the element of gender appeared to be almost wholly absent. The same has been true of the academy, where most urban design programmes (and one could include all of the environmental disciplines in this) are void of teaching on the importance of gender to design. Chapter 6 in *The Form of Cities* tried to compensate for this omission by placing issues of gender on a par with other concerns. This, of course, was a mistake, as it is not simply another dimension of the designer's vocabulary, but a general principle, as in the case of sustainability, that should infuse every part of the design process. Neither can be considered an add-on to the designer's brief – 'ok, let's think about nature/women now' – but should be consciously welded into our perceptions of the world and how we live in it. The underlying reference point of all three books in this series is spatial political economy, and in the previous text I have illustrated the uneasy truce between a feminist perspective and one deriving from historical materialism. For the moment, I will assume that one cannot live without the other, recognising the partial yet interlinked nature of each as a fundamental form of explanation (FOC6: 127).

Significantly, however, the choice of spatial political economy is reinforced when one comes to the idea of method, as one simply cannot look to the literature on urban design for any methodology or any consideration of issues surrounding the question of gender (Kimmel 2008). Here, we must embrace human geography, art history, cultural studies and other disciplines for insight. I have always urged my students to read 'outside the box' if they wish to mature as responsible designers, a task that will never be accomplished by trawling through illustrations of the latest urban design projects or most of the current literature, and I hope that this chapter will vindicate my advice. Of one thing we can be certain, that, in discussing issues of gender, particularly gender and patriarchy, we face the task of righting the whole of human history, something that will not be accomplished overnight (Browne 2007). As to origins, although we can go back centuries for isolated examples of the struggle for women's rights, 1980 has some significance as a starting point for feminist geography, when the spatial dimension to women's conditions of existence came to the fore:

> It was less than ten years ago [prior to 1989] that the issue of the invisibility of women, both as the subjects of geographical study and as practitioners of the discipline started to emerge. In the intervening years we have seen a remarkable burst of energy by geographers interested in feminist theory, and in the documenting of women's inequality and oppression in all areas of social and economic life, and in all parts of the globe.
>
> (Bowlby *et al.* 1989: 157)

In the intervening period, there has also been a move to correct this situation with reference to architecture and urban planning. In architecture, we may witness a small but marked interest in gender studies, for example *Sexuality and Space* (Colomina 1992), *The Sex of Architecture* (Agrest *et al.* 1996), *Designing Women* (Adams and Tancred 2000) and *Decoding Home and Houses* (Hanson 2003). In planning, there is a similar dearth of references (depending on how one defines 'planning') – but *Change of Plans* (Eichler 1995), *Women and Planning* (Greed 1994) and *Gender and Planning* (Fainstein and Servon 2005) are essential touchstones. Urban design is in a similar position to urban planning, but, importantly, *Discrimination by Design* (Weisman 1992), *Approaching Urban Design* (Roberts and Greed 2001), *Design and Feminism* (Rothschid 1999) and *Constructing Difference in Public Spaces* (Ruddock 1996) stand out. Understandably, by far the greatest number of texts issue from urban studies (particularly urban geography), notably *Women and Space* (Ardener 1981), *Women in Cities* (Little *et al.* 1988), *Gendered Spaces* (Spain 1992), *Space, Place and Gender* (Massey 1994), 'Gender and urban space in the tropical world' (Huang and Yeoh 1996) and *Women in the Metropolis* (Von Ankum 1997). These texts are emblematic of work in each area and are not meant to devalue the many other groundbreaking works that do not fall so easily into such limited categories, for example, Dolores Hayden's three masterful works – *Seven American Utopias* (1976), *The Grand Domestic Revolution* (1981) and

Redesigning the American Dream (1984), which are essential reading, forming a genre unto themselves.

The historical nexus

In *The Way to Paradise* (2003), Mario Vargas Llosa charts two journeys: the first, that of Paul Gauguin, the visionary painter, and the second, his grandmother Flora Tristan. Their stories are interwoven, contrasting two visions of paradise on earth. Gauguin's journey takes him to the absolute periphery of French colonial power in Tahiti. Flora's quest also took her overseas, to Peru, her lifetime search for paradise being fought over the politics of utopian socialism in France in the middle of the nineteenth century. Whereas Gauguin's search for paradise focussed entirely on Gauguin, a journey mediated by sex, alcohol and the French penchant for eulogising *la pensée sauvage*, Flora sought maximum benefit for all. Her commitment paralleled several social movements of the time, whereby the principles of *liberté*, *égalité* and *fraternité* (liberty, equality and brotherhood) could be implemented as the central intention of the French Revolution. Flora was also interested in adding sisterhood to the equation. Arguably for the first time in human history, the organisation of labour went hand in hand with struggles over the emancipation of women. Significant to our discussion is the fact that there was also a small but important attempt to spatialise these relationships, with a move to revolutionise women's emancipation beyond production and patriarchy into domestic life, childrearing, sexuality and space.

Paradoxically, it was almost exclusively through the actions of men that the principles of utopian socialism emerged as radical experiments in community, via the three founders of the movement, namely Henri de Saint Simon (1760–1825), Charles Fourier (1772–1837) and Robert Owen (1771–1858). All were firmly committed to social change, using direct action as their method, unlike prior utopians such as Sir Thomas More, Etienne Cabet and others, whose visions remained in the realm of the imagination. The writings of these three individuals, specifically St Simon's *Letters from an Inhabitant of Genève* (1802), Fourier's *Theory of the Four Movements* (1808) and Owen's *A New View of Society* (1812) underwrote the philosophy of utopian socialism. Although revolutionary, the texts had not yet advanced to a stage where a surgical analysis of capitalism could take place. That had to wait until the publication of Marx's *Capital* (in German) in 1867. Within the Marxist paradigm, women's role was not tied to sexual freedom in its widest sense, but to their position within a proletarian revolution, the outcome of which would, in theory, automatically generate equality between the sexes. Hence, as Flora perceptibly notes,

> there was no hope for the Fourierists . . . Their original sin was the same as that of the Saint Simonians: not believing in a revolution waged by the victims of the system. Both distrusted the ignorant, poverty-stricken masses, and maintained with beatific *naiveté*, that society would be reformed

thanks to the goodwill and money of bourgeois citizens enlightened by their theories.

(Llosa 2003: 71)

The seeming naivety of all three individuals, St Simon, Fourier and Owen, stemmed from methods rooted in concepts of morality, ethics and ideology as the basis of social harmony, not the relationship between the *economic* structure and the social wage. To them, a specifically economic sphere was not a cause of social unrest. Collectively, they also disagreed with prevailing concepts of religion and politics as being fundamentally resistant to harmonious social development,

> since there is an axiomatic assumption of natural harmony between nature and human nature, the problem of antagonism and evil is displaced from the sphere of production . . . [at that time] the socialist critique of political economy precisely concentrated upon emphasising the impossibility of isolating a distinct economic sphere.
>
> (Steadman-Jones 1981: 86)

Hence, while the instigators of utopian socialism had a significant region of agreement vis-à-vis social change, their methods were fundamentally different. Saint Simon promoted an as yet unformulated social psychology, Fourier's focus was on the *amatory* relations as opposed to *economic* relations of production, and Robert Owen emerged from a new scientism that conflated the methods of physical sciences with those of the social (see Chapter 1). As Saint Simon did not attempt to give physical form to his ideas, the experiments of Fourier and Owen in matching ideology to physical form remain seminal in the annals of urban design.

Despite many of the nonsensical ramblings in his written work, and the total irrationality of certain of his beliefs (e.g. that, when perfect harmony was achieved, six moons would orbit the earth; that the world would contain 37 million each of mathematicians, poets and dramatists of genius), Fourier's central concern was admirable – to reverse the degradation of the industrial revolution by humanising all work, emancipating the lives of women, reconstructing concepts of family life heretofore incarcerated by religious orthodoxy, and promoting gender equality in all things. In this context, sexuality became disconnected from work and reproduction. Fourier was a radical feminist who rejected patriarchy (while remaining patriarchal) and advocated sexual liberation (while simultaneously rejecting equality of the sexes). He also condoned all forms of sexual activity except those that involved pain or coercion. However, his vision of human emancipation clearly did not involve democracy, as he himself constituted the alpha and omega points of Fourierist philosophy. Despite the fact that this philosophy was riddled with contradiction, his great accomplishment was to build many experimental communities and so to complete the first significant attempt to match an ideology based on human emancipation with a physical environment within which his philosophy could thrive. To date, this

> life, from manufacturing and agricultural labour to government, office, educational and cultural activities. With childcare collectivised, and all economic pressures removed, marriage would become a matter of 'romantic affection' only, to be entered on mutual agreement and dissolved by mutual choice.
>
> (Taylor 1981: 64)

Owen was one of the first to realise that the emancipation of the workforce actually resulted in profits rather than losses, owing to the increased prosperity, health, education and wellbeing of labour and children, and the subsequent efficiencies that emerged from increased social welfare. The village of New Lanark in central Scotland (Figure 6.1), linked to his cotton factory, became a pioneering example of utopian socialism, visited then and now by thousands of people annually, although it is arguable that the actual achievements of Titus Salt at Saltaire in Leeds were at least as marked (see Figures 6.2 and 6.3). Like Fourier, Owen also rejected Christianity along with the factory system of the industrial revolution based in greed, selfishness, exploitation and human misery. He became disenchanted with the guarded reception his ideas received in Britain, and emigrated to the United States, where he established another sixteen Owenite communities, the most famous of these being New Harmony in Indiana.

In her book *Seven American Utopias* (1976), Dolores Hayden analyses, in great detail, the attempt to establish paradise on the American continent by way of building ideal communities. Of these there were many, and from a huge variety of ideologies and religions, as well as the charismatic claims of many powerful leaders. However, the term *utopian socialists*, applied accurately by Marx and Engels to Saint Simon, Fourier and Owen, is misleading and does not apply to all types of utopian project. A more useful term is the French word *commune*, whose members were referred to as 'communards'. The word refers to the smallest unit of French government administration (*communard*). More generally, it means a communal settlement where ideologies, property, material wealth, labour and other factors are held in common, to varying degrees. The word also possesses the overtones of the French Revolution and the overthrow of the Bourbon monarchy in 1789. While Hayden chooses seven groups (Shakers, Mormons, Fourierists, Perfectionists, Inspirationists, Union Colonists and Llano Colonists), many other communes, sectarian or otherwise, established settlements in America during the second half of the nineteenth century.

However, many died out as rapidly as they arose. Some grew into major religious organisations, such as the Mormons, and the Oneida and Amana communities now represent major corporations in the United States. Both the utopian socialists and the many communes established in America offered a vast array of physical alternatives to traditional family life, from a redesigning of the nuclear family home to grand plans for towns and cities, such as New Harmony in Indiana, Nauvoo in Illinois, Topolobambo in Mexico, Hancock in Massachusetts, Llano del Rio in California or the Amana community in Iowa.

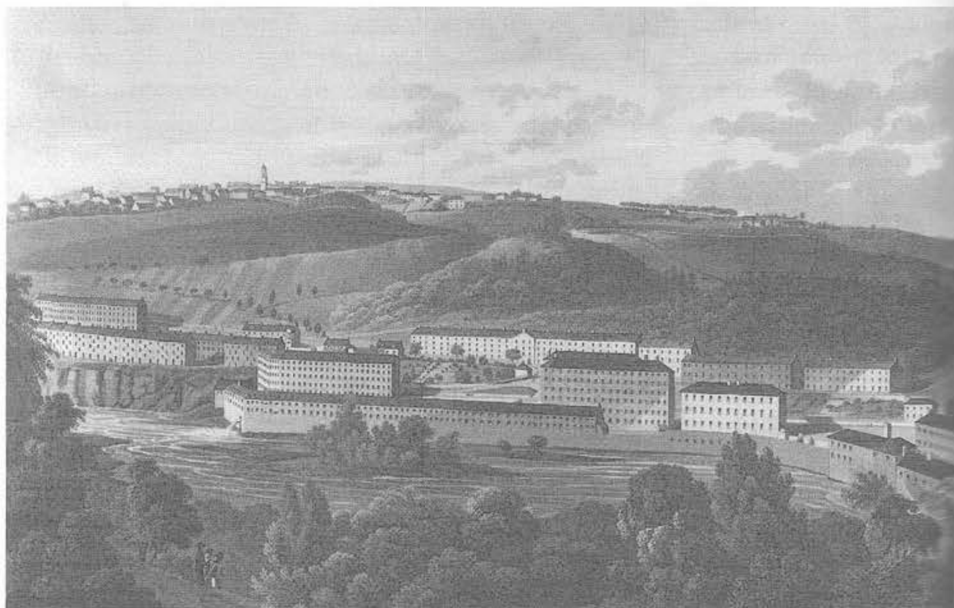


Figure 6.1 Artist's impression of New Lanark, a model industrial community built by the utopian Robert Owen in Scotland, 1785

Source: The Art Archive/Eileen Tweedy

Figure 6.2 View of rear entrances to houses in Saltaire village, West Yorkshire, 1833

Source: © Washington Imaging/Alamy

Figure 6.3 View over the Mill, Saltaire village, West Yorkshire, 1833
Source: Duncan Walker/iStockphoto

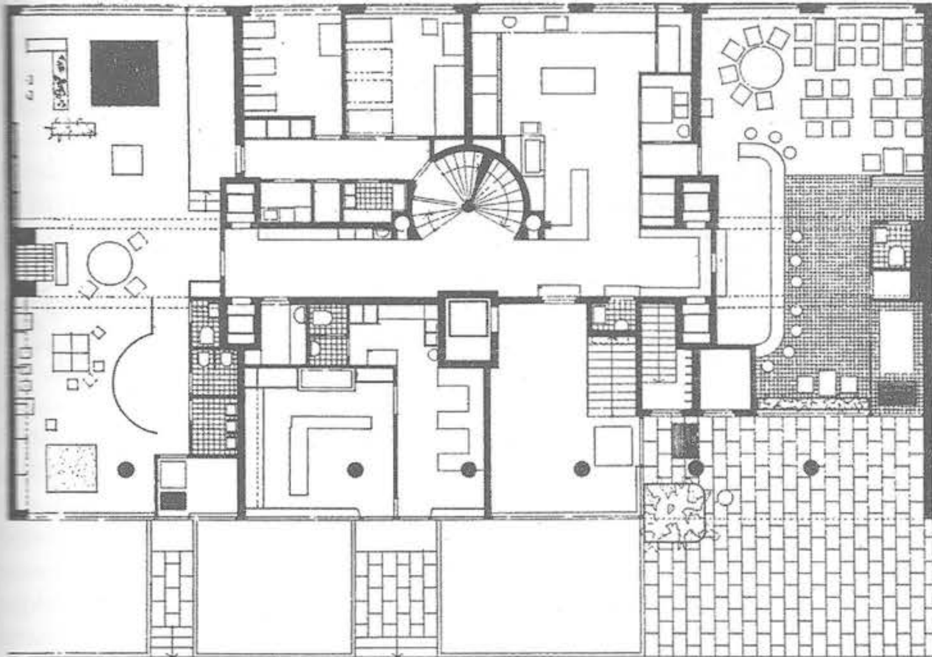
In between, designs for homes, industrial and agricultural buildings, temples, collective workshops, crèches, town centres, garden cities, communal apartment buildings and other structures were conceived and built. The collective result was an entirely new and experimental taxonomy of architectural forms, as well as of the relationships among and between these forms in space. Despite the enduring divisions of social class, most, if not all, of this restructuring took place through a redefinition of gender. The repressed anger of women's oppression is well expressed by Alice Constance Austin (architect and planner of Llano del Rio in California) that the traditional home functioned as a Procrustean bed on which, 'each feminine personality must be made to conform by whatever maiming or fatal, spiritual or intellectual oppression . . . and of the thankless and unending drudgery of an inconceivably stupid and inefficient system by which her labours are confiscated' (Hayden 1981: 242).

It is safe to say that, in virtually every commune, issues of gender and space inevitably involved sexuality, across all age barriers and from birth to the grave. As certain communes saw the traditional nuclear family as the source of women's enslavement, its deconstruction and spatial reorganisation also undermined women's position as property within patriarchy. In some cases, this allowed women complete sexual freedom, and, in others, the concept of patriarchy was significantly enhanced. For example, Mormon society was polygamous. In

the Oneida community, group marriage was promoted, and couples were discouraged. The Amana, on the other hand, insisted on celibacy or monogamous relationships. What became clear overall was that a new sexual division of labour and sex roles resulted in new spatial structures. The concept of gender and gendered space challenged the concept of social class in the breadth of its implications for social reconstruction, and still does so today.

The transition to the twentieth century also saw some cataclysmic shifts in gender relations with the communist revolutions in Russia and China. Unfortunately, equality between the sexes did not occur quite as planned, and the revolution of the proletariat did not produce the effects Marx expected. Women's position in both of these countries in terms of emancipation remains significantly below that of its capitalist counterparts in the Western world. Defying one of its most cherished principles – equality for all – patriarchal socialism was a disaster for women's emancipation in all respects. Nor did cataclysmic social change generate even minimal shifts in the relationship between gender and space, as communes in both countries remained firmly rooted in the nuclear family system, albeit with a weakening of ties between parents and children. In the *Grand Domestic Revolution* (1981) and *Redesigning the American Dream* (1984), Dolores Hayden provides penetrating analyses of the domestic mode of production – the labour of half the world's workers, which goes unpaid and is therefore discounted as forming part of any national economy (without doubt contributing the *free* component within the free market system). By the end of the First World War, most experiments in utopian socialism of whatever genre had fallen apart.

Nonetheless, traces of communal living carried on. Ebeneezer Howard, a Fabian, continued experimenting with the idea of cooperative housing and shared domestic work as the foundation of his ideal *garden city*, a concept that today still reverberates in planning thought. He incorporated these ideas in his design for cooperative housing in Letchworth at Homesgarth (1909) and moved into one of his own kitchenless apartments with his wife (Hayden 1981: 231). Residents of the thirty-two apartments had the choice of communal dining or service in their own flat. The concept of the kitchenless house was pursued in several countries, including the United States, and the Great Depression of 1930–9 saw the establishment of many communes as a necessary part of survival, one that also had its European counterpart (Figure 6.4). The same was true in Russia after the revolution (Figure 6.5). In Australia, where land was available, many communes were established by emigrants escaping poverty and homelessness. After the Second World War, however, urbanisation in the West saw the nuclear family firmly entrenched as the fundamental social unit, reinforced by the physical isolation of one family from another in the creation of vast suburban sprawl. Somewhat later, around 1960, what remained of gender equality dictated by shared responsibility in labour became reoriented to political equality within the market economy, on the basis of an intrinsically feminist ideology, influenced by new developments in biology, neurology, philosophy and psychology.



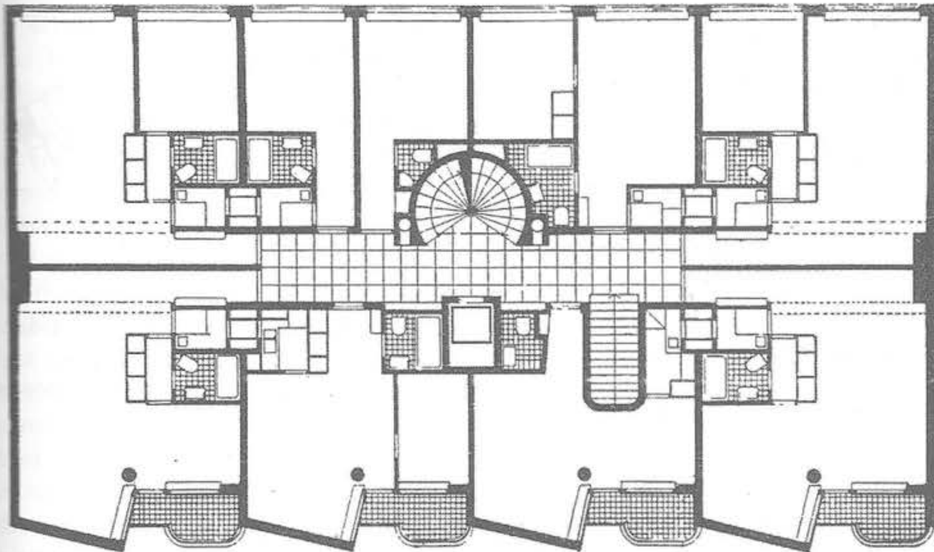


Figure 6.4 S. Markelius and A. Myrdal's collective house, Stockholm, 1935

Source: D. Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighbourhoods and Cities*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981, p. 165, Fig. 6.2

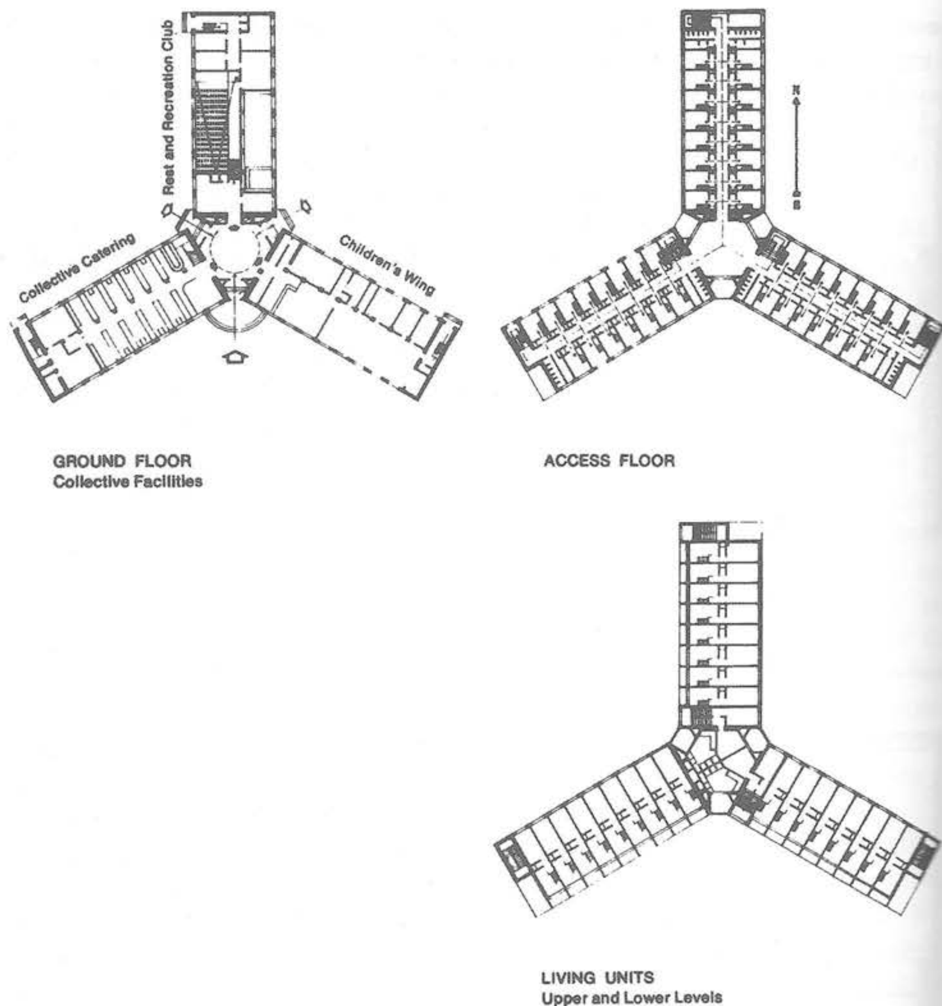


Figure 6.5 K. Ivanov, F. Terekhtin and P. Smolin. Plans for communal housing with collective catering, 1924

Source: D. Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighbourhoods and Cities*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981, p. 259, Fig. 11.23

Sex, gender and the female mind

> There is no female mind. The brain is not an organ of sex. Might as well talk about a female liver.
>
> (Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860–1930))

While it may seem unnecessary to a discussion over the integration of gender with design issues in cities, we cannot proceed without taking into account a

brief consideration of scientific enquiry into the human brain and its relation to sex and gender (Harding 1991). Claimed biological differences between the sexes have been abused in a variety of ways to undermine women's freedom and reinforce patriarchy. Along with this, there is the associated and problematic concept of 'mind' (Kimura 1993, 1999, Blum 1997, Geary 1998, Hines 2004). Fundamental biological divisions between the sexes need some brief consideration to fully inform our understanding of women's needs in the built environment. For example, if Charlotte Gilman could have accessed the research that has occurred in the last century, she might have had some doubts about her statement. For example, she conflates *brain* and *mind*; argues that the brain has nothing to do with sex and is not an *organ*; and conveys the idea that somehow sex can exist independent of its functioning. Initial attempts to erase any biological difference between the sexes as part of the political agenda of radical feminism, as well as the gay cosmos, have given way to the fact that significant differences do exist, outside environmental influences. Current research is now exposing a broadening array of diversity in structure, function and biochemistry between the sexes. This leads to important differences in perception, behaviour, emotion and cognition, discoveries that have only recently been possible through sophisticated technological advances, such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (FMRI). Although these differences do not necessarily result in behavioural change, they remain significant. Although biology does not rule, it has its moments.

While most investigation has focussed on the male brain, more recent research has tried to bring some balance into the picture. Simon Baron-Cohen, the director of the Autism Research Centre at Cambridge University, has affirmed the specific biological differences between average male and female minds in a recent book, *The Essential Difference* (Baron-Cohen 2004). Similarly, *The Female Brain* by Loann Brizendine (2006), a pioneering neuropsychiatrist at Harvard University, is the result of extensive research into how women think and act as they do. Importantly, the differences between brain types go well beyond reproduction. She established the first clinic in the United States to study and treat the brain function of women. Her book begins to compensate for the fact that the male domain has been the focus of most existing clinical data on neurology, psychiatry and neurobiology, and her work represents a major contribution to the place of women in society. Most of the differences that have appeared are significant, but an important consideration (before politics intrudes) is that the female brain (biology) does not necessarily correlate with the female mind (gender). The BBC, for example, has a test assembled by a team of psychologists to indicate whether or not one has a *male* or *female* brain, independent of sexuality. The test offers a brain-sex profile, to discover whether one *thinks* like a man or a woman, and can be accessed at (www.bbc.co.uk/science/humanbody/).

The bottom line is that every brain is female at conception. Only after eight weeks *in utero* does a massive surge in levels of testosterone determine maleness or femaleness. Overall, men's brains are roughly 10 per cent larger, with

approximately 4 per cent more brain cells (and about 100 grams more tissue), figures that may seem irrelevant as we only use something like 10 per cent of our mental capacity in any event. Whereas males will access the left brain more than the right, the dendritic connections in a woman's brain are more numerous and complex (Lippa 2002). The frontal cortex, where higher cognitive functions are located, is also larger. Hence, women have the capacity to transfer information more rapidly between the hemispheres, a fact that has an important bearing on language capacity and language learning. It influences, for example, recovery from stroke, where the speech capacity of men is more likely to be impaired (Blum 1997). These structural differences and the larger size of the hippocampus (location of emotion and memory) also enhance women's capacity for nurturing, making their recall superior to that of the opposite sex. As a result, men and women orient themselves in space differently, the former having a capacity to solve problems through the mental rotation of images, whereas the latter rely on superior memory function. Crudely stated, men tend to calculate where they are in space, whereas women proceed by feeling and remembering.

Not only is current research leading to a greater capacity to understand and treat certain forms of illness, it is also opening doors to a more encompassing understanding of gender and difference. Although this information may not translate directly into design concepts and strategies, in no way does it deny the significance of gender to design, and few (hopefully few men) – would say that it is unimportant. Hence, anyone looking for a straight-line graph connecting gender heterologies to design outcomes will be disappointed. However, the fact that we are more informed about this relationship will inexorably modify our consciousness and, hence, our capacity to deal with problems differently (Hines 2004, Geary 1998). The relationships between gender, equality, urban politics and social change are also influenced by the question of a specifically feminist awareness and, therefore, a specifically feminist method.

A feminist method?

The concept of a distinctly feminist method opens up the question of a specifically feminist science, scientific investigation being the dominant paradigm of all enquiry. So, does a specifically feminist science exist? Can a scientific counter-culture be established, one that promotes a uniquely feminist epistemology, yet one that is inclusive of men? The answer appears to be a resounding *yes* on both counts. It must also be pointed out that we cannot really talk of feminism, but feminisms, given the ideological range of feminist activity (see FOC: Chapter 6). The arguments are complex and challenging, and here I can only abbreviate some of the more important debates (see Bleier 1986, Harding 1991, Hesse-Biber *et al.* 1999, Lather 2007). In contradiction to the classic absolutist, androcentric tradition, the bottom line is that science is not a rational, abstract process, populated by billions of self-contained facts waiting to be discovered, with an independent existence outside values, subjectivities, meanings and gendered

realities. Like everything else, science is a socially produced cultural institution. However, unlike other social processes, science feigns a special mantle, as it denies its ideological foundation within the social formation to claim objectivity in all things, an objectivity that transcends race, class, sex and gender. But it goes without saying that patriarchy has dominated science, as it has the economy and family life. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the traditions of science have as much bias as any other region of knowledge, with the systematic exclusion of women at all levels of the scientific process, from laboratory assistants to research of global significance: 'Since ideas are not generated in cultural vacuums, the exclusion of women from the practice of science and the consequent male, patriarchal structuring of science is reflected in [its] concepts, metaphors, assumptions and language' (Bleier 1986: 6).

Hence, feminism calls into question every aspect of the scientific process, on the basis that it has been biased and therefore distorted in its objectives, structure, epistemology and methods of investigation. Donna Haraway (1985), coming from a perspective rooted in primatology, suggests that feminism will not succeed in its quest by simply replacing one paradigm by another, but through modifying a region of research – *a field* – and thus reformatting it with new stories and explanations that describe its operation within a set of new narratives. As she remarks,

> Altering the structure of a field is quite different from replacing false versions with true ones. To construct a different set of boundaries and possibilities for what can count as knowledge for everyone within specific historical circumstances is a radical project.
>
> (Haraway 1985: 81)

However, Haraway's use of the term *field* is not so different from that of Bourdieu, who, in observing that 'science is an armed struggle among adversaries', also notes that,

> The objective reality to which everyone explicitly or tacitly refers is ultimately no more than what the researchers engaged in the field at a given moment, agree to consider as such, and it only ever manifests itself in the field through the representations given of it by those who invoke its arbitration.
>
> (Bourdieu 2000: 113)

It is this nuanced, relational quality that characterises much feminist research, in opposition to finding direct pathways to the truth, which is the dominant, androcentric focus.

When we address the idea of feminist method, we also enter an imaginary arena, which nonetheless is a politically charged and sensitive theatre of debate. Paradoxically, as postmodernism and many feminist writers have made clear, logic dictates that a single feminist method cannot exist, owing to the sheer complexity of the ideologies involved (FOC6: 128–30). It is more relevant to

ask what kinds of problem women choose to address, rather than search for proto-feminist methods. Of course, this does not deny the value of each position, nor the positions' synergy, which stand collectively against millennia of patriarchal rule, sexual oppression and personal abuse. The targets are quite clear. All it says is that the innate problems of sexual inequality cannot be reduced to a single method of observation. In one way or another, this focus on gender primes all methodologies, underwriting issues that begin with the sex of god, and conclude with the vexed issue of which public toilets are open to which kinds of person. On the way, questions of biology, neurology, politics, philosophy, psychology, religion and innumerable other issues are encountered, with positions cogently presented by all sides. One thing that can be agreed on, however, is that, while sexuality is biologically determined, gender is a social construct, where even the commonly accepted terms *male* and *female* are extremely fuzzy concepts. This is enhanced by recent approaches that 'draw on definitions of gender that imagine it as a process by which subjectivities are produced and shift over time' (Nightingale 2006: 165). This position had already been stated in Ivan Illich's classic, *Gender* (1983), where he notes that, over historical time, very few societies have classified individuals by the erotic nature of their attraction to a particular gender. Such fuzziness is not only further impacted by race and class, but also by sexual orientation against the mainstream of human behaviour. Hence, there is now a significant literature termed 'queer studies' (Berlant and Warner 1993, Browne *et al.* 2007, Clarke and Peel 2007, Haggerty and McGarry 2007). Such studies carve out the territory of those whose sexuality is heterotopic, in Foucault's terms, or perverse, in Oscar Wilde's – who was of the opinion that 'sin is the only colour left in modern life'.

Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that feminist method may best be understood by making assumptions after enquiring what feminists actually do, which concerns dominate, and what strategies are proposed. For example, from our brief account of gender equality during the nineteenth century, patriarchy, the domestic mode of production, women's unpaid labour, the male gendering of domestic and urban space, and political and legal equality are clearly writ large in the female consciousness as territories in serious need of overhaul. By the same token, neo-Marxist political economy, embedded in questions of equality and space, remains, warts and all, one of the dominant modes of enquiry. Habermas, for example, considers the life-world to be composed of two public and two private spheres. These can be defined as the private sphere of everyday life and the private sphere of the capitalist economy; public spheres are represented in the individual realm of political participation and the collective public sphere of the state. However, this overarching model needs to be qualified, 'by observing how each of these four roles is different for men and women; we need in other words, to read the "gender sub-text" in order to see how questions of gender run through every aspect of modern society and its evolution' (Saraswati 2000).

Collections of essays on feminism and methodology regarding development reveal the complexity of the problem and its extension over the last twenty years

Harding 1987, 2004, Hartsock 1991, Hesse-Biber *et al.* 1999). For example, Doreen Massey's work within the framework of political economy illustrates one major approach to feminist methodology (Massey 1984, 1994), as Donna Haraway's use of near science-fiction dystopia represents another (Haraway 1991). There are also a growing number of texts specifically oriented to feminism and methodology (Harding, 1991, 1998, Lather 2007). Whichever gender one belongs to, the roles that people play in society are fundamental to any epistemological investigation. Even science fiction has its role. In her *Cyborg Manifesto*, Donna Haraway goes one step further than most feminist writers to target nature fetishism, organicism, sexualism and the idea of identity. Her essay constitutes 'an ironic political myth faithful to feminism, socialism and materialism, based upon the idea of a cyborg, a cybernetic post-human hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of high-tech social reality as well as a creature of fiction' (Haraway 1993: 272; see also Haraway 1991, Hayles 1999). In the utopian tradition, the cyborg is envisioned as an artificially constructed phenomenon that inhabits a post-gender world. Sensationalism apart, its overall function is to liberate our minds from the normal strictures of gender politics, racism, patriarchy and oppression, so that future socially constructed boundaries and collective resistance to them may become more apparent. This is not so strange, as it is, in effect, the foundation of all planning (urban or other) – the dubious principle that, if we can predict the future, we may be able to avoid its worst excesses: 'Cyborg feminists have to argue that "we" do not want any more natural matrix of unity and that no construction is whole. Innocence and the corollary insistence on victimhood as the only ground for insight have done enough damage' (Haraway 1993: 278). In this context, Haraway's method is to correlate the evolution of the cyborg with the development of existing social institutions and the processes that flow from them, in a manner that recalls George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1992 (orig. 1933)) or Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1960). Hence, she redefines and reconceptualises existing spatial structures, such as home, market, paid workplace, state, school, clinic-hospital, church etc., so that the task of surviving the future has a greater probability of success. Nonetheless, her vision is unredeemably bleak, which is not to say that it is unlikely. The future of *Church*, for example, is predicted to evolve into a situation wherein:

> Electronic fundamentalist 'super-saver' preachers solemnising the union of electronic capital and automated fetish gods; intensified importance of churches in resisting the militarised state; central struggle over women's meanings and authority in religion; continued relevance of spirituality, intertwined with sex and health.
>
> (Haraway 1993: 291)

School is reformatted to contain a

> deepening coupling of high-tech capital needs and public education at all levels, differentiated by race, class, and gender; managerial classes involved

in educational reform and refunding at the cost of remaining progressive educational democratic structures for children and teachers. Education for mass ignorance and repression in technocratic and militarised culture; growing anti-science mystery cults in dissenting and radical political movements; continued relative scientific illiteracy among white women and people of colour; growing industrial direction of education (especially higher education) by science-based multinationals (particularly in electronics-dependent and biologically dependent companies); highly educated numerous elites in a progressively bi-modal society.

Whether women's place in such a society will be any better than it is currently is a moot point, with global warming potentially holding the casting vote. Leaving dystopia behind, what we can deduce from all of this is that science is in trouble. The development of feminist epistemology over the last thirty years has not only generated significant challenges to androcentric scientific orthodoxies, it has also proposed and executed its own gendered alternatives. However, while the literature on feminist politics, ideology, science and culture is now extensive, considerations of space and place remain limited. In order to accommodate this need, a brief account of the impact of gender on design is required, prior to that of the *flâneur* – a mythical character that has symbolised women's oppression in urban space for nearly 100 years.

Flânerie as heterology

> The ordinary practitioners of the city live 'down below', below the threshold at which visibility begins. They walk – an elementary form of this experience of the city; they are walkers, Wandersmänner, whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban 'text' they write without being able to read it. These practitioners make use of spaces that cannot be seen, their knowledge of them is as blind as that of lovers in each other's arms. The paths that correspond in these intertwining, unrecognised poems, in which each body is an element signed by many others, elude legibility. It is as though the practices organising a bustling city were characterised by their blindness.
>
> (Michel de Certeau)

> The flâneur is the observer of the marketplace. His knowledge is akin to the occult science of industrial fluctuations. He is a spy for capitalists, on assignment in the realm of consumers.
>
> (Walter Benjamin)

For anybody involved in the urban design process, the actual experience of the city is paramount in the designer's consideration. The idea of the *flâneur*, written about for 140 years, is the embodiment of that experience, of walking in the

city, taking in its sound, smells, secrets and vistas (de Certeau 1933, 1984, Parkhurst 1994, Wilson 1995, Huang 1996, White 2001). The *flâneur* is also a historically contingent, mythical character who has evolved with changing consciousness and development from historic boulevards to postmodernist urbanisation.

The term *flâneur* comes from a French verb *flâner*, meaning to wander about, hence, *flânerie* – to walk aimlessly for the sheer pleasure of walking in the city. The term has close relations, in English, to the rambler,

> who visits sites of leisure, pleasure, consumption, exchange and display in early nineteenth-century London: the theatre, opera house, pleasure garden, club, sporting venue and bazaar. By looking in its open and its interior spaces for adventure and entertainment, the rambler creates a conceptual and physical map of the city.
>
> (Rendell *et al.* 2000: 136)

While the rambler's orientation is towards sexual pleasure, the *flâneur* is embedded (after the sixth sense of intuition), in what we may call 'the seventh sense' of kinaesthesia, the sensation of bodily movement through urban space. He comports himself with the qualities of casual observer, voyeur and analyst of the city. He is a collector of filmic texts, impressions and transitions, as well as urban and architectural forms and spaces. He is the ultimate cognitive map. The concept of the *flâneur* was first initiated by Charles Baudelaire, in his *Paris Spleen* collection of poetry, from 1869. Baudelaire claimed that traditional forms of art were inadequate to express modernity, and that it was a mandate that the artists should immerse themselves in the metropolis in all its complexity. The *flâneur* was Baudelaire's embodiment of the urban experience.

More recently, the Marxist Walter Benjamin advanced the idea in his *Arcades Project* of 1935 into a critique of capitalism (Benjamin 1997, 1999). In this task, Benjamin was influenced by the sociologist George Simmel, whose essay 'The metropolis and mental life' (1903) remains a classic for all urbanists. So, the original *flâneur* is male, French, and the setting is Paris, amid the rebuilding of the city by Baron Haussmann, from 1851 to 1870 (although the process had commenced well before this point and continued well after his sacking in 1870). Therefore, Baudelaire's *flâneur* was probably trying to walk around in one of Europe's largest construction sites, a reason why Benjamin felt that the arcades of Paris offered unlimited opportunities to the *flâneur*, compared with those of the normal city streets. Since then, a significant body of literature has grown up around the overall theme of the *flâneur* (Mazlish 1994, Tester 1994, Gleber 1999, Parsons 2000, O'Neill 2002, D'Souza and McDonnough 2006, Wilson 1995). As O'Neill remarks:

> He is 'the reader' and writer of 'the spectacle' that is the modern city. He is the mobile observer of the public life of the modern world . . . he emerges as 'a historian, a reflective critic of the city, a close analyst of its architecture,

> a collector of scenes and images, and an interpreter who translates his impressions and experiences into a way of being/existing in the world and often into texts that represent these experiences'.
>
> (O'Neill 2002: 3–4)

The constellation of events and circumstances contained in *flâneur* vastly transcend its own simple definition, the central reason being that it condenses an array of factors significant to the study of urban form and experience. It provides a simple method – the idea walking in the city – that can be expanded to include a general critique of capitalism, particularly consumerism, to encompass gender, social class, utopianism, the urban–rural divide, film, the kinaesthetic experience and other important dimensions of urbanism. Many writers have addressed *flâneur*, both in theory and practice, including Michel de Certeau, Walter Benjamin, Georg Simmel, James Joyce and Edgar Allen Poe. Overall, James Joyce's revolutionary *Ulysses* of 1922 must, however, constitute the finest example of the genre. His account of a single day in the life of its *flâneur* anti-hero, Leopold Bloom, wandering through the streets of Dublin and sampling its offerings on 16 June 1904, remains a masterpiece of twentieth-century literature. Interestingly, Joyce finished writing *Ulysses* (1960 (orig. 1922)) and commenced his second great work, *Finnegan's Wake* (1992 (orig. 1939)), in Paris, in 1922.

> The question then arises as to whether the flâneur is a historical concept with no relevance today, being overtaken by the wholly commodified flâneur of the late twentieth century – the tourist. O'Neill points out that the difference between them is fundamental – while the tourist goes from site to site, and the destinations are the essential experience, the flâneur is exploring the 'in-between' spaces where aimlessness is the aim. He is doing nothing other than 'the act of doing' itself.
>
> (O'Neill 2002: 2)

In revealing issues of androcentric urban space (not to mention patriarchy, oppression, hegemony, inequality, social class and domesticity), the *flâneur* is obviously a man, and the role of women is implied, either by their annihilation from the scene, or their unwilling participation as an object of the male gaze. Virtually all of the writings about perceptions of space in cities and its associated *emballage* are once again a reinforcement of the concept that urban space, however many women it contains, still remains a male domain, both conceptually and actually. The only women who could carve out a space of their own in the time of Baudelaire and Benjamin were prostitutes. Colette, Anaïs Nin, Simone de Beauvoir and other radical feminists were possible exceptions to such rules. More recently, the concept of *flâneur* has been challenged by the term *flâneuse*, in order to lay claim to women's rights in the domain of public space and, hence, locate it fairly and squarely within the purview of feminist politics and criticism (Wolff 1985, Von Ankum 1997, Gleber 1999, Olofsson 2008). The *flâneuse* highlights the subordinate role of women in the domestic realm to the dominant

male role in the public realm of social life. While the flâneur denoted an incipient modernity, women remained cloistered and suffocated within the domestic realm (Thompson 2000, D'Souza and MacDonough 2006).

The emergence of the *flâneuse*, a female who could freely roam the streets, as did her male counterpart, remained problematic, as challenges over territory inevitably end in bloodshed (Figure 6.6). Hence, the space of the department store and luxury consumption at the end of the twentieth century represented the first spaces where women could roam freely and without peril. The male domain was not threatened. Shopping, a distinctly bourgeois activity, clearly excluded working-class women, who remained entombed in domesticity. Nonetheless, the freedom of the bourgeois woman did not approach synchronicity with her male counterpart, as her own movement had been tied into new forms of capitalist consumption, later evolving into the supermarkets and hypermarkets of contemporary life. Production remained a male domain. The clear distinction is that the woman's freedom was inexorably tied to interior public spaces, where her security was/is guaranteed. Invariably, the street so colonised by the *flâneur* can be symbolised for many women in their own transition from one interior space to another, a journey that was not characterised by the inherent freedoms assumed by men in urban space. The conventions that apply to men do not apply to the woman, with the effect that her gaze is restricted, her presence as

Figure 6.6 The *flâneuse*: public space and the male double standard

Source: D. Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighbourhoods and Cities*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981, p. 29

a public is minimised and turned into a stylised display or an object of the voyeur's pleasure.

In order to assert the increasing role of the *flâneuse*, Jennie Oloffson has used a linguistic device, preferring to use the term fl@neur for the female. This is an intelligent gambit, because, in merging terms linguistically, we are forced to denote difference and therefore to recognise and reveal our own prejudices. Similarly, by merging the terminology, she creates a more radical methodology – not by adopting the more obvious and divisive tactic of a radical *other*, but by absorbing the opposition into the same *Weltanschauung*. It is an effective method to deny dualism and useless conflict. Hence, the move is at once defiant and insightful, as well as offering politically subtle yet undeniable resistance to male dominance across the entire spectrum of issues, from the material and the social, into the virtual world (Olofsson 2008). Interestingly, and in reference to the Norwegian theorist Dag Osterberg, she chooses to focus on the concept of *förtäntningar*, or densities, and states, 'not only is the study of densities paving the way for blurred boundaries between city and countryside; using the term also allows for alternative views of embodied relationships between humans and spatiality', and, hence, 'I see the fl@neur as occupying densities rather than boulevards' (Olofsson 2008: 8).

Therefore, concepts of *flâneuse* and densities challenge several components of *flânerie*: the urban–rural divide, the public and domestic realms, interior and exterior space in both, as well as the possibility of adapted forms of spatial restructuring. For example, we can now consider the idea of the fl@neur in the suburbs, and adaptations into the realm of the automobile, not forgetting that the *flâneur* is not an *individual* but an *analytical device*, offering greater understanding of cities. In Paul O'Neill's article, 'Taking the *flâneur* for a spin to the suburbs', he argues that the gradual progression from street to department store modified the *flâneur*'s relationship to the city: 'the demarcations between observer and observed, and more significantly between the individual and the commodity were now abolished, and the flâneur was now taken "into" the space of consumption' (Hulser 1997, O'Neill 2002: 4). Similarly, the movement from department store – still largely an urban phenomenon – was itself gradually swallowed by supermarkets and the suburban shopping centre, an event made possible by Taylorised Fordist production techniques that permitted mass access to the automobile. Hypermarkets extended the idea even further. This permitted the method of *flânerie* to be extended to the auto-*flâneur*, and an altogether different method of accommodating urban life, yet another extension of Baudelaire's original idea.

Although this process did not directly destroy *flânerie*, hopefully still alive and well in many great cities, it removed it, in whole or in part, from vast urban areas in the United States. Shopping centres annihilated the conventional literacy of cities, which Kevin Lynch (1960) denoted as paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks, in favour of a new vocabulary of brands, escalators, lifts, parking lots, hypermarkets etc. Similarly, our perceptual field now became extended into movement through space at vastly increased speeds. Whereas the *flâneur*'s

body/movement was an indivisible process, a new 'auto-centaur' was born, a creature paralysed by its own body, unable to move without being welded to an automobile (J.G. Ballard's novels such *Crash* and *Kingdom Come* (1973, 2006) convey the flavour of this idea). As the *flâneur* and the *flâneuse* offered differing methods of analysing urban space, so the auto-centaur added a new dimension to the other two. In each case, however, progressive methods of analysis come into play, methods that allow us to plot the shifting relationship between capitalist processes of consumption and the changing matrix of urban space and design:

> The ability to define people to object relations and the knowledge and control of this economic exchange within capitalist space, allows for the possibility to create purpose made new spaces within which this exchange can be both monitored and controlled. Major examples can be found in the construction of completely new cities that were based on capitalist ideology, like Las Vegas, or [the] edge cities of Detroit or Chicago, or suburban developments like Celebration or Seaside in the United States, as well as British examples like Welwyn Garden City or Milton Keynes.
>
> (O'Neill 2002: 8)

Perhaps the real evolution of the *flâneur* is best exhibited by 'low riders' everywhere, but personified by Chicanos and Blacks in the United States, who use the automobile to wander slowly and aimlessly through the streets, like the Dandy, absorbing the sounds and lights of the city, albeit at a speed not much beyond the *flâneur*'s perambulations.

Heterology, gender and design

As the *flâneur* symbolises the male domination of space *qua* experience, so androcentric control is also exercised over its physical organisation and structuring. While the *flâneur* personifies the authority of the male *gaze*, control over the design and organisation of the city is similarly overwhelmed through decisions made by men. This fact is so self-evident it needs little reinforcement. Decisions about the organisation, structuring and design of social space are executed in both state and private sectors and in financial, administrative, planning, cultural and corporate institutions, where committees, boards of directors, shareholders and all forms of decision-making remain overwhelmingly dominated by men, even today. So the question of the emancipation of women at all levels of the urban design process begins with the education and employment of women and ends in the boardrooms in the highest echelons of government and business (Adams and Tancred 2000). At the level of the male consciousness, it involves nothing less than a revolution in the way we perceive the world (Akkerman 2006). The crisis of sustainable development emanating from cities is matched equally by the crisis of women's empowerment, and it is

also self-evident that the crisis of global warming has occurred within the context of patriarchy.

In equal measure, the spatial division of labour deployed by patriarchal capitalism is not gender neutral (Andrew and Milroy 1988, Spain 1992, Massey 1994). It is the heterology through which women's subservience and control have been encapsulated in space (Drucker and Gumpert 1997). The methodology of urban transformations – from the planning and provision of central business districts to suburbs, sporting venues, entertainment districts, industrial zones and the whole panoply of urban functions – constitutes gendered realities. In most cases, they envelop the material context and the processes they encompass. These same realities constitute historically designated constraints in the form of a physically variegated matrix of oppression, supported and generated by capitalist urbanisation – mental and physical abuse, psychological dominance, victimisation, humiliation, insecurity, physical constraints and negative representation in the form of sexist imagery across all forms of media, to name but a few (Valentine 1990, 1995, Borisoff and Hahn 1997, Day 1997, 1999). The overall effect is to dominate, resist, oppose, undermine, threaten or express indifference, on a grand scale, to women's needs. The same is true to a varying degree with the queer world, ethnic minorities, children, the aged and the handicapped. The corollary is that, in order to generate the empowerment and necessary freedoms that reflect women's rights, space also matters. Not only does the system of power need to change, but also so do its methods in relation to spatial implications and consequences. This argument does not represent an unconscious vindication of physical determinism, quite the opposite. It stresses that the decisions that formed space were the controlling factors, along with their inherent ideological bias. Urban design decisions are not only material decisions about bricks and mortar; they also constitute political and moral decisions, frequently with effects that span centuries. There is no such thing as a value-neutral design process in cities, and this fact extends to every level of professional engagement (Roberts 1997, 1998).

Notwithstanding my comments about the existence of urban design as an independent region of knowledge, the research in architecture and planning about women's access to education and employment as the best method of bringing about gender equality is much better researched (Mackenzie 1988, 1989, Greed 1994, Loevinger *et al.* 1998, Madsen 1994, Adams and Tancred 2000, Weddle 2001). A seminal article on the methodology of gender planning was written by Moser and Levi (1986), with figurations for feminist methodologies more recently pursued (Olofsson 2008). Even the Royal Town Planning Institute has made its own contribution to gendered methodologies in publishing in its *Gender mainstreaming toolkit* (Reeves 2003), a belated recognition from twenty years earlier that something was amiss (RTPI 1985). The accompanying caveat, as noted above, is that research methods also tend to be gender biased, even if they are instigated by women (Grant *et al.* 1987). Indeed, the architectural profession has also been presented with its sexist history, in two fine books, *Designing Women* (Adams and Tancred 2000) and *Designing for Diversity* (Anthony

2001). Both make disturbing reading, in that they destroy all of our prejudices that somehow misogyny and discrimination have nothing to do with the civilised professional world, when patently they are equally rife, if better disguised, as elsewhere in society. Indeed, the architectural profession also qualifies significantly in racial and ethnic discrimination as well. Anthony's methodology was based on both primary and secondary research in Canada, using census material on women architects from 1921 to 1991, archival sources and interviews with various groups of registered female architects, including those who no longer belonged to the profession. Apart from many insightful outcomes, an overarching conclusion is that the few women who have become successful have had to do so by inserting themselves into a male-dominated profession and accepting its values, rather than belonging to one that was non-sexist and democratic. The critique of the professions is also paralleled by the critique of the academy, where ideological practices in the androcentric organisation of space and form are taught across gender boundaries (Sutton 1996). Similar sentiments have also been expressed about planning education (MacGregor 1995: 25).

Methodical discrimination through design takes on many forms, and professional bias at the institutional level is only the beginning. Countless other methods of gendering the built environment also exist, from the interior spaces of architecture to the construction of the public realm, monuments and art forms (Gardiner 1989, Weisman 1992). At its most elementary, women's underwear is fetishised as spectacle in boutiques, in countless public thoroughfares across the Western world. In certain places, it is the women themselves who are fetishised, placed in shop windows and sold in red light districts, in Amsterdam and Hamburg, for example. More subtle are the practices that have formed the domestic realm over time, the relationship between rooms, the form and location of contents, between inside and outside, and the gendered and social stratification of the inhabitants. Virginia Woolf is of the most perceptive of all writers, for example, in *Jacob's Room* and *A Room of One's Own*, where she undertakes a microscopic analysis of domestic space, along with the surgical dissection of its characters. As she demonstrates, gendered differences even apply to the use of furniture, its type, placement and materials. To take a single example, the most famous chairs of all time, by Thonet, Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier, Alvar Aalto, Gerrit Rietveldt and others, were all designed by men. Clearly, it is difficult to exclude furniture and fittings from an analysis of gendered space, as empty, unfurnished rooms can only transmit so much information (Colomina 1992, Leslie and Reimer 2003). Gendered domestic space can also be seen as a metaphor for domestic gendered social space, albeit at differing scales and contexts (Franck and Paxson 1989, Weisman 1992: 86). As men still dominate in the design professions, it is unsurprising that the contexts required for women's compliance are ideologically reproduced by men, in the absence of any awareness of the process.

At the level of policy, a diversity of methods have been initiated to accommodate women's need in cities, although only a fragment of what is actually required to restore some balance. In addition, such is the socialisation of women

that there is no necessary correlation between more women and better outcomes. Nonetheless, European women planners started what is called *The Eurofem Initiative* in order to impose women on to the process of spatial and policy planning. This constitutes a major counter to the idea that so-called 'women's problems' have nothing to do with design and land use (Boys 1985, Huxley 1988, Sandercock and Forsyth 1992, Fainstein and Servon 2005). This initiative is also supported by a highly organised website that addresses planning issues: www.gendersite.org. Planning the non-sexist city has made slow but inexorable progress since 1980, when Dolores Hayden wrote her by now iconic article, 'What would a non-sexist city be like?'. Only a few initiatives can be mentioned here (see FOC6: 143). For example, the Royal Town Planning Institute denotes eight questions that should be incorporated at all levels in the planning process, in order to accommodate gender equality (this naturally includes men as well), namely:

- Who comprises the policy-making team?
- What is the representation of men and women? Minority groups?
- Who are the planners planning for? Men, women, workers, minorities?
- How are statistics gathered, and are they disaggregated by gender?
- What are the key values, priorities and objectives of the plan?
- Who is consulted, and who is involved in participation?
- How is the plan evaluated, by whom and on what basis?
- How is the policy implemented, managed and monitored?

While these are obviously not design criteria, they would clearly affect design outcomes through a more variegated input at the planning stage. Dolores Hayden also suggested a list of six properties for housing and residential neighbourhoods that a more egalitarian society should possess (Hayden 1980: 272). Added to this is a more recent taxonomy of priorities as a method of reducing gender bias in design:

- a well-developed network of services dealing with the issue of violence against women and children;
- elimination of public violence against women through a public agency with the mandate to ensure this [situation];
- friendly neighbourhoods through mixed use of space and lively streets oriented towards pedestrians rather than cars;
- a first-class public transportation system that is cheap, safe and efficient;
- an active social housing policy that includes cooperative housing, housing for women leaving transitional homes, and special housing for women with disabilities;
- good day-carc in a variety of forms, from drop-in centres to full day-care;
- active encouragement of community-based economic development, with meaningful jobs for women, coordinated with day-care;

- a close physical relationship between services, residences and workplaces, encouraged by mixed urban land use;
- a feminist planning process, working with the population rather than about the population;
- public art that is representative of women and women-centred activities.

(Eichler 1995: 16)

Other early initiatives include that of the London Planning Aid Service (1987) and urban planning and design in Toronto, where building women's needs into metropolitan planning has had a huge impact, much of it based in workshops to increase awareness, lobbying of politicians, meetings with community groups and general mobilisation of women to support their own best interests (Modlich 1994). Elsewhere, suggestions have been made that focus on gender equality by reclaiming public space for daily life, emphasising the local over the global, reintegrating culture, generating greater civic engagement and other qualities (Watson 1988, Ruddock 1996, Jaeckel and Geldermalsen 2006).

Conclusion

Along with nature, the fact of gender is arguably the most exploitive aspect of the capitalist system. Tragically, socialism has done no better. While gender equality makes glacial progress, along with the domestic mode of production, important inroads have been made into gender diversity and difference, from biochemistry to childhood education. The practical results are legion, illuminating such differences as learning capacity, physiology and perception in space. This naturally leads to the question of a distinctly feminist method, applied in our case to the built environment. Given that feminism is represented in all aspects of social science, arguably there can be no specifically feminist method. More significantly, the feminist contribution is oriented differently, to how entire fields of knowledge have been constructed within patriarchy, whatever theoretical bent is pursued. All of this impacts on the built environment, illustrated by the metaphor of the fl@neuse, which condenses a multitude of urban conflicts into a single concept. More specifically, it is transparent that, within the built environment disciplines as a whole, the entire gamut of prejudice and inequality has run rampant for many years. Gender bias has been exerted from education to employment and to professional activity. Hence, Dolores Hayden's question of thirty years ago, 'what would a non-sexist city look like?', may remain unanswered for some time to come.