Gender, Sexuality, and the Biopolitics of Architecture:

From the Secret Museum to Playboy

Beatriz Preciado

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Dissertation abstract

Taking as a starting point the work of Michel Foucault on biopolitics, as well as its feminist, queer, and transgender readings by Judith Butler, Teresa De Lauretis, Donna Haraway and Susan Stryker, amongst others, this dissertation understands architecture as a biopolitical technology for producing gender and sexuality: it explores how political and sexual identities are shaped through architecture, examining the relationship between gender, sexuality, techniques of vision and surveillance, medical techniques of management of reproduction, and techniques of body production, and the construction of the public/private divide, grounding such analysis in a series of case studies (the secret museum, l’Enfer, the boudoir, the state brothel, Playboy Enterprises’ spaces, the Pill…) which outline a genealogy of modern regimes of spatialization of gender and sexuality. This dissertation studies the impact on architecture of the displacement from what Foucault called a disciplinary regime of production of sexual subjectivity (characterized by the architectures of the panopticon, the hospital, the state-brothel and the domestic space) to what I shall define as pharmacopornographic regime, derived from the introduction of new chemical, pharmacological, prosthetic, media, and electronic surveillance techniques for controlling gender and sexual reproduction, as well as the post-Fordist capitalist modes of production of gender and sexuality.
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PREFACE

This research project started to take shape several years ago thanks to the critical framework provided by Beatriz Colomina’s doctoral seminar on Cold War Architecture and its relationship to mass media and visual technologies, as well as to the historical research developed by George Teyssot on the birth of the modern interior, both of which took place at the Princeton School of Architecture.

Combining historical perspectives with contemporary critical theory, gender studies, queer theory, porn studies and history of technology and intentionally mobilizing a range of primary trans-disciplinary sources – treatises on sexuality, medical and pharmaceutical handbooks, architecture journals, erotic magazines, building manuals, novels, etc.- this dissertation explores the use of architecture as a biopolitical technique for governing sexual reproduction and the production of gender in modernity.

This dissertation attempts to trace some of the strategic relationships between architecture, gender, and sexuality by looking at popular sites related to the production and consumption of pornography that lie, until now, at the margins of traditional histories of architecture: male secret cabinets, female boudoirs, utopian brothels, bachelor pads, multimedia rotating beds... These sites are not mere buildings, but rather,
to use Beatriz Colomina’s words, “a series of overlapping systems of representation,” or as Teresa de Lauretis puts it, a series of “technologies of gender and sexuality” which have been for the most part ignored by histories of architecture so far. This dissertation focuses on popular culture, and pornographic spaces as sites of architectural production. These spaces are not understood here as inherently or naturally sexual, neither perverted nor queer, but rather as biopolitical techniques for governing sexual reproduction and the production of gender in modernity.

In this respect, this dissertation addresses Beatriz Colomina’s call for taking into account the productive relationship between architecture, popular culture, viewing technologies, and mass media: “The conventional view portrays modern architecture as a high artistic practice established in opposition to mass culture and to everyday life. It has focused on the internal life of the supposedly autonomous, self-referential object made available to a detached viewing subject, an art object. In so doing, architectural scholarship has neglected the overwhelming historical evidence of modern architecture’s continuous involvement with mass culture. It is actually the emerging systems of communication that came to define twentieth-century culture: –mass media are the true site within which modern architecture is produced and with which it directly engages.” The study of popular spaces of sexuality and their mass media production gave me the occasion to

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3 Beatriz Colomina, 1996, 14.
bring together into a project of architectural theory my French philosophy background, as well as my ongoing work as queer and transgender activist.

From the point of view of the history and theory of architecture, it is interesting to notice that feminism and queer theory have invested the performative language of “construction” and the rhetoric of architecture to denaturalize gender and sexuality. Arguing that sexual and gender differences were “surface effects” rather than interiority, “ornamental” rather than structural, and “performative” rather than essential, authors such as Judith Butler or Eve K. Sedgwick concluded that sexual and gender identities were *performatively constructed* rather than naturally given. In spite of the epistemological break introduced by the performative turn, insufficient attention has been given to the influence of the architectural rhetoric of “construction” on contemporary gender and queer studies as well as to the material, technical and prosthetic dimensions of gender construction. Within queer studies, the notion of “gender performativity” has stressed the productive force of language to construct rather than merely describe what it names, leaving aside, as Butler regrets and Eve K. Sedgwick demands, the *spatiality* of gender performance, the very *topos* of the construction of gendered and sexual subjects.  

Sedgwick addressed the problem of reducing gender performativity to a linguistic phenomenon and argued for a “spatialization” of the concept of “gender performativity.” She pointed out the necessity to study drag, gender mimicking and gender performativity in relation to a larger “ecological field whose intensive and defining relationality is internal as much as it is

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5 Ibid., 7.
directed towards the norms it may challenge.”6 For Sedgwick “spatializing disciplines such as geography and anthropology do, though, have the advantage of permitting ecological and systems approaches to issues of identity and performance.”7 Butler’s and Sedgwick’s performative definition of sexual and gender identities call for a larger exploration of the theatricality of architecture and its performative power to produce sexual and gender positions in space.

On the other hand, this dissertation embraces transgender and disability studies as critical frameworks to question the political production and use of spaces. Transgender and disability studies argue not only that domestic and institutional sex-segregated and able architectures put transgender and disable people in jeopardy, but that architecture functions as a political technology of body, gender, and sexual production and normalization. As transgender activist and theorist Lucas Cassidy Crawford has pointed out reading Joel Sanders, “architecture is not simple or neutral aesthetic category to which gender is merely applied” but rather “architectural forms and gendered bodies mutually reinforce each other’s feigned timelessness and stability.”8 Likewise, the emerging field of disability and crip studies questions the role of architecture in the normative production of the “able” body and its living conditions. As Lennard J. Davis has put it, disability and crip studies stress the complicity of architecture in the

6 Ibid., 9.
7 Sedgwick proposed Esther Newton’s study of the floor plans of two drag clubs in her 1972 Mother Camp study of female impersonation as a paradigmatic example of such “spatial” analysis of gender. Eve K. Sedgwick, 8.
“construction of normalcy” unveiling the social process of “disabling” produced by architecture during the history of modernity.\(^9\)

Thinking about this mutual construction of body, gender, sex, and architecture, Lucas C. Crawford asks “how have these gender-based conventions of architectural stability and timelessness seeped into our ways of thinking our bodies?” and proposes to study the history of architecture as an “archive of gender.”\(^10\) Taking into account the fact that transsexuality and transgender embodiment have been historically represented by medical discourses and popular culture through architectural metaphors (describing, for instance, female transsexuality as the experience of “a woman trapped within a male body”), Crawford interrogates these spatial images of embodiment (where the body is described as a “private architecture,” a house or a home) as a way to question both architectural practices and discourses, as well as hegemonic representations of transsexuality and transgenderism. Furthermore, contemporary transgender theorists, such as Susan Stryker, Sandy Stone, and Dean Spade interrogate the technological and cultural process of biopolitical body production and suggest understanding embodiment as an “architectural practice” rather than a natural process.\(^11\) As Lucas C. Crawford puts it: “transgender and transsexuality may even be exemplary architectural practices and

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\(^10\) Lucas Cassidy Crawford, 516.

also the very bases for thinking of bodies architecturally.‘’

Working in resonance with recent developments of the Foucaultian notion of *biopolitics* (Giorgio Agamben, Tony Negri, Donna Haraway, Roberto Esposito, and Sven-Olov Wallestein), as well as its feminist, queer, and transgender readings (Judith Butler, Eve K. Sedgwick, Teresa De Lauretis, Donna Haraway or Susan Stryker), this dissertation understands *architecture as a biopolitical technology for producing gender and sexuality*: it studies how political and sexual identities are shaped through architecture, examining the relationship between gender, sexuality, techniques of vision and surveillance, medical techniques of management of reproduction, and techniques of body production, and the construction of the public/private divide, grounding such analysis in a series of case studies (the secret museum, l’Enfer, the boudoir, the state brothel, Playboy Enterprises’ spaces, the contraceptive pill…) and which outline a genealogy of *modern regimes of spatialization of gender and sexuality*.

Finally, this dissertation is methodologically located within the field of porn studies. From the early 1980s, in an escape from the dead-end of the feminist censorship debate, a group of historians and theoreticians from the fields of cultural studies, literature and cinema—including William Kendrick, Richard Dyer, Linda Williams, Lynn Hunt—

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12 Lucas Cassidy Crawford, 517.
and Thomas Waugh\textsuperscript{17}—took as a starting point the genealogical analysis of power and knowledge developed by Michel Foucault in his \textit{History of Sexuality} and began to extend his insights to the relationship between body, gaze, power and pleasure to cover pornographic representation. Modern pornography, they argued with Foucault, rather than a transgressive practice, is just one of the most sophisticated and paradoxical techniques of government for producing sexual and gender identities as well as normal and deviant sexualities. From the eighteenth century, pornography becomes a totalizing system of virtual signs claiming a single subject of desire. Linda Williams, Lynn Hunt and William Kendrick stressed the complicity between the pornographic techniques of representation and normalization of the body and the medical and legal devices as well as with the modern techniques of gender segregation of spaces and body practices: pornographic pleasure, they argued, far from the immanent knowledge of the \textit{ars erotica}, is inseparable from the political construction of the gaze and from the modern biopolitical techniques of managements of the body and urban space.

“Porn Studies”\textsuperscript{18} and the possibility of historical, cultural, cinematographic and political analyses of pornography, emerged with the new millennium partly from this productive

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{On early twentieth century homosexuality and pornography} see the historical study by Thomas Waugh, \textit{Hard to Imagine: Gay Male Eroticism in Photography and Film from the Beginnings to Stonewall} (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
\end{itemize}
reading of Foucault, but also from the performative understanding of gender identities provided by Judith Butler and queer theorist and from the transgender and disability studies redefinition of bodies and pleasures as biotechnological practices and embodiments. Letting aside both the pro-censorship versus pro-pornography feminist debates that characterized the discussion on pornography during the 80s and 90s, porn studies considers pornography as a cultural discourse, a popular cultural form related to the construction of sex, gender and pleasure through visual representation.

Whereas proponents of the anti-censorship school obfuscate any distinction between “erotica” and “pornography” - using the term erotica for all sexually explicit materials -, and most anti-pornography feminist distinguish between pornography and erotica, condemning pornography as “material that combines sex or the exposure of genitals with abuse or degradation in manner that appears to endorse, condone, or encourage such behavior,” porn studies refuse to conform to legal or moral definitions of pornography, claiming the possibility of studying pornography as a cultural object, a specific visual, spatial and historical regime - of which “erotica” would be just one specific genre.

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In light of contemporary development of theories of gender and sexuality, this dissertation explores the work of architecture in the production and normalization of sexual subjectivity within modernity putting into dialog contemporary readings of the history and theory of architecture with critical perspectives on body, space, and sexuality coming from queer, transgender, and porn studies. Adopting a Foucauldian genealogical method, this dissertation tries to pose “the problem of power and the body”\(^{21}\) in relation to architecture discourses and practices, to viewing practices and the production of pleasure, as well as to the historically constructed normal and deviant uses of space.

This research project does not try to offer a totalizing theory of the relationship between gender, sexuality and architecture but rather to provide a different framework for political imagination and gender research in architectural theory. Avoiding linear narrative and disciplinary “monolinguism,”\(^{22}\) this dissertation works with an array of different scientific and historical texts (from medical and biological treatises, pharmacological protocols) as well as with unorthodox (and often unauthorized) sources (related to popular culture and the sex industry), to give an alternative account of the transformation of architecture, the birth of domesticity, and urban planning in modernity.

In order to analyze the regimes of spatialization of gender and sexuality, this dissertation mobilizes and interrogates the Foucaultian spatial notions of “hétérotopie” and


“disciplinary architecture” within the framework of biopolitics.\textsuperscript{23} The dissertation itself can be read as a genealogy\textsuperscript{24} (a counter-history which accounts for the relationship between knowledge, power, discourses and subjectivity) of what I have called with Steven Marcus “pornotopias”:\textsuperscript{25} spaces for (utopian and dystopian) production and normalization of bodies, and pleasures within the modern city, from the Secret Museum and Restif de la Bretonne’s utopian State Brothel to the “multimedia brothel” created by Playboy in the late 1950s. Rather than mere examples of the Foucaultian theory of subject production, these “pornotopias” come to problematize the biopolitical model of spatialization of power and knowledge proposed by Foucault in the \textit{History of Sexuality} and \textit{Discipline and Punish} during the 1970s.

My working hypothesis is that a Foucaultian, biopolitical and queer feminist critique of the historical accounts of utopian erotic architectures, from the Enlightenment “state brothel” to Playboy multimedia bachelor pads, mansions, and clubs, provides a critical


\textsuperscript{24} For more on the difference between “genealogy” and “history” see: Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” in \textit{Language, Counter-Memory, Practices: Selected Essays and Interviews} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980).

model – a “speculative fabulation” to put it in Donna Haraway’s terms\(^{26}\) for surpassing the anatomic, formal, essentialist, and identity politics readings of architecture that have dominated until now the study of the relationships between body, gender, sexuality, and architecture.

In this dissertation, architectural space is recognized as crucial for the construction of identity in historically and culturally specific terms. Following Beatriz Colomina, I understand “privacy” and “publicity” as historical, architectural, cultural, and political constructs that claim status of body, health, identity, class, gender, sexuality, and race. On one hand, and drawing on Foucault, Butler, Williams, and Kendrick, I shall explore here what we might call the architecture of sexuality as biopolitical technology, starting with a genealogical analysis of the birth of the modern pornographic regime within the eighteenth century and focusing later on the transformation of the visual and power regimes that take place after the Second World War. Special attention shall be given to the modern processes of *sexualization* and *medicalization of space*. In the following chapters, I shall study the performative work of architecture in the normalization of gender and sexuality, but also in the biopolitical management of sexual reproduction and the spatial control of the normal and the pathological, healthy and sick bodies within the modern city. Undoing traditional gender and sexual definitions, as well as conventional readings of the history of architecture, Foucault’s biopolitical analyses allow me to study the relationship between the modern architectures of sexuality (such as the male cabinet,

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\(^{26}\) Donna Haraway, *SF: Speculative Fabulation and String Figures* (Kassel, Documenta 13, 2012).
the boudoir, the brothel or the domestic regime) and the political management of syphilis in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, or the relationship between the transformation of the domestic space and the brothel in relation to the invention and commercialization of the ”pill,” the first hormonal contraceptive technique, during the second half of the twentieth century.

On the other hand, this dissertation interrogates agency within the process of fictional and projective writing, planning and constructing architecture as well in the act of inhabiting and using spaces, investigating spatial normalization, but also spatial resistance, transgression and dissent. Throughout this dissertation, I attempt to analyze the ways in which various gendered and sexual subjects are disciplined differently in relation to the production of space, domesticity, and the pornographic image, and resist differently, within particular visual regimes of inhabitation. Therefore, the spaces studied in this dissertation (whereas secret cabinets, boudoirs, Enlightenment brothels, Playboy rotating beds, domestic pharmacological laboratories, suburban houses or pill dispensers) are not understood as fixed, unified places or objects but rather as contested, contingent terrains, always relational and performative.

Drawing on Michel Foucault’s biopolitical analyses of disciplinary spaces, and Judith Butler’s performative definitions of gender and sexual identities, as well as on contemporary critical readings of the history of architecture undertaken by Beatriz Colomina, Mark Wigley, Spyros Papapetros, Anthony Vidler, Sylvia Lavin, Giuliana Bruno, Michael Moon, Diane Fuss, Georges Teyssot, Sanford Kwinter, Mark Cousins,
Jane Rendell, Joel Sanders, or Lucas C. Crawford, to cite just a few, this dissertation seeks to pursue the intersectional study of architecture and the fields of gender and queer theory and the cultural history of technology.

**Cartography of modern pornotopias**

The first part of this dissertation locates the emergence of pornography in the West as part of a wider (industrial, global and media) regime of production of sexual subjectivity through technical management of spaces, reproductive organs and fluids, bodies, images, and pleasures. The first historical and methodological chapter of the dissertation tries to develop a tentative theory of architecture for the study of the history of sexuality and pornography. We shall ask: What is the *topos* of invention of pornography? What is the relationship of pornography and the biopolitical spatialization of gender and sexuality within the modern urban spaces? What is the relationship between the development of institutional sex-segregated architectures, medical knowledge, the management of sexual reproduction, visual restriction, and the production of sexual subjectivity in modernity? How does pornography relate to other biopolitical spatial techniques of government in modernity such as the *boudoir*, the domestic space, the prison or the hospital? How does pornography work within the political mechanisms of normalization of the health and reproductive body within the modern city?

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27 I shall study here only the political architecture of pornography from the time it was implanted in modernity to the invention of the moving-image and the stag films. The mutations related to video technologies after the 1980s and cybernetics deserve further analysis that largely exceeds the scope of this dissertation.
In the first genealogical part of the dissertation, I shall focus on different models of spatialization of sexuality and sexual pleasure which characterized the modern somatic experience of private and public spaces: the secret museum, the male cabinet, the female boudoir, the Enlightenment utopian state brothel, urban sewers and arcades. These monographic chapters are thought as a pornotopic grammar, which provides the architectural and biopolitical language that shall be used in the second part of this dissertation to understand the transformations of the architectural techniques for producing gender, sex, and sexuality that appeared after the Second World War. They are also vertical cuts within the history of architecture and the history of sexuality, from eighteenth century reading cabinets and disciplinary brothels up to nineteenth century arcades and the introduction of visual pornographic techniques within the public space of the city.

The aim of this first part is to examine the terms of the sexuality and gender studies’ debates in relation to architecture and to the cultural production of spaces, to visual taxonomies, pornographic devices and biopolitical techniques of management of reproductive organs and fluids. Special attention shall be given to the production of sexuality through what Linda Williams following Jean-Louis Comolli calls the intensification of sight provided by the “machines of the visible” among which I shall include architecture.\textsuperscript{28} Sexuality is here a function of the relationship between space and vision, between publicity and privacy, between pleasure and surveillance, between

production and reproduction, between the modern city and the representation of the body producing biopolitical differences between masculine and feminine, normal and pathological, healthy and sick, white and non-white, reproductive and sterile. I focus on four particular spaces emerging at the same time as industrial capitalism and modern pornography (the secret museum, l’Enfer, the boudoir, and the Enlightenment utopian state brothel and modern bourgeois domesticity) in order to examine how architecture becomes a biopolitical apparatus to produce knowledge, sexual difference, and sexuality.

This first part of the dissertation takes up the historical convergence of architecture and pornography. In order to create a critical framework for sexuality studies in architecture, and drawing on the work of Michel Foucault and Walter Kendrick, the first chapter of the first part begins with a genealogical study of the emergence of pornography within European modernity as part of a larger biopolitical regime of production of gender, sexuality, and race throughout the technical management of space and vision in the modern city. The study of the invention of the modern notion of pornography at the Secret Museum gives rise to a first working hypothesis: pornography is not simply a category derived from the sexual content of the images or the representation, nor it can be reduced to a legal or moral category. Pornography is redefined in this dissertation as an architectonic and spatial category, which social and political effects depend on specific techniques of spatialization of power, gaze, and pleasure. Pornography is neither a set of images nor a discursive object: it is a biopolitical technology for producing and spatializing pleasure, gender, and sexuality within the modern city. Developing a three-fold definition of pornography (urban, architectural and archival), the
aim of this first genealogical chapter is to introduce pornography as a critical notion for the history and theory of architecture.

The first and second chapters of the first part of this dissertation study the displacement of the spatial and visual techniques of biopolitical government of the Secret Museum into the space of the library as first “media space,” the invention of the male cabinet and the institutional creation of the “Enfer” of the French public library in the eighteenth century as a first spatial technique of privatization of sexual knowledge and pleasure. This reflection on the “pornographic archive” is two-folded: on one hand, it explores the fundamental pornotopic sites of modernity as the effect of spatialization of specific techniques for the construction of heterosexual masculinity and femininity, as well as for the production of power and pleasure; on the other hand, it triggers an epistemological reflection on the architecture of knowledge and the biopolitical relationship between architecture, the body, and the archive, that runs across the whole dissertation.

The third chapter of the first part explores the invention of the boudoir as gender box: a paradigmatic topos where modern intimacy, femininity and sexuality where constructed as spatial and somatic fictions. This chapter draws a critical history of the different techniques of medicalization and theatricalization of the boudoir’s interiority in relationship with the production of femininity and sexual pleasure. The study of the architectural construction of the boudoir enables us to question the naturalness of intimacy and to develop a critical gender reading of the modern distinction between public and private space as segregations of visual and sexual enjoyment. Finally, a
genealogy of the boudoir would help us to understand the biopolitical relationship between femininity, sexual reproduction and interior space, as well as to unpack the complex links between the boudoir, the bourgeois interior as heterosexual space, the brothel, and the forthcoming technique of peepshow the construction of a boudoir’s parody within the commercial space of the modern city.

The fourth chapter of the first part examines the origin of the modern architecture of the “state brothel” as it was described for the first time in the work of the eighteenth century French pornographic and political writer Restif de la Bretonne and its influence in the later projects by Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, Marquis De Sade and Jean Jacques Lequeu. Refusing both formalist as well as anatomorphic (body-building metonimic) readings of architecture, this chapter argues that the architecture of the brothel should be understood as a biopolitical prophylactic and assisted reproduction technique (related to the condom and to contraceptive techniques) to prevent the spread of syphilis in the modern city and to privatize women’s reproductive bodies.

This pornotopic and biopolitical grammar in four chapters can be read in a twofold manner: from the point of view of political resistance to normalization and production of heterogeneity, this genealogy could be read as a history of modern sexual heterotopias - located counter-spaces that function as exceptions in relationship to the normalized space of bourgeois domesticity and public urban gender and race segregated spaces. On the other hand, from the point of view of history of women and sexual minorities, this genealogy could be read as a contribution to a larger cartography of disciplinary spaces -
including the hospital, the school, the prison, and the domestic space- to which I have added the secret museum, the library, the boudoir, the brothel, and the arcade as biopolitical architectural techniques to control the population’s health and sexual reproduction, and to regulate the presence of women, and sexual and racial minorities within the public space of the modern city. Finally, this tension between heterotopia and disciplinary space, between resilience and normalization, between utopia and distopia, (paradigmatically exposed through the relationship between the Enlightenment state brothel and the panopticon) cannot be resolved. Rather it shows the ambivalent functioning of multiple and conflicting power regimes and the variety of strategies of resistance and subversion. Within this tension, architecture operates as a critical lever rather than as a dialectic resolution.

In the second part of this dissertation, I study the displacement form a disciplinary regime of production of sexuality towards what I call I pharmacopornographic regime, derived from the introduction of new chemical, pharmacological, prosthetic, media, and electronic surveillance techniques for controlling gender and sexual reproduction after the Second World War. I use Playboy and the pill as critical labs to trace the transformation of biopolitical spaces and techniques of sexual and gender production.

Published for the first time in 1953 in Chicago, Playboy became during the fifties, not only the first pornographic popular magazine in America, but also a way of living embodied within a series of utopian multimedia spaces from the fictional Playboy penthouse of 1956 to the Playboy Mansion rebuilt in 1959 or the Playboy Clubs and
hotels disseminated all around the world during the sixties. During the same years, the invention of the contraceptive pill gave popular access to a biochemical technique able to separate (hetero)sexuality and reproduction for the first time, troubling the traditional relationship between gender, sexuality, power, and space.

The political management of pornography and sexuality within *Playboy* spaces and their relationship with biotechnologies of reproduction provide case studies to analyze the changing relationship between biopolitics, sexuality, architecture, and capitalism. I take Foucault’s hypotheses on biopolitics of architecture to the context of American neoliberalism in order to understand how the invention of a multimedia *pornotopia* and of a chemical prosthesis for controlling sexual reproduction modified the modern spatial regime of sexualization and of gender and racial production.

Within the background of the historical study of biopolitical spaces developed in the first part of this dissertation, I read *Playboy* in relationship to the French libertine popular erotic writings and architectural projects of the Eighteenth century. *Playboy* Enterprise’s spaces are studied here as electrified, multimedia, and neoliberal remakes of the boudoir and the *maisons de plaisir* of libertine tradition of Restif de la Bretonne, Nicolas Ledoux and Marquis De Sade.\(^{29}\) Whereas the libertine aesthetics of interior space invented the boudoir and the state brothel as new spaces for the production of female subjectivity,

\(^{29}\) A parallel study could have been carried out about Walt Disney as the postwar neoliberal incarnation of Fourier’s and Saint-Simon’s utopias, as Susan Buck-Morris suggests following an intuition by Walter Benjamin, “The Flaneur, the Sandwichman and the Whore: The Politics of Lotering,” *New German Critique*, Second Special Issue on Walter Benjamin, 39, Autumn (1986): 101.
sexual reproduction and male pleasure, as well as a whole new array of somatic and biopolitical practices of intimacy and sexual discipline in the eighteenth century, *Playboy* (sexualizing the new technologies of communication and body production derived from the Second World) develops the “penthouse,” the “mansion,” the “rotating bed,” and the “club” as new forms of *masculine, electronic and media boudoirs and brothels*, as post-Fordist utopias where to produce a new form of multimedia connected, heterosexual, but non-reproductive masculinity.

Finally, to investigate *Playboy* and the pill ultimate leads me to move beyond conventional readings of the Foucaultian notions of “panopticism” and “heterotopia” opening up new relationships between architecture, sexuality, and technology, as well as to take Butler’s performative definitions of gender further into the realm of prosthetics and technobiopower.

**The Private Archive**

**Epistemology and the political architectures of pornography**

Given the lack of historical archives on pornography, it might be helpful to outline my methodology at the outset. Working with pornography and architecture as discursive and material objects as well as technical and cultural fields (related to the advent of syphilis and to the development of prophylactic and contraceptive techniques after the eighteenth century), I have used very different archival and documentary sources: medical and hygienic treatises (specially those of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and the École
Nationale de Médecine), urban writings (specially those of the Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris and Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal de Paris, the Bibliothèque de l’École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées, but also at the Archives de la Préfecture de Police, as well as the documents of the “Brigade Mondaine” and the “Brigade de Moeurs,” dedicated to the control and surveillance of prostitution within the city), legal and administrative texts, historical collections related to prostitution and pornography (mostly from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and the Musée Carnavalet in Paris), literary texts, as well as the partial access to the archives of Playboy Enterprises located in Chicago and Los Angeles. Documents from the 1940s-1968s pornographic industry have been compiled from trade books, legal studies (including those edited by the U.S. Attorney General’s Commission on Pornography Reports) and police registers, journalist articles, and private archivist and ephemeral film and photo collectors. The lack of public archives on popular culture and pornography and the underground status of the industry implied the need to look into private collections and uncatalogued caches.

Talking about the difference between the “archival excess” of Le Corbusier and the impossible archive and the insistence of “removal of traces” of Adolf Loos, Beatriz Colomina has stressed the political and epistemological dimension of the archive and its relationship not only to the construction of privacy and publicity in modernity but also to the control of interpretation and the construction of history of architecture as fiction.30 Indeed, I would like to emphasize from the very beginning the complex question of the archive when working both with sexuality and pornography as cultural objects as well as

30 Beatriz Colomina, 1996, Chapter 1: “Archive.”
When researching sexuality and pornography the question of the “archive” and documentation, far from being merely instrumental, becomes critical in terms of the architecture of knowledge but also in terms of the biopolitics of architecture as sexual and gender technology. Rather than leaving these questions aside, I have addressed the relationship between pornography and the archive in the second chapter of the first part of this dissertation. Working with what historically has been produced and thought as “pornography” raises crucial questions in relation to the archive as cultural and political space. The Enfer of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris invented in the Eighteenth century as privatized archive and male cabinet becomes a critical site to explore the spatial construction of gender and sexuality in relation to the access to knowledge as well as to the modern techniques of production of pleasure. The study of the Enfer as a spatial technique of surveillance governed by state and ecclesiastic powers, but also as a privatized space of male pleasure addresses questions of gender spatial distribution and segregation, privacy, property and access to knowledge, and sheds light on the complex relationship gender and sexuality and the architecture of modern archives, including those of the public libraries but also those of private enterprises such as Playboy. In this respect, the second chapter of this dissertation can be read as an epistemological dialog with and between Beatriz Colomina’s reflections of the archive of architecture in modernity, Michel Foucault’s reflection on the archive as a
political system which governs the appearance of statements as historical events,\(^{31}\) and Jacques Derrida’s reading of the archive as paternal domicile and epistemological machine.\(^{32}\)

For the second part of this dissertation, I have worked with the published and unpublished material related to Playboy enterprises. The difficulty to work on Playboy became evident to me when I first published a small article already called “Pornotopia” for the collective book *Cold War Hot Houses*, edited by Beatriz Colomina, Ann-Marie Brennan and Jeannie Kim and published by Princeton Architecture in 2002. In order to have access to some of the images analyzed within the text, I wrote together with editor Anne-Marie Brennan to Playboy Enterprises asking permission for publication. Diane Griffin, Rights and Permissions Records Management wrote us back arguing that Playboy “did not align with the word “pornography” and that “Unless the chapter title “Pornotopia” and the references to pornography are removed, we will not release any material.”\(^{33}\) When I talked directly with Marsha Terrones, from the Playboy Enterprises and Media Department, she suggested changing the word “pornography” by “art.” In spite of being myself personally against any form of political censorship against pornographic representation, I could not give up the notion of “pornography,” neither in historical nor in critical terms, in order to analyze the specificity of Playboy multimedia empire and architecture. This initial conflict, instead of detouring me from the study of


\(^{33}\) Email exchange. See final documentation.
Playboy, convinced me of the political character of this research project and pushed me into a more in depth exploration of the relationship between the architecture of the archive and pornography, as well as of the ways in which pornography had been historically thought, constructed, and defined within space.

Meanwhile, Playboy has become for the study of gender and sexual politics during the 1950s and 1960s what Le Corbusier was for modern architectural history: an essential critical knot. During the last few years, several articles and books (specially those of Fraterrigo, Osgerby, and Pitzulo) have contributed to what today could be already called “Playboy studies.” Barbara Ehrenreich included a detailed reading of Playboy in her history of American masculinity in the early 1980s, Elizabeth Fraterrigo understood Playboy’s urban move as a critical response to American suburbia. The groundbreaking works of Joanna Hollows, Ethan Thompson and Bill Osgerby studied the role of Playboy in the construction of post-War masculinity, and Steven Cohan and George Wagner explored for the first time the relationship between architecture, gender, and sexuality in Playboy spaces. The work of Osgerby, Wagner and Cohan, as well as Beatriz

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Colomina’s research seminar,\(^{35}\) have been crucial for my own research project. Nevertheless, together with this critical work, some recent studies have been based upon the textual analysis of the magazine’s discourse on sexual politics, neglecting the place of visual and surveillance techniques as well as the role of architecture within Playboy’s empire. Some of them (Pitzulo’s is the most evident case) are been overtly done with the “consent” and complicity of Playboy Enterprises, which provides access to the archival material of Playboy but clearly limits the critical scope.

Playboy Enterprises Inc. archival epistemology and politics of access seem to have taken into account what Jacques Derrida made clear in *Mal d’Archive*:\(^{36}\) the archive is not a container of traces of the past but a performative machine for constructing the future. Controlling the archive equates to determine how the history of Playboy will be written. After the first conflict with Playboy Enterprises and Media Development in 2004 concerning the use of the word “pornography,” I have been able to enter several times both in the Chicago archives and in the offices of Los Angeles using my second Spanish family name Ruiz, pretending to be a journalist, without ever refereeing to my intention to study the relationship between architecture and pornography. Playboy archives are made of a large (sometimes public, sometimes private, but always highly disciplined and

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\(^{35}\) In 2008, Beatriz Colomina and the Princeton Architecture School dedicated a doctoral research seminar to work on the relationships between Playboy and architecture during the Cold War years.

monitored) field of multimedia artifacts, which either circulate endlessly through the media (Playboy opened in 2009 an internet archival page giving paid access to 57 years of Playboy magazine37) or are carefully kept within the “domestic” and corporate spaces of Playboy Enterprises Inc. (including offices in Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York, the Playboy Mansion in Los Angeles, and the club and hotel in Las Vegas). These heterogeneous archival spaces are severely controlled by legal and corporate devices. First, it is almost impossible to read an article about Playboy that has not been reviewed and authorized by Playboy Enterprises. Almost every publication on Playboy has been previously proofread and approved by the Playboy Law Group. Therefore, every written artifact on Playboy has more a hagiographic than a documentary or hermeneutic character. As a result, some of the studies on Playboy should be considered as part of the production of Playboy Enterprises itself - the introduction of Playboy within the academic production being in this case just another form of multimedia expansion. On the other side, the physical photo and text archives located in Los Angeles and Chicago could be described as “archive-bunkers” where the historian and the critic are asked for compliance with the firm. The insistence of making public a series of selected texts and pictures contrasts with the difficulty to access freely to the contents of the archives. Interpreting Playboy as a “pop architecture studio,” this dissertation takes a multimedia corporation as key cultural object for architecture theory in postwar capitalism and studies intentionally the political boundaries of corporate and public archives and its shifting conditions of access to knowledge.

Methodological introduction

FOUCAULT’S BIOPOLITICS OF SPACE

“I do not think it is possible to say that one architectural project is of the order of “liberation” and another is of the order of “oppression.” There are a certain number of things that one can say with some certainty about a concentration camp to the effect that it is not an instrument of liberation, but […] Aside, from torture and execution, which preclude any resistance, no matter how terrifying a given system may be, there always remain the possibilities of resistance, disobedience, and oppositional groupings. […] liberty is a practice.”

Michel Foucault, Interview with Paul Rabinow, 1982

How to do the history of sexuality in relation to the history of architecture? How do both histories do and undo each other? Can “power,” “subjectivation,” “gender,” and “sexuality” operate as variables for architectural research and, if this is the case, how shall they be defined?
Michel Foucault’s genealogical undoing of history offers a critical methodology to address some of these questions. Indeed, the work of Michel Foucault has had a strong critical impact within gender and sexual studies as well as within visual and cultural studies since the 1970s. Within the field of history and theory of architecture, the early readings of Foucault, started in the 1970s by the School of Venice, focused on the notions of “hétérotopie” and “panopticism.” More recent readings of Foucault’s, developed by Sven-Olov Wallestein, Meredith TenHoor or James Hay,\(^{38}\) to name just a few, have explored the spatial implications of the “governmentality of life.”\(^{39}\) In spite of this discursive profusion, none of these studies have investigated the relationship between the biopolitics of space and the production of modern sexuality.

In the latest French edition of Michel Foucault’s “Des espaces autres” and “Le corps utopique,” Daniel Défert, historian and life companion of Foucault, reflects on the reception of the notion of “hétérotopie” in contemporary theory. For Défert, the different readings and uses of the notion of “hétérotopie” enable us to trace the “transformations of the aesthetic, epistemological, and political discourses in architecture and urban


The notion of “hétérotopie,” coined by Foucault in 1966, has been extremely prolific for the interpretation of an array of different modern and contemporary architectural projects. From the 1970s, Franco Rella, Manfredo Tafuri, Massimo Cacciari, Georges Teyssot, Anthony Vidler, Robin Evans, Gwendolyn Wright or Josep Quetglas articulated history and theory of architecture around Foucault’s notions of “hétérotopie” and “disciplinary space.” Within these early projects, heterotopia served both to invoke critical gaps within the history of architecture, such as Piranesi’s Carcei or Campo Marzio, or as a political tool to study the relationship between hegemonic spaces and “otherness.” At the same time, the upheaval of the notion of hétérotopie gave rise to a series urban space studies that for the first time escaped the utopian/dystopian Marxist dialectic, such as those on “thirding” by Edward Soja.42

On the other hand, the reception of Foucault within history and theory of architecture has been mostly limited to Foucault’s reading of Jeremy Bentham’s “panopticon” in *Discipline and Punish* (1975). Whereas the notion of *hétérotopie* generated a romantic, non-deterministic and contingent vision of architecture as a site of political disruption, panopticism produced a rather pessimistic understanding of architecture as paradigmatic place of discipline and confinement. Most readers of the early Foucault have often reduced the “panopticon” issue to a history of incarceration architectures and have been more interested on the formal architectural inscription of surveillance techniques that in sketching a larger cartography of relationships between power, subjectivation and architecture.

In order to do an architectural history of sexuality, both notions (“heterotopia” and “panopticism”) must be re-inscribed within the larger critical horizon of a biopolitical research that enables us to understand architecture as part of a series of modern governmental techniques for producing modern subjectivity. What is at stake here is the relationship between the spatialization of power regimes in form of “disciplinary space” and the development of specific “biopolitical techniques of subjectivation.” Only within the critical framework of a biopolitical genealogy can the notions of heterotopia and disciplinary space become vectors for analyzing the relationship between the history of

modern sexuality and the history of modern architecture: the techniques of spatialization of power are understood here as techniques for controlling and reproducing life.

Within this short introduction to a biopolitical methodology for architecture studies, I would like to show first, that the notion of hétérotopie was already a highly sexualized concept most probably derived from Steven Marcus’ “pornotopia;” on a second move, I shall draw Foucault’s conceptual displacement from the 1960s notion of hétérotopie to the analyses of “regimes of spatialization of power” in architecture and sexuality, and more particularly to the study of the development during the late eighteenth century of specific power techniques to produce, and maximize the “life of the population” that Foucault called “biopolitics.”

What is a Pornotopia?

In the conclusion to The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England, one of the first critical books dedicated to the history of pornographic writing, published in 1964, British historian Steven Marcus coined the term “pornotopia” to refer to the utopian production of a “plastic space” implicit in the modern pornographic writing that pushed the imagination “towards independence of time, space, history and even language itself.”

Marcus argued that pornographic writing consisted on a fictional effort to create a topos (whether represented as cabinet, garden, boudoir, luxurious bed, closet with a peephole or brothel) where desire could be fully spatialized. Nevertheless, stressing the utopian dimension of modern pornographic

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43 Steven Marcus, 267.
textual and visual representations, Marcus defined this pornotopia as an “ineffably familiar fantasy inhabiting behind our eyes, within our skulls, but that cannot exist within physical space.” Although it is the most literal of all utopias, pornotopia has, for Marcus, no-place or better no-where, existing only “within the lingua franca of sex.” For Marcus, language itself is the immaterial space of pornotopia. But how to explain this link between pornography and space? Why is space the anchor where desire must be hooked up? And why this space cannot be fully materialized? Is the relationship between sexuality and space tautology or oxymoron? What could happen if a pornotopia would take place outside of language? Or to put it otherwise, could pornotopic language proliferate and be inscribed within space?

Foucault’s concept of “hétérotopie” will come to answer Marcus’ questions. Two years after reading Marcus, and before developing the notion of “biopolitics” Foucault coined the word “hétérotopie” as “a space within language” (and in this respect still close to Marcus non-located pornotopia) to refer to the strange taxonomy of animals invented by Borges for his improvised Chinese encyclopedia in Les Mots et les choses published in 1966:

“Utopias afford consolation: although they have no real locality there is nevertheless a fantastic, untroubled region in which they are able to unfold; they open up cities with vast avenues, superbly planted gardens, countries where life is easy, even

44 Ibid.
45 The conceptual links between Marcus “pornotopia” and Foucault’s “hétérotopie” can be traced in the introductory chapter of the first volume of The History of Sexuality. Foucault read Steven Marcus history of pornographic writing and addressed Marcus directly calling the introductory chapter “Nous autres, victoriens.”
though the road to them is chimerical. Heterotopias are disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language, because they make impossible to name this and that, because they shatter or tangle common names, because they destroy “syntax” in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things (next to and also opposite to one another) to “hold together.” This is why utopias permit fables and discourse: they run with the very grain of language and are part of the fundamental dimension of the fibula; heterotopias (such as those to be found so often in Borges) desiccate speech, stop words in their tracks, contest the very possibility of grammar at its source; they dissolve our myths and sterilize the lyricism of our sentences.”

At this point, Borges’s heterotopias are, according to Foucault, like Marcus pornotopias, spaceless spaces carved within language itself. Heterotopia, rather than a spatial or architectural notion, is still a literary theory concept. A few months later, Foucault reworked his own variation of Marcus’ distinction between utopia and pornotopia - although without quoting Marcus - in a brief radio talk that he gave in Tunise, as part of a series of reflections on “French culture” about the concept of “Utopia and Literature” broadcasted on December 7th, 1966. Tunisia, a French colony until 1956, was itself, as Daniel Défert suggests, a “heterotopic discursive position,” the colony being one of the central examples of hétérotopie given by Foucault in his talk. Speaking in French about resistance within space from Tunisia, Foucault was reflecting on the eccentric spatial condition of Tunisia in relation to France, which could make the notion of hétérotopie

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already a postcolonial term. At the same time, as his biographers have noted, Foucault found in Tunisia a homoerotic utopia: a territorial crystallization of his own private “pornotopia.” This brief radio talk called “Utopie et Hétérotopie” generated an unexpected interest among the Tunisian architects (rather than among literary critics) who asked Foucault for a formal meeting that took place at Sidi Bou Saïd on March 2th, 1967.

Foucault’s hétérotopies could be ostensibly understood as the result of the attempt to spatialize and materialize Marcus’s pornotopia. In this second talk, Foucault uses Bachelard’s account of the “already existing utopias” or “localized utopias” such as the play-spaces created by children within the backyard or at the parent’s bedroom. Hétérotopie, he argued transferring Marcus’ pornotopia from language into physical space, is a real site that functions like a counter-location. It is here that Foucault enunciates the first political definition of hétérotopie as a space of subversion, claiming the possibility of a “hétérotopologie” as a general “science of other spaces”: “ces espaces différentes qui sont la constestation des espaces où nous vivons.” Against the still structuralist analytic framework of Les mots et les choses, the last book Foucault published before the 1966 talk at Tunisia, the notion of hétérotopie seemed to disrupt

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the relationship between space, representation and power. Whereas in the structuralist framework, power should totally determine spatial configurations, according to this new notion of hétérotopie the relationship between power and space is neither continuous, nor causal or determinist but rather opened to constant negotiation, resistance, confrontation, disruption, and even rupture.

Foucault’s hétérotopie which is set against both “u-topia” (no place) and “eu-topia” (good place) refers to an “other place,” “a real place that juxtaposes several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible,”⁵¹ which produces divisions in the traditional forms of spatialization of power and knowledge in a given society. But the notion of heterotopia is also defined in relation to the geographical terms border, limit, margin and edge, outside and horizon. In a sense, the heterotopia relates to the border of the visual field, but also to the limits of the geographical, and the horizon of the literary and political space. Most importantly, Foucault, as well as future readers such as Paul Rabinow and Daniel Défert, insists on the impossibility of a general typology of heterotopias, a taxonomy of architectural forms that would always operate as counter-spaces. Against this structural reading, a space can only be heterotopic in relation to a given historical and political context, subverting the already existing uses and conventions of architecture. Foucault draws a line between “crisis heterotopias,” which cover processes of biological, (later Foucault would rather refer to “biopolitical”) change, such as puberty, the onset of menstruation or old age, and “heterotopias of

deviation,” places “in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the
required mean or norm are placed” among which Foucault includes psychiatric
hospitals and prisons. In this “heterotopology,” which is not so much a science as a
systematic genealogical description of these other-spaces, Foucault mentions the strange
space-time quality of brothels for the first time, as sites that “create a space of illusion
that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned, as
still more illusory,” and which he considers, together with colonies, to be “extreme
types of heterotopia.”

Heterocronia, the rupture of temporal laws, is as important as space dislocation for
Foucault: the possibility of opening of a different space-time relationship, of distorting
the conventional experience of time and space. Examples given by Foucault include the
cementery, the museum or the library, but also the polynesian vacation village at
Djérba in Tunisia and the brothel. As Défert suggests, hetero-crono-topia is either here
but not now, either now but not here, giving space a historical background or introducing
another time within a given spatial framework, establishing unpredicted relationships

53 Ibid., 35.
54 Ibid., 27. He also mentions attempts to abolish the maisons closes, as examples of what
he calls the “second principle of heterotopias” according to which the same heterotopia
can play different functions within different social and historical contexts. Moreover, a
given heterotopia can be dissolved or transformed into another by a given social or
political group.
55 Robert Auzelle, who was part of the Cercle d’études architecturales, had written a
history of funerary architecture that he offered to Foucault in 1976 as a paradigmatic
example of heterotopia. See: Robert Auzelle, Dernières Demeures (Paris: Chez l’Auteur
13 Place du Panthéon, 1965).
56 Daniel Défert, 41.
between diachronic and synchronic orders. In order to explain the brothel as hetero-
crono-topia, Foucault introduces a third element between space and time coordinates: identity, subjectivity, self. For Foucault the brothel is “a space where I become somebody else.”

In terms of architecture, heterotopia, for Foucault, alters the usual relationships between form, function, power, and “subjectivation.” It can, for example, project a three-dimensional space onto a two-dimensional one, as in cinema, or juxtapose a place where one is and at the same time is not, like a mirror or a cemetery. This alteration of program is at work at provisional places, like honeymoons; or cumulative space-times that superimpose and contain other temporalities and other spaces, like libraries and museums; or localized economic utopias like colonies were to sixteenth century Europe. Breaking with traditional space, heterotopias are what Giorgio Agamben shall later call “spaces of exception,” areas for circulation or rest, places in which the normal laws that govern elsewhere are suspended, localized utopias or distopias that have found a provisional place or a port of exception.

The 14th of March of 1967, Foucault gave a third talk reworking the Tunisian conference at the Parisian Cercle d’études architecturales called “Des espaces autres” ("Of Other Spaces"). The Cercle was at that time directed by Jean Dubnisson, architect of the Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires de Boulogne and the architect Ionel Schein who

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57 Quoted by Daniel Défert, 41.
was considered a member of the “radical movement.” But the majority of the group, following the so called “linguistic turn” in architecture had embarked in a Marxist semiotic reading of Le Corbusier and the Bauhaus via Tafuri, understanding the city as a rational text where the building appears as a “code” within a readable space.

The written version of the text remained itself for long time heterotopic since Foucault did not consider it polished enough for publication. The circulation of the text written for the lecture was restricted at the time and only few members of the Cercle kept unauthorized notes. Few excerpts of the text were published with the title “Des espaces autres” in French at the Italian journal *L’Archittetura, cronache e storia* – edited by Bruno Zevi - in 1968, which might explain the early Italian reception of this notion via Manfredo Tafuri and the Venice School. Nevertheless, as Daniel Défert has noticed, the literary concept based on Borges’s taxonomy eclipsed the political complexity of heterotopia as space of contestation and resistance to power.

A new version of the text, but still different from the final one that could be later found at *Dits et Écrits*, would not be published until 1984 as part of the exhibition “Idée, Processus, Résultats,” curated by German architect Johannes Gachnang and by the Italian architectural historian Marco Michelis and organized at the Marin Gropius Bau

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59 Daniel Défert, 43.
60 Mario Gandensolas and Diana Agrest were the first architectural theorists to develop in English a reading of French and Italian “semiotics of architecture.” See Mario Gandelsonas, “Linguistics in Architecture,” *Casabella*, 74, February 1973.
62 Daniel Défert, 55.
by the International Bauausstellung (IBA) about what was at that time a still utopian reunification of Berlin. The Tunise/France colonial gap translated in terms of heterotopia took here a different twist. For the curators of the International Bauausstellung (IBA) exhibit, Johannes Gachnang and Marco Michelis, the notion of hétérotopie, based on a discontinuous and fragmented idea of space and stressing the relationship between architecture and power, seemed ideal to think about Berlin in 1984. Rejecting models of totalized urban topography and the narrative of a unified history of the city, they claimed the possibility of a heterotopic representation of the city able to integrate the space-time ruptures introduced by the Stalinist style architecture, but also to register the trace within space of political surveillance and of resistance, as well as the effects of neoliberal politics in the West.

At the same time, and as Gwendolyn Wright has acutely noticed, a “spatial turn” was taking place within human sciences and political theory during the 1960s. Architecture was the object of a process of critical politization. Foucault defined modernity after the eighteenth century as the period of “space rather than of time” (“peut-être plutôt l’époque de l’espace”). Against the “espace de locatisation” that dominated the Middle Ages, and “l’espace étendue,” the abstract, infinite and opened space, developed by

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Galilee during the Renaissance, modernity is characterized for Foucault by a notion of “espace emplacement”: « L’emplacement est défini par des relations de voisinage entre points ou éléments ; formellement, on peut les décrire comme des séries, des arbres, des treillis. »

This “spatial turn” was at work already within the Marxist thinkers of the time. Right before Foucault started to develop his hétérotopologie, Henri Lefebvre shifted his analyses of capitalism towards a general theory of “spatialization of power” and the “everyday life,” developed for the first time in his trilogy Critique de la vie quotidienne (1946, 1961, 1968). Lefebvre agreed with Foucault, anticipating David Harvey’s analyses, in defining capitalist spatiality as a fragmented and hierarchical geography, which nevertheless tended towards homogenization. In La survie du capitalisme (1973) and La production de l’espace (1974) Lefebvre associated the survival of capitalism with the production of “mystified spaces” where ideology is materialized.

In 1976, Foucault took part in an interview for the radical French journal of geography Hérodote. The interview was published in English, following shortly the translation of Discipline and Punish (1975) and the first volume of the History of Sexuality (1976) in the 1980 collection Power/Knowledge as “Questions on Geography.” The same year, Foucault addressed a series of questions to geographers that were once more published in the journal Hérodote: What are the relationships between knowledge, war, and power?

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65 Michel Foucault, Des espaces autres (1984), 17.
66 For a Lefebvre’s reading of Foucault’s notion of heterotopia see: Henri Lefebvre, La Pensée marxiste de la ville (Paris: Casterman, 1972).
What do geographers understand by power? And what would the geographies of medical establishments (implantations) understand as political “interventions”\textsuperscript{68}? Jean-Michel Brabant, Alain Joxe, Jean-Bernard Racine, Michel Riou and Claude Raffestin answered Foucault’s question generating for the first time an outline of possible relationships between space, and technologies of power in geography studies.\textsuperscript{68}

The concept of heterotopia as a heterogeneous space of places and relationships would be of vital importance to the geographers and economists of the following decades when defining not only the global network that characterizes the late capitalist territory, but also the contemporary city itself. Heterotopia came to shake the field of geography that had not been yet affected by the “cultural turn” by the late 1970s. As David Harvey has put it, Foucault enabled geographers to leave the Kantian notion of abstract absolute space, in favor or a notion of space as “social practice,” a function of knowledge, power and subjectivation.\textsuperscript{69} The reading of Foucault gave rise in a sense to “critical geography”\textsuperscript{70} informing the work of Edward Soja and Kevin Hetherington, which shall also have an impact in the theory of architecture.

\textsuperscript{68} This exchange was not translated in English until the 1990s, and the grammar of biopolitics did not fully penetrate either architecture or geography.


Hérodote’s interview as well as the text about the heterotopias and the reflections on “panopticism” developed in *Discipline and Punish* found a receptive audience among the Anglophone geographers only after Foucault’s death in 1984: Félix Driver explored Foucaultian notions of “governmentality” to explain the work of surveillance over disciplinary spaces insisting on the articulation between “technologies of domination” and “technologies of the self.”\(^{71}\) On the other hand, Derek Gregory’s influential book *Geographical Imaginations* drew on the concept of heterotopia to think what he called the “cartographic anxiety” caused by the crisis within hegemonic geographical representations.\(^{72}\) At the same time, Raul Rabinow used the notion of hétérotopie to study colonial formations: avoiding the formal reading, Rabinow understood the creation of the colonial heterotopia as part of the disciplinary techniques for producing and controlling social health and national (racial) reproduction.\(^{73}\)

**From hétérotopie to biopolitics of space**

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\(^{71}\) Félix Driver, “Power, Space and the Body: A Critical Assessment of Foucault’s Discipline and Punish,” *Society and Space*, 3 (1985): 444. Driver’s was the first in-depth study of the relationship between power and discipline in Foucault from the point of view of geography.


During 1975 and 1976, the years of the publication of *Discipline and Punish*, and the first volume of the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault developed a new definition of modern power techniques of production of subjectivity, introducing a reading of space and architecture radically different than the one he had sketched in “*Des espaces autres.*”

At the lecture given at the Collège de France in 1975-1976, while thinking about the larger context of the technological and economic transformations that were going on in Europe during the XVIII century, Foucault used for the first time the notion of *biopolitics* to talk about a new relationship between power, bodies and spaces. Foucault described the transition from what he called a *sovereign society* towards a *disciplinary society*: a new form of power that calculates *life* technologically in terms of population, health and national interest, he noted, displaces a prior form of power that decided and ritualized *death* (*thanatopouvoir*). Foucault called “*biopouvoir*”74 (*biopower*) this new diffuse and productive set of “*dispositifs*” to regulate life. He referred to biopower as

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74 Thomas Lemke and Roberto Esposito have noticed that “Foucault did not invent the notion of biopolitics. It figured already in the first half of the 20th century in texts on the regulation and policing of life and race, most prominently in books and articles by the National-Socialists in Germany. A bit later, at the end of the 1960s, a new field of research was established in Anglo-American political science under the heading of “biopolitics [...]” For instance, in the lecture “The birth of biopolitics,” Foucault refers to 1930s ordo-liberal Alexander Rüstow who described “biopolitics” as: “a politics of life that [...] takes into account the entire situation of life of the worker, his real and concrete situation, from the morning till the evening, from the evening till the morning.” Thomas Lemke, “Biopolitics and beyond. On the reception of a vital Foucauldian notion,” Digital File. For early texts that introduce the notion of “Biopolitics” see Karl Binding, *Zum Werden und Leben der Staaten* (München und Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot 1920); Eberhard Dennert, *Der Staat als lebendiger Organismus* (Halle: Müller Verlag,1922); Eduard Hahn, *Der Staat, ein Lebewesen* (München: Deutscher Volksverlag Boepple, 1926). For theoretical genealogy of the concept of biopolitics see: Roberto Esposito, *Terms of the Political: Community, Immunity, Biopolitics*, trans. Rhiannon Noel Welch (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012).
“governmentality,” meaning the set of techniques by which a population accepts to be governed.

It is within the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* that Foucault develops the implications of the biopolitical techniques for the first time. Biopower, Foucault explains, “s’exerce positivement sur la vie, qui entreprend de la gérer, de la majorer, de la multiplier, d’exercer sur elles des contrôles précis et des régulations d’ensemble.” This power over life, as we shall see later, should not be understood as external force (“subjugation”) imposed upon the social body, but rather as a constitutive power (“subjectivation”) to produce subjects (“assujettissement”) able to resist and subvert the very discipline by which they are constituted. The interpretation of the biopolitical processes of production of subjectivity as the result of the tension between subjugation and subjectivation opened a new field for the study of the emergence of political agency, resisting minorities and forms of subversion within disciplinary regimes.

For Foucault, governmentality spilled beyond the boundaries of the legal realm, the punitive sphere, becoming a force of "somato-power" that penetrated and constituted the body of the modern individual. Biopower is for Foucault “the art of governing free bodies” as opposed to coercive pre-modern techniques of government including torture.

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76 This relationship between subjugation and subject production, knotted together in the Foucaultian notion of “assujettissement,” has been central, for instance, to the emergence of queer theory and the study of contemporary forms of subversion of gender and sexual identities. See: Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power. Theories on Subjection* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997).
and death. This modern power took the more versatile and amiable form of an “art of governing life,” an overall political technology that metamorphosed into scientific texts, statistical tables, demographic calculations, instructions for use, guidelines, schedules to regulate life and public health projects and that according to Foucault best materialized into what he called “disciplinary architectures”: institutional sex-segregated devices such as the prison, the barrack, the school, the factory, the hospital, but also the domestic regime and the brothel.

If we go back to Foucault’s *History of Sexuality* and to *The Birth of Biopolitics*, we find sexuality and architecture as central intertwined techniques of modern biopower. For Foucault the techniques of power upon life work in two different scales, producing different historical figures. On the small scale, biopower acts in the form of a political anatomy, operating upon the body as social machine. At this level, the body is educated and corrected, it is integrated within systems of control, economic performance and productivity, and domesticated by a series of disciplines. On a larger scale, biopolitics of population does not longer act upon the individual body but on relation to the control and maximization of the life of the species. The aim of biopolitics of populations is to increase health, to improve the quality of life, but also to control the purity of blood, preventing contamination and degeneration of the species. It is here that the notions of

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“sexual difference,” “racial purity,” “homosexuality and heterosexuality” operate as factors of a larger liberal and colonial enterprise to improve the life of the population. The biopolitical administration of life during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries takes into account for the first time the body as an element within a numeric multiplicity within the modern city: anthropometrics and public hygiene could be thought as the extension of biopower techniques from the anatomopolitical scale of the body to the territory of the city. The aim of biopolitics is the control of epidemics, the management of natality, the canalization and distribution of water, the elimination of waste, the cleaning of the streets, the separation of the normal and the pathological, the management of food, the extinction of hereditary sickness...Modern subjectivities (sexual identities, normal and disabled subject…) will be the techno-somatic effects of these practices of knowledge and power.

The panopticon works for Foucault as an architectural diagram of biopower techniques. Prefigured by the hospital plans by Bernard Poyet and C.P. Coquéau and by Louis Le Vau’s project for a menagerie at Versaille, the panopticon first emerged as a model of industrial (not yet prison) architecture, invented in 1786 by the naval engineer Samuel Bentham, brother of the philosopher Jeremy Bentham, in response to a commission from the Russian prince Grigori Potemkin.
Based on the taxonomical radial design for the animal “menagerie,” the panopticon was an industrial “inspection house” designed to maximize surveillance, control, education, and production of workers in a utopian human menagerie and village-factory. Bentham's architectural structure was built upon two concentric rings, with a surveillance tower placed in the center and a series of cells radiating out from it. Each of these cells had two windows, an external one to let in light, and an internal one facing the surveillance tower. The occupants of the cells were isolated from each other by walls, and subject to the collective and individual (audiovisual) scrutiny of a guard in the tower, which, as Foucault speculates, could have been empty or occupied by the abstract eye of God, which would remain hidden.
This original design became the formal scheme for internment and disciplinary centers built in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as Rahway Prison in New Jersey, United States, national prisons in Dublin, Bogotá and Cuba’s Isle of Pines, and the Mataro prison in Spain, designed by Elies Rogent, among others, as well as for numerous hospitals, menageries and institutional and industrial buildings, such as Les Halles market in Paris.\textsuperscript{79} To Foucault, the Panopticon isn’t just a functional device. It’s the \textit{material model} of disciplinary knowledge-power as a form of “social orthopedics.”\textsuperscript{80} Power and its specific modes of knowledge and surveillance materialized in the form of physical architecture (whether it is a prison, school, hospital, barracks, factory or market) that automates movement, controls the gaze, programs action and ritualizes everyday practices. Likewise, for Foucault “sexuality” is just one of the “devices” (dispositifs) of biopower working along four major axes: the hysterization of the feminine body, the sexual pedagogy of children, the regulation of procreative conduct, and the psychiatrization of the pervert’s pleasures. Foucault called these processes of disciplinary and panoptic control of the body and its pleasures, not without irony, “modernization of sexuality.” Modern sexuality is the result of a set of “political technologies that come to invade the body, health, the ways of eating and inhabiting, living conditions, as well as spaces of existence.”\textsuperscript{81} These political technologies are not ideological entities but precise architectures, complex techniques of regulation of bodies and spaces.

\textsuperscript{79} See the above mentioned article by Meredith TenHoor.
\textsuperscript{81} Michel Foucault, \textit{Histoire de la sexualité, I. La Volonté de savoir}, 189.
In all such cases, disciplinary power is, according to Foucault “exercised through its invisibility…and the examination is the technique by which power, instead of emitting the signs of its potency, instead of imposing its mark on its subjects, holds them in a mechanism of objectification.” The purpose of these forms of architecture is not simply to provide habitat or represent the individual – instead, like true performative devices, they tend to produce the subject they claim to shelter. The convict, the student, the patient, the soldier, the worker or the consumer are the political precipitate of these technologies of subjectivation.

Fig. 2. Bernard Poyet’s project for the Hôtel-Dieu on the île des Cygnes, Paris, 1787. Committee of the Académie des Sciences. Plan, elevation and section using radial layout. BNF.

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82 Michel Foucault, Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison, 187.
Unlike the notions of “espace autre” and hétérotopie that were influenced by the history of sciences (Koyré, Bachelard), literary theory (J.P. Richard, Maurice Blanchot and Steven Marcus), and the existential psychology of Binswanger, the notion of “disciplinary space” and Foucault’s reading of the “panopticon” have as a main reference the material work of historians of L’École des Annales (specially Marc Bloch and Fernand Braudel who have written a history of the rural and urban spaces, and Phillpe Ariés who developed a history of ordinary life), but also his debates with the geographic journal Hérodote.\textsuperscript{83}

Foucault’s work on “disciplinary architectures,” although primarily centered on the birth of the later eighteenth century prison, is also his own genealogical answer to the crisis of the spaces of social confinement in France during the 1950s and 1960s, highly criticized by the radical left groups, and that will find political expression within the 1968 movement. In February 1971, Foucault, Jean-Marie Domenach, director of the journal Esprit, and historian Vidal-Naquet created the GIP (Group of Prison Information). The aim of the GIP was to open points of flight within the French penitentiary system, establishing communication links between the “outside” and the “inside” in order to disclose the regime of power and subjectivation hidden behind the prison’s walls. One of the first actions of the GIP was to carry out a public survey amongst the inmates of different French prisons: the idea was enabling the prisoners to produce knowledge and

discourse about the prison and about its specific techniques of subject production, piercing this way “the walls of power.”

The GIP found an academic and political support on the CERFI, a research group created in 1965 in Paris around the University of Vincennes (today Université Paris 8), that gathered Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, Michel Foucault, or Anne Querrien, as well as intellectuals and activists associated with the left and that will become one of the main centers of reflection on the relationship between architecture and biopower during the 1960s and 1970s. The CERFI organized a series of research projects dedicated to the new strategies of producing collective knowledge and political practices generated by the May 68 revolts. Rejecting traditional academic style, the “history of collective equipment” aimed at producing “new practices of collective enunciation.” Gathering around the journal Recherches and operating within the fields of psychiatry, artistic production or urban and architectural history, the GIP targeted the study of what following Deleuze’s and Guattari’s terminology they called “Équipements collectifs” (“public facilities.”) The CERFI was formed by academics coming from philosophy, history, urbanism and psychology who, being before related to the radical left and the PCF (French Comunist Party), had started to develop a critique both of Marxism and of Freudian psychoanalytic theories of power and subjectivation. Against Freud, they understood power as productive rather than repressive force. Against Marx, they rejected the notions of ideology and superstructure in favor of an analysis of the micropolitical relationships between power, knowledge and subject formation. Moving beyond,
Deleuze and Guattari displaced both Marx and Freud arguing for a radical questioning of capitalism as a libidinal economy connecting desiring machines.\(^84\)

The result of the first project of the CERFI around “public facilities,” which operated partly as an extension to the whole social field of the work that Félix Guattari was doing at the psychiatric clinic at La Borde, was *Généalogies du capital I: Les Équipements de pouvoir* (1971).\(^85\) It was a highly anti-disciplinary project that tried to draw a general cartography of technologies of power within capitalism. Architecture and urbanism became here the center of genealogical criticism. In 1972, Foucault started working with architect Bruno Fortier, from the *Centre d’études et de recherches en architecture* in Paris (CERA) that was joined soon by Barret-Kriegel, Thalamty and Béguin. As a result of this “spatial turn,” Foucault’s 1973-1974 Seminar at the Collège de France focused on the emergence of the eighteenth century physician as expert not only in psychiatry and legal medicine, but also as an urban engineer and architect who shapes the rules and spatial distribution of the modern hospital.\(^86\)

The second project of the CERFI moved further within architectural history focusing on the birth of J.R. Tenon’s modern hospital in France and gave rise to the publication *Les

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The modern hospital is redefined here as “biopolitical technique” and “équipement collectif” using J.R. Tenon’s expression “machine à guérir”\(^{88}\) (machine to cure). The architecture of the hospital (the art to distribute spaces in order to stop contamination, to make air circulate, make differences between different kinds of sickness and of sick bodies, to watch and visually control the sick population…) is for Foucault the spatialization of medical knowledge and power.

“As Bruno Fortier argues, normative architectural typologies derive from the definition of a hospital as a rational machine to produce climatic, demographic, hygienic, medical and statistical knowledge.

Foucault’s critical aim, as Daniel Défert has pointed out, was not to do a history of the hospital, but rather to trace a general cartography of new biopolitical techniques amongst which he included for the first time the “architecture of the panopticon” looking at Poyet’s\(^{90}\) and Bentham designs for prison-factories.\(^{91}\) Tenon’s hospital and Poyet’s,

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\(^{87}\) *Machines à guérir. Aux origines de l’hôpital moderne* in 1977.


\(^{89}\) *Les Machines à guérir. Aux origines de l’hôpital moderne*, 58.


Coqueau’s and Bentham’s panopticon (contemporary not only with the modern prison model but also to Ledoux’s revolutionary projects, but also, as I shall show in this dissertation, with Restif de la Bretonne’s plea for the “state brothel,” and with Sade’s writing) function at the same time as political utopia of national health and public reproduction and as confinement dystopic institutions for normalization of bodies and sexualities. Finally, a question (that as we shall see will extend to the architecture of the brothel) remains without answer: must the modern hospital and factory (and we shall add brothel) be considered as a “heterotopia” or a “disciplinary architecture”?

At the same time, Foucault directed a second project, coordinated by historian of French colonial architecture François Béguin\(^92\) to do the history of housing in France between 1800 and 1850 and gave rise to the publication *Politiques de l’habitat 1800-1850*.\(^93\)

There is a common methodology to *Politiques de l’habitat, Les Machines à guérir* and the *History of Sexuality*: they all refuse the framework of traditional history of architecture and sexuality, starting instead with a genealogy of the discursive and visual practices that have transformed architecture and sexuality into techniques of administrative and political government defining the life of bodies according to age, sex, race, health or disability. Foucault’s method - outlined in *Naissance de la biopolitique* and displayed in the CERFI urban research projects- is neither empiricist nor historicist. He is not interested in starting from universal categories such as the truth, state, power,

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or subject. Rather, his method is to start from the premise that such universals do not exist – as he presumed with his earlier work on madness and sexuality – and then “to consider what forms of critical self-reflection and practical action begin to form such concepts and bring them into play.”"94 Foucault’s method demands to “start with concrete practices,” and “to pass the universals through the grids of these practices.”95 For Foucault, architecture and sexuality should be investigated as entangled biopolitical practices aimed at the production of “the body of the nation,” and therefore endlessly subjected to processes of political enforcement and cultural contestation.

François Béguin describes this way the rejection of “tectonic” history and the defense of a “deconstructive” and genealogical method: “Il faut d’abord se défaire de la prégnance de la maison, la déminéraliser, la déconstruire.”96 Whereas in Les Machines à guérir architecture is studied in its biopolitical relationship to the invention of modern sickness, in Politiques de l’habitat, domestic architecture as “équipement collectif” is understood in relation to the birth of modern bodies and architectural practices such as the treatment of water, air, food, heat, electricity, as well as the political management of private and public spaces. In this project, new questions for architectural theory as well as for gender and sexuality studies were put forward: “how do people live, how is their domicile structured, what is their hygienic and medical status, how do they mate, under what

96 Quoted by Daniel Défert, 51.
conditions does the family become happy and when does it turn into a source of diseases? Amassing knowledge also requires a different form of governing, or “governmentality” that deals with the sexed and desiring individual both in its singularity and as part of a biological collective with a reproductive force.”

The evening of the 25th of June 1984, Michel Foucault died at the pavilion of neurological sickness at Hospital Salpêtrière in Paris. Foucault’s body, the same that had sharply examined the disciplinary function of medical and architectonic discourses and techniques, lied dead in one of the rooms of the Salpêtrière, the very building where modern psychiatry as a technique of production of subjectivity emerged and where the visual and technical management of hysteria was invented by Charcot. His death provoked by brain dysfunctions related to AIDS, but which actual causes where veiled under the name “rare brain infection,” not only left the project of a general history of sexuality incomplete, but also put in jeopardy the collective research on architecture as “équipement collectif” started by the CERFI. At the same time, Foucault’s translation into English generated a process of reappropriation within American feminist and queer studies - starting with the works of Gayle Rubin, Judith Butler, Donna Haraway, or Teresa de Lauretis - that shall transform the landscape of critical theory.

Foucault’s genealogical undoing of traditional historiography of architecture and sexuality appears as the epistemological effect of the political changes of the 1960s (the anti-colonial, black, feminist and gay, lesbian and transsexual liberation movements) as

well as the response to the postmodern and neo-liberal configuration of the urban space. For Daniel Défert, these writings constitute a new biopolitical methodology both for the history of architecture and urbanism and for the history of sexuality radically different not only from the Marxist and psychoanalytic accounts but also from structuralist and semiotic readings. The following chapters, exploring the relationship between architecture and sexuality as biopolitical techniques, are inscribed within this critical and activist framework.

98 Daniel Défert, 48. Nevertheless, both studies, published in French at Recherches, as well as in leftist political anthologies, remained mostly unnoticed for architects both in France and the English speaking countries.
PART 1

THE ARCHITECTURE OF PORNOGRAPHY

BIOPOLITICS, SEXUALITY AND SPACE DURING THE DISCIPLINARY REGIME
SECRET MUSEUM

The “Gabinetto Segreto,” sexualization of space,
and the invention of pornography as architectural category in modernity

« Le musée est mauvais, car il ne fait pas tout connaître.
Il trompe, il dissimule, il illusionne. C’est un menteur.»

Le Corbusier, *L’Art Décoratif d’Aujourd’hui* (1925)\(^{99}\)

How to define pornography? How does pornography relates to architecture and the sexual politics of space? Following Michel Foucault’s understanding of the production of sexuality and the political government of bodies within modernity, Walter Kendrick published in 1987 what can be considered today as the first cultural history of modern spaces of pornography: *The Secret Museum. Pornography in Modern Culture*.\(^{100}\)

Defying the current definition according to which pornography is “written, graphic or other forms of communication intended to excite lascivious feelings,” but also letting aside the feminist debate on anti-pornography that focused on the so-called “sex wars”\(^{101}\)

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social and academic debate during the 1980s in the United States, Kendrick developed an etymological and genealogical study of the notion of pornography coming to an unexpected conclusion that has, nevertheless, remained unexamined by architectural historians. Kendrick argued in The Secret Museum that the notion of pornography emerged in modern European vernacular languages between 1755 and 1857 as part of a museum rhetoric, arising directly out of the controversy caused by the discovery of the Ancient Roman ruins and a series of images, frescoes, mosaics and sculptures depicting bodily practices, with the consequent debate as to whether these could be displayed publicly. Etymologically speaking, the first use of the modern notion of pornography was provoked by Pompeii’s archeological discoveries and the techniques of spatial and visual concealment deployed to remove some of the images, walls and objects considered as “sexually arousing” and “obscene” for public view; the word “pornography” itself was inscribed within language for the first time as an archeological and museological category by the German art historian C.O. Müller around 1850.

Investigating the origins of the modern museum, Kendrick provides a chronology of pornography as an architectural, visual, cultural, and political category. According to this genealogy, the history of pornography starts with the act of digging and unearthing. Pornography finds its place in modernity between mud and open air, between oblivion and memory, between desire and fear to see, between seclusion and exhibition, but also between gift and trade. Kendrick describes the context in which the first findings took place in the south of Naples around 1710:

“An Italian peasant was digging a well in Resina, a small town south of Naples. He
unearthed a mass of marble and alabaster, including fragments of *gallo antico*, the yellow marble prized by ancient Roman architects. Antiquarianism was not yet the rage it would later become, but Giovanni Battista Nocerino was well aware that this was not ordinary mud. Rich foreigners often paid high prices for gallo antico and alabaster; Nocerino sold his fragments to a local dealer who specialized in this taste. [...] Other impressive objects were unearthed, and it was determined that Nocerino’s well had plunged directly into the amphitheatre of Herculaneum, one of the three ancient cities buried by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 A. D. For a while, discoveries came so thick and fast that a museum was set up to house them—the *Museo Borbonico*, named for the current ruling family of that unstable area. Again, however, the well ran dry. By 1745, Herculaneum having apparently failed, the excavators turned their attention a few miles to the southeast, where under a hill provocatively named *Civită* (“City,”) Pompeii had to lie waiting.”

As Agnes Heller argues: “Modern men are diggers. They sense to have achieved depth in themselves, so they start digging. The past history sunk deep in them, thus they keep digging...Men as archeologist; a hopeful archeologist or a hopeless archeologist. Imaginary institutions do change. Digging can be stopped; instead, one can start to exhibit.” And it would be precisely the relationship between digging and exhibiting, hiding and display (a relationship later staged by the opposition between unconscious versus conscious) that will become problematic in the eighteen century.

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Archaeological digs beneath Mount Vesuvius revealed pictures and sculptures of intertwined naked animal and human bodies and oversized penises. Contrary to the initial impression, these images were not restricted to brothels and nuptial chambers, but were found throughout the space of the ancient city. Although Pompeii was buried three centuries before Roman Empire “declined,” the objects, wall painting, sculptures and building decorations discovered were considered by the eighteenth century observers as signs of what Edward Gibbon called in his influential Decline and Fall of the Roman
Empire (1776-88) the “moral laxity of our ancestors,” creating a controversial relationship to the past and providing the bases of the modern narrative of history as moral progress where the representation of sexuality within the public space was understood as a symptom of cultural decadence. A phantom coming back from the past, more than simply another archeological site, Pompeii was considered as part of a series of fallen cities that, consumed in their own splendor, had resurfaced during the eighteenth century to reveal a moral lesson.

Atlantis, a legend coming from Plato’s Timaeus and Critias, was figured within the epic poem by William G. Simms (1832), by Peter Prospero’s novel (1838) and later by Jules Verne’s chapter on “The Lost Continent” (1870) as a Greek city encased in a gigantic glass dome, a submarine crystal self-contained civilization whose sinking into the Ocean and total disappearance served for centuries as an emblem of supernatural punishment. But whereas Atlantis had only resurfaced in fiction, Pompeii - as later the pre-Columbian empires of South and Central America, Troy or the Minoan culture in Crete - was found intact under lava strata. The diggings of Pompeii brought to light a figure of apocalypse as it happens, a vision of total destruction, a spectacle of annihilation that shall become paradigmatic of all future representations of world demolition, from natural catastrophes to nuclear dawn. Watching Pompeii’s ruins was like peeping into a grave.

106 John Lloyd Stephens first discovered the ruins of Maya civilization in the 1840s, Heinrich Schliemann excavated Troy between 1870 and 1890, and Arthur Evans found the Minoan civilization of Crete in 1900.
and seeing death. Pompeii was constructed within a narrative that established a causal relationship between pleasure and death, between the public representation of sexuality and the destruction of the city. If the fall of Atlantis, according to the myth, was due to corruption, avarice and sin, the findings of Pompeii gave a sexual meaning to the reasons of the punishment.

Fig. 5. In *L’Art Décoratif d’Aujourd’hui* (1925), Le Corbusier includes Pompeii’s museum among the icons of modernity: for Le Corbusier Pompeii’s museum « is the one museum that deserves that name. »

**LE MUSÉE MENTEUR**

In the eighteenth century, the remains and objects of Pompeii were shown openly to Grand Tour visitors in the Museum Herculanense in Portici during a few years. But the gradual unearthing of the Vesubian cities generated an epistemological and political rupture within the modern way of understanding and mapping the eighteenth century city
and the emerging public space. For the early modern observer nothing was more bizarre and depraved than the random arrangement of representations of sexuality within the city of Pompeii. The early cataloguers of Pompeii, such as Pierre S. Maréchal, Charles Bonucci or Ernest Breton, placing the new findings within the eighteenth and early nineteenth century moral and political framework, understood that any representation of sexuality (painting, sculpture or architecture) must have been displayed within a space devoted to obscene activities such as Roman brothels (lupanaria) and nuptial chambers. None of the commentators of the time were able to deal with the fact that the Priapic sculptures, the phalluses, the nudes or the frescoes depicting sexual intercourse were scattered around gardens, located on street corners or adorned the entrance of private homes. The ruins and collected objects, almost as the Freudian

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108 Most Pompeii’s lupanari consisted in a single room over a winery were payed sex was practiced. The most famous Pompeii lupanar was: The Lupanar (VII, 12, 18-20) is located approximately two blocks east of the forum at the intersection of Vico del Lupanare and Vico del Balcone Pensile.


110 John R. Clarke has charted the original locations of most for the paintings and sculptures that ended up in the Secret Cabinet in Naples. According to him, most of the frescoes do not come from Roman brothels but from wealthy Roman houses that had at the time a picture-gallery. One of the best well studied frescoes comes from the house of a businessman called Caecilius Iucundus. The fresco was found by the excavator Antonio Sogliano en 1875, cut from the wall and packed off to the Secret Cabinet. See: Clarke, *Roman Sex*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams Publishers, 2003), 35.
return of the repressed, revealed another model for the knowledge and organization of bodies and pleasures in the pre-modern city and brutally extruded a visual topology of sexuality that was radically different from that which was starting to shape European public and private spaces in the eighteenth century. Pompeii called for a whole new taxonomy that would distinguish between objects that were accessible to view and those which could only be seen under state supervision. The public authorities (the government of Bourbon King Charles III of Two Sicilies) decided to confine certain images, sculptures and objects to a “secret collection,” a “looked room” number XVIII created in 1795, first sheltered at the Summer Palace of the Bourbon King in Portici and latter moved by the heir to Neapolitican throne, Francesco I, into what shall soon be known as the “Gabinetto Segreto,” the Secret Museum:

“From very early in the excavations, objects were being unearthed that presented a special problem to the authorities. Already in 1758, for example, rumors circulated that ‘lascivious’ frescoes had been found; not longer thereafter, a particularly outrageous artifact turned up- a small marble statue, highly naturalistic in style, representing a satyr in sexual congress with an apparently undaunted goat. This distressing artwork, under special orders from King Charles, was entrusted to the royal sculptor, Joseph Canart, with the ‘strict injunction that no one should be allowed to see it’.”

Contemporary historians agree on the fact that such images and sculptures within Roman culture had a mystical and religious function, which went from house protection to fertility or long life.

111 Freud himself considered Pompeii as a material metaphor of the unconscious.
112 Walter Kendrick, 6.
Fig 6. Drawings from the Secret Museum of Naples, César Famin, (1799-1853). The drawings were taken to Paris in 1836 and held at the «Réserve de livres rares» of the French National Library, BNF, at the Enfer, with number 902, where they can still be found today.

Paradigmatic of the troubling of species, sexual bodies, and sexualities of Roman ruins, the marble statue of Pan penetrating a female goat was probably the best example of this visual concealment and display taking place at the Secret Museum: found in the excavations of the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum in 1752, it was closed up in the royal palace at Portici by King Charles with orders to show it to no one without special permission. As historian John R. Clarke recalls, “the door to this room was sealed with a wall of mortar and bricks. Sealed by the Minister of Morality.”113 Not even the most

At the heart of this spatial repression and distribution was a new definition of sexual difference and normal sexuality in relationship to domestic and public spaces. Every image and every body troubling the hegemonic binary gender representation, as well as the difference between species and sexualities was confined into a locked room, a short of exterior inside, where they could be at the same time totally under surveillance and invisible. The undecidable hybrid figures of the hermaphrodite body and the faun, as well as the isolated figures of erected penises within public space where thought as “diseases” of the public space. As Michael Chapman argues, around 1740, less than fifty years before the construction of the Secret Museum: “When French archaeologists had begun digging up the previously unknown statues of hermaphrodites and other hybrids (as well as their Roman copies) in the colonies of Turkey they, trapped by a considerable moral dilemma, decided to keep them in a locked cupboard in the recesses of the Palace in order to contain them from public eyes while they decided whether or not they should be exhibited. (…). Winckelmann, the Enlightenment scholar and connoisseur of ancient sculpture (as well as overt homosexual), re-counted at the time that he was curious as to the contents of the forbidden cupboard but too afraid to ask for the key.”

114 Ibid., 26.

logic, the sculpture of Pan penetrating a female goat, the very materialization of the obscene for the modern pornographic regime, was an exemplary case of threat to the modern normal order of sexes (female/male), species (animal/human) and spaces (domestic/public).

The Secret Museum can be understood as part of the larger process of the modern transformation from a society regulated by sovereign power to a disciplinary biopolitical regime that took place during the eighteenth century and that Foucault started to describe in *Discipline and Punish*. As well as the body of the criminal went from being the object of a theatrical ritual of public punishment to be included within a set of disciplinary institutions (such as prisons, barracks, and hospitals) where, once located within a segmented and fixed space, could the object of visual inspection and moral normalisation, likewise, within modernity, the obscene image is neither vandalized nor totally destructed, but carefully enclosed within a disciplinary segmented space (the museum and its secret cabinets) where it can be the object at the same time of visual concealment and maximum scrutiny, introducing hierarchy and surveillance, but also distributing according to space shame and pleasure, subjection and power, social status and gender. The modern age discovered space as object and target of governmentality. If Michel Foucault characterized modern *biopower* as a power that transforms the living body into an object of control and surveillance, we shall argue, analyzing the invention of Secret Museum, but also, as we will later see, the birth of the boudoir, the private cabinet and the modern brothel, that biopower does not act upon the body without

becoming topopower: an intensified and ramified set of political, cultural, and economic forces that acts by spatial carving, and division, creating multiple separations and distributions, but also by allocating light and dark, by cladding and unveiling, inventing new techniques for observation, surveillance, and control of spaces. It is through spatial distribution and through the creation of what Peter Sloterdijk has called following Foucault “biopolitical islands” or “insulations,” architectural devices for producing immanency, that modern biopower acts. The Secret Museum is one of these modern spatial techniques regulating the relationship between space, pleasure, and power.

Pornography emerges from the differential and disciplinary sexualization of spaces that for the first time makes a distinction between what can be seen and what must be concealed in terms of regulation of the life of the population. If sculptures were enclosed in secret rooms, the frescoes were covered with plaster or were protected by a pierced wall: the mechanical hole that could be opened introducing a coin enabled visual access to the frescoes to the happy few. Thus the Secret Museum invented two of the main visual and spatial techniques of modern pornography: the dark room and the peep-show. Pornography is the effect of constructing and investing public and private spaces as topopolitical objects of disciplinary government of sexuality.

118 Until the 1970s, the authorities outfitted the rooms with frescoes depicting sexual scenes or with naked statues representing Priapus. For instance, in the House of Vetti in Pompeii known for its frescoes every room was outfitted with a steel door and until the 1970s the authorities allowed only men to see the paintings and sculptures. Some frescoes covered with plaster and only rediscovered during the twentieth century due to rainfall.
Fig 7, 8, 9: Antoine Watteau, *L’Enseigne de Gersaint*, 1720; The most famous sculpture of the Secret Museum: Pan and the She-Goat. Found in the excavations at Herculaneum in 1752. It was the sexual transgression of the animal/human divide that rendered the sculpture “invisible”; Pornographic parody of the museum and the amusement park, probably inspired by Antoine Watteau’s famous *L’Enseigne de Gersaint*, 1720, but also by the Secret Museum: *Passe-temps, « Musée des paillards »* London and Paris, 1840. Color Litography, Victor Adam (1801-1866) Estampes, Réserve, Ae 20, f. 45-47, BNF.
THE LOOKED ROOM

The rhetoric of trespassing the wall, piercing a hole, seeing the forgiven, peeping into the concealed, and exhibiting the un-representable which structured the *Gabinetto Segreto* extended from the space of the museum into Pompeii’s travel books, guides and museum catalogs, constituting the *undecidable* logic of pornography from its very beginning. In the treatise *Musée Secret* by M. L. Barré (1875-77), although the objects and images were represented, genitals were removed and bodies separated, thus reintroducing the very representation wall that the book intended to tear down. The inherent paradoxical status of the pornographic representation that gave rise to the practice of veiling the objects and plastering the walls took also to blurring the image within the books and catalogs dedicated to the *Museo Borbonico* already at the nineteenth century – being “fogs” and “clouds” ancestors of the contemporary practice of “pixeling” which characterizes the representation of pornographic images within contemporary digital culture.

Fig. 10. Drawing by César Famin (1827) of a roman fresco from the *Osteria della Via di*
Mercurio (VI 10,1.19, room b) in Pompeii. Reproduction in M. L. Barre: Musée secret. Vol.8 of Herculaneum et Pompei (Paris 1877). The erect penis of the original has been removed.

The modern notion of pornography is linked to the rise of the public museums, archives and libraries in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and to their specific techniques of spatial organization of display in relationship to modern notions of “public audience.” Historian Anne Nellis Richter has argued that early modern art museums were created as extensions of masculine cabinets, sometimes even being located within the masculine private residences. Combining both this tradition of “Gentlemen’s Galleries” and “private collections” and the tradition of the “national galleries” such as the The Museo Capitolino or the Museo Pio-Clementino in Rome, the Secret Museum was built in 1819 as a “domestic, masculine and patriotic” space. The interior space of the Secret Museum constructed an intentional gendered distribution of visual display creating its own masculine public, and its deliberate female outside. First, the

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construction of the Secret Museum involved building a wall, creating a closed space; and second, opening up a peephole, regulating sight and touch through several devices of surveillance, supervision and control. The Secret Museum was not simply *that* physical enclosed space or *that* collection of objects, but a larger emerging *topopolitical* regime that regulated the relationship between space, vision and sexuality: it was a whole new regime of spatialization of pleasure and vision, knowledge and affect within the modern city according to gender, class, race and age.

As historian Lynn Hunt has noticed, pornography did not constitute a separate and distinct category of written or visual representation before the late eighteenth century when the “locked room” of the Secret Museum was established and its logic extended to other museums and cabinets around Europe and the United States. “Room XVIII,” designed as a locked cabinet, represented a new architecture of visual pleasure that was to be perpetuated across Europe for almost two centuries. In Naples, when the collection was installed, it contained 202 “abominable monuments of human licentiousness.” By 1822, only twenty requests for visits were made; two years later these increased to three hundred. By 1866 The Museo Borbonico was transformed into the National Museum of Naples, and became a central space of Garibaldi’s Neapolitan cultural policy. The writer Alexandre Dumas became director during this period and, with the help of Giuseppe Fiorelli published the first catalogue of the contents of several “locked closets” that he called “*La Raccolta Pornografica,*” the “pornographic collection.”

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121 See: David Gaimster, "Sex and Sensibility at the British Museum," *History Today* 50, 9 (September 1, 2000).
Salaman, “The possibility of a scientific, neutral approach to this sexualized material which had so recently been locked up, was a liberation in parallel to the larger political one going on in Italy at that time. The once criminal secret associations of nationalist sympathizers from the 1820s to the 1850s, were now forming the basis of a modern secular government. The new taxonomy ‘pornografico’ gives a space to the previously hidden and unsayable. The new structure operates symbolically as the invention of fairness, the potential of justice. The dead language of Greek is used to make a new category which breaks open the sealed space where sexuality and freedom lie perishing, unrepresented. At the same time there are nagging doubts. If these objects had indeed been liberated in this way, why were they still housed together, and why, even after the revolution, was the collection closed to all but the learned or privileged few. Why were women not admitted?”

Fig. 11. Cupboards containing La Raccolta Pornografica, Museo Nazionale, Napoli.

Photo Naomi Salaman, Hermione Wiltshire, April 1999.

After the Guttenberg revolution, and with the advent of the print culture, the rise of literacy and the spread of education during the nineteenth century, new regulations came to restrict the access to space and knowledge, to vision and pleasure. By royal decree, only upper-class men—no women, children or members of the lower orders—were allowed into the demarcated area of the “locked room.” Therefore the Secret Museum operated a political segregation of the gaze based on sexual difference, class and age. The wall of the museum was a material representation of the hierarchy of gender, age, and social class, building political-visual differences through architecture and its regulation of the gaze: “a gentleman with appropriate demeanor (and ready cash for the custodian) would be admitted to the locked chamber where controversial items lurked; (...). Makeshift in origin, this method of segregation worked well enough to be extended to the lupanaria (brothels) that were uncovered from time to time as the digging went on.”

The looked room worked as an archival technology to produce gender, sexuality, age, class, and race differences.

It was in this museum context that the German art historian C. O. Müller first used the word «pornography» in a technical sense, (from the Greek root porno-grafei: painting of prostitutes, writings on the life of prostitutes) around 1850 in his Handbuch der Archäologie der Kunst to refer to the contents of the Gabinetto Segreto. As Kendricks

notes, “The source of Müller coinage was a unique instance in classical Greek of the word pornographoi (‘whore-painters’), tucked away deep in the Deipnosophistai (‘Learned Banquet’) by the second-century compiler Athenaeus.”

The 1857 Oxford English Dictionary and the 1864 edition of Webster's Dictionary, following Müller, defined “pornography” as “licentious and obscene paintings employed to decorate the walls of rooms sacred to bacchanalian orgies, examples of which exist in Pompeii.” Moreover, since the notion of obscenity applied to describe those representations literally meant “what was removed out of sight, outside of public scene,” the term pornography established itself from the beginning as tautological, paradoxically entangled to the definition of the modern museum, and to the political limits between the visible and the invisible, between what was publicly displayed and what was carefully kept out of sight.

For Kendrick, the Secret Museum and the regulation of this space is a founding topos of what pornography would come to signify in the visual, sexual and urban rationality of the modern age in the West. In this rhetoric and in the one to which I shall refer below, pornography emerges as a technique for managing the public space and more particularly for controlling vision, for keeping the potentially excited or excitable body under control in the public space. In other words, the notion of pornography that art

John Leitch (London, 1850), 163-4: “Love incantations, Tischb. iii, 44. We must here by way of appendix refer to the great number of obscene representations (especially the Veneris figure, on pictures, gems, coins, lasciva numismata, Martial viii, 78. to which also mythology gave frequent occasion, see 1 37. R 3. It is remarkable that the Volcentine vases usually represent obscene subjects in the oldest style. On the pornographers of the later times.”

125 Walter Kendrick, 11.
history invents is above all a strategy for tracing the limits of the visible and the public space. The Secret Museum wall co-invented the new categories of «childhood,» «womanhood,» and «lower orders» as those who remain outside and who are not allowed to watch. In contrast, the upper-class white male body emerges as a new politic-visual (we might even say libido-political) hegemonic subject: the body that has access to sexual excitement in public, as opposed to those bodies whose gaze must be protected and whose pleasure must be controlled.

In the United States, the first conviction for the common law crime for obscenity took place in Pennsylvania in 1815 to prohibit the circulation of images and texts among the lower classes. In the United Kingdom, following the example of the “room XVIII,” the famous “cupboard 55” was created around 1865, in the wake of the Obscene Publication Act (1857) in the Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities at the British Museum in London.\textsuperscript{126} It contained the collection of “ancient erotica” given to the museum by George Witt, physician and collector of phallic antiquities, as well as by other private collectors, such as sir William Hamilton, formerly Envoy Extraordinary to the Court of Naples, and Richard Payne Knight.\textsuperscript{127} Inaccessible to women, children and the lower classes, the cupboard 55, made of oak doors, was located at the “deep bowel of the

\textsuperscript{126} Catherine Johns, \textit{Sex or Symbol, Erotic IMages in Greece and Rome} (London: British Museum Publications, 1982).

\textsuperscript{127} Baron d’Hancarville and Richard Payne Knight were among the first to depict the priapic sculptures discovered at Pompeii. Knight published in 1787 \textit{A Discourse on the Worship of Priapus and Its Connection With The Mystic Theology of the Ancients}, defending the anti-clerical idea that Christian symbols, including the cross, were the translation of pagan worship of sexuality. See: Alexandra Ponte, \textit{Le Paysage des origines: le voyage en Sicile (1777) de Richard Payne Knight} (Paris: Editions de l’Imprimeur, 2000).
Museum, beyond the last display cabinet, at the end of a silent corridor.”

Room XVIII and cupboard 55 were the limits of the modern museum as democratic public space. According to Lynn Hunt’s audacious argument: “pornography as a regulatory category was invented in response to the perceived menace of the democratization of culture.” If as Derrida has stressed, there is no political power without control of the archive, and of the techniques of archiving, and therefore “effective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion: the participation in the access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation,” the history of modern democracies is, paradoxically, marked by the restriction of the access to the archive and to the techniques of archiving.

Jacques Derrida’s analyses of the archive as both domicile and legal consignation can help us to understand the paradoxical logic at work at the Secret Museum. In Archive Fever, A Freudian Impression, Derrida comes back to the Greek meaning of the word.

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129 It was not until 1939 that the British Museum partially dispersed the collection of cupboard 55, although the locker itself was not emptied until 1954. The last items to be deposited at the cupboard in 1953 were a group of animal membrane condoms tied at the open end with silk ribbons that were found in an eighteenth century book. See: Byron Rogers, “The Secrets of Cupboard 55,” The Telegraph, June 19, 1999.

130 Lynn Hunt, “Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity,” in Drucilla Cornell ed. Feminist and Pornography, 355-6. Hunt suggests the possibility of extending the notion of pornography backwards to refer to practices of representation and consumption of sexuality of the Renaissance and early modernity, but taking into account that the legal and visual frameworks were not strictly those of modern “pornography.”

“arkhé” as “the residence of the superior magistrate, the archons, those who commanded. The citizens who thus held and signified political power were considered to possess the right to represent the law.”\textsuperscript{132} This was still the case at the Borbonic Museum where the ruins of Pompeii were kept in the private cabinet of the monarchic authorities who were, at the same time, entitled to trace the borders of the legally visual and discursive public space: “It is, in this domiciliation, in this house arrest, that archives take place. The dwelling, this place where they dwell permanently, marks this institutional passage from private to public, which does not always mean from the secret to the nonsecret.”\textsuperscript{133} The Secret Museum works according to this paradoxical logic: it is at the same time an “arch” (a private domicile, a cabinet, a box, a closet, a coffin, a prison, a reservoir\textsuperscript{134}) and a museum (a theater of the world, a public stage). The Secret Museum shares Derrida’s description of the archive as a topo-nomological order, the same archontic dimension of domiciliation, the same patriarchal function, the same power of consignation. The law of the Secret Museum is the “law of the house (oikos), of the house as place, domicile, family, lineage, or institution,”\textsuperscript{135} and therefore its limits are regulated according to the patriarchal laws of gender, class, race, and age. The condition of possibility of the museum is therefore, as Derrida points out, the creation of a space that is at the same time visible and invisible, a place of memory and a topos of oblivion, of recollection and of separation, of inscription and of repression. This impossible topology is the exact location of the Secret Museum as “domestic outside”

\textsuperscript{132} Jacques Derrida, \textit{Archive Fever, A Freudian Impressio}, 2.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 2-3.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., 23.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 7.
and “exterior inside.”\textsuperscript{136}

Derrida notices the etymological link between the words “separating” (secernere), and “secret” (secretus).\textsuperscript{137} In Latin, “secrētum” (adjectival form of pass time of the verb secernere, segrei made of the prefixed se- indicating separation and of the root cernere, from cretus, “making distinctions, deciding, judging, but also knowing”\textsuperscript{138}) is a “separated place,” a place that have been isolated and marked by a physical division. Meanwhile, Derrida doesn’t notice that while architecture shares the Greek root “arkhē” with architecture, the notion of “sex” is derived from the Latin word secernere, separating apart, diving in two: architecture, sexuality and secret being thus closely linked to each other in the practices of dividing, taking apart, but also showing and hiding. Architecture is archival. Sexuality is a secret archive. The archive is a sexual architecture. If for Derrida, “there is no archive without outside,”\textsuperscript{139} the Secret Museum could be the very materialization of this logic of exteriority. With the Secret Museum’s wall, architecture becomes an archival technology able at the same time to separate and to render secret. To put it in Derrida’s terms, “pornography” as what is contained with the Secret Museum’s partitions, could be understood as “le mal d’archive,” “the archive fever,” the death drive at the heart of the principle of visibility, inscription, memory and publicity that seem to define the modern museum.

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 19. \\
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., 3. \\
\textsuperscript{138} Dictionnaire Historique de la Langue Française, Sous la direction d’Alan Rey (Paris: Robert, 2010), 2063. \\
\textsuperscript{139} Jacques Derrida, Archive Fever, A Freudian Impression, 11.
Ob/scene, On/scene: the politics of pornographic display

By the end of the eighteenth century, the Gabinetto Segreto in the Naples Archaeological Museum contained a myriad of different sculptures and everyday objects, and hundreds of pieces of frescoes removed from the walls of ancient Roman houses not only from Pompeii but also from the towns of Herculaneum, Satabia and the villas surrounding Naples. The Secret Museum constituted an outside-montage-place made of the accumulation of previously segmented spaces, a spatial and temporal collage of non-visible spaces within a single set aside space and time. Removing and displacing objects and images from different places and relocating them in a single space defined by a common legal prohibition to be seen without royal authorization, the Museum invented pornography as a place outside urban legal cartography, a contradictory space impossible to see but whose very existence depended on vision, at once invisible and over-exposed. Pornotopia was born. The Secret Museum created a spatial and visual singularity: a publicly regulated private topos located within a public space, its very wall constituting at the same time the limits of common publicity and the entrance to a higher level of visual enjoyment only accessible to certain bodies (male, white, upper class). Over-determined by visual control and erotic investment, modern pornography is invented at and by the museum as an ob-scene space, in Latin literally “off-stage,” or that which should kept “out of public view,” a space outside the public representation, at the same as a visual ghetto and privileged chamber. The locked room is a political architecture that produces the very distinction between privacy and publicity as a gender and sexual divide. Film scholar and porn studies pioneer Linda Williams has coined the term “on/scene” to describe this paradoxical display/concealment operation of modern
pornography: “The gesture by which a culture brings on to its public arena the very organs, acts, bodies, and pleasures that have heretofore been designated ob/scene and kept literally off-scene.” The Secret Museum was a visual and spatial technique to put “on/scene” what had been declared “ob/scene.”

Fig. 12. The Parisian magazine *Le Sourire* described in 1933 a series of “maisons closes” as “Musées Secrets,” BNF, Paris.

But what was emerging with Pompeii’s diggings and being named “pornography” was not only a vestige of the Roman past, but the modern city as spectacle. Whereas the visit to the emerging ruins was not an ordinary experience, descriptions of Pompeii started to proliferate in all kinds of travel books and in a new genre of literature, which appeared at

140 Linda Williams, *Porn Studies*, 3.
the same time as the frescoes where unearthed, the tourist illustrated guide of places. In the popular novel and travel guide *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834), Edward Bulwer-Lytton explained: “Pompeii was the miniature of the civilization of that age. Within the narrow compass of its walls was contained, as it were, a specimen of every gift which luxury offered to power. In its minute but glittering shops, its tiny palaces, its baths, its forum, its theatre, its circus, - in the energy yet corruption, in the refinement yet the vice, of its people, you beheld a model of the whole empire. It was a toy, a plaything, a showbox, in which the gods seemed pleased to keep the representation of the great monarchy of earth, and which they afterwards hid from time the wonder of posterity.”

At the beginning of the twentieth century, a reconstruction of the last hours of Pompeii, bringing dystopia and sexual utopia, the freak show and the natural catastrophe show together in a single place, will become one of the main attractions of *Dreamland* at Coney Island. Located next to Lilliputia or “Midget City” (a miniature city constructed for 300 hundred “midgets,” including parliament and theater), was the “Fall of Pompeii,” one of the most expensive attractions of Dreamland. “A fresco by Charles S. Shean, set behind the columns, depicted the Bay of Naples and its surrounding towns and cities at the base of a dormant volcano. Visitors seated inside a classical Greek temple watched E.C. Boyce's cyclorama show, a staged eruption of Mt. Vesuvius and its destruction of the town of Pompeii with its inhabitants by engulfment and a downpour of

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lava and ashes.”¹⁴³ British illusionist Henry J. Pain used theatrical technology for the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius and resulting fall of Pompeii, beneath streams of pyrotechnic powder that according to the visitors transformed the part into an “Oriental orgasmic.”

Pompeii (together with the Parthenon and the Acropolis) could be said the origin of the transformation of architecture into image, and, at the same time, the birth of a spatial mechanism to render it invisible. Together with Pompeii came, not only the museum, but also the circus, the antiquarian shop, the souvenir, and tourism, and with them, the closet, the private box, the secret cabinet, the dark room, and the peephole. Pornography will also be the name for these practices of visual consumption of sexuality and space within the modern city. Kendrick describes the process transformation of the archaeological site into an urban the modern city/spectacle as follows: “For its first century and more, the excavation of Pompeii more nearly resembled a circus than a modern archaeological dig. On many occasions, when a notable find was made, it was buried again in order to be re-found before the eyes of some visiting noble personage. In the earliest days, thievery was common; even when objects were carefully transported to the Museum, so little was known about to preserve them –delicate frescoes in particular– that very often they were damaged beyond repair. [...] Systematic excavation did not begin until the appointment of Giuseppe Fiorelli as head of the project in 1860. It was Fiorelli who first rationally mapped the city – so that the original location of an artifact would not be forgotten as soon as it had been removed – and who established the

practice, still in use today, of preserving most finds in place, instead of ripping out the
more spectacular and leaving the rest to disintegrate.”

Pompeii as reconstructed collage provided the spatial and visual models of what pornography will become during
the nineteenth century: secret cabinet and museum, circus and palace, theatre and shop, refinement and repetition, toy and show-box...The rising of the public sexual space of
Pompeii juxtaposed to the growing Enlightenment metropolis created a completely new urban phenomenon.

Fig. 13. Dreamland, Coney Island, 1905 view of the Fall of Pompeii Building.

The creation of the Secret Museum as a space both for displaying and for concealing, for collecting and distributing enables us to distinguish two logics underlining the invention

144 Ibid., 3-4.
of pornography within modernity. Pornography refers to the very act of representing, excavating, extruding, bringing to light, making public, displaying and offering something for public gaze, but also to the practices of surveillance, concealment, prohibition to see, segmentation, separation, disjunction and privatization. But what does it mean to display things in order to hide them? Can exhibition and prohibition to see, display and surveillance, control and excitement, power and pleasure be part of the same visual and spatial mechanism? How does this tension relate to the relationship between the Foucaultian notions of *hétérotopie* and *disciplinary space*?

Rather than an oxymoron, the dialectics of exposure and concealment at work in the Secret Museum seems paradigmatic of the visual and architectonic regimes of modernity. The Secret Museum, almost a conspicuous paradigm of all modern Museums and institutions of public display, showed that representation and publicity do not exist without policing and concealment. What we learn from the Secret Museum is that pornography is not made of images (obscene or not, not even of signs, literary or visual), but of architectural gestures, of *topopolitical* techniques for regulating vision, pleasure and power. What establishes pornography is not so much the visual content of the image or object that is removed from vision but the very act of separation, removal and concealment as part of a larger process of spectacularization and display, consumption and enjoyment, discipline and capitalization. The Secret Museum operated as a performative device that produced the very visual and political subjects that it was

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supposed to protect. Pornography, itself an architectonic exercise, is neither a private image nor a public representation, but the act of framing that constructs the limits not only between public and private, but also between bodies who enjoy visual experience and bodies who are not allowed to be sexually aroused in public. In this respect, modern pornography appears as the result of a set of disciplinary architectural and biopolitical techniques for producing visual, gender, and sexual subject positions.
L’ENFER

Pornography and the Architecture of Knowledge at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France

The question of the invention of pornography, as we have seen with Kendrick and Derrida, is the question of the construction of the archive and of archivization, and therefore the question of historiography: at the same time “project of knowledge, of practice and of institution, community, family, domiciliation, consignation, “house” and “museum.”\(^\text{146}\) Before getting into a genealogy of modern pornotopia, I would like to stop for a moment and think about the political and epistemological characteristics of the specific place where I have done most of the research for this dissertation project: the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris and most precisely, the so-called “Enfer” (literally “the hell”), Réserve and collection of “obscene works.” How does the architecture of the modern library relate to the architecture of the Secret Museum? What is the location of pornography within the library and what does this

location say about the modern epistemology and the construction the sexual subject as subject of knowledge?

*L’Enfer* was the name given in the nineteenth century to the French National Library Secret Cabinet of books and visual works that were deemed to be “obscene” and “contrary to good morals.” It included the largest collection of libertine literature, gravures and treatises from the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but also political and anti-religious works. *L’Enfer* remained during the nineteenth century an *unpublished* space: it was not accessible publically and its contents were kept secret. The space of *L’Enfer* translated within the architecture of the library the visual and political segregation of public and private spaces of the Secret Museum, reproducing within the order of knowledge the visual and political taxonomy at work within the Naples archeological collection. In 1913, Guillaume Apollinaire, Fernand Fleuret and Louis Perceau published in the *Mercure de France* a bibliographic catalog called *L’Enfer de la Bibliothèque Nationale* that, for the first time, included 900 titles of prohibited books from the “Réserve des livres rares.” In 1978, the bohemian journalist and man of letters Pascal Pia wrote a catalog that replaced the earlier classic edition by Apollinaire, Fleuret and Perceau, and that included 1700 titles. In spite of the importance of Apollinaire’s and Pia’s catalog for the process of *becoming public* of the secret collection, both studies transmitted an erroneous and partial version of the history of

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l’Enfer that was not corrected until 1984 when Jeanne Veyrin-Forrer carried out the first in depth historical and genealogical research on the origins and uses of the secret cabinet of the library.¹⁴⁹

Veyrin-Forrer shows that L’Enfer was neither the voluntaristic creation of the Consul of the Second Empire in 1864, nor the act of a single policy, as Apollinaire and Pia stated, but rather it was the result of a longer process of classification, separation and concealment that during more than two centuries redefined the limits between the public and the private through the control of the experience of reading. Foucault argues thinking about the political role of the archive within disciplinary regimes: “No knowledge is formed without a system of communication, registration, accumulation and displacement that is still a form of power. No power, on the other hand, is exercised without the extraction, appropriation, distribution, or restrain of knowledge.”¹⁵⁰ What were the systems of communication, registration, accumulation, displacement, extraction, distribution and appropriation that produced pornography as disciplinary outside?

For Veyrin-Forrer, the origins of l’Enfer can be related to two other spaces and taxonomical orders that worked according to two different (and almost contradictory) logics and techniques of consignation that, as we will see, will be paradigmatic of the

relationship between architecture and sexuality, but also between space and knowledge in modernity: the ecclesiastic collections of heretic books, and the “cabinet privé.”

One the one hand, l’Enfer is related to the collections of “libri haeretici et prohibiti” that were constituted by ecclesiastic institutions during late Middle-Age and the Renaissance and of which the collection of the Vatican is the most remarkable. In Paris, for instance, the Convent of Feuillants of the Rue Saint-Honoré created a library of heterodox books in 1652. The interior space of the Corinthian columns of the building were transformed into secret closets to keep the heretic books that were already called “l’Enfer.”151 At the Covent of Feuillant, the very structure of the building (the columns) became a secret container for “otherness,” in such a way that hidden heterodoxy seemed to be what held the edifice of faith and orthodoxy upright.

At the National Library the classification of books according to the catholic orthodoxy was done in the seventeenth century under the direction of Nicolas Clément.152 The proximity and the separation of heterodox and orthodox books within a common space posses the question of the architecture of the library: the question of the construction of an inside, but also the question of exteriority, and finally the bio/topo-political question of immunity and contamination by neighborhood. The ecclesiastic library, that shall become the dominant model for modern libraries, worked according to what Derrida has

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called “the construction of an interior exteriority.”\textsuperscript{153} Paradoxically, \textit{l’Enfer}, defined in terms that echo Derrida’s \textit{mal d’archive}, retrospectively constructs the limits of orthodox knowledge.

Moreover, if the \textit{panopticon} was for Foucault the diagram of the disciplinary power,\textsuperscript{154} and the modern hospital translated into space medical notions of contamination and hygiene,\textsuperscript{155} the architecture of the modern library was the result of the spatialization of theological and scientific disciplinary knowledge, the result of a process of fight against a form of spiritual (media) contamination contracted by reading and seeing.

\begin{figure}[h]
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\textsuperscript{153} Jacques Derrida, \textit{Archive Fever, A Freudian Impression}, 11.
The point that must be stressed here is how the space of the library was organized in such a way that radical otherness (first the heretic books, later those concerning sexuality) could be integrated within the inside of the orthodox order. In 2001, Thierry Grillet, director in charged of cultural communication of the Bibliothèque Nationale, in a special number of the Revue dedicated to eroticism and pornography, questions this paradoxical relationship between inside and outside within the Enfer of the library and asks: “How did the library shelter what the outside could not? How could the library create a space for what according to the law should not have place?”156

**Sexuality, space, and the male private cabinet**

Parallel to this disciplinary process of spatialization of knowledge within the library that we could call with Foucault *inclusionary exclusion*,157 there is another process taking place that participates to the epistemological and political definition of the space of l’Enfer: the construction of private cabinets. From 1750, most French aristocratic houses contained a “cabinet privé,” as described by D’Alambert and Diderot’s *Encyclopédie*: “A


room dedicated to study or in which one conducts private business, or which contain the finest examples of one’s collections of paintings, sculptures, books, curios, etc.”158 Not only rooms became increasingly function-specific, but also the growing demand for autonomy of the individual and privacy generated new distributions within the interior space. The *cabinet privé* indicates the emergency of a space for the new experiences of reading and thinking not only as solitary and silent, but also as private, a space where neither the theological nor the political authorities could access. During the eighteenth century, for instance, Chamberlain Lamoignon designed a private cabinet at his house that he called his secret “*enfer,*” a small room to keep a single political prohibited pamphlet from 1581, *Le Miroir des Français:* built without windows and almost always dark, the room was only accessible to the selected few. Likewise, the Marquis de Paulmy, founder of the Paris Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, constituted his own secret collection of obscene books.

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Fig. 16. The male “Private Cabinet” as library, writing place and space of production of pleasure. The presence of a satyr brings us back to the Pompeian Secret Museum.


The new individual experience of reading implied religious, political and sexual autonomy: to read alone, silently, for oneself designated also the creation of a new interior psychological space, progressively producing modern consciousness as a sort of *cabinet privé* within the male body. As we will later see in detail, the private cabinet was
also the masculine precursor of the space that will be called “boudoir,” the first eighteenth century aristocratic feminine space for toilette and sexuality, but also for female solitary reading.\textsuperscript{159}

During the nineteenth century, many private collections of pornographic books of private cabinets and boudoirs ended up within the \textit{Enfer}. Within the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris, \textit{L’Enfer} contained, amongst others, the private collection that belonged to the famous boudoir of Madame du Barry.\textsuperscript{160} The creation of L’Enfer as \textit{cabinet privé} within the public library reserved in the nineteenth century to male aristocratic readers materialized what Lynn Hunt called the final exclusion of women from the democratic public space of the library. Whereas the ecclesiatic \textit{Enfer} was a place of sin and punishment, the \textit{cabinet privé} operated already as a space for the production of masculine knowledge, and sexual pleasure. Underlying the gendered segregated character of \textit{L’Enfer}, Thierry Grillet defines the Reserve Room as a “place destined for pornographic reading,” and compares it with a “\textit{hortus deliciarum},” that he calls, “a garden without Eve.”\textsuperscript{161} But where was Eve? What was she doing while Adam was reading in his secret garden of \textit{L’Enfer}? As we will later see, the modern invention of the boudoir, the domestic space, and the brothel shall be the answer to this male-centered definition of the modern democratic knowledge and space and will determine the modern notions of pornography and prostitution.

L’Enfer was not a spatial metaphor, but a physical space designed to regulate the relationship between reading, knowledge, pleasure, and subjectivity in modernity. The combination of two apparently conflicting logics and taxonomical orders (the theological and the male pornographic private cabinet) explains the catalog names and the spatial consignation of l’Enfer. Already in 1620, the French Bibliothèque du Roi distinguished the orthodox books (marked D) from the heretic books (marked D2). According to an analogy between theology and literature, a new taxonomy that separated poetry (marked Y) from literary and erotic works (“eroticon sive romanesium, ut vocant et ludricrorum scriptores,” marked Y2, a sign that can still be found today at the books of the Reserve Room) was created at the end of the seventeenth century.162 By 1750 the series Y2 contained “without distinction of languages, the obscene works of all types and themes, and twenty two numbers of “ouvrages licencieux.”163 According to Veyrin-Forrer, from 1792 on, the catalog name added the word “Cab” (from cabinet) or “Tiroir” (drawer in French) to the Y series, which let us think that this particular consignation was associated with a specific place (a cabinet, a separated room, a drawer or a storage compartment) where two or three hundreds books could be kept separated from the rest of the collections. Since, as Veyrin-Forrer notices, there was no specific place within the plans of Jacques F. Blondel for the Library, it seems that either the Y2 cabinet referred to a piece of furniture or to a secret location without possible inscription in the plans.164

163 Ibid.
164 About the national library see: Jacques-François Blondel, L’Architecture française, III, livre V, n. XIII, pl. 2. (Paris, 1754).
Many of the documents of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries ended in the secret cabinet of the Library as gifts of the state prosecutor, who used them first as evidence in obscenity trials. According to French historian Jean Tulard who has studied the effects of censorship upon literary production and distribution, political and sexual censorship became a dominant governmental activity at the beginning of the nineteenth century during the first decades of the Empire. It is interesting to notice that within this archival logic, censorship did not equal destruction of the works, but rather on the contrary it created a parallel industry that produced hundreds of books that became part of the first underground market: the object of a new form of traffic, consumption and storage that created its own invisible cartography within the modern library and city.¹⁶⁵

For Veyrin-Forrer, it was the extraordinary augmentation of the number of prohibited books at the beginning of the nineteenth century that demanded, somewhere between 1814 and 1844, the creation of a separate space within the library that for the first time was named Enfer, probably under the direction of the librarian Paulin Richard, replacing the catalog names “cabinet” and “tiroir.”¹⁶₆

Veyrin-Forrer refers to the well-known affair of the “Libri trial” in 1849 to date the creation of l’Enfer as spatial enclosure within the architecture of the library. Libri was an

¹⁶₆ Marie-Françoise Quignard, « Où l’on ne parle pas encore d’Enfer mais d’ouvrages licencieux, » L’Enfer de la Bibliothèque. Éros au secret, 32.
Italian professor of the Collège de France and of the Faculty of Sciences who was accused of books robbery. At the beginning of the trial, the name of l’Enfer was already mentioned by the director of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Joseph Naudet. Libri accused Naudet of having kept the books that he was supposed to have stolen at l’Enfer, to which Naudet answers: “L’Enfer is simply a “secret cabinet” (une cachette) to which only a few have a key, and where there are kept some bad books, although precious to bibliophiles and of important venal value.” And he concludes with this revealing analogy that shows the centrality of the Secret Museum at the time: “L’Enfer is to books what the Secret Museum of Naples is to antiquities.” Along the same line, in 1885 Henri Bouchon, curator of the National Library, defined l’Enfer this way: “The works belonging to these series are only communicated when the librarian gives permission, and to those whose work can justify the necessity to study certain free books…[...] The images and other productions without value are not communicated. The name Enfer is often used to cover a rather uninteresting merchandise, many times idiotically obscene. It is better to immediately warn the public. At the Library, it is difficult to have the doors of the Enfer opened, since the key is under the custody of the staff.”

168 Ibid.
169 Henri Bouchot, Le Cabinet des estampes de la Bibliothèque nationale : Guide du lecteur et du visiteur, catalogue général et raisonné des collections qui y sont conservées (Paris : Editions Dentu, 1895), 14. « Les ouvrages de cette série ne se communiquent que sur l’avis du conservateur, et aux personnes qui peuvent justifier d’un travail nécessitant l’étude de certaines œuvres libres ; telles que les vases grecs, les compositions de Jules Romain, etc., etc. Les images, ou autres productions sans valeur ne se communiquent point. Le nom d’Enfer, employé ordinairement, sert en réalité à couvrir une marchandise peu curieuse en soi, le plus souvent idiotement obsèque. Il vaut mieux prévenir de suite le public ; il est bien difficile à la Bibliothèque de se faire ouvrir les portes de l’Enfer dont la clef n’est d’ailleurs confiée à personne dans le service.»
If Baudelaire considered, in his “Salon of 1846,” the museum as the “mnemotechny of the beautiful,” we could say that the library was the mnemotechny of political, gender and sexual law, an archive containing the traces of the process of production of the normal and the pathological. The criteria that unified the collection of books and documents depended on the understanding of antireligious treatises, subversive political pamphlets, erotic writing and representation of deviant practices within sexuality as “other spaces.” For Bruno Racine, president of the French Bibliothèque Nationale from 2007, l’Enfer was both a punishment place created by political and religious censure (“lieu de relegation où aboutissent les livres et les images stigmatizes par le pouvoir politique et religieux – une sorte de pénitencier de la censure.”) but also an erotic and artistic “boudoir” where fantasy can create non-existing worlds. In this respect, l’Enfer already talks about the complex relationship between the Foucaultian notions of disciplinary space and hétérotopie. Although the effect of religious and political surveillance, l’Enfer projected a heterotopic space constituting a sort reservoir for utopian and subversive projects. Thus, while apparently contained within the space of the library, l’Enfer threatens its very epistemic closure. As Thierry Grillet argues: “Keeping the book in the reserve room was a way of trying to make place for it outside,

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and therefore to recognize that the existing order of books could neither integrate, nor oppose the disorder of sex."

Fig. 17. The “public” library as male club. Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Lettres, Paris, 1909, BNF.

As with the Secret Museum, the logic of *inclusionary exclusion* of l’Enfer extended to other European modern libraries. At the British Museum Library the secret collection was called “Arcana” and “Private Case”\(^\text{173}\); at the Library of Congress at Washington, it was called “Delta” (Greek symbol for the female sex); at the New York Public Library, “The Cage”; and at the Armed Forces Medical Library of Washington, “Cherry Case.”\(^\text{174}\)

Names given to the secret collections of the libraries refer always to a *topos*, pointing not

\(^{172}\) Thierry Grillet, *Revue de la BNF, Erotisme et pornographie* 7 (2001): 1. « Mettre en réserve ou aux Enfers consistait autrefois à éviter le sujet, à lui faire une place à part, et reconnaître ainsi que l’ordre des livres ne pouvait intégrer, ni même s’opposer efficacement aux désordres du sexe. »


to the actual content but to the place or the location where the collection is stored. In “L’Enfer,” this place is dystopian, a place of suffering and punishment, a place of death present in different religious traditions, external both to Earth and to Heaven, and that is like Pompeii’s ruins, located underground. In the “Arcana,” this location becomes utopian, an ideal place of pleasure and enjoyment. In “The Cage” and the “Cherry Case,” the collection refers to the private rooms and cabinet, to the boudoir, and to act of keeping secrets, and producing intimacy.

**L’Enfer in the digital era**

The architecture of the modern library and the restricted conditions of access to *L’Enfer* were related, as we have seen, to the spatial logic of the Museum as limited public space and to the production of modern pornography as disciplinary interior outside. Michel Foucault stressed that the archive not only determines the terms of discourse, but it also defines the spaces of display.\(^{175}\) After the Second World War, the radical change of the biopolitical conditions of production of sexual subjectivity, as well as, what could be called with Marshall McLuhan, the progressive mutation from the Guttenberg space to the multimedia and electronic space,\(^{176}\) will provoke a political and epistemic crisis within the architecture of the library. The displacement forecasted by McLuhan “from

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\(^{175}\) For Foucault The archive is “the system that governs the appearance of statements.” Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge* (New York: Harper Books, 1976), 129.

the Alexandrian Library to the computer,\(^{177}\) as well as from the secret consumption of pornography within boudoirs, secret cabinets, brothels and smoke-rooms to the transformation of pornography into popular culture with the publication of *Playboy*,\(^{178}\) came together with a process of undoing of the walls of the Secret Museum and l’Enfer.

In 1969, after more than a century of seclusion and surveillance, and in a context of redefinition of the limits of privacy and publicity, of new struggles for sexual liberation and legal reorganization of the censorship codes, the direction of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France decided to definitively close (or rather open?) l’Enfer. The reorganization of the limits of l’Enfer between 1969 and 1997 coincided with the relocation of the National Library to a new architectural site, as if the totality of the archival space, the very distinction between outside and inside, open and close, was being thought according to a new taxonomy. In 1989 the French government organized a competition to built a colossal building of 250,000 m\(^2\) on the east side of Paris, on a site near to the Périphérique, facing the Seine.

In 1997 the ancient *Enfer* was transferred to the new site of the Bibliothèque Nationale built by Dominique Perrault on a stretch of industrial wasteland on the banks of the Seine in the East End of Paris between 1989 and 1996. What is the architecture of knowledge produced by Perrault’s Library? Where and how is located l’Enfer within this...

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\(^{177}\) Ibid., 32.

architecture? Rejecting the coming multimedia digitalized space, Perrault erected a monument (or rather a requiem) to the Guttenberg era: he claimed that his architectural concept was “to impose the library's presence and identity on the urban landmarks to develop and enhance the idea of the book,” constructing “four corner towers resembling four open books, all facing one another, to create a symbolic place, a mythical place.”

For Perrault, “The towers present themselves like an accumulation of learning, of knowledge that is never complete, and of a slow but ongoing process of sedimentation.” But, what is Perrault’s idea of the book and the archive? How do the “four towers” relate to the modern library as public-private spaces controlled by theological and disciplinary authorities? What is the division of knowledge’s conveyed by Perrault’s library? And finally who is the reader as subject and the practice of reading constructed by the architecture of the library?

Perrault’s library inverts the traditional relationship between heaven and hell, light and darkness, air and earth, outside and inside creating a monument to knowledge where the experience of reading seems only secondary. The book itself as medium rather than the experience of reading is at stake. The stored books have been (inexplicably) placed under natural light distributed vertically up the floors of the four glass towers that constitute the library, being the four building divided according to the epistemological traditional divisions between fundamental, biological, and human sciences, and

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179 All translations of the French are mine unless otherwise noted. See: Dominique Perrault, “Bibliothèque Nationale de France », in Arc.Space.com
180 Ibid.
181 To avoid the books being burnt by the light, wooden panels were installed to blind the glass walls.
literature. Placing himself within a modern tradition of medicalized architecture,
Perrault’s library is a sunny sanatorium where books are kept in “good health.” As opposed to the verticality of the books, the reading rooms for researchers are located on the ground floor, surrounding a sunken artificial garden (A new inaccessible cabinet? A prohibited “hortus deliciarium”?) placed in between the towers, but carefully separated from the reading rooms by high glass walls, in such a way that the reader, enclosed within an air-conditioned atmosphere, can never go out. Toyo Ito questions this anti-modernist gesture: “I would like to know,” he asks, “what Le Corbusier would have thought of a space totally exposed to the sunlight but exclusively reserved to the books, and where the readers are relegated to the underground areas.” When the reader calls for a book, the book, completing a rather theological trip, descents from the towers to the ground floor reading rooms where the reader is both sheltered and trapped. Equally separated from nature and from knowledge, or rather relating to both only visually, the researcher reads the books within artificial light, having access to natural light only thought the reflections of the interior garden. Moreover, the four towers of the library distribute spaces according to disciplines and sciences in such a way that a trans-disciplinary project (such as the present dissertation) forces the reader to constantly run from tower to tower, transforming the researcher into a disciplinary fugitive, trespassing archival thresholds and jumping according epistemic voids. As Ito acutely asserts: “This

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183 Toyo Ito, in With Dominique Perrault (Berlin/Barcelona: Birkäuser/Actar, 1999), 82.
is not a space for a flâneur.”\textsuperscript{184} It is rather a space for a blind cross-disciplinary runner.

In this architecture, defined by Perrault himself with astonishing frankness as “part temple and part supermarket,”\textsuperscript{185} L’Enfer is not a secret underground room, but it is, nevertheless, a separated area clearly differentiated from the rest of the reading rooms. Still in 2007, the director of the Bibliothèque Bruno Racine stressed the liminal position of l’Enfer in relationship to the political field of vision: “L’Enfer is the blind point of the Bibliothèque. Although its existence is known by everyone, it is nevertheless invisible for most people and totally ignored in detail.”\textsuperscript{186}

Fig. 19-20. The interior garden of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Dominique Perrault, Photo Claire Berthelemy, 2007; X Light on the façade of the towers for the Exhibit Éros au Secret/L’Enfer de la Bibliothèque, Photo Claire Berthelemy, 2007.

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid., 81.
\textsuperscript{186} Bruno Racine, “Preface,” in L’Enfer de la Bibliothèque. Éros au Secret, 15.
When I make my way into what is no longer called l’Enfer but “Réserve des livres rares” there are reminders of the secrecy formerly shrouding the famous locked collection. Nevertheless the spatial organization seems displaced, upside down. The actual Reserve Room have been restructured to contain only erotic writings and representations of deviant sexuality, including now 1930s to 1950s books on the so-called “English vice of flagellation,” works by Man Ray, Jean Genet or even contemporary audiovisual works classified as “pornographic” or “violent.” The catalogs by Apollinaire and Pia themselves have been also relocated within the Réserve, as if l’Enfer could not accept the possibility of an exterior indexation or a meta-language. Any discourse on L’Enfer will end up at the Enfer itself. Not only it is necessary to justify academic reasons for requesting the books and documents of the Reserve Room, but, more importantly, the Reserve Room is located in a close squared-shaped glass and wood room, a new transparent looked room, a digital porn box, to which one can only access with a lift.

Here, the reader goes up to l’Enfer instead of going down. Within the inverted monumental architecture of Perrault’s library-book, the Reserve Room, vertically detached from the rest of the library walking and reading areas, and in a sense “secret” since invisible to other readers, floats and overlooks the open space of the general library reading rooms, becoming an observatory, a sort of suspended and private “heaven,”

187 The French penal code classifies under the same category “violent and pornographic works.”
more than a “hell.” This reversal operates also on the level of the common reading rooms: in the post-Playboy digital era, the general reading areas of the library located at ground floor, only accessible through security metal doors, but connected to dozens of internet wired computers have become the new public *Enfer.*

For Thierry Grillet, the transformation of the architecture of the library and the dissolution of the walls of *l’Enfer* reflect a change of the place of pornography within contemporary public space and discourse, a context where “sex is not kept close anyway because sex is now diffused everywhere”¹⁸⁹: “Today, after decades, there is no *Enfer* (in the “moral” sense), there is no particular status, there is no place reserved for sex within the Bibliothèque. The frontiers between the legal and the illegal have been vanished inside and outside. Neither the authorities of the city nor those of the library who classify, organize, order, work to keep the forces of subversive sex at distance. Today everyone must face reading alone without mediation. This responsibility placed on the reader’s shoulders is enormous, he must now judge by himself about the limit that he

¹⁸⁸ Today, two conflicting logics, that of the computer and that of the library, to put it in McLuhan’s terms, coexists at the National Library in France. Whereas the electronic digital archive project *Gallica* makes accessible through the internet a series of works that can be freely downloaded, most of the books and visual materials are still regulated within the physical space of the library according to the law of *l’Enfer:* a symptom of the persistence of this law is the difficulty to give direct access to the books or to allow photocopies or images prints from the “pornographic” collections.

This undoing of the limits between the open library and l’Enfer reached a spectacular climax when in 2007 the Bibliothèque Nationale de France decided to open the collection of l’Enfer to a public exhibition for the first time after its creation in the nineteenth century, showing 350 “sexually explicit” literary works, manuscripts, engravings, lithographs, photographs and film clips. Let’s pay attention to this subtle but important move: l’Enfer was not dismantled, but instead it was transformed into an exhibit. In other words - and following the postwar Playboy transformation of sexuality into media display - the “secret” became the object of a theatrical exhibition, a well-disciplined spectacle.

Ibid.: “Aujourd’hui et depuis des décennies, il n’y a pas plus d’Enfer (au sens « moral »), plus de statut particulier, plus de place repérée pour le sexe dans la Bibliothèque. Les frontières de lícite et d’illicité se sont estompées dehors et dedans. Ni les autorités de la Cité ni celles de la Bibliothèque qui classent, rangent, ordonnent, ne travaillent plus à tenir à distance – en respect ?- les forces subversives du sexe.» «Aujourd’hui chacun est conduit à faire face seul sans plus aucune médiation. Cette responsabilité énorme, ainsi basculée sur les épaules de chaque lecteur, le rend fondé à juger par lui-même de la limite au-delà de laquelle il n’est pas supportable d’aller. C’est un progrès. Dans le même temps, la situation est devenue plus complexe.»
The exhibition called “Hell at the Library, Eros in Secret” was, according to director Bruno Racine, not only an effect of a change of archival paradigm but also a response to the new status of the pornographic image within multimedia electronic society. As Elaine Sciolino put it, “The exhibition came at a time when France was struggling with a variety of societal issues: the limits of privacy for its public figures, censorship and the definition of good taste.” The spatial and visual regime of modern pornography was shifting and redefining the limits not only of the Secret Cabinet but of the entire library: “In an era where sexual images are a product for popular consumption, the library has decided to lift the veil on this world of imagination and fantasy,” said Bruno Racine in the preface to the exhibition catalog.

The redefinition of the limits of the visible and the knowable within the exhibition space raised once more the question of the construction of the public. At first, library administrators considered strict adherence to law, which would ban entry to the

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192 Bruno Racine, L’Enfer de la Bibliothèque. Éros au secret, 15.
exhibition to anyone under 18. In the end, they decided to follow the lead of cable television, which puts an under-16 warning on late-night soft pornography and erotica shows. This displacement from the laws regulating the age of access to public places to the law concerning cable television was yet but another sign of the entrance within the digital regime of consumption of images and texts that now extended to the space of the library.

Responding to contemporary multimedia dispersion of pornography, the theatrical display of the secret disseminated from the library to its outside, and into the city. For the exhibition, the Paris metro system constructed a teaser for it on its No. 10 line. Commuters passing by the closed Croix Rouge station got a fleeting glimpse of erotic engravings lighted up in shocking pink and partly hidden behind fluttering black curtain strips. The subway replaced the Hell as moral topos: the religious and moral locations were re-inscribed within the urban topography of Paris. Although still working according to the analogy between deviant sexuality, sewer and urban detritus defined by Parent-Duchâtelet hygienic work during the nineteenth century, the extension of the exhibition to the subway stations transformed the subway into a subrogated underground cabinet, at once city interior and sexual arcade that nevertheless is now totally public. The Enfer is now everywhere and yet remains unknowable.

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193 About the relationship between the biopolitics of sexual space and urban hygenics see chapter 4 on Alexandre Parent-Duchâlet and William Acton in this dissertation.
“Entering” into l’Enfer as a researcher implies to unpack the relationship between architecture and pornography, to undo the limits of traditional disciplines, but also to interrogate the biopolitical links between the domicile and the archive, between the institution of family and that of prostitution, to investigate the common spatial and sexual laws of the museum, the library, the prison and the brothel. I have called this critical project a genealogy of modern pornotopia that will take us from the library to the boudoir, and to the brothel, and with the advent of cinematic technologies, up to the immaterial peepshow.
3. BOUDOIR

The Birth of the Female Cabinet

Fig. 23-24: Félix Nogaret, L’Aretin François, par un membre de l’Academie des dames, suivi de Les Épices de Vénus ou Pièces diverses du même académicien, Londres, saisi 1866, Réserve, Enfer 463, Enfer Smith-Lesouëf 20, p. 8. BNF; Right: Jean-Baptiste-Marie Guillard de Servigné, The boudoir, (1723-1780), Réserve, BNF.
THE GENDER BOX

The boudoir is together with the “secret museum” one of the central modern pornotopias, produced at the very intersection between architecture and literature, between physical space and utopia. Fictional site for a multiplicity of discourses around feminity, sexuality, viewing and seduction, the boudoir became during the eighteenth century in France one of the most culturally loaded spaces of the history of architecture. The pornotopic quality of the boudoir derives in part from the gap between the discursive proliferation in literature, and lack of physical architectonic occurrences at least during half a century. The boudoir was invented and developed by erotic literature before being explicitly codified within architectural terms: born in the writings of Chevalier de Mouhy’s *La paysane parvenue*, (1735), Jean-Baptiste de Boyer, the Marquis d’Argens’ *Thérèse philosophe* (1748) and Claude Crébillon’s *Hasard au coin du feu* (1763), the boudoir became thematic in Jean-François de Bastide’s *La Petite Maison* (published in 1758 with the symptomatic title *Le nouveau spectateur*) and transformed into a cultural icon with Vivant Denon’s *Point de Lendemain* (1777), Choderlos de Laclos’ *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (1782) and Marquis De Sade’s *La philosophie dans le boudoir* (1795).

The term “boudoir” appeared for the first time at the *Dictionnaire de l’Académie*  

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194 The word “boudoir” appears for the first time in Claude Crébillon’s *Hasard au coin du feu*, 1763.
Française in 1740 as a “petit cabinet où on se retire tout seul”\textsuperscript{195} relating for the first time, outside religious or ascetic practices, space and solitude. The Dictionnaire Trévoux adds in 1721-1752: “small and narrow cabinet, close to the bedroom, where one goes to be alone and to sulk when one is moody.”\textsuperscript{196} Only in 1835 the Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française introduced the gendered condition of the boudoir defining this space as a “cabinet orné avec élégance à l’usage particulier de ces dames.”\textsuperscript{197}

The boudoir was the first chamber to be both a gender and sexuality specific space within French pre-revolutionary architecture. The boudoir emerged in the eighteenth century, both as a physical and as a fictional space, as the female variation of the studiolo and the male cabinet. It was the first modern gender box: while the space of the cabinet called for studying, reading and the enjoyment of art as masculine activities, the space of the boudoir housed the practices of body toilette, religious duties, sleeping, but also the reproductive and sexual functions understood as specifically female.

As Ed Lilley has underlined, the cabinet and the boudoir were probably not yet gendered differentiated spaces until the 1760s since Blondel’s entry in D’Alambert and Diderot 1751 Encyclopédie, defined the space of the cabinet as “a room dedicated to study in which one conducts private business, or which contain the finest examples of one’s


\textsuperscript{196} Dictionnaire Trévoux. Dictionnaire universel françois et latin: Tome I (Trévoux : F. Delaunle, 1721-1752), Digital File, Gallica.

collections of painting, sculptures, books, curios, etc. One can also call cabinet those rooms in which ladies get dressed, attend to their devotions or take an afternoon nap, or those which they reserve for other occupations which demand solitude and privacy."

Although already existing in fiction and in use, the male cabinet and boudoir did not always featured on architect’s plans. Within her sociology of French architectural practices, Annik Pardailhé-Galabrun has noted that there were no boudoirs within architectural plans prior to 1760, and that out of 3000 Eighteenth century Parisian aristocratic households most of them included male cabinets but only 10 had boudoirs.

In “Figures, Doors, and Passages,” Robin Evans establishes a relationship between architectural plans and cultural forms of sociability that can be read today in terms of biopolitics. For Evans, the Italian Medieval and Renaissance “matrix of connected spaces” determined forms of social relationship based on “closeness, carnality and accidental social encounter.” The Italian rooms had several doors, which allowed the occupant to walk from room to room, providing at the same time physical enclosure and

199 Ed Lilley, “The Name of the Boudoir,” 195. Ed Lilley has studied the spatial arrangement of the aristocratic apartments at Nicolas Ledoux’s the Hôtel Thélusson (1770s) and the Hôtel d’Attily (late 1780s), as well as François II Franque’s design for the house of the marquis de Villefranche at Avignon where the sequences bedroom-dressing room-boudoir-cabinet could indicate for the first time a clear separation between cabinet and boudoir although nothing in the plans enables her to deduce a gender difference.
mobility. On the other hand, the British corridor and the “cellular room model” characterized a social context based on “privacy, distance and segregation.” The French boudoir could be re-inscribed within Evans’ genealogy as a turning point within the transition from the Medieval open plan to the bourgeois domestic spatial arrangement. Until the eighteenth century the process of spatial differentiation and sharing (“partage de l’espace”) in terms of class and social status was vertical, being the horizontal plane an “appartement de parade,” an open space where social life was exposed to public view. “L’appartement ou chambre de parade” was a theatrical plane where body and space established a relation of public exhibition. The proliferation of spaces out of the new art of horizontal distribution of space produced progressively the differences between the “cabinet de parade,” the “grand cabinet,” the “petit cabinet,” the “oratoire,” the male cabinet and the “cabinet de toilette” and “boudoir,” producing sexual difference through spatial segmentation and inscribing within space different uses of the body in public and introducing a growing degree of intimacy and self-enclosure along with spatial distribution.

The male cabinet and the boudoir appeared first as a class status space, “limited to the most privileged residences, as only the homes of the economic and social elite contained such rooms.” In this respect, the cabinet and the boudoir established a dialectic economic relationship with the “alcove” or the “ruelle,” the sleeping space of the lower

classes, defined only by the location of the bed in space. Together with the boudoir, the second gendered space of the French upper-class houses of the eighteenth century was radically opposed by its quality and functions: whereas the boudoir was the most private enclave of the house, the “chamber de parade” was a public scene where “the woman of the house received guest on ceremonial occasions.” In spite of the apparent opposition between the highly public “chambre de parade” and the extremely private boudoir, they were both stages for gender performance whose architecture regulated public and private body uses in space.


Fig. 25. Horizontal distribution can be observed in the plan for the ground floor of a model home in Paris in the mid-18th century, designed by the architect Jacques François Blondel. Diderot and D’Alembert’s *Encyclopedia*.

As French architectural historian Monique Eleb-Vidal has noticed, the production of interiority through the invention of the “petit cabinet” and the “boudoir” in French aristocratic houses (“hôtels aristocratiques”) were the key architectural innovations that gave rise to modern ways of inhabiting. As Ed Liley has put it, by the end of the
eighteenth century architecture, “rooms became increasingly function-specific…[…]

The process began earlier, but during the period of the Enlightenment, with its increasing insistence on the autonomy of the individual and a consequently augmented demand for privacy, new room-types developed, a new distribution meant that access to one room did not necessitate (as in the past) passage through several others.”

Within architecture discourse, the production of media interiors is inscribed within the modern notion of “spatial distribution” (art de la distribution) central to the writings and techniques of Jacques-François Blondel, Nicolas Camus de Mézières and Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. Eighteenth century architects “advocated the division of the traditional ground-floor parade space into a sequence of more intimate reception rooms” dedicated to different practices and bodily functions, and amongst which the smallest and most conspicuous was the boudoir. As Audrey Higelin-Fusté and Ed Lilley have underlined, the aristocratic interior is the experimental field where the key architectural mutations of the eighteenth century take place: the plans show the creation of new chambers, the multiplication of “salons particuliers” and “cabinets” distributed along corridors creating new spaces of circulation and insulation, and increasing the possibility of a growing “privacy” towards the end of the corridor, or at the “interstices” or in small closeted spaces. Architectural modernity could be defined by the advent of the biopolitical horizontal segregation of space in terms of gender, class, race and sexuality stimulated by new reading and audiovisual technologies. The modern subject is

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constructed by architecture through media spatial isolation, by this process that Peter Sloterdijk, following Foucault, has called “anthropogenetic insulation.”

This first architectural distinction appeared already in Jean-François Blondel’s *De la distribution des maisons de plaisance et de la décoration des édifices en général* (1737) between the “grand cabinet,” a sort of “chambre de parade,” a more public space were visitors are received, and the “petit cabinet,” or “arrière cabinet,” defined as a smaller backroom adjoining to the “grand cabinet” where to retreat to work designed according to the rules of “commodité” for more intimate and private matters.

But the process of architectural translation and codification of the boudoir took place in the work of the architect Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières first published in 1780. Together with the “petit cabinet,” Camus de Mézières distinguished between the “cabinet de toilette” (a dressing room without running water) and the “cabinet à l’Angloise” (a bathroom with a flushing toilet). Diana Cheng has argued that the first uses of the “female cabinet” far from being voluptuose were probably religious: according to Cheng, the first boudoirs were small chambers for female religious devotion, being the female toilette (and water) introduced only much later. These

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209 See the analyses of the relationship between the production of modern intimacy and space in: Peter Sloterdijk, *Bubbles. Spheres I. Microspherology* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2011).


smaller and more intimate cabinets dedicated to female body practices and fluids would by the end of the eighteenth century take the name of boudoir. Bringing together the sensualist philosophy of Blondel and the literary tradition, Le Camus de Mézieres defined the boudoir as a place “où on voit régner le luxe, la mollesse et le goût.” For Le Camus de Mézieres, the boudoir was already a gendered and sexualized space that he described according to the analogy with the female body: “the boudoir is a lady of fashion to be adorned,” “les contours en sont doux et bien arrondis, les muscles peu prononcés, il règne dans l’ensemble un suave simple et naturel dont nous reconnaissions mieux l’effets que nous ne pouvons l’exprimer.”

But if as Cheng has argued, the origin of the female boudoir was the “oratoire,” how did the “oratoire” went from being a place of devotion to transform into a chamber of gender production, sexual pleasure and body care during the eighteenth century giving way during the nineteenth century to the modern notions of domesticity, bourgeoisie interiority and the “maison close”? The answer is not sex, but reading. The early eighteenth-century “oratoire” was a small “chapelle” and by extension a small chamber where the devoted aristocratic woman retreated for religious reading and prayer. Charles-François Roland Le Virloy’s *Dictionnaire d’architecture civile, militaire et navale* defined the boudoir as a room “where a woman may retire to pray, think, read, or work, or, in a word, to be alone.” It was through the secularization of the religious

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213 Quoted by Audrey Higelin-Fusté, digital file without page number.
215 Quoted in Nicole Reynolds, 107.
practices of reading and through the introduction of the pornographic novel for female reading that the “oratoire,” conceived as a space of spiritual discipline and meditation, progressively became a boudoir.\textsuperscript{216} The Secret Museum and \textit{l’Enfer} were indeed the genealogical origins of the boudoir: the boudoir was the inscription within high-class domestic architecture of the law of spatial distribution that generated the Secret Cabinet within the museum and \textit{l’Enfer} within the library.

![Image of paintings](image)

Fig. 26-28. From left to right: Jean-Jacques Laqueu, \textit{Et nous aussi nous serons mères, car…}, 1794; Clovis Trouille, \textit{Les nonnes}, 1927-1930. Trouille brings into the surrealist imaginary the eighteenth century representation of the nun as erotized prostitute, and the brothel as sexual convent.

\textsuperscript{216} See also Huysmans’ reference to the “oratory” as a “cell for solitude and repose” according to Des Esseintes. Jorys-Karl Huysmans, \textit{Against The Grain}, Translated by John Howard, Chapter 6, 2004, E-Book.
Fig. 29, 30. Left: Madame de Maintenon represented with the religious book as reader. « Madame de Maintenon à l’église », gravure publiée chez Claude-Auguste Berey, sans date. Versailles, Bibliothèque municipale, Rés fol A 32 m_fol 98 ; Right: The female cabinet and library as a place for masturbation, *Thérèse Philosophe*, S.l.n.d, Paris ou Genève, 1770-1780, Réserve des livres rares, Enfer 404. BNF. Paris.

French feminist historian and disciple of Michel Foucault, Michelle Perrot has identified the “chambre” of Françoise d’Aubigné de Maintenon, mistress and later wife of King Louis XIV between 1683 and 1715, as a site of emergency of modern uses of privacy and intimacy and precursor of the eighteenth-century *boudoir*. Within a context of total public exhibition of the royal rooms of the Chateaux de Versailles where the power of the King depended on its theatrical display in public space, “the favorite women of the
King had the privilege of dwelling within the central rooms of the Chateaux, close to the King, who show publicly and without complex his taste for bigamy or even his polygamy. Historian Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret has termed “Versailles’ harem” this spatial sexual arrangement of the Chateaux de Versailles prior to Madame de Maintenon’s cabinet and its performative regime. The “Versailles’ harem” was a space dedicated to royal sexual enjoyment but, as opposed to the forthcoming modern brothel, it pre-existed the distinction between public and private. Indeed, the exhibition of royal sexuality was part of the public spectacle of power. The word “conseil privé” signified the “group of people, ministers and butlers, who assisted the king when getting up and going to bed and having therefore access to the spectacle of the royal chamber.” Pre-modern royal sexuality was not yet an intimate practice but an open scene theatrically staged as choreography of political authority.

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Fig. 31. Representation of the boudoir in François Franque, house for the marquis de Villefranche, Avignon. Recueil de Planches de l’Encyclopédie, 1762m plate 25. BNF. Paris.

According to Michelle Perrot, this regime of spatialization of sexuality was altered by the arrival of Madame de Maintenon to Versailles to whom Louis XIV gave for the first time a “private apartment” facing the royal chamber. By the end of his life, the king himself moved into her apartment displacing the practice of “lit de parade” into a smaller place, progressively privatizing royal sexuality.\(^{220}\) Refusing unnecessary public visits to her apartment, Madame de Maintenon claimed for a close room, a “sanctuary”

and a silent “retreat” for reading…non-religious books.

The practice of reading as a non-eclasiatic and popular activity developed during the seventeenth century amongst the urban upper classes. Reading created a spatial gap within the upper-class public experience of space that characterized the early modern aristocratic life. The pornographic book functioned as an interface where interior space, subjective thought, physical pleasure, and imagination unfolded for the first time with the practice of individual reading. The experience of reading demanded a silent corner, but also created a breach with the surrounding space: swallowed up by non-sacred books, the reader developed a virtual and emotional space that separated her from the surrounding physical environment.

In fact, Madame de Maintenon was said to possess one of the richest female libraries of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries that contained, for instance, one of the few surviving copies of the licentious novel *L’Ecole des filles*. Erotic libertine texts, a mixture of instructional philosophy, pedagogical, sexual health advice and sexual arousal, “required (in as much as religious texts) an intimate setting, for the writer/artist to place their characters, and for the reader/viewer to enjoy them.” In its relation to the “oratoire,” the “female cabinet” was already a transgressive use of a religious space, the erotization of the spiritual practice of reading sacred texts through novels and erotic

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writings.

The boudoir as chamber for reading pornographic books functioned as a spatialization of Steven Marcus’ *pornotopia*, literality opening a breach within the order of power, knowledge, and sexuality of the Renaissance. The book could be defined as a “technology of the self,” in the sense that Foucault has given to this expression: a technology of production of subjectivity through discipline and surveillance, but also through identification and pleasure production.\textsuperscript{223} Within the female library a new technique of the self was born. The “female cabinet” could be understood as the first space where masturbation as a body technique related to the practice of reading took place. It was through reading that the “oratoire” started to be represented as a female masturbing room. For historian of sexuality Thomas Laqueur, modern masturbation appeared as politically regulated practice, as medical, and discursive fact exactly at the same time that the private chamber of Madame de Maintenon was created, between 1712 and 1760, with the publication of the anonymous tract *Onania* (probably authored by John Marten around 1712) and Samuel Tissot's *L'Onanisme: Ou, Dissertation physique sur les maladies produites par la masturbation* (1760).\textsuperscript{224} According to an early model of industrial capitalism, the modern theories of masturbation defined the body as an economic circuit of energetic fluids that should be used either for production of capital or for sexual reproduction. For the first time, the hand appeared as a new and troubled

\textsuperscript{223} Michel Foucault, Edited by Luther Martin, *Technologies of the Self, A Seminar with Michel Foucault* (Univesity of Massachusetts Press: Minnesota, 1998), 17-25.

(genderedless) sexual organ that could break into the energetic body circuit causing an unnecessary waste of productive and reproductive fluids. Reading pornographic novels was “lire d’une seule main” (reading with a single hand) which implied that it was the activity of reading itself that moved the “second hand” to touch the body unleashing pleasure. Whereas the royal practice of sexuality understood as theatre of power was publically staged, the pleasures of solitary masturbation induced by reading seemed to demand an isolated place. Solitary sex understood as “self-abuse” and “insanity” demanded a separated cabinet, outside of public representation. This is how the libertine cabinet emerged as “a self-conscious aesthetic chamber for sexual intimacy and discovery.”

Fig. 32, 33. *Portes et fenêtres (nouvelle série)*: Collection de 36 dessins coloriés, Paris, chez les marchands d’estampes, vers 1835, Estampes, Réserve, Ae 76 A, pet. fol. BNF. Paris.

Fig. 33, 34. Left: Palais de Fontainebleau, Chambre à coucher de Madame de Maintenon, Tourist postcard, 1920s; Right: Plan de l'appartement de madame de Maintenon, gravé par Nicolas de Fer situé au rez-de-chaussée du pavillon royal du château de Marly. BNF. Paris.

Madame de Maintenon’s “chambre,” later imitated by Marie-Antoinette’s and Madame du Barry’s boudoirs, became a transitional space where the king worked publicly with his ministers but where she could find a new form of intimacy for reading behind dividing “cabinets,” collections of objects, candles, and thick curtains, claiming that she was always “cold.” This fabrication of opacity and interiority with the inner segmentation of the space of the “chambre” with furniture and textiles anticipated the dense and highly privatized female boudoir of the eighteenth century and the

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forthcoming bourgeois interior space. Moreover, with the extraction of the practices of reading and “solitary sex” outside of the public scene after the eighteenth century, the public representation of reading non-religious books and sexuality became “obs-scene,” literally outside of the scene in Linda Williams’s sense, and therefore pornographic.

Even before the development of the European market of the erotic novel, “the act of reading itself,” Georgina Downey and Mark Taylor underline, “was figured as a proto-sexual activity, especially for women of whom about 3.5 million were literate by the end of the eighteenth-century.” After the end of the eighteenth century, the notion of pornography was used retrospectively to define the array of texts and illustrations dealing with sexuality, anti-religious thought, naturalism and libertine practices that circulated around Europe and that included Pietro Aretino’s reprinting of Ragionamenti (1534-6), L’Académie des Dames (1660), L’Ecole des filles (1655), L’Ode a Priape (1710), Le Sopha by Crébillon fils (1737-1748), Thérèse Philosophe (1748), Clealand’s Fanny Hill (1749), Sade’s Philosophie dans le boudoir (1795) or Galérie des femmes (1799) among others. As historian Katheryn Norberg has stressed all these writings shared a new and unexpected literary hero: a female character – specially a “prostitute” but also a “free woman” or a “philosophe”- is always at the center of most libertine narratives such as in Thérèse philosophe, Margot la ravaudeuse or Julie philosophe.228

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227 Georgina Downey and Mark Taylor, 3.
For Lynn Hunt and Joan DeJean, the so-called pornographic literature of the early seventeenth century, dealing with the pleasure of the individual body and related to the female voice and to the subjective experience of the senses, created an experimental fictional platform where the modern sexual subject as individual and gendered body emerged.229 Steven Marcus describes this process of sexual differentiation as related to pornographic reading:

“As an urban, capitalist, industrial, and middle-class was being created, the sexual character of European society underwent significant modifications. The sexual character or roles attributed to men and women changed; sexual manners and habits altered; indeed the whole lifestyle of sexual life was considerably modified. Among the principal tendencies in this process was a steadily increasing pressure to split sexuality off from the rest of life. By a variety of social means, which correspond to the psychological processes of isolation, distancing, denial, and even repression, a separate and insulated sphere where sexuality was to be confined was brought into existence. […] Indeed that isolation was both the precondition and the vehicle through which such a development occurred. The growth of pornography was one of the results of these processes – as, in another context, was the development of modern romantic love. Pornography and the history of pornography allow us to see how, on one of its side, and under the special conditions of isolation and separation, sexuality came to be thought of in European society.”230

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Steven Marcus argues that eighteenth century pornographic writings recorded for the first time the vast social processes which were taking place within Enlightenment European colonial societies: the growth of the cities and with them of an audience of literate readers, and the experience of the urban space; but also “the privatized experience”\textsuperscript{231} of the individual subject. The boudoir is the virtual space where both experiences meet. For Marcus, pornography registers at the same time the encounter and the incompatibility between these two new uses of the interior space and the city: the experience of privacy and that of the public street. Modern pornography, ranging from reading and masturbatory practices, to medical and hygienic discourses of management of urban detritus as well as of women within the public space, will be for Steven Marcus “mad parodies” of these new modern experiences of privatization and publicness.\textsuperscript{232}

\textsuperscript{231} Steven Marcus, \textit{The Secret Museum}, 282.
\textsuperscript{232} Lynn Hunt, \textit{The Invention of Pornography}, 368.
Fig. 35, 36. Left: L’Académie des dames de Pierre Arretin, Venise, Grenoble, 1680, Réserve des livres rares, Enfer 277, BNF; Right: Marquis de Sade, La Philosophie dans le boudoir, 1795, réserve des livres rares, Enfer, BNF. Paris.

We could say reading Lynn Hunt and Steven Marcus with Foucault that eighteenth century pornography was the experimental language were the shift from a sovereign regime of power to a disciplinary regime was recorded through four critical displacements: 1) criticism of forms of power and of theological norms of the Ancien Régime characterized by the materialist and naturalist desacralization of icons of the Monarchy and the Church that will become prominent during the Enlightenment. For instance, the pornographic pamphlet Les Bordels de Paris, avec les noms, demeures et prix, published in 1790, was at the same time a detail description of the aristocratic brothels of Paris and a critique of the life and morals of Queen Marie Antoinette that end
up justifying death penalty. A turning point in the social and political functions of pornography happened, according to Lynn Hunt, between the end of French Revolution and the 1830s. By the beginning of the nineteenth century pornography started to loose its anti-religious, political, and philosophical connotations and entered within the realm of consumption and media industry. As a result, the social character of the audience was modified, its public being mostly aristocrats and the high bourgeoisie. Therefore, the relationship between pornographic representation and democracy is far from being linear: whereas pornography developed democratic and naturalist philosophies during the eighteenth century, it was later a refuge of royalist and antidemocratic ideas. 2) pornographic writing registered the urban experience as opposed to the rural life, as well as the rising of the question of management of “public women,” and of regulation of the uses of sexuality within the public space of the city, as we will see in the following chapter; 3) but pornography was also linked to the rise of literacy and the new media, being reading, as well as the public spectacle of museums, theaters, arcades, sideshows and circuses central to this mediated experience and to the production of new kinds of visual and sensorial pleasures; and finally 4) pornography triggered privatization and the birth of modern intimacy, with the invention of a fictional space, a private room, the male cabinet and the female boudoir as cells for the senses and capsules for the development of techniques of the gendered self.

In terms of architecture, the invention of the Gutenberg printing press, the production of

the non-religious book and the secularization of the practice of reading after the sixteenth century were crucial not only for the advent of architecture as discursive technique with the possibility of reproducing the modern treatises by Alberti, Filarete and Di Giorgio, and specially with the work of Andrea Palladio, but also for the invention of a new experience of interiority that will push architecture to displace itself from tectonics to programming, embracing the new task of creating differential interior spaces destined to promote new practices of production of subjectivity related to body discipline and political control, but also to the encapsulation of the new pleasures and surveillance techniques.

The male cabinet and the female boudoir were the places where the silent and private experience of reading was for the first time possible. Although the use of the printed book is today naturalized and therefore we have almost forgotten its cultural origins, the book is not a natural fact but a technology for the production and transmission of a cognitive experience (as much as it will be later the Kinestoscope, the cinema machine and the peepshow) which implies not only a pedagogical process of learning to read (with the birth of the institution of school) but also a process of transformation of the body sensorial experience, which in the case of the book requires concentration, spatial restriction of the audiovisual field and the increase of the imagination’s activity. The relationship between reading and spatial isolation will be crucial for the invention of modern interiority as space for the production of individuality, as well as of gender and sexual identity.
First with religious reading, and later with erotic writing and reading a new form of architectural imagination appeared that projected interiors as expressions of emotional states of the inhabitant. Architecture was not only the art of providing shelter as the Abbé Laugier had put it in his *Essai sur l’architecture* (1753), but also a technique for cultivating the self, generating differences according to class, age, gender, sexuality, or race. This shift towards interiority and the transformation of architecture into what we shall call with Mathieu Triclot an “experience operator” was reflected on the work of Nicolas Camus de Mézières’ treatise *The Genius of Architecture or the Analogy of that Art with Our Sensations* (1780), written a few years after Restif de la Bretonne’s *Le Pornographe ou la Prostitution Réformée*. Camus de Mézières’ boudoir seemed to have the power to act upon the subject’s will, not simply facilitating sexual arousal, but removing the subject’s ability to act otherwise. The boudoir codified behavioral norms into spatial organization and décor creating a “psychological architecture fostering an interior life.” The modern sexual subject will grow out of the space of the book.

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Fig. 37. Sleeping room with peephole, Jean-Jacques Lequeu, Plan d'une chambre à coucher, 1751-1824? BNF. Paris.

The book and the boudoir work together up to the point that the boudoir could be considered the first media space, the origin of the modern media spatial experience. The
boudoir was, to put it with Suellen Diaconoff, “l'espace du livre,” the book space, at the same time oratoire, private female library and space for female reading. As historian J. Paul Hunter has pointed out, literacy “grew rapidly between 1600 and 1800 so that by the latter a vast majority of adult males could read and write, whereas two centuries earlier only a select minority could do so.” This secularization of reading practices and their extension to a larger population provoked a profound cultural mutation that modified the ways of inhabiting space: a transition from oral culture to a culture of silent reading that brought with it new experiences of privacy and confinement. This mutation altered the subject relationship to vision and hearing in such a way that disability scholar Lennard J. Davis, has argued that during this period “Europe became deaf.” In solitary reading, the encounter with the book demanded “the text not be transformed into an auditory translation but would be seen as language itself.” “Hooked” to the reading technology of the book, the modern subject was engulfed by a voiceless space where images and feelings grew out of the connection between the eye, the hand, and the mobile page. The eighteenth century boudoir is to literature what the

\[\text{Suellen Diaconoff, } Through the Reading Glass: Women Books and Sex in French Enlightenment (New York: State University of New York Press, 2005), 3.\]
\[\text{David Bartine, } Early English Reading Theory: Origins of Current Debates (Columbia SC: University of South California Press, 1989), 133.\]
black room is to cinema, the space where a media experience is activated. In this respect, the boudoir is part of what Frederick Kittler calls the “literature discourse network” of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The boudoir is the space where the book as “general medium” and “archive for storage of all cultural data” could be opened. Kittler argues that before the technological separation and storage of the data stream introduced by the invention of the gramophone, the kinestoscope and the typewriter at the end of the nineteenth century, the eighteenth century book was a synthetic medium involving all senses: the book as homogeneous medium “was invested with spiritual powers whose thematization provided the basis of romantic poetry and hermeneutics.”

Before the separation of media, the book contained, says Kittler, a total sensorial synesthetic experience, without specialization or separation of the senses where images grow out of words. As Novalis put it in 1798: “If one reads correctly, the words in us will be unfolded into a visible world.” For Marshall McLuhan the book as “mass-technology of the phonetic alphabet” and “mediatization of the senses” translated the world of the ear into a visual world that engulfed the subject. But since, as Kittler notices, “writing can store only writing,” the boudoir, constructed as an intentionally enhanced sensorial box, provided the optical experience that the book promised: if as Kittler argues before the advent of the separated media “all the passion of reading

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consisted of hallucinating a meaning between letters and lines, the visible or audible world of romantic poetry, the boudoir, with mirrors, curtains, and candles was the space that produced, triggered, and captured this new hallucinatory reading experience whose synthetic intensity was in itself pornographic. For Kittler, electricity and the invention of the separated media at the end of the nineteenth century turned obsolete this hallucinatory power of reading and writing, displacing the modern subject from the boudoir to the cinema room, and later to the TV room and the computer station. The advent of modern interior architecture could be thus understood as part of this technology of the book that will be profoundly transformed with the development of prosthetic and mobile multimedia techniques after the Second World War and that I shall explore in the second part of this dissertation.

If Beatriz Colomina has defined the modern house by its relationship to media, this process of media production, I would argue, starts with the boudoir as book space. Modern gendered architecture was born within the Guttenberg’s space: as a technique for enclosing, confining and eroticizing female reading and sexuality. The boudoir was the first pod entirely designed for the connection of the individual body with the book as a technology of the virtual.

248 Ibid., 40.
249 John Jonston, in Frederick A. Kittler, Literature Media Information Systems, 5: “This synthesis dissolves with the invention of the film and the phonograph, which record and store optical and aural data automatically with superhuman precision, and the typewriter, which mechanically removes writing from the sensuous continuity of the hand’s movements, and frees it from the double domination of eye and consciousness.”
250 This is one of the central thesis of Colomina’s work that has been a starting point for my own dissertation research. A startling summary of this argument can be found in Beatriz Colomina, “The Media House,” Assemblage 27 (August, 1995): 55-56.
Contrary to what has commonly being argued, the experience of the boudoir was neither voyeuristic nor exhibitionist because none of these medical categories existed until the end of the nineteenth century as psychological conditions or sexual deviations. Indeed, voyeurism and exhibitionism as “pathologies” invented at the same time that photography and the kinestoscope are already the sign of the media separation that is taking place at the end of the nineteenth century. Preceding this media differentiation, the spatial experience of the boudoir, producing interiority through reading and masturbation, gave rise to the modern sexual subject as individual and self-identified body stressing sexual difference via the situation of the body in relation to space: femininity versus masculinity, private versus public space, inside versus outside, and as we will see, menstruating blood and nurturing milk versus sperm.

For historian Suellen Diaconoff, reading transformed eighteenth century architecture: the practice of reading demanded the creation of smaller and more intimate rooms, removed from the “agitation of the normal household activities” which promoted horizontal distribution. Victor de Mirabeau described this proliferation of interior spaces designed by Blondel and Le Camus de Mézières as a “Daedalus” that transformed the house into a

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domestic labyrinth where the subject felt anxious and lost.\textsuperscript{253} Indeed, in a somatic sense, being confronted to multiple segmented spaces or enclosed within the “petit cabinet” or in the “boudoir” must had been an awkward experience, both in visual and sensorial terms, for a body educated according to the performative rituals of public space of the early eighteenth century. As it is defined in the literary early eighteenth century texts and designed in the aristocratic apartments by Claude-Nicolas Ledoux our François Franque, the boudoir is not a room at such, but rather a closet within a cabinet, a domestic \textit{Enfer}, the last resort of privacy to hide solitary pleasures, melancholia and anti-social emotions: a very narrow space left to the salon in François Franque’s design, a sub-division of an already small space in Ledoux’s apartment for the Hôtel Thélusson, or in the case of Ledoux’s design for the Hôtel d’Attily, a micro chamber connected solely to a library or to a toilet. To give a sense of the narrowness of the space and its inconvenience for sexual adventures, Ed Lilley has calculated, looking at Ledoux’s and Franque’s plans, that the first boudoirs were “not bigger than a telephone booth,”\textsuperscript{254} and only later were developed to place a small lying platform. We could venture that the experience of being alone in a boudoir not bigger than a closet or sharing the boudoir with another body was for an early modern subject as bizarre as was for Farnsworth to be exposed to the public gaze within four glass walls in the house at Plano, Illinois designed by Mies Van der Rohe in 1949, or to seat inside the Archigram’s “cusichle” in the 1960s. In all cases, sexual spatial arrangements and the politics of vision were radically shaken.

\textsuperscript{253} Victor de Mirabeau, \textit{L’ami des hommes, ou Traité de la population}, Vol. 1 (Hamburg: Chrétien Herold, 1758), 518.

\textsuperscript{254} Ed Lilley, “The Name of the Boudoir,” 195.
Apart from religious and disciplinary confinement, in the boudoir, space itself (as sexuality within reading and masturbating) was given to the individual body for the first time as a subjective experience: this encounter between body and space, skin and surfaces, gaze and smell, could already constitute a sensual or even a sexual practice. Architecture was for the first time consumed erotically. This could be the reason why the boudoir was the central sexual topos but also topic of eighteenth century pornographic literature. In the most influential pornographic writings of the eighteenth century, Vivant Denon’s *Point de lendemain* (1777), the architecture of the boudoir itself becomes an erotic object more appealing than the human body: “It was not longer Mme de T. who I desire,” the protagonist affirms, “but her cabinet.” Actively participating within the production of sexual difference through the segmentation of spaces and the regulation of sexual practices through restriction, confinement and vision, architecture itself is erotized. In *Anecdotes sur Mme la Comtesse du Barry* (1775), Mme Gourdan introduced the young comtesse into her brothel by charming her with the beauty of the boudoirs, where the walls were decorated with engravings of images of love making that made the young lady to forget the exterior world. As Paul J. Young argues, the boudoir “functions as a supplement to pleasure,” in such a way that architecture enhances but also supplants sexuality: “The cabinet, rather than simply inspiring or facilitating pleasure, attempts to offer a response, or a challenge, to nature.”

The architecture of the boudoir and its “ressources artificielles,” whether paintings,

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décors, mirrors, carpets or optical devices, worked to produce a somatic effect, becoming part of a sexual practice. Le Camus de Mézières’s *The Genius of Architecture* (1780), “promoted the sensuous and seductive aspects of surfaces and spatial arrangements.” Libertine sexuality was the practice of having sex not only *in* the boudoir, but *with* the boudoir. There is no fetishism in this intense erotization of the tectonics and materials of the boudoir as media space. As in the case of voyeurism and exhibitionism, this process of sexualization of architecture is prior to the pathologization of fetishism as sexual investment of non-organic bodies introduced by French psychologist Alfred Binet in 1887. Rather than separation of the senses and pathologization of the visual and haptic non-genital experiences, the boudoir, between the end of the eighteenth century and the advent of bourgeois ethics of interior space, produces the modern sexual experience as (in Kittler terms) “synthetically mediated”: growing out of reading and extending to the non-organic world, to smell, vision, and touch.

For Audrey Higelin-Fusté, the architecture of the boudoir is conceived in the eighteenth century literature as an “aphrodisiac machine”: multiplied and displaced by visual low-tech devises, the boudoir space operated as a masturbatory technique supplementing reading. Rodolphe El-Khoury has studied the role of architecture in libertine erotic

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259 Audrey Higelin-Fusté, “Le boudoir dans la littérature ou l’architecture de l’intime,”
narrative of De Bastide’s *La Petite Maison* (1789). De Bastide’s novel narrates the process by which the Marquis de Trémicour seduces Mélite who has thus far resisted his advances. Anticipating Playboy deployment of the penthouse’s architecture and interior design as a technology of seduction (that I shall study in the second part of this dissertation), Trémicour uses the interior architecture of the “boudoir” at the *Petite Maison* as a technique of sexual arousal. Trémicour’s boudoir caused such an impression to Mélite that she “trembled, became confuse, sighed, and lost the wager.”

But what was the specific architecture of the boudoir as media space? As we have seen, the boudoir was a chamber constructed to enhance the experience of reading through visual and sensorial tricks. The boudoir provided an intensive aesthetic and bodily experience created by adornments, furniture, perfume, lighting and the overlapping of fragmented images coming from superimposed fabrics and looking glasses. As Diane Berret Brown has put it, the boudoir was a “cabinet of the senses,” a total interior which generates its own moral and visual rules. In architectural terms, the boudoir was a small cabinet constructed by visual, architectonic, and theatrical techniques aimed to intensify the experience of isolation for reading, to enhance imagination and body self-perception, and to regulate vision and sound producing privacy. Four material techniques characterize the boudoir as media box: the mirror, the peephole, the curtains, and a lying

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platform inducing body horizontality; all four aimed at the same time to psychically connect the body to the book technology, to immerse the subject within space, to isolate the individual body, to dematerialize the wall, and to multiply the gaze.

In the boudoir, architecture functioned as a framing and portrait technique, a mirror to represent the self. The shift from the seventeenth century spatial arrangement “en enfilade” to spatial distribution as an art of “carving” interiority in the eighteenth century was also, according to Denise Amy Baxter, a transformation in the techniques of framing the subject. “En enfilade” spaces were the expression of etiquette practices, but also of a theatrical organization of space that enabled the construction of a series of stages to perform social rituals of power and identity, such as those taking place at the “chambre de parade.” As opposed to the Medieval opened plan described by Evans and to the open theatre of the seventeenth century, interior space was crafted in the eighteenth century as a “portrait” or a “mirror,” architecture operating as a self-fashioning technology to represent identity. In the boudoir this process of individual framing, mirroring and identity production is hyperbolically amplified.

In Vicent Denon’s Point de lendeman, the boudoir is depicted as “une vaste cage, entièrement de glaces,” “a large cell, entirely made of mirrors.” In the boudoir, the walls are totally covered by images, decorated with paintings of natural gardens,

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263 Vicent Denon’s Point de lendemain [1777], suivi de Jean-François de Bastide, La Petite Maison, Michel Delon ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 1995), 95.
secluded groves and dark grottos, and multiplied by their reflection on mirrors. Following Denon and taking on the tradition of the “cabinet de glaces,” in Camus de Mézières’ boudoir the mirrors reflecting interior objects and images create the illusion of a garden view. Nicolas Camus de Mézières describes the boudoir like an artificial grove, a lying space where the bed recess with an ottoman was decorated with a combination of “looking glasses,” “carved tree trunks,” creating a vault space decorated with mirrors on the ceiling.

The boudoir is a techno-somatic space, a place where architecture and body juxtapose and interpenetrate up to becoming one. Enclosing the body like an architectonic looking-glass skin, the boudoir is at the same time a visual prison and a virtual window: decorated as a fake garden reflected on mirrors, the small boudoir opens to its inhabitant as a mental infinite landscape. Made of mirror-walls, the boudoir is not a simple room, but rather an optical device totally turned into itself, and multiplying interiority, an architectural replica both of a natural garden where furniture and objects seem to grow naturally. It is a synesthetic experience machine made to intensify the senses. The boudoir as erotic box represents the breaking down of boundaries between architecture and furniture, between tectonics and interior decoration, but also between the artificial and the organic. Because of the proximity with the technical cave, the fake grotto and the

264 The “cabinet de glaces” or Italian “galleria degli specchi” were part of the seventeenth century illusory experiences created by optic devices. The most famous “cabinet de glaces” was the one at Versailles built around 1680. See: Katrin Sello ed., Spiegel Bilder (Berlin: Speigel Bilder, Frölich und Kaufmann GmbH, 1982).

265 Nicolas Camus de Mézières, The Genius of Architecture or the Analogy of that Art with Our Sensations [1780] (Santa Monica: Getty Centre, 1992), 116.
artificial garden,\textsuperscript{266} furniture is thought in the boudoir as a series of organic extrusions growing out from the wall. Lying within an organic sofa and surrounded by an interior landscape created by superimposed images and textures, the inhabitant of the boudoir saw her interior space at the same time turned into itself and opened endlessly.

Within the boudoir design, as important as psychical isolation and multiplication of the gaze was inducing bodily horizontality: to force the subject to experience reading in laying position, stimulating the state of relaxation and hallucination that psychoanalysis will later embrace as the condition of “free association.”\textsuperscript{267} Although extremely narrow in its origins, the boudoir became during the late eighteenth century a space big enough to have the ability to contain a laying platform, either a sofa, an ottoman, a small bed, a duchesse or Paphos. In terms of body discipline, the furnishing of the boudoir, designed for reading (religious books but also erotic novels), conflated textuality and affect inviting the reading body to relax and to enter into an intermediate state between sleep and wake that induced trance and masturbation and that by itself could already be considered as ex-centric, and ob-scene.\textsuperscript{268}


\textsuperscript{267} See the argument on Freud’s divan by Diana Fuss and Joel Sanders: Diana Fuss, \textit{The Sense of An Interior: Four Rooms and the Writers that Shaped Them} (New York: Routledge, 2004), 31-46.

Although constructed as a baroque Leibniz’s “monad without window,” the boudoir was not a totally enclosed inside. According to Vivant Denon’s and Jean-François Bastide’s narratives, privacy and disclosure, confinement and release were intentionally designed via the construction of secret mechanisms (“ressort secret”) to open and close the doors, and to peer into the walls. As important for the space of the boudoir as the mirror as technique for dematerializing the walls and multiplying vision, it was the possibility of the boudoir to be observed from an outside through a peephole. In terms of sexual difference, the peephole created a break between female interiority and the masculine public space, while preserving the separation of gender spheres.

Fig. 38–40. From left to right: The catoptric theater. From Ars Magna Lucis et Umbrae, 1671; Athanasius Kircher, Application of the Magic Lantern, Catoptric boxes, 1660; Microscope captroptique, Esprit Pezenas, Paris, Jombert, 1754.

Covered with mirrors in the inside and opened to the outside through a peeping hole, the boudoir functioned as a “camera obscura” or a “catoptric box,” a mirror-lined box
invented during the seventeenth century (that Leibniz considered the best example of the monad) to create the illusion of an internal space larger than the box itself often recreated with gardens or architectural composition images.\textsuperscript{269} Georges Teyssot has noticed that Johannes Zahn’s catoptric box “was composed of compartments with mirror-linen dividers that had a peephole in the center of the compartment – when a viewer looked through the peephole, each scene depicted was multiplied six times and magically appeared to fill the entire hexagonal cabinet.”\textsuperscript{270} In fact, working as a catoptric chamber where the images of reading and desire could flow in space and multiply, the boudoir was the first inhabited peepshow in the history of architecture. Placing the subject at the center of a series of lenses to maximize and multiply vision, the boudoir could also be compared to a microscope (a variation of the catoptric box developed during the eighteenth century) intended to view and represent sexual identity and desire.


Fig. 41. Using a catoptric box the Jesuit Johannes Zahn (1641–1707) developed a camera obscura with peephole, which – with the addition of a mirror – no longer produced an inverted image.

As a result, from the eighteenth century, the central trope of the pornographic texts was to “peep through the hole,” “regarder par le trou de la serrure,” or to put it in Louis Aragon’s terms to glance “derrière un tapisserie éraillé habilement.” The eighteenth century pornographic image was never directly seen, but rather technically “unveiled” being hidden surveillance a condition of erotic enjoyment. If modern subjectivity is constructed through spatial isolation, the sense of privacy and intimacy are nevertheless side effects of the new techniques of disclosing and observation.

In the eighteenth century erotic novel, the sexual activity of the boudoir is often observed from a hidden eyehole as in Thérèse philosophe where the narrator Thérèse witnesses a rape scene from a hole in the closet door. The boudoir becomes an erotic inside when it is observed from a peep-hole opened on its walls which connected the media space to the moral rules of the exterior space introducing risk, surveillance, and pleasure. This outside space can also be another inside, a closet or a hidden cabinet within a cabinet where the viewer can look without being seen. Indeed, the narrator of the erotic libertine fictions was not the subject directly involved in reading or sexual activity within the boudoir, but rather the viewer that observed the boudoir from the outside. In Louis-Charles Fougeret de Monbron’s Margot la Ravaudeuse (1750), the female protagonist

“slipped away in a niche in the cabinet that was closed by a simple screen with panels separated from each other by a good inch, sealed together with strips of paper. By means of a small opening that I made, it was easy to see all the manoeuvres.”272 The space of the boudoir is thus constructed through a process of erotisation of surveillance but also through an intentional performance of interiority.

To study the use of salons and chambers in eighteenth century architecture, Kathryn Norberg borrows from Joan Riviere and Judith Butler’s273 theory of gender performance to explain how aristocratic women used interior spaces as stages for their performance of identity.274 For Norberg, the boudoir went from being a cabinet designed for primarily female private occupation to being a space associated with illicit sexual liaisons during the second half of the eighteenth century when French courtesans and prostitutes used their boudoirs as stages to perform sexual identity and commercialize sexual services. Only an exterior gaze could transform the interior space of the boudoir into a stage. Through the peephole, the boudoir emerged as an “emphatically theatrical space” where to display crafted female gender and sexuality. It was this theatrical dimension of interiority that attracted the attention of eighteenth-century architects such as Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières that saw the boudoir as an architectural experimental cage for

producing affects.

For Georgina Downey and Mark Taylor, “The architectural intention of the mirror-linen space was not only to dematerialize the walls, but to offer a means by which sexual encounters could be further enjoyed through watching.” The candle lighting, the mirrors and the peephole created a virtual space where the gaze could be projected and returned. But who was looking? Who was the subject reflected within the mirror? Who was being observed? Reading Laura Mulvey with Eve K. Sedgwick, Nicole Reynolds interprets Le Camus de Mézières’ description of the visual enjoyment of the boudoir as a self-reflective masculine homoerotic pleasure where the architect meets himself at the mirror: “In designing this space, Le Camus has seduced himself. The architect, ostensibly (ad)dressing the lady, finally finds her extraneous to his erotic practices. His is the pleasure of looking, of watching himself look, and finally of describing that experiencing in an architectural treatise to other gentlemen-architects.”

Although the narrative and visual subject of the architecture of the boudoir and the erotic novel are women, they are women as they are imagined by men. Being women represented by men the main subject of erotic writing and representation in the boudoir, when the architect looks into the peephole or into the mirror it his own image that he finds. To put it otherwise, the architect and narrator finds his own image in female drag within the boudoir indulging within a transgender fantasy embodying femininity and the female

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Together with looking glasses, thick curtains covered the boudoir’s walls. The boudoir’s drape was not intended to block the passage of light through windows since the walls were opaque, but rather functioned as a secondary mobile and soft wall, controlling temperature, absorbing sound, and intensifying the experience of interiority, while activating the possibilities of hiding and disclosure. Wrapped around with fabric, the boudoir is a deaf reading cage, where the density of images is underlined by the minimization of noise. Refusing the distinction between floor and wall, fabrics extended the totality of the boudoir. The female cabinet’s floor was never simply a surface, but rather was treated as a natural soil or a skin. Sometimes it was covered with a fussy carpet and became “épais gazon,” “a thick lawn;” others, it is waxed like a “parquet ciré” becoming a slippery skin.

In terms of a genealogy of materials, the thick curtain of the boudoir was the displacement of the seventeenth century religious drapery within the realm of aristocratic domestic architecture. According to Anne Hollander, swathed, draped curtaining, in both painting and textual illustrations, did more than just frame the subject: “In the Eighteenth century, drapery, which was traditionally used by religious painters and sculptures to glorify Holy figures, was liberated from a theological or functional purpose and became “irrational, emotional, sensual, allusive, sometimes ridiculous, but always a virtue,
power and agency all of its own."

For Georgina Downey and Mark Taylor, “curtains exteriorize the sensations that the figured subject are experiencing, and amplify these sensations.” If reflected images intensify the sense of sight, perfumes and the juxtaposition of textures on the floors and walls, on curtains and bed linen intensify the sense of touch. Although the boudoir is mostly described as a virtual scopic box, rather than a haptic space, it is not because of a total absence of touch, but rather because of the sensorial translation of touch into vision, of vision into smell, of taste into sexual arousal provided by the book as “synthetic media.” Curtains move and wave like book pages, open like body wrinkles, transforming the boudoir into a book, but also into a living organ. As Gilles Deleuze suggests in his reading of Leibniz and the Baroque, boudoir’s curtains could be understood as the spacialization and externalization of the new modern subject’s psychic and sexual desire.

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278 Georgina Downey and Mark Taylor, 5.


Fig. 42. Portes et Fenêtres, Planche n. 7., lithographie coloriée, vers 1835, Estampes et Photographie, Ae 76 Pet. Fol. Réserve BNF. Paris.

Fig. 43, 44. Left: Jean Jacques Lequeu, Cratère d’une fille adolescente animée de désir déréglé: ell est couché sur le dos les deux cuisses levees et bien ouvertes, de manière qu’on voit le pucelage force, 1779-1795, Estampes, Réserve Ae 15, boîte 1, BNF; Right:

WET SPACE

BIOPOLITICAL MANAGEMENT OF FLUIDS IN THE BOUDOIR

With the architecture of Jean-François Blondel and Le Camus de Mézières, the “bâtiment idéal” or the aristocratic apartment was divided in two distinct areas segregated according to the degrees of display and privacy. In biopolitical terms, this new segmentation of spaces was not only dedicated to the new practice of reading, but it was also related to the production of femininity and sexuality as side effects of the book and its specific technologies of the self. The male cabinet and the boudoir created an inside within an inside, opening spaces of gender and sexual exception, operating like biopolitical gaps within the still open space of the distribution “en enfilade” of the aristocratic hôtel particulier.

From the point of view of the biopolitical relationship between power, subjectivity and architecture sketched by Foucault, we could say that the cabinet and the boudoir appeared at the time of transition between a sovereign and theocratic regime of power to a disciplinary secularized regime. The cabinet and the boudoir could be thought as the effects of the biopolitical transformation of the medieval monastic cell into a secularized container for the modern individual body, its affects and subjective emotions. Along the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries the monastic cell (moving from “oratoire” to
boudoir) detached progressively from the transcendental relation to theological power and became a privilege place for the production of subjectivity amongst the upper-classes. The spatial specialization of the male cabinet and the boudoir as *gender capsules* at the end of the eighteenth century defined new relationships between power, body and architecture. Modern masculinity and the cabinet share a common process of cultural construction, as they define spaces of femininity and sexuality by contrast and exclusion.281

The eighteenth century is not only the period of spatial inscription of intimacy through new techniques of the self and interior distribution. It is also, and equally importantly, the period of proliferation of new techniques of biopolitical management of gender and sexuality within space. Modern gender and sexual differences were constructed in and through space by distribution, segmentation, media specialization, and strategic visual connection of different spaces. As Mark Wigley has argued, this process of distribution and subdivision of spaces was a “housing of gender” that “map(ped) a social order drawing the lines between hierarchies of propriety” into the domestic constructing the modern house as a gendered regime.282

**The boudoir as PMS chamber**

What could we learn about the history of “interiority,” the domestic space and their


specific architecture if we analyze them with Foucault in relation to the biopolitical history of sexuality? What are the governmental techniques and body disciplines that derive from the architecture of the private and domestic spaces? What is the relationship between the techniques of control and management of sexual reproduction and the architecture of the boudoir? Or to put it otherwise: How to explain the process of naturalization of architecture that took from the libertine boudoir as “private garden” and pornographic reading cabinet to the nineteenth century domestic interiority defined as female milking breast and reproducing womb, and to the state brothel as space for male pleasure production? And how was the shift from the boudoir as libertine cabinet towards the boudoir as bourgeois domesticity operated?

Contemporary with the findings of Pompeii and with the creation of the Secret Museum and the private liberary, the age of the invention of the boudoir as female chamber was also the biopolitical period of over-codification of sexual difference and sexuality with the discourses of reproductive biology, medicine, and urban hygienics. The biopolitical gendering of space was the architectonic inscription of the anatomopolitical process of gendering the human body at work during the eighteenth century.

Using architecture as a gender technology, the gendering of the body and sexuality was effectively constructed through the carving of “interiority” and the design of the boudoir and the cabinet as female and masculine spaces respectively. According to this architectural inscription of anatomopolitical differences the male cabinet was understood as “the chamber of reason” while the “boudoir” was described as a “vagina” where the
pages of the pornographic book turned into genital skin flaps and folds. On one side, As Kathleen Lubey has shown, imagination itself was represented within eighteenth century literature as an interior space, a delightful room “that housed a singular and celebrated faculty that endowed each object with a self-contained capacity for excitem...it accommodated an interior secret life replete with beautiful spectacles, narrative engagements and the satisfaction of virtual ownership in all visible things.” On the other hand, “female imagination” was conceived in thermodynamic terms as a “dangerous” and “hot” chamber and faculty that might be controlled (in a thermostatic sense) through aesthetic experience.” This process of spatial partition and differentiation came together with a new theory of generation and sexual reproduction that, as Thomas Laqueur has noticed, for the first time explained the female and the masculine sexual organs according to a system of differences, rather than to a system of similarities, giving rise to what Laqueur calls the “two sex model.” Thus, the birth of the boudoir introduced the anatomopolitical epistemology of the sexes within architecture, producing what we could call with Laqueur the two sex-space model.

Drawing on the work of feminist historians, Ed Lilley traces the emergence of the boudoir as a space designed specifically for female occupation in eighteenth-century

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284 Georgina Downey and Mark Taylor, 3.
France. For Ed Lilley the space of the boudoir was not only the result of changing style or architectural innovation related to new reading practices but also the symptom of a shift in attitudes towards women during the time: “the boudoir was more than a room: it generated discourse about sexual power relationships and was at the center of discussions of morality.”

Although the boudoir ended up to be associated in literature with frivolous sexual activity and upper class romance, Ed Lilley, reconstructing its semiotic and architectural history, has pointed out the relationship of the boudoir not only with female reading, melancholia, sadness and solitude, but also with the spatial management of female reproductive fluids and organs.

Using etymology as a genealogical tool, Ed Lilley notices that the French word “boudoir” comes from the verb “bouder,” meaning “feeling sorry for oneself, being in a temper or in a gloomy mood” while making faces. In the 1752 French Dictionnaire de Trévoux the definition of the boudoir refered explicitly to the act of hiding oneself when in a irritable temper: the boudoir is said to be a “small closet (“petit réduit”), very confined cabinet (“cabinet fort étroit”), adjacent to the room one normally occupies, apparently thus name because of the habit of retiring their, to sulk unseen (“pour bouder

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sans témoin”), when one is in bad mood.”\textsuperscript{287} Jean-Antoine Du Cerceau described in 1730 the boudoir’s temper this way: “becoming gloomy and dreamy, as if in your boudoir. You deepened your dark mood until it turned to black.”\textsuperscript{288} Moreover, the term “bouder,” associated to a female “moody temper,” referred also to menstruation.\textsuperscript{289} During the eighteenth century, the boudoir as female chamber was defined as a space filled with affects and bodily functions: the space for “gloomy temper,” a private cabinet within a cabinet, came to be associated to the female reproductive cycles, and to be sexualized by the practice of reading pornographic fiction associated with female sexuality and masturbation.

\textsuperscript{287} Cited by Ed Lilley, “The Name of the Boudoir,” 194.
\textsuperscript{288} Jean-Antoine de Cerceau (circa 1730) as cited by Diderot and D’Alambert in their Encyclopédie, Vol 2, 488: “Tantôt sombre et rêveuse, et comme en ton boudoir. Tu renfonçais ton gris, et me montrés ton noir.”
\textsuperscript{289} Ed Lilley, “The Name of the Boudoir,” 197.
Reading Lilley with Foucault we can put a biopolitical hypothesis forward: the boudoir results from the spatialization and naturalization of the female menstrual cycle and the female reproductive functions at a time of changing representations of sexual difference and its relationship to organs and fluids, but also to private and public spaces. The space of female reading and imagination was naturalized through its association with sexual
reproduction, menstruation, and masturbation. Constructed by the eighteenth century medical and literary discourse on female reproduction, the boudoir could be understood as the invention of the premenstrual syndrome chamber. Far from the erotic qualities attributed to it by the pornographic novel, the female cabinet could rather be considered as a biopolitical cell where sexual bodies and reproductive forces were controlled and erotized: educated women (defined as moody, menstruating, and potentially masturbators) were locked up in the boudoir where they were erotized while being disciplined.

Along the same lines, it is possible to read libertine literature, such as the work of Vincent Denon, Marquis d’Argens, and Marquis de Sade, among others, in biopolitical terms as an early narrative of resistance dedicated to teach women to enjoy the pleasure of sex avoiding pregnancy. As Diane Berret Brown has noticed, the boudoir as an intimate space for female reading and erotic imagination was considered as a “first step to sexual enlightenment,” being the art of seduction, love-making, and birth control the most “dangerous” forms of knowledge that women could acquire.²⁹⁰ One of the most famous erotic novels of the time Thérèse philosophe by Marquis d’Argens is a fable that teaches Thérèse to prevent pregnancy avoiding vaginal penetration and giving priority to fellatio, anal penetration and “tribadism” (the medical term “female homosexuality” does not exist until 1868), and masturbation. It is this particular “education” which transforms Thérèse into a “philosopher,” giving her, in a certain sense, the privileges of masculinity.

in relation to sex. But in spite of this birth control lesson provided to women as pornographic readers, the boudoir of the libertine literature cannot be considered as a feminist strategy of resistance or emancipation. On the contrary, as we will see, the boudoir, operated either as a sovereign aristocratic technique for the maximization of male sexual power and enjoyment or as a new disciplinary cell.

Fig. 46, 47. Disembodied penises and vaginas from the sovereign regime. Left: Dominique Vivant Denon, Le Phallus Phénoménal, 1793, Estampes, Réserve, Ae 35, BNF. Paris; Right: Félix Nogaret, Aretin François, par un membre de l’Académie des dames suivi de Les Épices de Vénus ou Pièces diverses du même académicien, Londres, 1740-1831, Enfer 463, BNF. Paris.

SPERM and WATER in the libertine “foutoir”

In terms of the biopolitical management, regulation and spatial distribution of bodily fluids, the eighteenth century boudoir was a troubled wet space: designated either as a
pathological menstrual chamber or as a libertine container of sperm. Whereas the boudoir as disciplinary chamber was thought of as a space for the biopolitical management of female menstrual blood and reproductive cycles, the libertine boudoir was imagined by eighteenth century literature as a chamber for the free circulation of sperm.

In the seventeenth century, the so-called “father of microbiology” and user of the catoptric microscope Antonie van Leeuwenhoek “detected innumerable small animals in the masculine sperm”\(^\text{291}\) that he called “spermatozoa,” which led him to defend the preformationist theories according to which human reproduction took place within sperm itself, being the fetus’ body or homunculus fully contained within every drop of male sexual fluid. Until the advent of “cell theory” in the nineteenth century, sperm was considered a living fluid, being the female egg secondary in the process of breeding.\(^\text{292}\)

To put it in Foucaultian terms, reproduction was understood as a sovereign and patriarchal process of transmission of power, and the male fluid as the medium for masculine and divine generation. If sperm was a sovereign fluid deserving self-governed and autonomous circulation, the libertine boudoir was the pornotopic space where spermatic flow was transformed into literary and architectural spectacle.

\(^{291}\) Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex*, 171.

This is the reason why in the *Tableaux des moeurs du temps dans les différents âges de la vie*, Alexandre La Popelinière names the “boudoir” “foutoir” (the French word “foutre” meaning sperm) understanding the boudoir as a space for ejaculation: a wet space where sperm flows and circulates without religious or institutional regulations. In the hyperbolic spaces designed by Marquis de Sade, blood and shit would mix with sperm, transforming the “foutoir” into a “torturoir” (a torture chamber), as Restif de la Bretonne famously put it, a theatre of cruelty where the male aristocratic body is given absolute power to enjoy and to erotize the thanatopolitical techniques that characterized the pre-revolutionary French juridical system. Right at the time when water and milk were transforming the boudoir into a hygienic and reproductive domestic space, Sade, as Sean M. Quinlan has put it, used blood and shit against water “to undermine the moral hygienist agenda, just as he used literary conventions to attach the didactic, moralizing

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Together with sperm, as I will show in the following chapter, water entered into the libertine boudoir both as a technique of pleasure, deriving from the oriental bath and the harem, but also as a hygienic technique preventing the spread of venereal disease. The interior spaces of the Parisian “maisons des dames” ruled by Babet, Florence Dhosmont, La Gourdan, also called “la petite Comtesse,” or Justine Pâris, who was in charged of the Hôtel du Roule, and that became part of the literary world of Casanova or Jean-François Bastide, were some of the first French private houses to have running water within the boudoir. In the “salon de Vulcain” at the maison of La Gourdan, “the bidet,” working as a short of water chair, was as important as the “le fauteuil d’amour,” legendary for enabling women to slide back and open their legs.

The architecture of water within the domestic space is related to this process of extension of pornotopic practices within the new bourgeois classes. The Opera dancer Anne-Victoire Dervieux (1752 - 1826), supported by police authorities of the time, commissioned architect François-Joseph Bélanger (and her future husband) and architect Brongniart to build a Hôtel in 1774 at the rue Joubert in Paris with special attention to boudoirs and bathrooms. Bélanger was already well known for his design of the Paris

\[\text{\footnotesize 295 Jean-François de Bastide, La Petite Maison, ed. Michel Delon (Paris: Gallimard, 1995).}\]
\[\text{\footnotesize 296 Romi, Maisons closes dans l’histoire de l’art, la litterature et les moeurs (Paris: Serg,1965), 16.}\]
“Halle de Blé,” for his gardens and interior decoration of the Château de Maisons-Laffite, and for the neo-Classical Pavillon de Bagatelle in the Bois de Boulogne, that was erected in 64 days in 1777 to win a bet with Queen Marie-Antoinette. The two-story house for Dervieux was constructed by Alexandre Brongniart, and redesigned by Bélanger in 1788 in the latest Pompeian taste. The brothers Goncourt called it the most splendid of the small-scale hotels, “with its bathroom in the Etruscan fashion, the dining room preciously worked with silver arabesques, painted figures, and mahogany and lemon wood married together.”297 Conceived and developed for the libertine boudoir and for the eighteenth century prostitution spaces, the running water bath will end up entering within the bourgeois interior as a domestic resignification of disciplinary and pornotopic techniques.

Fig. 49, 50. Left: Pierre-Laurent Auvray (1736-?) after Jean Honoré Fragonard, Les Jets d’Eau, c.1779, BNF; Right: “Fauteuil d’amour du prince Édouard VII” used at the

The libertine boudoir as site of theatrical celebration of the free circulation of sovereign sperm could be understood as the last pornotopic aristocratic fantasy in a period of changing theories of power and sexual reproduction. During the eighteenth century, together with the criticism of religious and sovereign monarchical power, scientific discourse provided a new explanation of the process of generation as taking place within the female uterus. Thus, female body and fluids became for the first time the center of the political management of the process of reproduction of life. Milk and uterus emerged as fluids and organs of this new biopolitical discipline, transforming the libertine and sovereign boudoir into a domestic female cell.

**Milk space: the invention of domesticity**

During the nineteenth century, the boudoir will progressively give rise to two opposed sites of biopolitical regulation: the nineteenth century bourgeois domestic interior as hygienic and heterosexual reproductive space where cleaning water and milk shall replace menstrual blood and sperm; and the “maison close” as place where sperm can continue to circulate freely while being controlled by hygienic measures such as medical gaze and hygienic water.

In order to understand the complex biopolitical position of the boudoir in relation to gender and sexual production, as well as its transformation into a space of female confinement and reproduction, and the kernel of the bourgeois domestic regime during
the nineteenth century it is necessary to study the topopolitical regulation of the circulation of body fluids within different modern spaces, and more particularly the history of the shifting economy of human milk and its spatial distribution during the eighteenth century.

The architecture of the boudoir as female cabinet was invented exactly at the same time that the term “mammal” was proposed within the modern scientific discourse by Carolus Linnaeus as the central notion for a new taxonomy of nature that would enable to identify the place of the human species within the variety of living beings. As feminist historian of science Londa Schiebinger has argued: “In 1758, in the Tenth edition of his Systema Naturae, Carolus Linnaeus introduced the term Mammalia into zoological taxonomy. For his revolutionary classification of the animal kingdom Linnaeus devised this word, meaning literally “of the breast,” to distinguish the class of animals embracing humans, apes, ungulates, sloths, sea cows, elephants, bats, and all other organism with hair, three ear bones, and a four-chambered heart. In so doing, he made the female mammae the icon of that class.”

Linnaeus’ taxonomy, accepted by Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire and Georges Cuvier, induced the abandonment of the Aristotelic notion of Quadrupedia, and displaced at the same time Conrad Gesner’s (1551) influential distinction between “viviparous” and “oviparous” in favor of a new nomenclature based on the lactiferous nature of the females. Schiebinger notices that “by privileging a uniquely female characteristic in this way, Linnaeus broke with longstanding traditions

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that saw the male as the measure of all things…[…]…By honoring the “mammae” as sign and symbol of the highest class of animals, Linnaeus assigned a new value to the female, especially women’s unique role in reproduction.”

But how could be the feeding breast, asks Schiebinger, a functional organ only of the female of each species, and this only during the time of lactation, the universal and determining characteristic of the “highest” zoological class? Taking into account the arbitrary character of the term, as well as the plurality of nomenclatures proposed by different scientists of the time (some gave priority to the hair – “pilosa” – or to the hollow-eared – “aurecaviga”) in order to determine the zoological class, Schiebinger refuses to take the scientific success of Linnaeus’ taxonomy for granted and instead questions the social and political practices derived from this signifying hegemony of the “mammals.”

In order to question “the gender politics informing Linnaeus’s choice of this term,” Schiebinger starts interrogating the cultural and political history of the breast, its practices, social uses and topological inscriptions. How to explain the sudden centrality of breast-feeding and lactation for scientific discourse? What were the techniques of the body associated with the breast before and after the eighteenth century that could have lead the scientific community to give motherly milk and lactation an outstanding

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299 Ibid., 393.
300 Linnaeus term had an unprecedented discursive success and it is still today, in spite of the later modifications introduced by Darwin’s theory of natural selection, recognized by the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature.
301 Londa Schiebinger, 382.
semiotic and political privilege transforming it into the zoological foundation of the class where humanity will be located? If we translate Schiebinger’s questions into biopolitical architectural terms, we could ask: Is there a relationship between dominant forms of representing sexuality and reproductive practices and the history of architecture? What spaces were determined by the activity of breastfeeding? How was the circulation of milk topopolitically regulated? What were the social places where milk could freely circulate and according to which law? How modes of representing obstetrical and embryological knowledge shaped the politics of architecture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries?

During the European Enlightenment, Schiebinger argues, the breast became a conflicting knot of economic and political forces. Until the eighteenth century, breast-feeding was a professional and economic practice. The female milking breast was a production force and human milk a fluid able to circulate within the public space and the economic market. In cities like London, Paris or Lyon, 80% of the born babies were fed by “wet nurses,” being breast-feeding an occasional job for most working-class women.
The introduction of the term “mammalia” came together with a strong political campaign to abolish the practice of wet nursing: in 1752, a few years before introducing the new nomenclature, Linnaeus published *Nutrix Noverca* (Step Nurse in English, and *La nourrice marâtre* in French) an essay where he defined the human social link as

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established naturally through the practice of breast feeding between mother and child: “Eighteenth-century middle class and upper-class women were being encouraged to give up their wet nurses; a Prussian law of 1794 went so far as to require the healthy women nurse their own babies. Linnaeus was involved in the struggle against wet nursing, a struggle that emerged alongside and in step with political realignments undermining women’s public power and attaching a new value to women’s domestic roles.”\(^{303}\) As a result of this vast campaign, by the end of the century wet nursing was considered an illegal practice in many European states.

In a period of industrial capitalist and colonial expansion, a new concern with the biopolitical management of population growth and production of racial differences forced the emerging scientific community to define the practices associated with reproduction as “state priorities,” and to re-define femininity in terms of motherhood and domesticity. This redefinition of femininity shall invest milk as a central biopolitical fluid. According to Linnaeus, a good mother should breast-feed her children, avoiding “the contamination through the wet nurse milk from other races, classes, and nations.”\(^{304}\) Linnaeus defined the milk as the natural fluid through which the essence of the species, the races and the nations was transmitted from mother to child. Milk was thus transformed into the key biopolitical fluid, displacing aristocratic and sovereign sperm.

\(^{303}\) Londa Schiebinger, 383.

Fig. 53, 54. Left: Marguérie Gerard represented the transition from the culture of wet nurses to the bourgeois domestic space as milking boudoir, *La Nourrice*, 1802. BNF. Paris; Right: The passage from the pre-modern techniques of management of contraception to the birth of modern obstetrics is represented by an architectonic sectioning that translates the gender displacement from female knowledge and power to a male scientific discourses and practices, producing a transgender image of the man-midwife. Illustration from *Man-midwifery dissected; or, the obstetric family-instructor*, by S. W. Fores (London, 1793).

Schiebinger stresses the fact that a scientific nomenclature constructs an epistemological topography: it determines the *place* of a species in nature. The female milking breast was what linked humans to the animal kingdom, whereas masculine reason was what set humankind apart: “It is important to note, that in the same volume in which Linnaeus
introduced the term Mammalia, he also introduced the name Homo sapiens.”305 A similar topography will translate natural orders into the architecture of the boudoir and the domestic dividing and gendering spaces according to “natural” fluids and functions: “gender differences, indeed, lay at the heart of the eighteenth-century invention of the domestic realm as a wet milky space, a reproducing womb and a feeding breast.”306 The difference between Homo sapiens and Mammalia, between reason and breast corresponds to the topopolitical eighteenth-century architectural distinction between the cabinet and the boudoir, but also between the salon and bourgeois interior domesticity. The boudoir understood as a female cabinet was a secularized and gendered cell where the religious virtues were transformed into subjective erotic and bodily affects dominated by the wetness of menstrual blood and milk. Whereas masculine affects were given the status of knowledge and reason and were spatialized within the male cabinet, female affects, considered as more bodily and sexual than spiritual, were erotized and enclosed within the sensuous space of the boudoir.

In topopolitical terms, the new practice of individual breast feeding demanded the identification of a new reproductive space: the boudoir, as the most interior and wet space of the aristocratic house, was thus re-defined as a private reproductive womb, a lactating breast, a space of national immunity where the circulation of the fluids (semen, blood, and milk) between the patter familias, the mother and the children assured health,

305 Londa Schiebinger, 393.
306 Londa Schiebinger, 383.
national growth and racial purity. The management of female fluids, and most particularly the practice of breast-feeding served to naturalize the emerging frontier between the public and the private spaces, and their redefinition in terms of sexual difference. The biopolitical figure of the mother and the domestic topos where the background stage to the new democratic sphere defined as a universal (white, heterosexual, and masculine) public space. Women’s practices were transferred from the sphere of production into reproduction, inscribing the sexual division of labor into specific spaces and body uses. All the practices associated with the female body, reproduction and the management of health (wet nursing and prostitution) became illegal when practiced within public spaces, at the same time that they were devaluated and excluded from the new market economy.

During the late eighteenth century, a process of biopolitical over-inscription of the breast within the boudoir was taking place. This process of naturalization of the boudoir and the breast came together to produce a double and paradoxical process of discipline and erotization: on one side, the breast and the boudoir became the objects of a new biopolitical management: they were domesticated, privatized and excluded from the realm of economic production, being the activity of female reproduction and lactating confined to the space of the household and to female body defined as maternal. On the other, as Marylin Yalom and Barbara Gelphi have studied, during the eighteenth century

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307 Whereas classical medical discourses did not differentiated completely between blood, semen and milk, being semen for Aristotle “male milk,” the same way that “female milk” was a variation of menstruating blood, during the eighteenth century female milk and sperm were defined as radically different fluids. Londa Schiebinger, 394.
the breast and the boudoir were invested with erotic value by literature, clothing and architectural discourses and became the center of a new sexualized gaze that constructed them as popular pornotopias.\footnote{308} In a context in which women were starting to be confined outside public space within the domestic realm, the boudoir functioned both as a gender-segregating cell and as an erotic device that incited the male heterosexual eye to look, to peer within the mystery of interiority. The boudoir was thus the erotization of the techniques of production of gender difference and of confinement of femininity that characterized the modern biopolitical regime. The boudoir could thus be considered as a paradigmatic example of the modern biopolitical management of space: a fold of pleasure and power, or agency and subjection, the boudoir (working both as hétérotopie and as disciplinary space) shows the complex functioning of a pornotopia as biopolitical device.

Whereas within the libertine texts of the eighteenth century the boudoir was the wet space where aristocratic sovereign semen circulated producing pleasure, the translation of the boudoir within the architecture of the end of the eighteenth century inscribed the boudoir within a tradition of disciplinary spaces, transforming the female cabinet into a pathological menstrual room, dedicated to the surveillance and confinement of the female reproductive fluids. Both spaces were wet boxes but the fluids circulating within them had changed. As a result, in the nineteenth century, the boudoir will give rise to two different and opposed spaces: the domestic space as place where menstruating

blood, semen and milk reproduce national population and racial purity; and the state brothel or “maison close” as place where sovereign sperm can continue to circulate free from the ties of disciplinary marriage.

Fig. 55, 56. Left : Humunculus in the sperm, Nicolaas Hartsoeker, *Essay de dioptrique*, Paris: Jean Anisson, 1694 ; Right, Anton van Leeuwenhoeck’s sperm. In terms of architecture, it is interesting to notice that the homunculus is not represented just as an individual body, but rather as a body enclosed within a (mobile) cell, which suggests a formal proximity with the boudoir.

As we will see in the following chapter, the modern notion of “state brothel” and the nineteenth century “maison close” would be the materialization of a literary, architectonic and biopolitical sexual utopia of the Enlightenment first imagined by Restif de la Bretonne and the so-called revolutionary pornographic writers. Although politically
thought within the tradition of the disciplinary architectures, the interior of the nineteenth century brothel would be conceived as a public boudoir, being the “maison close” designed as the imitation of the erotic utopia of the aristocratic libertine boudoir accessible to bourgeois men.

Fig. 57-59. Three representations of the disembodied uterus: Muscio (9th century) Courtesy of John Hopkins University; Leonardo da Vinci, Anatomical drawing of the uterus, 1478; William Hunter, The Anatomy of the Human Gravid Uterus Exhibited in Figures, Engraving, after drawings by Jan van Rymsdyk, 1774.

This complex relationship between discipline and erotization determines early feminist political struggles to take women outside of the boudoir. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth century British feminist movement, best represented by the Mary Wollstonecrafts’ A Vindication of the Right of Woman (1792) could be read today as a critique of the boudoir regime understood as a “luxury cage” and a place of sexualization.
where women are imprisoned. Inscribed within this critical genealogy, Virginia Woolf’s
claim for *A room of her own* would be a political claim to reappropriate and de-gender
both the boudoir and the domestic space enabling women to access the public domains
of writing (pointing to the “male cabinet” as space of his own) and of the political space
(that of the parliament but also of the Secret Museum). 309

A similar process of topopolitical codification affected the representation of the uterus
during the end of the eighteenth century, a process that took to the biopolitical and
architectural analogy between the boudoir and the vagina, between the domestic space

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309 The investment of the boudoir as gender cell could also explain the distance between
the architecture of Le Corbusier and that of Eileen Gray. Although critical of almost every
architectural aspect of the nineteenth century bourgeois architecture, Le Corbusier stuck
to the traditional spatialization of gender, which was probably the central spatialization
technique of the bourgeois interior. In the *Pavillon de l’Esprit Nouveau*, Le Corbusier
explicitly inscribed gender differences within space establishing differences between the
male cabinet and the boudoir. Whereas the study (understood as a male cabinet equipped
with the classic sign of scientific and geographical knowledge, the globe) was a subset to
the dinning room, the boudoir was a space off the master bedroom. Unlike Le Corbusier,
Eileen Gray seemed to reject gender segregation, absorbing previous segmented gender
spaces within a common “boudoir”. In 1922 Eileen Gray designed a room for the
exhibition at the *XIV Salon des Artistes Decorateurs* that she named “Boudoir de Monte
Carlo”. Although presented by Jean Badovici as “an architecture which expresses the
strong will of a modern man” (Jean Badovici, “L’art d’Eileen Gray par Jean Badovici
Architecte,” *Wendingen* 6, 6 (1924):12, cited by Caroline Constant, “E. 1027: The
Nonheroic Modernism of Eileen Gray,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*
53, 3 (Sep., 1994): 268.), the use of the word boudoir might denote Gray’s intention to
define the room as a “woman’s space,” a total space that as Caroline Constant has
underlined was “elaborated upon the potential for a single room to take on aspects of an
entire lived milieu.” (Caroline Constant, « E. 1027: The Nonheroic Modernism of Eileen
Gray,” 267). Likewise, later, in E. 1027, she explicitly designed the master bedroom as a
bedroom/study conflating into one the gender segregated spaces of the boudoir and the
male cabinet.
and the reproducing womb. Obstetrical and embryological representations shaped the biopolitics of architecture naturalizing the spaces of the uterus and domestic interiority.

Fig. 60,61. Rendering of the uterus according to the epistemological model of the disembodied womb. Jacob Rueff, De conceptu et generatione hominis, et iis quae circa h[a]ec potissimum consyderantur, libri sex, congesti opera Iacobi Rueff chirurgi Tigurini. Insertae quoq[ue] sunt picturae uariae foetus, primum in utero siti, deinde in partu, mox etiam matricis & instrumentorum ad partum promouendum & extrahendum pertinentium, nec non postremo uariorum monstrorum insuper, Latin translation by Wolfgang Haller of the first German translation, Zurich: Christopher Froschauer, 1554.

Feminist cultural critics have analyzed the history of fetal imagery to understand the visual politics of gender production and their relationship to the political regulation of social spaces.\(^{310}\) As historian of science Karen Newman has argued in *Fetal Positions*,

“earliest visualization of obstetrical knowledge illustrate a core schema that was reproduced into the eighteenth century: a uterus separated from the female body and a seemingly autonomous fetal figure.”

The classical Latin ninth century treatise on midwifery by Muscio introduced the first images of the fetus in utero as an individual body or humunculus floating within a jar, a vessel, or a spherical box (egg and treasure), an image that was reproduced within the 1513 treatise by Eucharius Rösslin Der Swangern Frawen Rosengarten and translated into all European languages until the end of the eighteenth century. In spite of the variation of pictorial styles, what is most striking about these representations is the “schema of the fully formed fetus actively negotiating the uterine environment and cut off from a female body.”

Fig. 62. A vagina represented according to the “one-sex” model epistemology: Vertical


Ibid., 33.
cut of a vagina represented as “internal penis” according to Vesalius, *De humani corporis fabrica, Book V*, 1541. Penislike female organs of generation according to Georg Bartsch, *Kunsbuche*, 1575.

The disembodied womb was part of the epistemological sexual regime that was described by Thomas Laqueur as “mono-sexual,” where the female body as differential anatomy did not exist yet. Until the seventeen century, and still within a sovereign regime of governing sexuality, sexual epistemology was dominated by what the historian of sexuality Thomas Laqueur calls "a system of similarities" that interpreted female sexual anatomy as a weak, internalized and degenerated version of the only sex thought to have ontological and sovereign existence: the male anatomy.

As Laqueur puts it “all anatomical illustrations, historical and contemporary, are abstractions; they are maps to a bewildering and infinitely varied reality. Representations of features that pertain especially to male or female, because of the enormous social consequences and distinctions, are most obviously dictated by art and culture. Like maps, anatomical illustrations focus attention on a particular feature or on a particular set of spatial relationships.” Organs are thus technical diagrams in a culturally bound aesthetics.

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314 Ibid., 164.
Within the pre-modern visual regime, ovaries were seen as internalized testicles, and the vagina as an inverted penis that functioned as a receptacle (in line with a metaphor of agricultural insemination) for the male genital organ and fluid. Femininity was an “accident,” whereas masculinity was form, structure and function.\textsuperscript{315} Abortion and infanticides were common practices that were not regulated by governmental institutions, but by the different economic-political powers to which the gestating body was bound in each circumstance (the tribe, the feudal house, the \textit{pater familias}, etc.). To put it in Laqueur's terms, we could say that the pre-modern epistemology of sex was

dominated by a “mono-sexual model” that gave rise to two hierarchically distinct social and political expressions: “man,” as sovereign subject, and “woman,” as subaltern body. In this case, sex assignment didn’t just depend on the external morphology of the sexual organs but, above all, on the individual’s reproductive capacity and social role. Thus, for example, a bearded woman who could gestate and breastfeed her child would be considered to be a woman, regardless of the shape and size of her vulva and her clitoris. Within these “mono-sexual” somato-political sex and sexuality (the term “sexuality” was not invented until 1880) did not constitute yet political determinations that go beyond the assignment of the status of slave or free man, citizen or foreign, master or slave. This does not mean that there were no differences between masculinity and femininity, or between different forms of production of sexual pleasure, simply they did not yet determine the crystallizations of biopolitical identities.

After the seventeen century, the visual epistemology that governed modern sexo-politics began to shift towards a “system of oppositions,” rather than similarities, in Laqueur's terms, “a physiology of incommensurability,” mapping out a new sexual anatomy in which the female sex was no longer an accidental reversal or an interiorization of the male sex, but an entirely different sex with forms and functions that responded to their own logic. Thomas Laqueur goes as far as to claim that it was necessary to invent the aesthetics of sexual difference at the dawn of modernity, capitalism, and democratic revolutions, precisely at a time when political hierarchy between men and women began

316 Thomas Laqueur, 154.
317 Ibid., 6.
to be questioned. For Laqueur, the new anatomical representation functioned as a form of scientific legitimization of the new biopolitical organization of the social: the creation of a bourgeois public sphere.\textsuperscript{318}

Fig. 66, 67. Female and male differential anatomies according to a «two-sex» epistemological model in \textit{Thomae Bartholini Anatome ex omnium veterum recentiorumque observationibus}.... Lugduni Batavorum: Ex officina Hackiana, 1673. BNF. Paris.

\section*{HOUSING THE UTERUS}

Before the eighteenth century, and according to the sovereign and patriarchal definition of generation, the uterus was thus represented as a floating organ, as if the generative process would be taking place without physical anatomy, within a transcendental,

\textsuperscript{318} Ibid., 194.
Platonic, or theological plane. But during the eighteenth century, together with an epistemological change towards a “two-sex regime,” a shift within the representation of the uterus was taking place: at the same time that the boudoir was being constructed and that the breast and female milk were being privatized, a process of incorporation of the womb within the domestic space and the female body was taking place.

Fig. 68, 69. Sexual difference represented according to the « two sex » epistemology by Jean–Jacques Lequeu, from left to right: Posture Lubrique de Baccus, without date; Jean-Jacques Lequeu, Cratère d'une fille adolescente animée de désir déréglé : elle est couchée sur le dos les deux cuises [sic] levées et bien ouvertes, de manière qu'on voit le pucellage forc, 1779-95, BNF. Paris.

The breast, the uterus, and the boudoir were naturalized according the same biopolitical taxonomy. Opposing pre-formationist theories, Linnaeus defined mammals not only by their lactiferous character but also by the primacy of the uterus as female reproductive organ. The domestic space was the natural *topos* where the uterus, before entering the
female body, was inscribed. If the uterus was a boudoir within the female body, the domestic was the uterus of the social space. As if the disembodied womb would fall from the transcendental realm into physical space before entering the female body, Petro Berrettini represented in 1741 (Fig. 71) the womb embodied not within the female anatomy but rather within the wall of the house as surrogated female space. This process of incorporation of the womb produced a double naturalization of the female body and the domestic as spaces for natural reproduction, and came together with the exclusion of women from the practice of medical midwifery and the masculine professionalization of obstetrics. The uterus was becoming the object of medical observation at the same time that women were loosing power over birth control techniques.\(^{319}\) For 1800, the female body and the boudoir were appropriated into a series of gendered narrative codes that disciplined reproductive fluids and organs and assured the sexual difference of male and female bodies and spaces. Whereas in pre-modern anatomy the womb was represented outside of the female body, within the late eighteenth century anatomy every woman was represented as pregnant, producing a synecdochical collusion between domestic interiority, the reproductive womb and female anatomy.

Although envisioned in the eighteenth century as a female space for reading and pleasure production, the boudoir was progressively turned into the nineteenth century into a reproductive cell, a space of confinement for menstruating women destined to control and regulate their reproductive power. This process of transformation of the boudoir into a domestic unit for heterosexual reproduction was accomplished by the biopolitical analogy between the female womb and the domestic interior as “natural garden,” between reproduction and sexuality developed within the nineteenth century theories of sexual reproduction.
Fig. 71, 72. Left: Pietro Berrettini’s representation of the uterus incorporated within architecture. *Tabula anatomicae*, 1741; Right: Jacques Fabien Gautier D’Agoty (1717-1785) [author/artist/printer] Gautier D’Agoty’s pregnant woman for the first time calmly looks back at the viewer, a characteristic pose of 18th-century French bourgeois portraiture.

Invoking Anglo-Saxon rather than French etymology, Mark Taylor and Julienna Preston argue that the bower as “female garden” immediately adjacent to the house was the first space allocated exclusively to women in British houses. Reading the work *The Bedroom and Boudoir* of the nineteenth century British writer Lady Barker, Taylor and Preston establish a genealogy that goes from the English “bower” or female garden to the French Boudoir, linking this way landscape ornamentation and the production of modern
interiority. The invention of the architectonic boudoir could be thus related to the eighteenth century theories of animal sexual reproduction that for the first time explored the philogenetic relationship between the egg, the womb, the nest, and housing. According to Taylor and Preston, the boudoir is etymologically related to the Bowerbird technique of construction of “a separate nest to facilitate the mating relationship”: using a screen partition and a great amount of color materials to decorate the nest and provide “soft insulation,” the bower was historically defined as a “clearing in a wood or a landscape garden feature, a secluded place enclosed by foliage such as a rose-scented arbor, a gazebo, pergola, or alcove.” Creating a secret interiority within a landscape through the growing of a thick vegetal wall, the bower could be at the origin of modern interior psychological spaces, both boudoirs (when this insulated interior is created within the French aristocratic hôtel particulier) but also to the “folies” (when the concealed space is a subset of landscape). Bower, boudoir and folies talk about the creation of an interface between the landscape and the spatial interior, about the process of artificial construction of nature and of naturalization of the architecture, encoding the complex relationship between sexuality and culture.

Fig. 73, 74. Left: The vagina represented as the entrance to the “Secret Cabinet.” The litographie says: “Come in ladies and gentlemen, it is time, it is now, there is place for everyone.” “Charges et décharges diaboliques pour un concitoyen,” Lithography by the comic cartoonist De Le Poitevin, Bruxelles, 1830. Donated to the BNF by George Barbier in 1933; Right: Emmanuel Jean Nepomucene de Ghendt (French, 1738-1815) after Pierre-Antoine Baudouin (French, 1723-1769), Midday, n.d., BNF. Paris.

This process of naturalization of architecture techniques for producing interiority is explicit in De Bastide’s *La Petite Maison* (1789), where the boudoir takes the shape of an interior garden: “The walls of the boudoir were covered with mirrors whose joinery was concealed by carefully sculpted, leafy tree trunks. The trees, arranged to give the
illusion of a quincunx, were heavy with flowers and laden with chandeliers. The light from the many candles receded into the opposite mirrors, which had been purposely veiled with hanging gauze. So magical was the optical effect (effet d’optique) that the boudoir could have been mistaken with a natural wood, lit by the forces of art. The niche, which contained the ottoman, a sort of day bed, had parquet floor of rosewood and was decorated with green and gold fringes and strewn with different-seized cushions. The wall and the ceiling of the niche were also covered with mirrors. Finally, all the woodwork and plaster was painted in the colors appropriate to what it represented, this color having been applied by Dandrillon, so that it gave off the scent of violets, jasmines and roses.”

Bastide’s *Petite Maison* (1789) is a paradigmatic example of the coming together of the naturalization of the boudoir as “female garden,” both bower and vagina, and the technification of masculine excitement through visual devises such as lighting and looking glasses.

For Mark Taylor and Julienna Preston, the most private and intimate interior spaces of the nineteenth century home derive directly from the tradition of the bower and the boudoir. The boudoir as “female cabinet” disappeared in the nineteenth century, through a double process of domestic extension and a performative specialization. The separation between the domestic space and the brothel is the result of this process of biopolitical specialization: on one side, Victorian domestic space assumes the functions of female sexuality as reproduction; on the other, the boudoir as male masturbatory and

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media space proliferates into a series of urban spaces for the commercialization of sexuality, such as the state brothel, the “maison close,” the arcade, and the peep-show.


The invention of the boudoir as kernel of the domestic space was part of a larger process that in biopolitical terms could be described as *hysterization of the domestic*: the double reduction of the female body to the reproductive function and the domestic to the gestating womb. During the eighteenth century, the aristocratic household, which will later become the model for the future bourgeois interior, suffered a drastic
transformation: the household was deprived of its productive activities and transformed into a reproductive factory which like the activities of female gestation and milking were naturalized. The Victorian interior crafted as a collection of objects, textures and memories and manifestation of individual taste and female generation was the extension of the logic of the bower and the boudoir to the totality of the domestic space.

Fig. 77, 78. Left: The great egg of nature. The Romantic view is vividly shown in this extraordinary scheme by Georg August Goldfuss, a German zoologist and follower of Schelling. Right: Jacob Rueff, *De conceptu et generatione hominis*, 1554.

This process can be traced through the Victorian domestication of the French libertine boudoir in the nineteenth century. The French boudoir appeared in upper-class British home around 1800, probably as a result of Prince of Wale’s taste for French design and fashion, and became a site of cultural trouble for the British leisure classes. Imported to England through writing rather than through architecture, the boudoir entered the Victorian bourgeois home to become not only the most private but also the most bizarre of domestic spaces, being progressively desexualized and moralized. As Nicole
Reynolds has argued: “In the Victorian climate of reform following revolutionary fervor and Regency decadence, the boudoir gradually was absorbed into the heart of the British home. The accommodation necessarily followed financial success and domestic felicity, confirming class status and class allegiances; architectural manuals and complacent husbands indulged a woman’s desire for privacy within the context of household affairs.”

Fig. 79, 80. The human uterus as natural bower. Left: Thomas Denman, *A collection of engravings tending to illustrate the generation and parturition of animals, and of the human species*, London: J. Johnson, 1787; and Samuel Thomas Soemmerring, *Icones embryonum humanorum*, Frankfurt am Main: sold at Varrentrapp and Wenner, 1799.

The boudoir as pornotopic space appeared as a fold within the nineteenth domestic space, filling with reading and imagination the de-sexualized space of conjugal domesticity, heterosexual reproduction and motherhood. A female room decorated with *objets d’art*, including a dressing room, and sometimes a toilet, the Victorian boudoir,

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connected to the exterior with windows and balconies, moved away from the secret and sexualized character of the French private cabinet and became a spectacular sign of social status. As Reynolds notices, John C. Loudon’s *An Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture* (1835) “illustrates several floor plans, including one for parsonage, that feature boudoirs. Located on the second floor, directly across the main staircase, this boudoir can be reached both from the lobby at the top of the staircase and through the best bedroom. The boudoir’s impressive bay window overlooks the front lawn and commands an extensive view.”

Nevertheless, Victorian society distrusted the French boudoir considering it as a place of sexual excess (as sperm chamber) and female pathology (menstruating and masturbating cell) that although being a sign of economic success could also jeopardize domestic reproduction and respectability. As Nicole Reynolds argues, within the Victorian bourgeois and upper-class interior, the boudoir encapsulates the opposition between “erotic freedom and the disciplinary strategies invoke to curtail it. It made manifest the tension between recalcitrant female desire and the proscriptions of domestic ideology.”

Resulting of the process of Victorian domestication of spaces and fluids, modern domesticity could be redefined as the rationalization and the disciplining of the eighteenth century libertine boudoir, the transformation of a pornotopia into a national site for heterosexual reproduction.

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327 Ibid., 103.
Inheriting some of the characteristics of the eighteenth century boudoir, modern domesticity became a privileged space for the management of biopolitical reproductive organs and fluids: the only space where female menstrual blood, and nurturing maternal milk were allowed to flow. If the aristocratic eighteenth century interior could be defined by horizontal segmentation of space and the creation of a separated “media space” for the voluptuous feeling of reading and sexuality and where the flow of sperm and menstrual blood was dedicated to male pleasure production, the bourgeois domestic space re-inscribed these fluids within a general economy of heterosexual reproduction.

Fig. 81. Jean Jacques Lequeu, *Le Gouté*, 1790, BNF. Paris.
While libertine sexuality was displaced to the brothel, the domestic wetness was desexualized and devoted to family reproduction with the help of heat and running water.

Juxtaposing governmental techniques coming from the sovereign and the disciplinary regimes, the later eighteenth century domestic space was a complex hybrid of thanatopolitical and biopolitical regulations. On one side, the domestic space was still managed by the patriarchal sovereign law that characterized pre-modern regimes. Space of exception within the democratic sphere designed by the French and American revolutions, the father had still the right to use violence within the domestic space without being confronted to the disciplinary law. On the other side, the domestic space was the most emblematic of all biopolitical spaces, working as a national bio-factory: at the same time the smallest cell of the national body, and the unit indispensable for the well functioning of every other disciplinary institution, from the school to the prison system. Modern domesticity transformed the libertine boudoir into an organic factory for biopolitical reproduction of the national population while preserving some of the male privileges of the thanatopolitical regime. Whereas male fluids (blood and sperm) could circulate freely within the public sphere (being the battle field in war, and the brothels the paradigmatic places where these fluids circulated), female fluids (menstrual blood and milk) should remain enclosed within the domestic space, preserved from the dangers of sickness and moral disease.

The invention of the modern notion of pornography as a politically regulated space,
locked room that is under surveillance by the governmental and institutional authorities, as a collection of texts and images that can only be read and seen by white men belonging to the ruling classes, is also intrinsically related to the emergence of the notions of private and public space, of femininity and masculinity, as well as to the boudoir and bourgeois domesticity within the modern European city. Likewise, the doors of the Secret Museum were imagined as a vagina whose lips should be controlled by governmental forces. This analogy did not depend on natural morphological bases as have been commonly argued (the interior/exterior opposition), but rather had profound biopolitical and economic roots that retrospectively came to determine anatomic and architectural representations. Looking into the Secret Museum amounted to peeping into a boudoir, into the natural “bower” of female sexuality. The shift from the control of individual bodies (anatomopolitics) into regulated spaces (topopolitics) translated political segmentations within the physical space of the city, as it moved from the sphere of the administrative regulations for that of sensorial perception and urban uses of space.
THE PROSTHETIC BOUDOIR

From the female cabinet architecture to the crinoline

In the nineteenth century, the production of female interiority as separate, interior and sexual space extended from the boudoir and the bourgeois domestic architecture to the representation of the female body in fashion. The architectural model of interiority moved from the architecture of the boudoir and its encapsulated interior design to the female body creating the so-called “farthingales,” “panniers,” and “crinolines”: different ringed structure fitted to the waist that created the over inflated form of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century female dresses.328

The crinoline was a stiff fabric (originally made of horse-hair and later of a steel latticework) that enabled the construction of a rigid skirt-shaped structuresupporting a woman’s dress. “The first 'crinolines' were petticoats starched for extra stiffness, or made out of the new crinoline fabric, and they often had ruffles to support the skirts to the desired width. Extra rigidity was added to petticoats through rings of cord or braid running around them. In the 1830s, women started to wear petticoats with hoops of whalebone or cane around them. (...) In 1858, the American W.S. Thomson greatly facilitated the development of the cage crinoline by developing an eyelet fastener to connect the steel crinoline hoops with the vertical tapes descending from a band around the wearer’s waist. (...) Thompson was probably inspired by the open cage or frame style of farthingales and panniers. The cage crinoline was adopted with enthusiasm: the

numerous petticoats, even the stiffened or hooped ones, were heavy, bulky and generally uncomfortable. It was light — it only required one or two petticoats worn over the top to prevent the steel bands appearing as ridges in the skirt — and freed the wearer's legs from tangling petticoats. "329

329 Encyclopedia Britannica, online file: crinoline and cage crinoline.
Fig. 82. The complex process of wearing a crinoline. Hulton Archive. London Stereoscopic Company. Getty images.
Fig. 83. Comparative views of corseted and uncorseted females, “Über die wirkungen der Schnürbrüste,” Samuel Thomas von Soemmerring, Berlin, 1793.

Fig. 84, 85. Inflating a crinoline with tube, 1857. Right. Crinoline architecture. Victorian and Albert Museum.
The crinoline could be read as the sing of the incorporation of the architecture of the boudoir within the modern female body as a form of biopolitical anatomy. Although the rigid cage crinolines of the eighteenth century wore by the aristocratic and royal women were strongly criticized during the revolutionary period, they became current for bourgeoisie women after 1810. Given the fact that the cage crinoline had a diameter of up to six feet (180 centimetres), it made difficult for women to get through doors, get in and out of carriages, and walk freely. Not only the crinoline inscribed the body within the architectural regime of the boudoir, but its volume and rigidity materialized in its conflicting relationship to the changing architecture of the modern city the new gender frontiers that segregated modern space.

The nineteenth century crinoline wearing female body was a walking boudoir: the steel
structure created a physical border that maintained the female body untouchable, while at the same time creating an interior space under the dress. The cage crinoline was the subject of an intense fashion controversy during the end of the nineteenth century concerning what could be understood as the architecture of women’s clothing. On one side, the industrial fabrication of the steel web after 1858 not only made the crinoline affordable for bourgeois classes and extended the use of the steel cage to all dresses, but also enabled the creation of larger and more flexible structures. On the other side, for fashion reformers the crinoline was a “prison” for women’s bodies that only modern fashion could break. The disputes on the crinoline could be retrospectively read as debates on the political architecture of the female body and its relationship to the architecture of the modern domestic and public spaces. “The crinoline had grown to its maximum dimensions by 1860. However, as the fashionable silhouette never remains the same for long, the huge skirts began to fall from favor. Around 1864, the shape of the crinoline began to change. Rather than being dome-shaped, the front and sides began to contract, leaving volume only at the back. The kind of crinoline that supported this style was sometimes known as a “crinolette”. The cage structure was still attached around the waist and extended down to the ground, but only extended down the back of the wearer’s legs. The “crinolette” itself was quickly superseded by the bustle, which was sufficient for supporting the drapery and train at the back of the skirt.”

Eventually, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the crinoline felt down. But rather than disappearing completely, the steel latticework structure came as close to the female body as possible becoming an exoskeleton reshaping the torax, bust, and waist. The process of

330 Encyclopedia Britannica, online file: crinoline and cage crinoline.
incorporation of the boudoir architecture was in this respect fully achieved: on one hand, the female body and the domestic space were re-defined as female natural spaces for heterosexual reproduction dedicated to the practices of giving birth, milking, and caring; on the other, public space was understood as a masculine realm fully dedicated to economic and political production.
Fig. 87. Fashion, France 19th century. 'Décadence de la Crinoline!' Caricature of the
fashion of the Second Empire. BNF. Paris.

QUEERING JEAN JACQUES LEQUEU

Fig. 88-90. From left to right: Jean Jacques Le Queu, J. ur., architecture de l’Académie Royale des Sciences, Belles-Lettres et Arts de Rouen, Dessiné par lui meme, 1792; Jean Jacques Lequeu, Je promets, without year; Autoportrait de Lequeu, Dessin, J.J. Lequeu, 1779-1795? BNF. Paris.

No one has better recorded the cultural contingency of the new aesthetic of sexual difference that gave rise to the male cabinet and the boudoir within the visual language of eigtheenth century architecture than Jean-Jacques Lequeu, unsuccessful architect and contemporary of Restif de la Bretonne, Sade and Ledoux. Lequeu not only introduced
the aesthetic of sexual difference within the visual language of architecture, but also
played with the cultural representation of sexual difference as he played with
architectural types and historical styles. Having worked as a cartographer (dessinateur
géographe) for the French Ministry of the Interior but mostly living poorly as a
permanent tenant at a brothel of the Passage du Cerf in Paris, Lequeu wrote several
political and pornographic pamphlets (not very different in this respect from Restif de la
Bretonne or Sade). Although he did not achieve to built his architectural projects,
Lequeu produced an enormous amount of architectural, anatomic, and nature drawings
(including detail drawings of female and male genitalia, but also numerous self-portraits)
which he tried to published or sell without success, and that he ended up bequeathing to
the Bibliothèque Royale before he died around 1825.331

In spite of his impressive work, Lequeu occupies still today a subaltern position within
the history of architecture. This historiographic eccentricity, I would argue, is
paradigmatic of a process of epistemological exclusion along the lines of gender,
sexuality, and disability. The first exclusion derives from Lequeu’s working class social
position and from his lack of institutional training and academic inscription. As opposed
to Boulée who is described by historians of architecture as “son of an architect,”
“brilliant student” and “excellent teacher,”332 Lequeu has been undermined as “the son of
a provincial Carpenter, without formal training in architecture or prior education, he has

331 The totality of his work can be found today at the archives of the Bibliothèque
Nationale de France in Paris where I have consulted it.
332 J.C. Lemagny, “Introduction,” Visionary Architects, Boulée, Ledoux, Lequeu (Santa
Monica: Hennessey + Ingalls, 2002), 16.
no access to salons or patrons.” Moreover, Anthony Vidler defines Lequeu’s work as representative of what he doesn’t doubt calling “the low life of architecture,” not only because of his “would-be” philosopher, and “would-be” architect condition, but also because of Lequeu’s implication with political broadsheets, gossip, popular treatise, and most particularly with pornography. Lequeu is well known not only for his series of portraits done according to the tradition of physiognomy (“Jeune homme faisant la moue,” “L’homme à la lèvre,” “Il tire la langue,” “Le borgne grimacier,” “Le grand bâilleur”), but also for a most conspicuous series of self portraits where the architect represents his/herself alternatively wearing female or male attire, but also portraits where sexual difference is deliberately rendered indeterminate.

It is indeed Lequeu’s transgression of conventions of representation of sexual difference, his intentional travestism, and his explicit drawings of human genitalia that seem to trouble the analytic framework of the history of architecture. Whereas Dominique de Ménil has described Ledoux’s and Boullée’s works as “virile and prophetic designs,” Lequeu has been described, by historians as different as Dominique de Ménil, Jacques Guillerme, J.C. Lemagny or Anthony Vidler, as the “inventor of bad taste,” and has been characterized as “narcisitic,” “neurotic,” “psychotic,” and “transvestite.”

Projecting back onto Lequeu late nineteenth categories of psychopathological discourse,

334 Ibid., 115.
335 Dominique de Ménil, in *Visionary Architects, Boullée, Ledoux, Lequeu* (Santa Monica: Hennessey + Ingalls, 2002), 11.
traditional historians of architecture understand Lequeu’s projects, both architectural as well as anatomical and self-portrait drawings, in terms of “symptoms” of a mental condition. For J.C. Lemagny: “Where Boullée was guided by his rigorous thought— all simplicity and grandeur—, Lequeu created in many idioms at once, indulging every eccentricity. His bizarre creations appear as the expression of his eccentric personality, a motionless and disturbing universe. [...] Recent studies have made it possible to understand Lequeu’s personality more clearly. His biographers have detected a strong feeling for textures and smells, a meticulousness amounting to mania, and a recurring preoccupation with sex.”  

Lemagny refers here to Vidler’s interpretation according to which: “Undoubtedly Lequeu was something of a neurotic. He deserves and has received psychoanalytical interpretation...In Lequeu’s case it was not only his pervasive narcissism and physiognomical fixations that qualify him as neurotic, psychotic, or schizophrenic, but also his preoccupation with names and smells (both perfumed and putrified), and with purification by air, water, and fire (as well as by soap), and his self-attested professional paranoia and resentment.”

Vidler argues that Lequeu should be understood using the same clinical method that Ernst Kris applied to the study of the eighteenth century physionomist Messerchmidt in the 1930s as well as the psychopathological diagnosis developed by Krafft-Ebing. If according to Kris, Messerchmidt’s transgression of sexual difference within physionomical taxonomy was due to “castration anxiety that lead him to embody the

feminine in each of his portraits,” for Vidler, Lequeu “suffered from a similar ailment, which the psychoanalyst summed up tersely as a psychosis with predominating paranoid trends, which fits the general picture of schizophrenia.”

But is it possible or even epistemologically accurate to analyze Lequeu’s architectural drawings according to clinical diagnosis? Against this clinical historiography, I would argue for the urgent need to read Lequeu within the critical framework of queer and disability studies. From a disability studies perspective, Lequeu appears as a paradigmatic example of the process of pathologization of difference at work within the history and theory of architecture. Disability scholars such as Lennard J. Davis, Susan Wendell and Harlan Lane have argued that mental illness and disability should be understood not as a biological given, but rather as a socially constructed reality. For David T. Mitchell, the history and theory of art and the humanities, have contributed, through the assumption of normalcy, to the construction of disability. Until now, architectural history has done to Lequeu what the history of psychology had already done to Restif de la Bretonne and Sade when considering their work as the symptoms of “foot fetishism” or “sadism” respectively. Thus, history and theory of architecture has contributed to the process of disablity Lequeu, by critically defining his architecture as the effect of a mental and sexual troubled condition. In the case of Lequeu, sexual and

social deviance from the norm has been pathologized and criminalized, but also has translated into a psychopathological historiography that aims not only to reproduce gender and sexual normalcy, but also to enforce architecture norms.

The traditional interpretation of Lequeu’s drawing called “...Il est libre” (“...He is free”) is a paradigmatic example of disabling historiographies. The drawing shows a naked body scrambling from an arch. The apparent contradiction between the female bosom of the body and the title given by Lequeu (“...He is free”) has taken historians to produce a series of imaginative answers to restore the truth of sex of the represented subject. In 1950, Helen Rosenau, reluctant to take the transgression implied in the tension created between body represented and its title, argued that “the “he” in the title referred not to the woman in the arch, but to the man who has escaped her clutches and is now safely out of view. According to Rosenau, the innocent and unencumbered male bachelor escapes, (like the small flying bird across the top of the frame does), “the tyrannical and possessive female embodied in chauvinistic notions of wife and mother.”

Fig. 91, 92. Artists Marcel Duchamp played with Lequeu’s self-portrait within the arch. Again, as in the case of Restif de la Bretonne and Sade, Lequeu fascinated the surrealist. Duchamp has been suspected to have entered within L’Enfer of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, with Bataille’s help, to have access to Lequeu’s drawings. According to an unconfirmed legend, Duchamp would have modified some elements within several of Lequeu’s drawings. Left: Jean Jacques Lequeu, Il est libre, 1798-99, BNF; right: Man Ray, Duchamp Portrait with Glider, 1917.

Reading Lequeu from a queer and disability perspective with Judith Butler takes us to understand what we could call Lequeu’s architectural travestism as a process of “discursive resignification” of the sexual and gender norms of his time.345 The late eighteenth century was a period of intense political, social, and scientific transformations (invention of feminism as a critique of patriarchal institutions, political bourgeois revolution, modification of the political position of the architect and his social role, scientific “discovery” of sexual difference as anatomic truth, etc.). New notions of sexual identity and normalcy were emerging with the displacement of the sovereign regime of power and subjectivation to a disciplinary regime signaled by the transformation of the techniques of punishment and exclusion into techniques of surveillance, discipline and spatial distribution of sexual identity. This new visual and spatial regime could be characterized precisely by a stronger repression of the undecidable figure of the hermaphrodite (who came to put new scientific notions of masculinity and femininity

into question\textsuperscript{346} as well as by the legal and religious persecution of practices of sodomy and cross-dressing. Against Rosenau’s interpretation, a queer and disability reading of Lequeu’s drawing would stress the tension between visual representation and sexual assignation as an intentional strategy to underline architectural conventions and put into question cultural representations of sexual identity.

Lequeu’s drawings represent the eighteenth century conflict between what we could call with Judith Butler different regimes of sexual and architectural representation as “cultural frameworks of intelligibility”\textsuperscript{347} in which normal and pathological subject made are visible. Refusing both Roseanau’s and Dominique de Ménil’s readings of Lequeu, Michael Champan understands “…\textit{He is Free}” as a “tactic to subvert the narrowing confines of masculinity and the male body, which is the theme of so much of his work. Rather than a male escaping the grasps of female bondage, the drawing depicts a male embracing, and even adopting the female form as the ultimate gesture of social transgression.”\textsuperscript{348} Arches, windows, walls and other architectonic limits are treated in Lequeu as conventional frameworks of intelligibility in which the subject is trapped. The figure of confinement already at work in Lequeu will become the central metaphor to describe homosexuality in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the work of K. U. Ulrichs (1825-1895), pioneer of homosexual discourse and politics, the figure of “a man’s soul trapped into a female body” described the condition of the third sex: the

\textsuperscript{346} About hermaphroditism as epistemological conflict see Michel Foucault, Ed, \textit{Herculine Barbin}, trans. Richard McDougall (New York: Pantheon, 1980).
\textsuperscript{347} I work here with Judith Butler’s notion “framework of intelligibility,” see: Judith Butler, \textit{Undoing Gender} (New York: Routledge, 2004).
homosexual or what Ulrichs called the “uranian hermaphrodite.” Anticipating Ulrichs’ claim to be liberated from anatomic confinement, as well as from the confinement of representational regimes, Lequeu’s drawings show a body fighting to escape disciplinary confinement as well as the epistemological framework of classical Vitruvian architecture - social conventions, ordering principles, sexual distribution space, and divisions of public and privacy.

Moreover, Lequeu’s female impersonation, as well as his physiognomic architecture drawings undermine the normative representation of sexual difference, while unveiling the conventional character of architectural classicism. Lequeu’s assault of the received images of the history of architecture are not to be considered as a mere symptom of a psychotic temperament or a castration complex, as Vidler puts it, but rather could be thought of as the result of Lequeu’s understanding of biological, anatomic, sexual, and architectural representations as conventional codes that the architect could play with, modify and even exchange. Thus, not only building façades can be made up of animal body parts (hen heads, cow’s legs…), but also human bodies, treated as architecture, could be composed and decomposed inducing gender mutation. Likewise, within this process of decontextualization, penises and vaginas, but also hair styles and clothing are denaturalized and represented as architectural codes that can serve to build different sexual bodies.


Anthony Vidler, The Writing of the Walls, 123.
Lequeu’s architectural drawings could be understood as the result of applying to architecture the principle of sexual parody and travestism (that Lequeu used to produce his/her own portraits) as tactic of representation, spatial organization, and seeing. From a queer critical perspective, Michael Chapman has argued that for Lequeu “the representation of the hermaphrodite” or the “transvestite” was not just related to transgression of sexual identity norms, but to fleeing architectural Classical conventions and their complicity with the new political and sexual order.”

According to Michael Chapman, Lequeu’s work intentionally troubled the classical and Cartesian systems of ordering space, derived from the Vitruvian virile body as a model for architecture. For Chapman, Lequeu’s hermaphroditic fantasies can be read as “deeper meditations on the systems of ordering and classification that are conspicuous in architectural epistemology.” Against Ledoux’s architectural taxonomy, against Vitruvius’s male body of architecture, but also against the new scientific conventions of sexual difference, Lequeu challenged not only the formal language of classical architecture, its programmatic styles and typologies, but the power of architecture to act as a system of representation that frames and makes visible the sexual subject.

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352 Ibid., 5.

353 A similar process of re-framing seems to be at work within the body itself. Lequeu applied to genitalia the “physiognomy of passions” that Johann Kaspar Lavater had developed to interpret the human face. His infamous drawing of a non-erect penis labeled “Low Posture of Bacchus” or the series of drawings of vulvas constitute a short of pornographic physiognomy: Lequeu displaces the face to locate genitalia at the center of representation and the subject of the portrait, as if a whole new physiognomy could emerge from the study of the form, movement, and passions of sexual organs. See: Johann Kaspar Lavater’s treatise on physiognomy was published in France at the end of
Lequeu’s architecture is made of a chain of decontextualized citations coming from different or even conflicting architectural typologies. Whereas Guillerme reads Lequeu using Matei Calinescu anti-postmodern states and understands Lequeu’s citational techniques as examples of the aesthetics of ugliness and “kitsch,” it could be possible to read Lequeu as forerunner of what Susan Sontag called “camp aesthetics” in her influential 1964 article. In Notes on Camp, Susan Sontag used the notion of “camp” (originally meaning “effeminate”) to describe a “sensibility,” appearing at the fall of the eighteenth century, including techniques such as “self-parody,” “failed seriousness,” “travesty, impersonation, theatricality,” but also as a refusal of “the good-bad axis of ordinary aesthetic judgment.” In Sontag’s terms “The experiences of Camp are based on the great discovery that the sensibility of high culture has no monopoly upon refinement. Camp asserts that good taste is not simply good taste that there exists, indeed, a good taste of bad taste.”

Lequeu’s use of female impersonation, multiple coding, citation, playful distortion of the original within the copy, recasting of the referent, transposition, and deliberate anachronism could be understood as the result of the use of “camp techniques” within the language or architecture or even as forerunner examples of what Jenks will later call

the eighteenth Century. See: Johann Kaspar Lavater, Essai sur la physionomie destiné à faire connaistre l'homme et à le faire aimer (Paris, La Haya, 1781-1803).

“double coding” or what Scarpetta has named “overcoding” postmodern techniques. Nevertheless, it seems important to understand these techniques of intertextual manipulation of a multiplicity of architectural and sexual conventions as part of a larger process by which subaltern subjects aim to gain social visibility and representation.

Contemporary queer scholars have claimed to understand camp strategies as “social processes of resistance” rather than as formal parody or postmodern overcoding. For Moe Meyer, “camp” names the techniques through which those who have been excluded from hegemonic cultural representation intervene within the process of production of meaning introducing their own codes, producing representations that are considered “ugly” or “fake” from the point of view of hegemonic language. From this queer perspective, Lequeu’s architectural travestism was not a mere formal play or discursive failure derived from a “neurotic” or “psychotic” condition, but rather the way in which the subalternal subject (constructed as queer and disable) resisted normative frameworks of sexual intelligibility entering the field of representation to produce social visibility.

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4. STATE BROTHEL

Biopolitics of Architecture and Sexuality from Restif de la Bretonne to Alexandre Parent-Duchâtelet

In 1982, and working on the imaginary spaces of Sade’s writing and on the French “roman noir” of the nineteenth century, French writer and literary critic Annie Le Brun paid attention for the first time to the French revolutionary projects for “mansions d’illusions,” “temples de Cythère” and “palais d’Armide” and considered them, close to Foucault’s heterotopic spaces, as “subversive architectures.” Nevertheless, the revolutionary brothel remained a “literary space” in the work of Annie Le Brun, until architecture historian Anthony Vidler decided to take it into account as a historical subject of architectural attention. In 1987, Vidler underlined for the first time the interest shared by many writers and architects in the period just before the French Revolution in setting up a program of “public establishments of lust,” “houses of pleasure” and “state brothels,” starting this way a possible genealogy of modern pornotopies. Unlike Annie Le Brun, and distrusting the emancipatory discourse of the Enlightenment, Vidler suggested reading Jean Jacques Lequeu’s reveries, Ledoux’s Oikema and Maison du plaisir, Sade’s programmatic writings and nineteenth-century utopian projects by Charles Fourier as “asylums of libertinage,” disciplinary architectures built in continuity with the Enlightenment’s social program, institutions paradoxically conceived not for

producing pleasure but rather to protect society from the passionate, chaotic desires of the people by offering regulated, institutional means to satisfy the “urges of the flesh.”

These conflicting readings of utopian architectural projects and writing are specially interesting for this dissertation since they force us to confront Foucault’s theory of architecture to its own critical *aporia*: whereas Vidler’s argument could be the result of the reception in the history of architecture of the Foucaultian urge to understand architectural sexual utopias in terms of disciplinary “institutions of confinement,” Annie Le Brun would argue for considering the Enlightenment sexual projects as heterotopias and therefore as disruptions within the very fabric of disciplinary intuitions. To put it otherwise, should the modern brothel be understood as a case of “architecture of subversion” or should rather be thought as part of the disciplinary project where architecture works as a technology to produce “docile subjects”? Are eighteenth century architectural projects for state brothels to be considered as revolutionary sites able to challenge the gender and sexual economy of the emerging democratic bourgeois space or rather as part of a larger political program to discipline the modern sexual subject? Instead of choosing between Annie Le Brun’s and Vidler’s readings, I shall argue that only a critical genealogy of the state brothel as biopolitical artifact could enable us to unpack the complex relationship between the Foucaultian notions of “*hétérotopie*” and “disciplinary architecture” in modernity. Ultimately, the state brothel could become a model to think modern techniques of spatialization of power and resistance, and

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therefore to study how modern biopolitical governmental techniques for producing gender and sexuality, health and sickness, materialized and spatialized in urban and architectonic forms.

Extending and problematizing Le Brun’s and Vidler’s arguments, the aim of this chapter is to explore the biopolitical and gender implications of the Foucaultian hypothesis on the French revolutionary projects for state brothels. I shall first argue for considering Restif de la Bretonne’s *Le Pornographe* as forerunner of the Enlightenment institutional projects to come and, as we will see, not only as precursor of Nicolas Ledoux’s *Oïkema*, but also as a producer of a new governmental discourse on the relationship between sexuality and space.\(^{361}\) Second, I shall read Le Brun versus Vidler, questioning the reading of Sade as being part of a common disciplinary design,\(^{362}\) claiming for a differential account of the projects for brothels and houses of pleasure depending on their biopolitical techniques of spatialization of power and subjectivation. Whereas Restif de la Bretonne’s and Nicolas Ledoux’s projects for state brothels could be read with Vidler as disciplinary architectures and “asylums of libertinage” in the Foucaultian sense, Sade’s projects are not to be understood in continuity with the Restif de la Bretonne’s and Ledoux’s state brothels, I shall argue, and cannot be defined exclusively according

\(^{361}\) Anthony Vidler mentions Restif de la Bretonne in his Claude Nicolas Ledoux as precursor of Ledoux’s *Oïkema* but he does not present a reading of Restif de la Bretonne’s work in relation to architecture: See, Anthony Vidler, *Claude Nicolas Ledoux, Architecture and Utopia in the Era of the French Revolution* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2005), 84, 135.

\(^{362}\) We shall leave Charles Fourier’s projects aside since they clearly belong to the XIX century and cannot be understood together with the French revolutionary architectures of the XVIII century.
to the sexual and visual principles of the “panopticon architecture.” Instead, it is my contention that, Sade created a alternative pornotopia to the modern disciplinary models of spatialization of pleasure and sexuality that could be understood either as the return of sovereign forms of spatialization of power, or as an example of utopian counter-biopolitical technologies for the production of sexual pleasures and identities that, as in the case of Lequeu, will later give rise to queer and camp techniques of resistance.

4.1 THE ARCHITECTURE OF SYPHILIS

Restif de la Bretonne and The Prophylactic Architecture of the Enlightenment

State Brothel

What is a modern brothel? What must its architecture be? How and where should it be built? Who should inhabit it? How should it be regulated? What are its uses and its political aims? Probably the first modern author to give an answer to these questions, a few years before the French Revolution, was Nicolas Edme Restif de la Bretonne, a prolific writer and social reformer contemporaneous with Sade - and his public enemy - who was well known in Europe in the eighteenth century for his numerous autobiographic and libertine novels.

Before Sade’s 1803 proposal for state brothels and anticipating Claude-Nicolas Ledoux’s

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363 His name is written both Restif de la Bretonne and Rétif de la Bretonne depending on sources.
1787 and 1793 plans for “la Maison du Plaisir” for Paris and the *Oïkema* for the ideal city of Chaux, the French writer Restif de la Bretonne argued in *Le Pornographe, ou la prostitution réformée* for the seclusion and the regulation of the “street women” of Paris in a series of state administered whorehouses, developing the first architectural proposition to reform prostitution practices in eighteenth-century European cities. Along forty five articles, Restif de la Bretonne develops a “pornognomonie,” “une Règle des Lieux de Débauche,” and “a rule for the spaces of vice”\(^{364}\): a series of regulations of what he called *Parthénia* (referring to the ancient Greece Mount Parthenon or mount of the virgin) that can today be read as a textual architecture project, an early biopolitical governmental guide, for the construction of the largest urban state brothel network in modern Europe.\(^{365}\)

**The bootman and the pornographer**

Although almost totally ignored by architectural historians, Restif de la Bretonne’s text is crucial to understand not only eighteenth century architecture, but also the invention of the modern notions of private and public space, of discipline, pleasure, and surveillance, as well as the establishment of modern biopolitical relationships between gender, sexuality, and space.

Undermined and forgotten by the canonical history of literature for his “unfit style” and considered more as a grapho-maniac than a writer, Restif was rediscovered and


\(^{365}\) Ibid.
reinvested in the twentieth century almost at the same time by two oppositional
discourses on sexuality: modern sexology and surrealism. On the one hand, Havelock
Ellis, probably following an earlier psychological study by Paulin Charpentier,366
described Restif in 1930 as “the first case of shoe and foot fetishism” and named
“retifism” what he considered a “sexual deviation”367 basing his diagnosis on Restif’s
book Le Pied de Fanchette (Fanchette’s Foot, also known as The shoe) published in
1769, the same year than Le pornographe:

“Every prostitute of any experience has known men,” noticed Havelock Ellis,
“who merely desire to gaze at her shoes, or possibly to lick them, and who are quite
willing to pay for his privilege. In London such a person is known as a “bootman,” in
Germany as a “Stiefelfrier”…Probably the first case of shoe-fetishism ever recorded in
any detail is that of Restif de la Bretonne (1734-1806), publicist and novelist, one of the
most remarkable literary figures of the later eighteenth century in France. Restif was a
neurotic subject, though not to an extreme degree, and his shoe-fetishism, though
distinctly pronounced, was not pathological; that is to say, that the shoe was not itself an
adequate gratification of the sexual impulse, but simply a highly important aid to
tumescence, a prelude to the natural climax of detumescence; only occasionally, and
faute de mieux, in the absence of the beloved person, was the shoe used as an adjunct to
masturbation. In Restif’s stories and elsewhere the attraction of the shoe is frequently

discussed or used as a motive…[…] It will also be seen that no element of masochism is involved in Restif's fetishism, though the mistake has been frequently made of supposing that these two manifestations are usually or even necessarily allied. Restif wishes to subject the girl who attracts him, he has no wish to be subjected by her. He was especially dazzled by a young girl from another town, whose shoes were of a fashionable cut, with buckles, "and who was a charming person besides."»

Analyzing his literary and autobiographical descriptions of incest and prostitution, the domination of women by men and “the adoration of feet,” Havelock Ellis described Restif de la Bretonne as a case of “neurotic non-masochistic fetishism,” introducing Restif into a genealogy of literary sexual pathology that Krafft-Ebing had already contributed to create through the analyses of the work Sade as a sign of psychological perversion that he named “sadism.”

On the other side, the surrealist saw in the “bootman” of the Parisian streets and in his “writing of the gutter” the model for a criticism of bourgeois sexual morality, a new approach to the city and the possibility for inventing a radically modern practice of self-fiction as novel writing.

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Born at Sacy, in France in 1734, Restif was educated by the Jansenist at Bicêtre and trained as a typographer and printer. Writing his own books directly at the typographic machine, Restif could be considered retrospectively as the eighteenth century ancestor of the contemporary “blogger” as working on a media of direct publication without editor where the act of writing itself becomes public. In this respect, Restif belongs to the genealogy of the self-publishing authors and self-fictional writers amongst which we could later locate Hugh Hefner who, two centuries later, shall use *Playboy* magazine as a public platform of self-display. Conversely, it could be said that Restif created the largest sexopolitical chronicle of the French Revolution – a sort of *Playboy* magazine for the libertine readers of the eighteenth century: he published more than two hundred pamphlets, including illustrated erotic novels, plays, essays, reforming projects and
utopian tales, which can be read as underground chronicles of the revolutionary years in France. His first success came in 1755 with the publication of *The Perverted Peasant*, which assured his reputation as libertine author in France, but also in England and Germany where the novel was immediately translated. In spite of his marginal social position and long time poverty, and unlike Sade, Restif tried to maintain a docile relationship to established political power during his life. Coming from a lower class origin, Restif depicted realistically the social conflicts of his time, reflecting an interest in prison and hospital reform, the problems of urban life and the working poor, but always comforting the established revolutionary governments. As a result of his political friendships, he worked as official writer after the Revolution and was given a place in the Ministry of Police by Napoleon – although he died before taking up the position.

The work of Restif de la Bretonne contains a historical lexicon of early capitalism, a narrative map of spaces for the regulation of the private and the public life as well one of the first modern accounts of the urban experience. As in the case of “foot fetishism,” the apparently marginal figure of Restif de la Bretonne finds itself at the origin of the discourses that shall define the modern alphabet to think social, sexual and political relationships. As Jean Luc Nancy has noticed, the first modern use of the word “communism” appeared in a text written by Victor d’Hupay de Fuveau\(^{371}\) in 1785 – four years before the French revolution to refer to Restif de la Bretonne’s longing for a

community of life based on “moral reciprocity” and “republican community”: “In his autobiography (“Monsieur Nicolas”), Restif described “communality” as one among nine types of government and writes this one is only effective for some people of South America, who “work together in the morning and play together in the afternoon…[...] This notion of communism referred to “people having in common a property belonging to the category of “main morte” – that is, not being submitted to the law of heritage”: as a monastery belongs to the community of the Monks, which is, as community, independent from the individuals. It seems that at the same time and even before, from the Twelve century, the same word designated some aspects of communal law and was linked to the communal movement which expanded as the beginning of a bourgeoisie.”

As we shall later see, the modern notion of “community - koinonia, communitas” that appears in Restif de la Bretonne at the time of destruction of the collective agrarian culture and the transition to a privatized and industrial colonial economy is, nevertheless, a community of male bodies, where the “togetherness” of people, although including animals, plants, and even stones, follows a patriarchal law, and is divided according to the difference between (masculine) production and (female) reproduction. Whereas the “primitive” and exotic community of South American “worker and players” was no longer attainable, the state brothel will be for Restif a possible model of utopian male communism, an urban island for the maximization of masculine pleasure and sexuality, social virtue, and national health.

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373 See also: Restif de la Bretonne, Les gynographes ou idées de deux honnêtes-femmes sur un projet de règlement proposé à toute l’Europe pour mettre les femmes à leur place, et opérer le bonheur de deux sexes (La Haie, 1777).

Restif’s *Le Pornographe, or A Gentelman’s Ideas on a Project for the Regulation of Prostitutes, Suited to the Prevention of the Misfortunes Caused by the Public Circulation*
of Women\textsuperscript{374} is an epistolary essay written in 1769 consisting in a series of letters between Monsieur d’Alzan and Monsieur des Tianges about love and the preservation of virtue. Monsieur d’Alzan, who will finally marry Ursule, the sister of Monsieur des Tianges’ wife, sends his friend a project for the regulation of prostitution in France in order to guarantee the virtuous exercise of love within the city of Paris.

In Restif de la Bretonne’s essay, the neologism “pornographer” (a word he coined from the Greek “pornê,” prostitute, and “graphein,” writing; the same word that resurfaces a few years later as aesthetic and museological category within Müller’s essay to refer to the content of the Secret Museum\textsuperscript{375}) does not refer to a writer or consumer of representations of sexual, anti-religious or anti-monarchic pamphlets, but rather to an expert in legal and medical techniques of public hygiene within the modern city. For Restif de la Bretonne, anticipating as we shall see the nineteenth century work of hygienists Alexandre Parent-Duchâtelet and William Acton, pornography is the branch of urban planning and hygiene dealing with the management of prostitution within the modern city and the preservation and maximization of the nation’s health.

Restif de la Bretonne’s “pornographer” is defined in the essay as a “night street walker,” a “urban observer,” and “city night spectator” (“dans le cours de vingt ans, c’est à


\textsuperscript{375} See this dissertation chapter 1: “The Secret Museum.”
dire depuis 1767, que l’auteur est spectateur nocturne, il a observe pendant mille et une nuits ce qui se passe dans les rues de la capitale," 376) as well as a new urban aesthetic agent (“citoyen des grandes villes, honnête homme.” 377) For Restif there are two cities that coexist in the same geography: a visible city exists during the day giving way to an invisible city that glows only during night-time. The night city is a “ville négative” 378 dwelling within the interstices of the urban legal and moral territory. The aim of the pornographer is, according to Restif, to shade light on the nocturnal city, in a literal sense to “enlighten” the negative city, its places and inhabitants.

The pornographer is the cartographer of the underworld. Because of the accuracy of these urban and night chronicles, Jean François de la Harpe named Restif “Rousseau of the gutter” and “Voltaire of the chambermaids.” 379 For Simon Baker, Restif can be considered as a “pre-modern spectator,” a precursor of Baudelaire and the surrealists, but also of Walter Benjamin, because of his “idea of a spectator who distinguished himself from any given crowd whilst insisting that he must be allowed to disappear in to it at will.” 380 Restif de la Bretonne’s “urban spectator” is, preceding Benjamin’s flâneur and the Situationist practice of “la dérive,” the first aesthetic and self-reflective figure of

377 Nicolas E. Restif de la Bretonne, Le Pornographe, 15.
379 G. Peignot, Recherches historiques, bibliographiques et littéraires sur La Harpe (Paris, 1820), 41.
male pornographic consumption within the urban capitalist city. Restif articulated for the first time what could be called an urban-porn hypothesis, that will become major with the work of Alexandre Parent-Duchâtelet and William Acton in the nineteenth century, according to which prostitution is constitutive of the modern city, in such a way that eradicating prostitution would equate to destroy the city itself: “Tu as entrevu,” explains d’Alzan to des Tianges, “que mon dessein n’est pas de faire regarder la prostitution comme absolument intolérable politiquement dans un État bien réglé. Loin de là, je la crois d’une malheureuse mais absolue nécessité dans les grandes villes, et surtout dans ces abrégés de l’univers qu’on nomme Paris, Londres, Rome, etc.” The pornographer was for Restif a new agent of technical urban management dedicated to reveal the invisible night, to describe and map prostitution places and to make political propositions to improve urban health and growth. The eighteenth-century use of the word “pornography” was thus related to an architecture and urban project for the spatial management of gender and sexuality in public space. Pornography in the eighteenth century political discourse named a new realm of biopolitical intervention that for the first time joint architecture, medicine and urban hygienics.

381 Nicolas E. Restif de la Bretonne, Le Pornographe, 23.
Fig. 97. « Conquering the New World. » Christopher Columbus meeting the natives. Getty Images. Colonization represented as an act of touch.

**Pornotopia as noso-architecture**

Michel Foucault coined the term *noso-politics* in his 1976 essay “The politics of health in the eighteenth century,” to refer to modern material devices (including scientific discourses and practices, institutions, and architecture) by which the sick body of the population becomes the object of political management. Before the invention of the Latin term for “hospital” (from the root “hospes” meaning “the guest who is received by a host,” the Greek term “nosos” designated the realm of “sickness” and everything related to it (*nosokomos*, the one who cures; *nosokomia*, the treatment; *nosokomein*, the verb for taking care of a sickness). Foucault used the root *noso*- to stress the horizontal

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multiplication of new social technologies to manage health and sickness that exceeded the medical domain and the architecture of the hospital, including the policing of the families, the treatment of the poor or the orphans, and the monitoring of new variables such as topography and climate.

Following Foucault, Restif’s state brothel could be defined as a noso-architectural project: a medical-hygienic architecture designed for the prevention of the most feared sickness of the seventeenth century: the “vérole,” the “mal vénérien” or syphilis. The architecture of the state-brothel was intended to work as an external barrier method to stop the spread of syphilis within the modern European city.

If Restif de la Bretonne’s essay enables us to define the state brothel as a revolutionary utopia is not because of its proposition of a series of buildings for the maximization of sexual pleasure, as Annie Le Brun shall later describe them. Restif’s state brothel is rather an archipelago of disciplinary confinement institutions for prostitutes. Although we could agree with Anthony Vidler’s description of the brothel as extension of the prison model of the panopticon to the treatment of sexual practices, the question of the social and political function remained without answer within Vidler’s analyses.

The form and function of the modern state brothel cannot be merely understood with Le Brun as architecture of pleasure, neither simply as formal “assembleage of fragments” of
existing institutional types, like in Vidler. The Parthénon was rather a noso-
architecture, an architecture of sickness and against sickness, developed according to the
eighteenth-century representation of syphilis and the syphilitic body. The state-brothel
was a project of urban hygienics aimed to regulate the presence of women and sexuality
within the city, to manage the circulation of organic fluids (sperm, blood, milk, and
water), to prevent the expansion of congenital syphilis, and to control the sexual and
racial reproduction of the Nation.

In the eighteenth century, France was the site of conflicting and emphatic discourses on
syphilis: together with the medical discourses about the disease, new literary and
political narratives started to represent the syphilitic body as a subversive political figure.
In a time that has been characterized by social historians as “syphilophobic,” the
position of Restif was conspicuous: it is interesting to notice that Restif was (like Sade)
not only a writer on prostitution but he was also a client of street prostitutes and a
syphilitic himself. Nevertheless, Restif, still at distance from the nineteenth century
construction of the syphilitic as romantic figure of resistance to the dominant political
order embodied by Baudelaire, Maupassant, Huysmans and the Goncourt brothers, did
not identify as syphilitic, avoiding the autobiographical style of his main work Monsieur
Nicolas, and presenting Le Pornographe, not as an “expert” word and a self-treatment
writing, but as a rational and political dialog among two healthy white male citizens who

384 Anthony Vilder, The Writing of the Walls, 104.
385 Alain Corbin, Les Filles de Noce, Misère Sexuelle et Prostitution au XIXe siècle (Paris:
Flammarion, 1982), 17.
never identify themselves as syphilitic.\textsuperscript{386}

In a context dominated by “pre-Pasteurian mythologies,”\textsuperscript{387} Restif de la Bretonne starts his argument in favor of the construction of a state brothel in his pamphlet echoing what was called at the time the “Colombian thesis” according to which the “vérole” was brought to Europe in 1493 with the arrival at Barcelone of the returning sailors from Haiti with Christophe Columbus’s voyage to America\textsuperscript{388}: “Tu le sais, mon cher,” argues the protagonist of \textit{Le pornographe}, “il est une maladie cruelle, apportée en Europe de l’île Haïti par Christophe Colomb, et qui perpétue dans ces malheureuses que d’abord continuel des étrangers rend comme nécessaires dans les grandes villes.”\textsuperscript{389} Restif’s argument was part of a larger medical and popular discourse that had produced a colonial and \textit{topopolitical} narrative in order to explain the origin of the disease. As historian of medicine Sander L. Gilman has stressed, syphilis was constructed within a political topography of sickness that opposed the \textit{outside} as contaminated and contaminating to the \textit{inside}, as proper and healthy, a representation that coincided with


\textsuperscript{389} Nicolas E. Restif de la Bretonne, \textit{Le Pornographe ou la prostitution réformée} (Paris: Mille et une nuit, 2003), 13-14.
the redefinition of national borders within modern Europe.

Fig. 98. Plan, section of the Oïkema at Chaux Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, *L'Architecture*..., Vol. II, p. 103. BNF. Paris.

Besides the “Colombian thesis,” the first European descriptions of the sickness dated from the battle of Fornovo in 1495 and were related to war narratives and the defense of the national borders. Understood also as a disease spread by soldiers via sexual contact with prostitutes, the cultural construction of syphilis related sexuality and war, or even more, understood sexuality and sickness as *war practices*, already representing all forms of relationship between the sexes and of prevention as war strategies – as shall be

Astonishingly following a similar bio-topo-political construction of venereal sickness as related to “pornography” and the “secret museum,” a scientific group claimed in 2010 to have found the “original” bacterial traces of the syphilis at the remains of a pair of twins at the ruins of Pompeii whose “secret” had been finally revealed. See: Mary Beard, “Pompeii skeleton reveal secrets of Roman family life,” *BBC News*, December 14, 2010.
the case with tuberculosis during the twentieth century. These theories claimed that syphilis entered France from Naples (“Mal de Naples”), after the retreating of French army in 1495 or that, on the contrary, it was brought by French soldiers into Germany (“Malafrantzosa” or “Morbus Gallicus”) or by the Spaniards into Holland or by Christian into Turkish territory. Anyway, the “virus” was always coming from the outside. The discourses on syphilis worked with a spatial representation of the political body where the national and masculine body borders were threatened by the contact with the other nation, or with the other continent, but also with the sexualized female body within the public space. Within this geopolitical iconography, the outsider (the stray woman, the stranger, the foreign) was “poisoned” and acted as a mobile source of contamination.

The topographic figures of the national and Christian borders materialized within the individual body on the skin as surface where the signs of the sickness as “stigmata” can be read. Syphilis defined as sexual and moral disease, the skin of the prostitute became the screen where cultural constructions of the sickness were projected. Sander L. Gilman has noticed that the popular image of the contaminating skin of the sexualized

391 About visual and discursive representations of immunity during the twentieth century see: Emily Martin, Flexible Bodies: The Role of Immunity in American Culture from the days of Polio to the Age of Aids (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994).
392 The name syphilis itself came from the 1530 epic poem by Girolamo Fracastro called “Syphilis sive morbus gallicus,” where the protagonist called “Syphilus” contracted the disease as a punishment from God Apollo for his defiance. See J.D. Oriel, The Scars of Venus, A History of Venereology (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1994).
woman as exemplary syphilitic eventually permeated both medical and political literature during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, supported by a biological and political discourse that established a relationship between vice, female use of the public space of the city and disease. The prostitute’s skin was not only the plate where the sickness could be read and recognized but it also perceived as an active “medium,” and interface for contamination.

Prior to the scientific discovery of the cellular difference between virus and bacteria, the modern construction of syphilis coincides with what Roberto Esposito has called, extending Foucault’s genealogy of modern power techniques, the emergence of the “paradigm of immunization” at the intersection of biology and politics. Reflecting on the etymological and genealogical relationship between *communitas* and *immunitas*, Esposito argues that modern sovereign power was instituted to immunize the community from the community’s own implicit excesses. The political reaction against syphilis, but also against political otherness (religious, racial or sexual difference) understood as biological threat, characterizes for Esposito the “autoimmunitary turn of modern biopolitics”: the authorization to destruct life in order to preserve life. As we will later see, nineteenth century eugenic techniques and twentieth century biochemical techniques of regulation of reproduction will join the early pornographic hygienic movement developed in response to syphilis and its architectural strategies of confinement and

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395 In his general atlas of skin diseases of 1806, Jean-Louis Alibert, one of the founders of modern dermatology, represents all of syphilitics as women. Cited by Sander L. Gilman, 96.


In order to understand the consequences of a possible interpretation of Restif de la Bretonne’s state brothel as “architecture of syphilis” is necessary to invoke Michel Foucault’s definition of leper, plague, and syphilis as “biopolitical entities” rather than as biological facts. For Foucault pandemics have been conceptually and discursively ordered, and constructed by different spatial and political strategies during different

397 See second part of this dissertation on the development of the contraceptive pill.
historical periods. Rather than assuming that biological facts are given before such political articulations and spatial arrangements, Foucault suggests that sickness is mutually constituted by scientific discourse, cultural, theological, political, and architectural rendering. We could argue reading Restif de la Bretonne with Foucault, first, that syphilis represents the turning point from sovereign techniques of management of the sick body within space to disciplinary techniques of spatialization of sickness and sexuality within the modern city; and second, that the architecture of the state brothel is the paradigmatic architectural representation of syphilis as sexual sickness within the space of the city.

According to Foucault, to each model of power correspond a model of sick body, a specific management of life and death in space, and a utopia of national and political immunity. Foucault described “sovereign power,” which prevailed within European societies until the eighteenth century, as a power that decided and ritualized death. The power of the king, sovereign, transcendental and divine power embodied within a male father figure, is defined not by his capacity to give life but rather by his power to give death. Sovereign power is displayed in the form of what Foucault defines as a set of “thanopolitical techniques,” or a series of techniques of giving death, going from violence and torture techniques to death penalty. The punishing style of public execution, of torture as public spectacle, analyzed by Foucault in the opening chapter of Discipline and Punish dedicated to the execution of Damiens, characterized not only the economy of sovereign punishment of pre-revolutionary European societies, but also the very relationship between pre-modern body, sovereign power, knowledge, and
Whereas sovereign power was exercised in its relationship to the spectacle of violence and death techniques, disciplinary modern power is, according to Foucault, defined by the emergence of new techniques for “protecting and maximizing the life of the populations.” Biopower is no longer concerned with “giving death,” Foucault argues, but rather with the regulation of life: biopolitics takes as its object body habits, health, reproductive practices, purity of blood, well-being, treatment of air and water…making

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architecture, domesticity, and urban planning governmental priorities. It is within this new regulation of life, Foucault argues, where the body, sexuality, and space become areas of political management.

In *Madness and Civilization*, Michel Foucault argued that “exclusion” and “ritual exile” were the main sovereign governmental techniques of spatialization of the medieval sickness of leprosy, being the medieval city walls and the “ship of Fools” - boats that conveyed the insane cargo from town to town - the sign of the impossible inscription of leprosy *within* the physical space of the medieval city. Thus, the leper and the madman occupied for Foucault a “liminal position,” becoming “prisoners of their own departure.”399 Inversely, “inclusion” and “confinement” are described by Foucault as eighteenth century disciplinary techniques of spatialization of modern sickness: plague and syphilis.

The Bubonic plague or “Black Death” of the fourteenth century was one of the most devastating epidemics in history. Europe suffered a thirty-percent mortality rate; and some cities, such as Florence, lost half of the population in a matter of months.400 The biopolitical management of plague, although still framed within the theological rhetorics of “God’s wrath and Satan’s vengeance” combined sovereign techniques of body

marking (such as the emblematic “plague beak-like mask” worn by the community plague doctors and filled with aromatic herbs was designed to protect them from “putrid air” considered to be the cause of the infection) where the skin functions as a surface of power inscription; and new spatial techniques implying disciplinary practices of space segregation, distribution, individualization, and surveillance described by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*: “First, a strict spatial partitioning: the closing of the town and its outlying districts, a prohibition to leave the town on pain of death, the killing of all stray animals; the division of the town into distinct quarters, each governed by an intendant. Each street is placed under the authority of a syndic, who keeps it under surveillance; if he leaves the street, he will be condemned to death.”

These new governmental techniques produce “a segmented, immobile, frozen space. Each individual is fixed in his place. And, if he moves, he does so at the risk of his life, contagion or punishment.”

Extending Foucault’s hypothesis, historian Bruce Thomas Boehrer has argued that syphilis, even more than plague, is the first modern sickness, or in order words, the first to break with the medieval model of medicine, with its discourse and its theological representation of the healthy and unhealthy body within space. With the advent of syphilis, the biopolitical techniques of spatialization of sickness *inside the city* became more specific while for the first time were articulated to regulate sexual and racial difference in terms of spatial distribution. Coming into being in the last decade of the

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401 Michel Foucault, 1977, 195.
402 Ibid.
fifteenth century, syphilis marks not only a new approach to disease itself, with the 
publication of the first medical texts in the vernacular, but also a new management of the 
sick body and sexuality in space.

Fig. 104, 105. Left: “Le pilori,” located in Les Halles, in Paris, was a paradigmatic 
building of the penal architecture of the Old Regime. The architecture of the “pilori” 
works as a theatre where the body of the criminal is publically exposed. Gruet au pilori, 
1716, Gravure, BNF, Arsenal, Est, 237 (3). Right: “L’homme au masque de fer,” “The 
man with an iron mask,” one of the most famous and enigmatic prisoners of the 
eigtheenth century. The combination of the mask and the private cell is a sign of the 
transition from the sovereign penal techniques to the disciplinary regime. 1789, Eau- 
forte et roulette, BNF, Estampes et Photographie.
The relationship between space, sexual intercourse and syphilis crystallized in 1527 when Béthencourt named the disease as a “mal vénérien” and described it as “originating
in sexual relations and contagion.”404 For the first time, syphilis was represented as a “sexual disease” threatening the integrity of social boundaries that can be treated through “personal cleanliness,” understood not only as spiritual purity (as it was the case in the medieval treatises), but also as practice of the body within the space and in sexual relationship with other bodies. As Foucault puts it, through its responses to syphilis, medical practices began to relocate sexuality “within the social body, and within the social space, rather than above it.”405 Nevertheless, it cannot be said that the theological notions of the sick body (where syphilis was “a punishment sent by God for blasphemy” that demands censorship and surveillance of speech) had completely disappeared for the Enlightenment but rather they were translated into hygienic and architectural terms. The biopolitical management of syphilis and the intensity of the disciplinary reforms during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries lead to a transformation of sexuality and space into technical domains of medical and punitive intervention.

We could say following Foucault that the body constructed by sovereign thanatopolitical power was a skin, and leprosy its biopolitical sickness. Developed before the invention of anatomic techniques of display of interiority that shall emerge during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the sovereign body was a flat exteriority, a surface where power inscribed its law with the aid of several thanatopolitical techniques. Following Foucault, Jonathan Swaday has studied the passage, with the practice of “penal dissection” (“the codification by statute of a set of rules under which the corpse could be

404 Claude Quétel, 1990, 54.
dismembered after death for the utilitarian investigation of the body’s internal structure,\textsuperscript{406} from spectacular punitive techniques, to anatomic dissection as the key transformation of the relationship between body, power, and knowledge. As opposed to the sovereign body, the modern disciplinary body constructed by the new biopolitical techniques that appeared after the end of the eighteenth century, is not longer a skin, but a dense and deep body, a complex and stratified system, an interiority made of a multiplicity of new organs and fluids. This new modern biopolitical body will be constructed as the anatomical substrate of sexual and racial identity.

New biopolitical techniques for governing the sexual body in space were implemented with the pathologization of masturbation, the hysterization of female sexuality, and the confinement of reproductive fluids, as we have seen on the Boudoir chapter. These architectural and medical technologies for the production of sexual identity would extend into the space of the city with the management of the syphilitic body. Finally, they will culminate around 1868, with the pathologization of homosexuality and the bourgeois standardisation of white heterosexual domesticity and its “sick” counterpart, the “maison close” as the nineteenth century materialization of the modern state brothel imagined by Restif de la Bretonne and later designed by Claude-Nicolas Ledoux.

Within the new epistemology of sexual difference, bodily deviation from the norm (the size and shape of sexual organs, facial hair, the shape and size of breasts, the use of the body as working force in the public space in the case of prostitutes) was seen as a monstrosity in violation of the laws of nature, or a perversion in violation of moral laws, an organic source of social and political contamination. The elevation of sexual difference to the category of “natural,” and even “transcendental” (as if it were beyond historical or cultural contexts) gave rise to a proliferation of sexual identities producing new oppositional differences between homosexuality and heterosexuality, between sadism, masochism and paedophilia, between normality and perversion, between the
bourgeois woman and the prostitute. Previously simple sexual practices became identities and biopolitical conditions, which had to be studied, catalogued, persecuted, punished, or cured. The “masturbating child,” the “sexual monster” and the “femme insoumise” were invented. Each body, Foucault tells us, became an “individual to be corrected.”


See: Michel Foucault, Abnormal. Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974-5 (New York: Picador, 2003). Foucault identifies three main figures from which the abnormals sprang: the ancient notion of the human monster, who violates the laws of nature as well as of society; the more recent character of the individual to be corrected, the “incorrigible,” who dates from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and the onanist, who is the object of a crusade against masturbation that takes off in the eighteenth century.
The disciplinary sexopolitical devices that went with this new aesthetics of sexual difference and sexual identity consisted of mechanical, semiotic and architectural techniques for the naturalisation of sex. Disciplinary techniques grouped together atlases of sexual anatomy, treatises on the maximization of natural resources according to population growth, legal texts on the penalisation of travestism and sodomy, handcuffs on a bed to restrain the hand of the girl who masturbates, irons to keep the legs of the hysterical young girl apart, silver film inscribed with photographic images of the dilated anus of the passive homosexual, straightjackets to restrain the untamable body of the masculine woman... These were hard, external disciplinary biopolitical techniques: architecture and orthopaedics, as well as new techniques of media representation – photography, cinema, early pornography – were the main biopolitical and anatomopolitical techniques of subject production. For Foucault, the paradigmatic model for these subjectivation techniques was the architecture of the factory-prison (in particular the panopticon), the asylum and the hospital. It is urgent to complete this cartography of disciplinary biopower techniques with the modern invention of domestic architecture as heterosexual reproductive space (which I explored in the Boudoir chapter) and the invention of the modern brothel: Restif’s state brothel was thought as a biopolitical architecture, a sort of disciplinary exoskeleton for extracting knowledge and pleasure out of working class prostitutes and syphilitic women.

In terms of biopolitics of architecture, the history of prostitution in modernity could be read as a history of techniques of privatization of sexuality and of segmentation of urban
public space in order to produce immunity, as a way to spatialize fear, and to prevent moral or physical contamination. The word “bordel” itself is a trace of these topopolitical practices. The first places for the exercise of commercialized sexual practices in the European medieval cities were public baths, which became progressively suspicious to the Christian authorities for their relationship both to oriental practices and religions and to body contamination – fear that will later be reenacted within the colonial narratives of the harem. Wet places considered as spaces of contagion, the baths were understood not only as immoral but also as unhealthy. As geographer David Sibley has put it, the “imaginary geographies” of exclusion located prostitution and the baths in social and spatial peripheries, literally moving them towards the “the edge of the world or the edge of the city.” In France, around 1256 the baths were close and the prostitutes moved outside of the city limits. Street prostitutes were forced to occupy temporary locations that took the form of “bords,” wooden platforms were women were exposed to the public view. These precarious platforms were mobile architectures where exclusion and spectacle, surveillance and pleasure converged. Prostitutes were thus called “filles bordelières,” referring to those who literally “stay on the bords.” In 1367 a governmental text written by Hugues Aubriot determined the location of the “bords,” concentrating the practice of public sexuality within a few streets of Paris - “Brisemiche,” Trace-Putain (actual rue Beaubourg), Gratte-cul (rue Dusbousbs). These “urban bords” located for the first time within the city itself and controlled by the government were called “Bordeaux,” the word from which derives the modern notions of

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408 David Sibley, Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West (London: Routledge, 1995), 49.
of “bordel,” “bordello,” “burdel,” and “brothel.”


The regulation of prostitution within the city was intensified and “modernized” with the advent of syphilis. After the seventeenth century, two strategies of spatialization of sickness coexist to manage prostitution: the pre-modern sovereign strategy of exclusion and ostracism, and the emerging disciplinary techniques of inclusion and imprisonment. During the first half of the seventeenth century, and as a sign of sovereign techniques of spatialization of sickness and sexuality, several thousands of street prostitutes were captured and deported to the Antilles or the colonies in America.\(^\text{409}\) In 1658, and already

shifting towards biopolitical techniques, Louis XIV limited the exercise of prostitution to a few streets and ordered the imprisonment of the “filles publiques” at the Salpêtrière that was transformed into a penitentiary where prostitutes were “moralized by work.” Between 1714 and 1747, several administrative projects were submitted to the government of Louis XV to medically control prostitutes in order to prevent the proliferation of syphilis, and Lieutenants Voyer d’Argenson and Berryer established a compulsory sanitary revision of all women working on the streets. According to Louis-Sébastien Mercier, in spite of constants evictions, there were around thirty thousand “filles publiques” in Paris in 1750. As a result of this will to regulate, for 1763, a general register of “filles des mauvais moeurs” in Paris was established. For historian Paul Teyssier, the modern relationship between the maison close and the institution of the “hospital-prison” that will characterize Restif’s and Ledoux’s projects for houses of pleasure, is not simply the result of a formal assemblage -as Vidler put it-, but rather it is related to the new biopolitical system of control of women’s sexuality within the urban public space. Thus, it is within these modern topopolitical narratives, as part of the hygienic management of syphilis within the emerging metropolis, and not simple as erotic utopia or formal project, that the architecture of the modern brothel can be understood.

410 Louis-Sébastien Mercier, Tableau de Paris (Paris, 1781-1789). This book is one of the first critical texts against the French institution of the “Hôtel-Dieu.” Mercier develops a futurist vision of the hospital as a “scientific place of health” in the utopian novel L’an 2440 ou rêve s’il en fut jamais (Paris, 1771), where he describes a totally rational society without sickness, beggars, and prostitutes.

Although Foucault was drawn to trace shifts over time, what often characterizes techniques of spatialization of power and sexuality is the co-existence and awkward fit of multiple power regimes, in such a way that sovereign and disciplinary techniques entangle and juxtapose. To analyze the biopolitics of architecture and sexuality through the changing model spatialization of power and sickness in the brothel requires charting rationales synchronically as well as chronologically.

The invention of the modern brothel as it was designed by Restif de la Bretonne and later planned by Nicolas Ledoux is related to a biopolitical displacement from leprosy, to plague and syphilis and to the development of new techniques to manage sexual bodies as contagious agents within space. Referring to a tension later articulated by Michel Foucault to explain the shift from a sovereign power regime to a modern disciplinary biopolitical regime,\(^\text{412}\) Restif de la Bretonne opposed, in a programmatic paragraph about the management of urban prostitution, the old techniques of management of the leper to the new spatial techniques for dealing with the spread of syphilis within the modern city: “Puisque le mal est fait, il ne s’agit plus que d’y trouver remède. De deux moyens qui se présentent, celui de séparer de la société, comme autrefois les lépreux, tous ceux que la contagion a attaqués n’était praticable qu’à l’arrivée du virus d’Haïti en Europe; le second, qui consisterait à mettre dans un lieu où l’on puisse répondre d’elles toutes les filles publiques, est d’une exécution moins difficile: il est plus efficace, le plus

\(^{412}\) See the opposition between spatial techniques of treating leper and plague in Michel Foucault, 1977, 195-200.
important, puisque ce serai prendre le mal à sa source.”413 The state brothel appears here as a new urban management technique to discipline and contain working class women understood as “venereal bodies.” Since for Restif de la Bretonne, the female prostitute embodies the carrier of the “venereal virus”414 within the space of the city, to control the spread of syphilis will imply to control the movement and displacement of the prostitute’s body.

Fig. 115, 116. Étienne Jeaurat: Transport of Prostitutes to the Salpetriere, 1755. Prostitutes in Paris during the revolutionary period, c. 1793-5. Engraving by after Jean-Baptiste Mallet (1759-1835). Bibliothèque nationale de France, BNF. Historian Laure Adler notices that the “fight for the window runs through the history of prostitution all along the eighteenth century.”415

413 Nicolas E. Restif de la Bretonne, 1769, 14.
414 Ibid.
Under a new sexual and epistemic gaze, the prostitute became the object of scientific observation within the brothel, as well as the object of pleasure and spectacle within urban circus sideshow attractions. This dual operation of medico-legal surveillance and media spectacularization, amplified by multimedia techniques, would become one of the defining characteristics of the pharmacopornographic regime that began its expansion after the Second World War – and that I shall explore in the second part of this dissertation looking into the making of Playboy’s pornotopia.

**Architecture as Prophylaxis: Building the Urban Condom**

The architecture of the brothel proposed by Restif in 1769 was intended to work as a prophylactic technique to prevent the dissemination of syphilis within the modern European city, being the building itself and its enclosing walls and internal divisions, physical frontiers against contamination, spatial techniques able to contain the bodies of the female prostitutes understood as “carriers” of the syphilis when free in the public space.

The modern state brothel was not simply a “maison de plaisir” but, rather a new kind of medical establishment, a semi-juridical structure, an administrative entity where the sexual bodies of women considered as potentially syphilitic can be observed, treated, judged and imprisoned. Just one detail seems to separate traditional confinement institutions from the brothel: this new and peculiar hospital-prison, this secularized convent for “shyphilic nuns,” must enable pleasure production for male visitants. The state-brothel was thus strange power that the government established between the police
and the court, the hospital and the prison, the domestic and the convent, at the very limit of law, medicine, and lust: an exception both to the public space and to the emerging institution of bourgeois domesticity. The hybrid program (superposition of functions, architectural types, forms, and norms) of the brothel was paradigmatic of modern biopolitical architecture.

The detailed description of the state brothel in Restif de la Bretonne’s *Le Pornographe* enables us to understand the use of the prison and the hospital architectural typologies not as formal assemblages, but rather as the double effect of the medical and moral fight against syphilis, a biopolitical dimension of the modern disciplinary architectures that seems to have eluded until now architectural historians.

Fig. 117, 118. Left : Jean-Jacques Lequeu, Etude d'un plan d'une caserne militaire, 1777-1824, BNF ; Right : The Grand Shaft Military Barracks and Military Hospital, Dover, around 1850; NYPD Visual Library.
Working as a prophylactic device to control the spread of syphilis, the arrangements of body and space supervision in the state brothel were in fact techniques of medical observation and imprisonment derived from the architecture of the modern hospital and the prison. But the state brothel was also a sort of proto-industrial sexual factory under medical and political surveillance placed at the heart of the city. In this respect, the brothel is not only related to the hospital and the prison, but also to the military barracks for the army and the factories for workers constructed in France between 1719 and 1840, and all along the nineteenth century in England. The brothel, the prison, the factory, and the military barrack shall work along the history of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as interconnected institutions often producing a single ergo-sexual-ecology where men are soldiers and/or workers and women are prostitutes (a short of sexual army or doing “civil service of sex work,”) being both military and reproducing forces for a healthy nation.

Michel Foucault talks about the extension of the barrack-factory model in *Discipline and Punish*, 142-3.

According to Foucault, disciplinary architectures represent the development within modern societies of military spatial practices of segmentation of the battle space. For Foucault, and after the seventeenth century: « L’armée est devenue une espèce de modèle spatial; les plans quadrillés des camps, par exemple, deviennent le modèle de villes, de villes quadrillées qu’on voit apparaître sous la Renaissance en Italie, puis au XVIIe siècle en Suède, en France, en Allemagne aussi. » Michel Foucault, DE, n° 234 : *La scène de la philosophie* (1978). It would be possible to define the disciplinary society as a social space segmented according to the military model of the grid. In other word, the modern city implies the “militarization of social space,” that came along with the Napoleon State and the Prussian State in central Europe. Beatriz Colomina *Domesticity at War* and de Mike Davis, *The ecology of Fear* can be read as two possible studies of the process of militarization of social space and the development of military architectonic models within the post-war American society. Twisting Reyner Bahnam’s *The Architecture of Four Ecologies* (1971), Mike Davis reads Los Angeles urban map as the effect of violence, surveillance, as well as police and military control.
The state brothel as conceived by Restif de la Bretonne was a technique for the management of the medical and moral environment of the syphilitic city. Restif’s *pornognomie* proposes eleven principles for the construction of the state brothel, that we will find at work later not only in the spatial formation of Ledoux’s Oïkema and house of pleasure, but also in nineteenth and twentieth century “maisons closes” in European cities, as well as (inflected by new media and postwar techniques of surveillance) in twentieth-century postwar architecture: separation, enclosure, surveillance, gender segregation, spatial distribution of bodies and pleasures, camouflage, theatricality, masquerade, secrecy, peep-show, hygiene and assisted reproduction of the nation. All these principles work together in Restif’s *Pornographer* to transform the *parthénion* into a prophylactic biopolitical disciplinary architecture to prevent the spread of syphilis within the context of the modern European city.

During a period of mutation from an epistemological and political way of understanding sexuality and reproduction to a new model of sexual and racial identity characterized by the expansion of industrial capitalism, the invention of the Guttenberg printing press and new practices of slavery and colonization, syphilis marked the turning point from sovereign devices to disciplinary modern technologies of power. Much of the cultural anxiety generated by these social and political changes came to take shape around different medical and governmental body and spatial techniques for the treatment and prevention of syphilis, as most particularly around the use of the condom. As historian of sexuality Angus McLaren has put it, in the eighteenth century, “the discussion of fertility, once dominated by the church, was secularized. The state began to replace
priest in policing motherhood by criminalizing infanticide and abortion, male obstetricians commenced their campaign to replace midwives in the delivery of babies, and writers of tracts on onanism and producers of condoms in effect launch the commercialization of contraception. ⁴¹⁸

As Joshua Gamson has noticed, the cultural struggles against and about the condom are related to the complex and not always linear relationship between contraception and prophylaxis, between communication and immunity, between sexual reproduction and contagion, between sperm and female organs and fluids, between the preservation of the nation’s survival and the preservation of the health of the individual body. These tensions were especially acute in the eighteenth century, since it was at this time that the condom’s role as prophylactic measure against syphilis was first recognized. ⁴¹⁹ Although the condom existed since antiquity, it was in 1564, in the anatomy treatise on syphilis De Morbo Gallico by the Italian Gabriello Fallopio, that it was considered for the first time as a medical technique although its aims and uses remained unclear. Its medical prophylactic use was not scientifically proved until the publication by Daniel Turner in 1717 of Practical Dissertation on the Venereal Disease. ⁴²⁰ Understood as naturally related respectively to the penis and to the vagina, the condom and the sponge were thought as masculine/contraceptive/prophylactic and feminine/contraceptive

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⁴²⁰ Daniel Turner, Practical Dissertation on the Venereal Disease (London, 1717), 197.
measures.\textsuperscript{421} During a time where no pharmacological treatment against syphilis was known, the “French peau” appeared as the only protection against sexual transmission, but also as a menace to sexual reproduction of the national population.

Fig. 119, 120. The prison and the military barrack constructed according to the same architectural type: Pierre-Léonard Laurécisque, (1797-1860), Left: Projet de palais de justice, prison et caserne ayant obtenu le 1er prix au concours, Paris, 1838: Plan général, Right: Projet pour un bâtiment de prison ou de caserne, Façade d'ensemble, 1800, BNF. Paris.

Organically produced with a linen sheath or an animal membrane to be fitted over the foreskin of the penis, and dipped in a solution of salt or herbs, the condom (as a genital variation of the plague beak-like mask) was supposed to be a protection not only against conception but also against the venereal disease.\textsuperscript{422} During the eighteenth century, the


\textsuperscript{422} Beatrice Fontanel and Daniel Wolfromm, Petite histoire du préservatif (Paris: Stock, 269
condom was popularized and used within the libertine culture and the prostitution practices. The fabrication and sale of condoms in Europe did not become largely public until 1712 during a diplomatic conflict that opposed the Dutch government and the Spanish crown and that forced thousands of soldiers to settle around the city of Utrecht. The event, reported by Casimir Freschot, - and only comparable to the celebration of the FIFA World Soccer Cup near Berlin in 2006 - brought to the Dutch city the biggest concentration of sexual workers in Europe during several months and generated a parallel industry of condom fabrication.\footnote{Casimir Freschot, \textit{Histoire amoureuse et badine du congrès et de la ville d’Utrecht} (Liège : Chez Jacob le Doux, 1714).} Animal’s membrane condom shops extended from Paris to London and Amsterdam, among other cities, during the eighteenth century and their use, although the object of intense debate in medical and religious discourses, were praised among others by Masquis de Sade, Giacomo Casanova, James Boswell and most remarkably by Jeremy Bentham.
On the other side, sponges (also called “la petite seringue,” “la sonde” or “tampon”) were the most used female contraceptives of the time, developed also within the framework of prostitution. Celebrating the medical virtues of the “tampon,” Jeremy Bentham, a paradigmatic forerunner of biopolitical measures, declared in *Situation and Relief of the Poor* in 1797 that population could be controlled not by a “prohibitory act,” or a “dead letter,” but by a “simple sponge.” The state brothel hygienic and prophylactic measures are an example of the introduction of water techniques within eighteenth century sex work places. The effective use of the sponge would have to be followed by the “vaginal shower” or “douche,” which introduced the “bidet” as a “French institution” within brothels before extending into the bourgeois domestic realm at the end of the nineteenth century.

According to Restif’s *pornognomie*, and reflecting the Enlightenment’s move from physical punishment to visual supervision, prostitutes, although imprisoned, should not be physically reproved once entered into the Parthénon, but rather subjected to a multiplicity of techniques of surveillance and hygiene. Both prostitutes and clients must

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424 Jeremy Bentham, *Situation and Relief of the Poor* [1797] (Edinburg: William Tait, 1843).
be controlled before entering the brothel in order to avoid the dissemination of syphilis within the inner space of the brothel. Once inside, like in a hospital, prostitutes must have regular medical visits and follow a strict hygiene discipline: female inmates should be forced to take two baths per day, (article XXXI), change clothing and underwear (article XXX), and avoid make up and perfume (article XXXII, “cela ne donne qu’un éclat factice et détruit la beauté naturelle”). Likewise, women inhabiting the brothel must be examined every day to detect syphilis and any other kind of venereal sickness, (article XXXIV): “On aura la plus grande attention à préserver les filles de l’horrible maladie qui rend cet établissement si désirable. On choisira parmi les filles dans qui l’âge et le goût des plaisirs disparaissent, celles qui auront toujours le mieux rempli leurs devoirs et qui seront les plus intelligentes, pour visiter les hommes qui se présenteront. Elles visiteront de même chaque jour les filles à leur lever.”

426 Nicolas E. Restif de la Bretonne, 1769, 61. Article XXXIV.
Fig. 126, 127. Left: The bathroom is the crossing point of the modern hygienic brothel. Second floor plan of the “maison close” Star of Venus, 7 rue Grance-Batalière, Paris, 1900, Archive: Préfecture Police, TDR, Paris. Right: The architect in charge on the renovation of an ancient brothel (located at 4, rue Hanovre in Paris) in 1934 doubles the number of toilets. Archive: Préfecture Police, TDR, Paris.

As Julia Csergo and Roger-Henri Guarrand have argued, the introduction of water techniques (the bath and “la douche” at the “bidet”) within the brothel can be seem as the beginning of a shift in relation to hydrophobic practices of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and operates as a motor for future changes within the domestic realm.⁴²⁷ Thus, the new biopolitical and hygienic techniques of production and control of sexuality, such as the condom and the individual toilet, were first implemented in the Oriental bath and in the brothel, before becoming the sign of “modernization” of the nineteenth bourgeois domestic space. In this respect, the syphilitic brothel and the Oriental bath are not only the heterotopic “others” of the European domestic space, but rather its unavowable origins.

Fig. 128, 129. Tables: M. Landriani, *Ricerche fisiche intorno alla salubrità dell’aira*, and Chronhyometro, ossia di una nuova macchina metereologica, colla quale si misura la durata della pioggia, Milan, 1775.

French historian Alain Corbin has described this period of the end of the eighteenth century not only a moment of political revolution but also as a time of “sensory revolution,” represented by the philosophy of Locke and Condillac, and characterized by a progressive displacement from a “hydrophobic time” where water was understood as a source of contamination rather than of cleanliness, towards a “hygienic time” where water, air and light become means of production of public health. The notion of “atmosphere” as “medical site” was one of the result of this hygienic investment within space. Doctors and jurists became architects who worked at the same time as metereologist, sexologist, urban, and moral managers. The obsession with the

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preservation of a healthy space came together with a new medical preoccupation for the management of air and light. On one side, as Simon Schaffer has noticed, Enlightenment medicine developed a technology known as “eudiometry,” dedicated to measure the “virtue” of airs and to provide “quantitative bases for the management of the medical environment.”

Invented by the Italian specialist of “pneumatic chemistry” Marsilio Landriani and developed by Joseph Priestly, “eudiometry” became one of the techniques defended by Jeremy Bentham to improve the quality of air within disciplinary institutions: Bentham celebrated the use of Priestly’s pneumatics as a mark of progress in his 1776 *Fragments on Government*, published only a few years after Restif’s *Le Pornographe*. Priestly promoted aerial analysis to fight epidemic fever and viral (“poisonous”) diseases, locating their etiology in noxious components of the air detectable by pneumatic chemistry. Priestly’s eudiometric machine was to breathing what Bentham’s panopticon was to vision, a device of rationalization of the relationship between space and the senses on which the reformation of morals depended. Although technically seen in the nineteenth century as a noble failure, eighteenth century medical eudiometry was situated at the meeting-point of two practices that shall determine the redefinition of

430 Priestley’s experiments consisted in the isolation of “nitrous air” as basis for diagnosis and treatment of the atmosphere. See Simon Schaffer, 1990, 286.
modern architecture: political management of sexuality and the medicalization of space.


As I have explored in the Boudoir chapter, in terms of biopolitical architecture, the “sensory revolution” was also the period of privatization of the somatic experience where the body practices and fluids were progressively domesticated and privatized, spatialized in such a way that their circulation and representation within the public space was highly regulated, codified, and stratified and distributed according to gender, class, and race. The city, like the body, was a close space defined by the circulation of fluids and airs. Between city space and the body, architecture mediated as a regulation system. Architecture, medicine, and morality were techniques to treat air and fluids on different scales. The sensory regime of the eighteenth century was still defined by the public spectacularization of body practices and fluids: urine, shit, sperm, and blood were part of an exercise of public display within punitive practices, and popular spectacles, but also
within ordinary life in the city. The streets of the pre-revolutionary European cities were “cloaques,” rivers of organic fluids. In Paris, the “passeurs,” for instance, covered the streets with boards to make the walk more comfortable for the upper classes. Likewise, sexual practices (including prostitution, and rape) were still visible within the public space. We could say, following Foucault (but also Norbert Elias, Alain Corbin and Georges Vigarello), that what we call modernization in architecture was a process of privatization of the somatic experience resulting form the biopolitical architectural management of organic fluids in the city during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, derived, partly, from pre-Pasteur theories of syphilitic contagion. At the same time, architectural “modernization” was a process of production of a new body, that echoing Artaud’s well-known expression twisted by Deleuze and Guattari, we could call a body without fluids, or at least, whose fluids must be the object of governmental control and that after the eighteenth century shall circulate, as we have seen in the case of the boudoir, according to new biopolitical divisions, through well defined disciplinary public or private spaces. Similar to the “passeur”’s platform (Fig. 130) to walk over city filth, the brothel was designed as a board to pass over the syphillic body without being


contaminated by its fluids.

As opposed to the “sponge” and to “bidet” and still inscribed within a sovereign regime dominated by the cult of male sperm and masculine fertility, the condom was promoted not as male contraceptive, but mostly as a physical protection against venereal contagion. Designed as a second skin that came to cover the penis and to contain the sperm (let’s not forget that the sovereign body is constructed as skin), the condom could be defined as the first somatopolitical technique intended to manage and regulate sovereign masculinity. It is because its capacity to contain sperm, understood as sovereign (transcendental at the same than reproductive) fluid that the condom was seen

by both religious and medical institutions as an immoral and anti-national device. Against the early scientific preventive discourses, both religious and medical conservative groups led by French venereologist Jean Astruc argued against the use of the condom for preventing syphilis because they understood the “sheath” mainly as a contraceptive method defending the idea that such device “positively frustrate the procreative purpose of sexual intercourse” and thus “directly opposes the designs of nature’s creator.” Instead of being recommended as prophylactic measure, the condom was contested within the eighteenth-century medical and religious discourses as an “outsider” incitation to vice and promiscuity, an obstacle between God and its creatures, between the Nation and its subjects.

437 In 1839, the same year hygienist Michael Ryan wrote *Prostitution in London, with a Comparative View of That of Paris and New York*, Charles Goodyear discovered the vulcanisation of rubber, the process that makes rubber - which is naturally hard when cold and soft when warm - elastic. This process enabled condoms for the first time to be made from latex, transforming the domain of venereal prevention and hygenics, and extending the use of condoms as “French Preventatives” to America. Nevertheless, the Comstock Law (named after Anthony Comstock) that regulated “pornography” made illegal the advertisement of birth control relegating once more the use of condoms to the private space. With the introduction of latex in the 1930s came a second revolution that translated into a major boost of mass production and distribution of condoms that lasted until 1960 when the Pill was first commercialized. See: Randolph Trumbach, "The Condom in Modern and Postmodern Culture," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 2 (1991): 95-98.
Defined by medical discourse as “an external barrier method,” the condom carried within it a paradoxical meaning of sexual intercourse and at the time the idea of separation, of radical division. Represented according to the same topopolitical, national, and immunitary logic that constructed syphilis as female, “indigenous,” and foreign contagious sickness, the condom was culturally defined as the “outsider,” and called “French letter” by the English and “capote anglaise” by the French.438 Promoted only for “ambassadors, foreign gentlemen, captains of ships, and noble men traveling abroad,”439 the condom in the eighteenth century was prescribed as a protection when dealing with extra-domestic affairs: it must be used only outside of home (at the brothel), and outside of the country (beyond the national frontiers). It was thus represented as an “amphibious

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439 Beatrice Fontanel and Daniel Wolfroom, 2009, 44.
thing,” a “twisted machinery,” a “shield” (notice for instance the name “armour” in English) and a secondary artificial skin (“peau divine” in French) between nature’s creator and the human subject, between the nation’s destiny and women’s procreating wombs, but also between the disease and the healthy body.

There is a possible biopolitical reading of the architecture of the state brothel that goes beyond both the anatomic metaphor (Singley and Hanno-Walter Kruft440), or the semantic and formal arguments (Vidler) that have been proposed until now. It is my contention that the hygienic fight against syphilis and the paradoxical logic of community/immunity at work at the condom (both enabling sexual intercourse while separating genital skin and body fluids) were translated into the architecture of the state brothel as conceived by Restif de la Bretonne in Le Pornographe and later designed by Ledoux. Instead of banishing the undesirable in wastelands, as it was the case with the sovereign political techniques before the eighteenth century, the venereal bodies, at same time, feared and desired, were separated from the healthy and the law-abiding by the construction of a disciplinary architecture of pleasure, which was at the same time, outside and inside the city. The state brothel worked as a noso-architecture, creating an interface between the immune community and the sick bodies: architecture was designed as a filter technique of prophylaxis, paying special attention to boundaries, points of contact and separations. Ledoux’s designs functioned as isolation sites where a

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considerable effort was devoted to the wall structure, as well as to its functionality and representation. In this respect, the Oïkema’s walls are similar to the asylum wall as “camouflage” of disciplinary techniques as they have been described by Strange and Bashford: “Originally a landscape architecture feature introduced in eighteenth-century aristocratic gardens, the ha-ha wall used in mental asylum design involved erecting a retaining wall at the base of a slope of land, thereby affording the master an unobstructed (visually un-walled) view of his estate. In the nineteenth-century asylum it simultaneously symbolized and concretized the objectives of 'moral therapy' and conveyed the dual meaning of 'asylum'. Imposingly visible from the outside, it was entirely invisible to insiders, for whom the illusion of freedom and space was considered vital to their cure. Indeed the self-concealing ha-ha wall […] offered both protection of and protection from certain populations; it expressed different objectives simultaneously, depending on one's position relative to it, as heterotopic carceral and segregative practices always do.”

In Ledoux’s Oïkema the slope works as a nature barrier but also as a utopian border to define a space of sexual freedom, removing the images of coerced isolation, enforced deprivation of liberty, medical surveillance and punishment of the state brothel as prison-hospital for syphilitics.

The Parthénon can be interpreted as a gargantuan condom architecture extruded within the space of the city where the double function of prophylaxis and contraception were nevertheless dissociated, enabling the male user to preserve the reproduction of the

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nation’s life without running the risk of venereal contagion. The function and form of architecture as gigantic extruded condom is even clearer in Claude-Nicolas Ledoux’s architectural translation of the Restif’s written project: the plan of the building does not simply imitate the anatomic form of a penis, but rather constructs an “armour” design, a “preventive” architecture where sovereign masculinity itself can be encapsulated and preserved.

The architecture of the state brothel is not an anatomic metaphor of a penis (as Singley and Hanno-Walter Kruft argue), but rather it is a second surrogated and technical skin separating the body of the syphilitic women from the health female bodies in the bourgeois city.

The state brothel project of Le pornographe and Ledoux’s plans for the Oïkema and the Maison du plaisir were written and designed simultaneously on two biopolitical registers: the medico-legal where the Parthénon is a technique to control the spread of syphilis, and the topopolitical, according to which the Parthénon works to extract women outside of the public space of the city privatizing their bodies and pleasures in order to control reproduction and the production of capital. The first register places the brothel in the genealogy of the penitentiary institutions such as hospital, the prison, the army and the asylum. The second one, anticipating Parent-Duchâtelet’s and William Acton’s influential nineteenth century treatises on prostitution, and Simmel’s criticism, establishes new links between the brothel and the domestic space as complementary
institutions. As we will see later analyzing the transformation of pornotopies within the Cold War period in America, Playboy’s architecture could be read as the effect of a displacement from the orthopedic prophylactic model of architecture endorsed by Restif de la Bretonne and Ledoux to the pharmaceutical and multimedia model where the physical walls of the brothels have been disintegrated in favor of molecular, virtual, and multimedia techniques for preserving health and producing masculine pleasure and capital.


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442 Simmel argues that prostitution and marriage, domesticity and the brothel are complementary institutions within capitalist economy. George Simmel, “Some Remarks on Prostitution, in the Present and in the Future,” in *Simmel on Culture*, eds. David Frisby and Mike Featherstone (California: Sage, 2000), 262-269.
The state brothel was also a *camouflaged wall* separating deviant practices that take place in the public street from the new private and protected space of domesticity. The state brothel was represented by Restif as an architectonic collective skin regulated by the state to protect the national masculine sovereign body. But it worked also as a disciplinary biopolitical technique promoting health and protecting “decent” women and the heterosexual domestic space from venereal contamination.
Fig. 137. Advertising page published in a French journal that shows the conflation of hygenics, sexology, and prostitution, already at work in Restif’s essay. *La Souris*, December 17th, 1925.
The first *topopolitical* norms imposed by the state brothel according to Restif are separation, enclosure, and surveillance. The Parthénion must be an *island of discipline and vice* that, according to article X, should be separated from the main arteries of the city and located “dans les quartiers peu habités.” To increase separation and surveillance, two sentinels will guard the doors, preventing the entrance of “decent women” and children into the garden of the Parthénion, and letting only men into the interior space of the brothel. The state brothel is defined in article VI as an “*asile inviolable,*” a total hermetic architecture, similar to penitentiary institutions, since once women have entered into the Parthénion, they will neither be seen from the outside at the window, nor they will be allowed to leave the brothel: “so that no fille publique appear in the streets or at a window.” As it is made clear in the first article, “all public women must be inside the houses, otherwise they will be physically punished.”

Establishing a link between theocratic sovereign societies of the *ancien régime* and revolutionary biopolitical disciplinary institutions, the convent (where the future wife of Monsieur d’Alzan lives) provides the monastic model for the disciplinary captivity of women in the Parthénion. But as opposed to the convent which works according to a “repressive logic” which aims to “obtain renunciation” the state brothel is entirely productive and seeks to increase pleasure, utility, the production of capital, and as we

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443 Nicolas E. Restif de la Bretonne, 1769, 47.
444 Ibid., 45.
445 Ibid, 32.
446 Ibid, 43.
447 This genealogical relationship between convent and brothel repeats in the link between the monastic cell and the boudoir. See chapter Boudoir.
448 Michel Foucault, 1977, 137.
will see, the reproduction of the nation. Hybrid of hospital and prison, of convent and boudoir, the state brothel requires total enclosure, “the specification of a place heterogeneous to all other and close in upon itself.” Restif de la Bretonne’s understands disciplinary confinement (“séquestration”) as a hygienic measure not only to control but to eradicate (“extirpation”) the venereal contamination in the city: “Un règlement pour les prostituées, qui procurerait leur séquestration sans les abolir, sans les mettre hors de la portée de tous les états, en même temps qu’il rendrait leur commerce, peut-être un peu moins agréable, mais sûr et moins outrageant pour la nature, un tel règlement, dis-je, aurait, à ce que je pense, un effet immanquable pour l’extirpation du virus, et produirait peut-être encore d’autres avantages qu’on est loin d’en attendre.”

The feedback relationship between confinement and contagion was one of the paradoxical results of the biopolitical design of the brothel as enclosed space. In the case of the brothel, the confinement of the syphilitic within an enclosed and intensively sexualized space aggravated contagion rather than preventing it. Therefore, spatial segregation of a biopolitically selected population (working class women and women

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449 Ibid, 141.
450 Nicolas E. Restif de la Bretonne, 1769, 14-15.
451 As Carolyn Strange and Alison Bashford argue: “Because places of isolation are also places of concentration, managers and experts have worried constantly, and not unwarrantedly, about the possibility that exclusionary practices might unintentionally increase undesirable behaviors and breed new and unforeseen dangers. Foucault wrote of this with respect to the contagion that was generated by the new institutions of confinement of the early modern period, and which, more easily than the inmates, slipped through the walls and contaminated those outside. His description of what he calls the ‘Great Fear’ of disease captures not only this literal spread of disease as a result of confinement, but also invokes the sense in which metaphors of contagion have been used repeatedly to describe the reproduction of undesirable or dangerous qualities, acts, symptoms, identities and practices in enclosed spaces and institutions of confinement.” Carolyn Strange and Alison Bashford, 2003, 12.
from the colonies) contributed to produce the sexual worker as syphilitic.

But how to understand the fact that the modern brothel, although represented as a utopian space of sexual freedom, was also a space of discipline and confinement? Rather than an exception, the modern brothel is part of the proliferation of practices of discipline and reclusion that paradoxically proliferated precisely when the legal and political concepts of “freedom of movement” and “liberty” were invented, but also when the “libertine” theories of sexual freedom were developed. For Carolyn Strange and Alison Bashford, “In the post-Enlightenment West new political imaginings of 'freedom' - the invention of 'liberty' as an inalienable right - created the very possibility of its denial as a new form of punishment. Historians of punishment have established that innovations in exclusionary practices and the proliferation of places of isolation occurred in the nation-states where political philosophies of democratic rights and freedoms first emerged. So, for instance, Philadelphia, the city that preserved the famed Liberty Bell, was also the city that established the model for penitentiaries in the midst of the American Revolution. Confinement became not simply exclusion but the deprivation of newly enshrined freedoms - of movement, association, religion, expression and thought. Precious rights, won through revolutionary struggles, could be stripped away if miscreants failed to obey the law. Once confined in “laboratories of virtue,” it was hoped, criminals would transform into law-abiding citizens. Thus, while methods of coerced isolation have long histories in many cultures, exclusionary practices took on new architectural forms and weighty new meanings in countries where ideals of
individual freedom were extolled and where they were constitutionally inscribed.\footnote{Carolyn Strange and Alison Bashford, 2003, 3.}

This tension between freedom and confinement, between liberty and discipline was for Foucault central to modern biopolitics as a set of liberal governmental techniques. In Stange and Bashford’s terms: “As government agencies assumed responsibility over sectors of life such as education and health, previously the responsibility of families, charities or parishes, isolation was not an aberration from liberal governance but central to its internal logic.”\footnote{Ibid.} For Foucault, this was the main question of biopower: how to govern living (sick and healthy) beings that are at the same time \textit{free} (and we could add desiring) \textit{subjects}? The state brothel was just one answer.

According to Restif de la Bretonne, enclosure was not sufficient to produce both pleasure and subjection while preventing sickness within sexuality. The Parthénion had to function as a gender-segregating device. According to article IV of \textit{The pornographer} only women will inhabit the \textit{Parthénion}: men were accepted only as clients. Conversely, a group of twelve male citizens will constitute a council of administration of the brothel, no women were accepted into the higher administrative functions. Therefore, there was a strict gender spatial and political segregation between work and administration, but also between worker and client, between sexuality and the public space of the city, between inside and outside, between secret and public spaces. In spite of the strong gender segregation, the male brothel visitors were tied to the women inmates by disciplinary bounds. In his analyses of the modern prison complex, Foucault stressed that disciplinary

\footnote{Ibid.}
practices, in spite of their intense segregating policies, linked, and mutually defined the isolated and the isolators. Likewise, in Restif’s state brothel, these bounds were not only those of discipline but also those of desire and erotization: isolated bodies and isolators, prostitutes and clients, were tied by biopolitical links: economic links, but also links sexual and power links. It will be Sade, rather than Restif de la Bretonne, as we shall late see, who will reflect for the first time on the erotized power bounds within sovereign and disciplinary architectures.

But even the governmental work of the Parthénion as gender filter was not enough. The state brothel was supposed to operate also as a segregation device within gender, introducing differences between different types of femininity, since not all women were destined to the Parthénion: the state brothel was, indeed, a place of confinement (“séquestration”) only for street prostitutes and unruly working class women. The state brothel was envisioned as a moral and gender grid, a sorting biopolitical technique to prevent, as Monsieur d’Alzan’s suggests, “the mixture of public women with honest women.” Like the Secret Museum, the non-accessibility to the Parthénion of “decent women, and children” produced domesticity as an outside reproductive space (inhabited by decent heterosexual women and children) but also as the brothel’s inverted moral image.

Internally programmed as a disciplinary space, the state brothel worked according to a

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454 Michel Foucault, 1988, 48.
455 Nicolas E. Restif de la Bretonne, 1769, 32.
456 Nicolas E. Restif de la Bretonne, 1796, 47.
logic of spatial distribution of bodies and pleasures. The process of spatial segregation was not simply a filter, but it continued within the interior space of the state brothel, distributing pleasure production and working bodies according to age, beauty, and money. The building partitioning was analytic; it established differences between several types of public women according to their biopolitical status – age, health, capacity of reproduction, beauty, class, and being or not the “property” of a single client. Biopolitical differences were thus distributed and spatialized. According to *Le pornographe*, age differences should be distributed within space along six different corridors (in categories from 14 to 36 years old), and the degree of beauty distributed into right and left alleys. “Chaque fille aura toujours la même place,” “Every girl should have her own place,” in the same way that military hierarchy and penal categories were distributed in space within the barrack and the prison. Each body has a place, each pleasure its location, each sexual service its price. The prostitutes should not be called by the clients by their administrative names but shall rather be identified by their location, every chamber being designated by flower names (“Rose,” “Amarante,” “Muguette,” “Narcise,” etc) and numbers. Moving from an ontology of sexuality to a topographical economy of bodies and pleasures, in the *Parthenion* the price of a sexual service shall be determined not according to the prostitute but to the room where she is located:

“Il y aura différent billets, suivant le dégré de jeunesse et de beauté. Les filles seront logées dans des corridors selon l’ordre suivant: le premier corridor, divisé ainsi que tous les autres en deux classes, sera occupé par les plus âgées; [...] celles de vingt-cinq à trente occuperont le second; au troisième seront les filles de vingt à vingt-cinq; on

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457 Ibid., 55.
trouvera dans le quatrième les filles de dix-huit à vingt ; au cinquième, celles de seize à dix-huit ; le petit nombre de filles qui pourraient se trouver de bonne heure…[…] occuperà le sixième corridor…[…] Les filles distinguées par une plus grand beauté occuperont la droite du corridor, marquée du chiffre 1; la gauche sera désignée par le chiffre 2. La tarif des billets sera aux guichet de chaque bureau.»

*Le pornographe* develops the argument according to which syphilis was transmitted by touch and physical contact through the skin, whereas moral vice (“le vice est si contagieux”459) was transmitted through “dangerous vision” (“dangeuse vue”460): young women could be brought into vice when seeing public women, since vision can trigger desire to imitate without knowing moral and biological risks. Therefore, the brothel’s wall was not only a technical urban skin intended to protect from venereal touch, but its camouflaged façade, and its secret location should equally protect from the dangers of vision. In cities such as Paris, Avignon and Toulouse, where the construction of a series of brothels was needed to confine a big number of public women, Restif de la Bretonne suggested creating what he already called in 1769 a “hot street” (une “rue chaude”461), separated from the inhabited areas of the city, and which access would be carefully guarded.

A moral and aesthetic rupture between the building façade and its internal program

458 Nicolas E. Restif de la Bretonne, *Le Pornographe*, Articles XVI and XVII.
459 Ibid., 34.
460 Ibid., 32.
461 Ibid., 41.
(similar to that between the client’s mask and his sexual fluids) define the architecture of
the brothel. The pornotopic space is defined by a radical split between what is publicly
visible and what becomes only visible for those who entered within its walls. Not only
the male client could come to the Parthenion wearing a mask, in order not to be
recognized in the street (although he should leave the mask before entering the first
garden) but the building entrance itself must be kept secret, unnoticed to “decent”
women walking at the street, being masked by an ordinary façade, labyrinths, trees, and
bushes.462

The Parthénon must be, according to Le Pornographe, located “within one or several
comfortable houses, without particular external signs” (“maisons commodes et sans trop
d’apparence”) in order to be undetected.463 Therefore, both the client’s face and the
Parthénon’s façade were masks that pretend to be what they are not. This principle of
camouflage determined a disjunction not only between the façade and the interior, but
also between form and program, and in a more general sense, between architecture’s
style and its uses.

462 Ibid., 47.
463 Ibid., 43.
Fig. 138, 139. Left: Ground floor plan of the “Maison de rendez-vous” at 32, rue Poissonnière, Paris, around 1910. The “boutiques” located on the façade of the building work as a mask that hides the brothel. Archive: Préfecture de Police, TDR, Paris; Right:
Ground floor plan of the “Maison Close” at 72, quai de la Tournelle in Paris, around 1920. A “boutique de curiosités” is the camouflage shop for the “boudoirs.” Archive: Préfecture de Police, TDR, Paris.

Fig. 140, 141. Left: Ground floor plan of the “maison close” located at 16, rue Blondel in Paris around 1900, where the restaurant (“brasserie”) works like a mask hiding a narrow sex work business. Archive: Préfecture de Police, TDR, Paris. Right: Thrid floor plan of a 1930 brothel. The space of the third floor, where the sex workers live, is distributed like a hospital or a boarding school, with large collective dormitories, as opposed to the privatized, individual rooms where the encounters with clients take place. Archive:
 Préfecture de Police, TDR, Paris.

For Paul Teyssier, “le couvent abrite un bordel, les façades des immeubles bourgeois dissimulent des maisons de rendez-vous aux spécialités inavouables, et derrière des murs anonymes apparaissent d’effroyables taules d’abattage.” In this respect, rather than specific architectures or spaces, the state brothel as pornotopia was made of “transitory states” or Deleuzian “becomings” of other architectures and spaces. Pornotopia, lying between visibility and invisibility, between open space and secrecy, reveals the chameleonic and mutating nature of architecture itself, as a hidden possibility waiting to be enacted. A conventional space can metamorphose into a pornotopic one depending of the different uses, and the narratives in which it is inscribed. This principle of camouflage extended from the state brothel into the entire city that was itself a secret pornotopia. As Restif himself noted on his city memoirs, the modern daylight city became a different space at night as if “a negative city was already dwelling within the interstices of its territory.”

More than simply a panopticon structure where vision is organized around a single central scopic device such in Bentham’s and Poyet’s architectures, the state brothel described by Restif de la Bretonne was an assemblage of multiple peep-shows and boudoir parodies, where clients and prostitutes were both erotized and kept under visual

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surveillance: a Russian peep-hole-doll made of mirrors and watching chambers. The interior space of the Parthénon was organized around a three cabinets peep-show, two for the prostitutes (articles X and XIII), another one for the male clients (article XII). The prostitutes’ rooms located along the two corridors overlooked the garden where the client awaits before entering the Parthénon, in such a way that “the prostitutes can see without being seen.” Once the client had entered into the corridor to which his ticket (“billet”) gives access, he did not enter the female space directly, but he was rather conducted by a maid to an intermediary room to be used only as secret observatory. This male peep-show took the form of a “dark cabinet” (“cabinet obscur”) with a small sliding opening (“petite coulisse”) through which the client could observe the available prostitutes without being seen: “L’homme examinera par cette ouverture toutes les jeunes filles du premier ou du second côté du corridor, rassemblées dans la salle commune qui leur est propre. Il fera connaître à la gouvernante celle qu’il choisit, et cette femme, après avoir conduit l’homme à la chambre de la jeune fille, ira chercher celle-ci.” Again, a visual and political reciprocity was established by the transformation of the prostitute’s room where the client has been conducted into a new peep-show where the sex workers could observe the potential client through a small slit (“petit guichet”) located at the room’s door, having thus the possibility to accept or to reject the client for sexual services. The secret interconnection of the three peep-shows assured the fantasy of privacy of both prostitutes and clients: they all watched without being conscious that they had been observed, they believed they exercise individual

467 Nicolas E. Restif de la Bretonne, *Le Pornographe*, 47.
468 Ibid., 48.
freedom without knowing that they had been previously observed and selected.

Fig. 142. Ground floor plan of an early twentieth century Parisian brothel located within a “hotel particulier” that reproduces the structure of interior garden and salon with double entrance imagined by Restif de la Bretonne. 8, rue Colbert, Paris. Archive: Préfecture de Police, TDR, Paris.

Finally, designed as a protective architectural urban skin, both a spatial and a visual barrier, the walls of the state brothel for Restif de la Bretonne must isolate the city from public female sexuality but without dismissing the possibility of sexual reproduction. Against current understanding of sexual work, but also against libertine visions of sexuality, Restif de la Bretonne, promoting a sovereign definition of male sexuality, urged for the prohibition to use contraceptive methods (including the condom) inside the brothel’s walls: the Parthénon itself should replace the condom as prophylactic
technique while enabling sexual reproduction. Young prostitutes were expected to procreate, being the state at the same time sovereign and father figure. According to article XXXVIII, children born within the Parthénon belonged to the State (if the father does not claim them), being the male children destined to the national army and the female children to get married or to become prostitutes - thus, the children of the Parthénon were supposed to come back to the foundational activities of war and sexuality, and to the national institutions of the army and the brothel. Restif de la Bretonne essay reveals a triangular structure linking the army, domesticity and the brothel where both masculine and female bodies are biopolitical pieces of a larger national enterprise. The Parthénon functioned as a collective reproductive assisted technology belonging to the State: a sort of modified architectonic condom where the prophylactic and the contraceptive functions have been dissociated, being the contraceptive function cancelled in order to preserve both masculine health and national reproduction.
Camp domesticity

Theatricality and the brothel interior as domestic and colonial masquerade

In the early eighteenth century brothels, courtesans’ chambers were constructed (through framing, interior distribution, lighting and veiling of light and decoration) as highly theatrical spaces for performing identity and sexual pleasure. The cabinets and chambers of Restif de la Bretonne’s Parthénion were described as sites for a deceptive masquerade, where mirrors, furniture, wallpaper, curtains, and the “frivolous” style associated in the eighteenth century with the boudoir, with the emerging experience of privacy and with femininity, but also with pleasure and sexuality, were meant to mask the disciplinary character of the space, its hygienic and surveillance techniques.

According to the spatial distribution of the Parthénion, the “filles entretenues,” those that were allocated to a single client, should be enclosed within an isolated space similar both to the monastic cell but also reproducing the privacy and status of the boudoir, as well as the decency of domestic space: the “fille entretenue” must be separated from the rest of the inmates and put under surveillance in order to guarantee the “fidelity” for her client and the possibility for the client to access his “maîtresse’s” chambers without stepping into the garden of the common prostitutes: “Les filles entretenues seront logées dans un corps de logis séparé. Leurs chambres seront disposées de manière que la
communication de l’une et de l’autre, et avec le reste de la maison, ne se fasse que de l’aveu des gouvernantes introductrices préposées, qui seules auront les clefs. […] Il y aura une entrée différente pour les amants en titre, lesquels seront toujours introduits par deux gouvernantes.”469 This internal segregation implied also a re-privatization of certain spaces inside the Parthénon that worked like parodies or masquerades of the domestic bourgeois space and the marriage couple, being regulated according to the same norms of fidelity and decorum as those defining the patriarchal institution of family.

469 Nicolas E. Restif de la Bretonne, Le Pornographe, Article XVIII, 52.
Fig. 145. Clovis Trouille, *Mes Funérailles* (1940), represents the strongly framed interior of eighteenth century prostitution, staging the erotized body at the center of a theatrical space. Private Collection.

In high-class brothels, rooms were already a parody of female aristocratic interiors: they imitated the female boudoirs, being decorated as replicas of the courtesan cabinets within the royal courts and private *hôtels*. The body of the prostitute as performative artifact existed within a staged space where it was framed by several layers of drapery and cloth: “la mousseline, la soie, du satin, du velours.”  

Her cabinet become a sexual theatre where a certain performance of sex was constructed and displayed: “Le théâtre apparaît comme l’un des lieux de prédilections de la courtisanerie: la pièce entière n’existe que pour lui servir de cadre. Savamment cache par de rideaux, orné par des petits amours ou des colombes s’entrebaissant, il est, avec ses draps parfumés un peu défaits, le théâtre, le trône, l’autel, l’instrument de travail de la femme.”

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470 Laure Adler, 1990, 23.
The interior spaces of the twentieth century brothels were decorated as replicas of eighteenth century boudoirs. Musée d’Érotisme, Paris.

According to Laure Adler, eighteenth century prostitution could be defined as a disciplinary regime regulated by the construction of a highly theatrical interior which prescribed bodily actions, codified movement and body performance: the brothel was a theatrical setting where sexual action was staged and the subjects (worker and client) eroticized:
“La vie de la courtisane,” Adler argues, “est réglée, répétitive, pleine d’obligations et toute entière tournée vers la perfection de la représentation. Elle se lève généralement vers onze heures, déjeune, prend un bain, très long. Douceur et blancheur de sa chair entretenue par des laits, des crèmes, de parfums. Humidité odorante de la chambre qui communique avec la salle de bains d’où s’échappent des effluves capiteux. Table de toilette surchargée de flacons de cristal remplis de parfums rares. Arrive ensuite le coiffeur. Papotis, badinage. La bonne interrompt le tête-à-tête pour l’habillage, opération lente et compliquée. Chapeau à plumes, mantelet de satin, bottines à talon qui découvrent la cambrure du pied, bouche rougie, yeux noircis, nuage de poudre de riz, gorge palpitante savamment découverte, masque blanchi, elle peut sortir au Bois, se promener dans les jardins des Champs Elysées avant de se rendre au vernissage d’une exposition ou à une première de théâtre sur les boulevards où elle noue ses intrigues et lance ses invitations pour le dîner.”

Fig. 147, 148. Thematic chambers as imitations of eighteenth century aristocratic interiors at the Parisian maison closes in the 1920s: Left “Chambre Louis CXI” in Le Chabanais; Right: “Chambre ducale” in the Parisian maison close One Two Two. Private Collection.

The “courtisane’s” apartment, located at the city center, normally within a “hôtel particulier” recreated both the atmosphere of “lust and vice” of the brothel, as well as the cozy and homely environment of the new aristocratic domestic spaces. Thus the courtisane’s apartment created what we could describe as a form of camp domesticity, a theatrical imitation of the aristocratic “boudoir” life without the sexual and gender rules of the domestic heterosexual contract. In a second theatrical move, the serial rooms of the state brothel were supposed to imitate the masquerade of the private domestic boudoir of the courtesan, becoming the copy of a copy, a drag-room of an already camp space. This double masquerade, this imitation of an already staged space, this
theatralization of both libertine and domestic theaters within a disciplinary institution, will later give rise to the “kitsch” atmospheres of the early twentieth-century Parisian brothels, highly codified and oversaturated interiors that, as we will later see, will extend to the *media parodies* of the post-domestic interiors of Playboy architecture after the Second World War.

**DRAGING THE ORIENTAL HAREM**

Fig. 149, 150. Two represenations of the Harem as “feminotopia”: Henriette Browne, Une Visite (interieur de harem, Constantinople 1860) (1861), oil on canvas, 33/2" x 44/2". Private Collection. Photo: Christie's Images Ltd.; John Frederick Lewis, *The Hhareem* (1849), Private Collection.

The Parthénion was not only a parody of artistocratic interior domesticity and of the libertine boudoir, but also a colonial drag of the Oriental harem. The utopian character of the Parthénion as state brothel was constructed in relation to and against the image of the “seraglio,” also called “harem” or Eastern brothel. As postcolonial readers have

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473 Pierre Martino, *L'Orient dans la littérature française* [1906] (Genève: Slatkine
pointed out, the space of the harem and the body of non-white women worked in the French eighteenth century discourses and representations as political and material metaphors for the East. European narratives represented servile women as oriental, and at the same time, pictured the Orient as a feminine space influenced by hot climate and easily subjected to passions, and therefore a possible harem for Western travelers. To put it in Gayatri Spivak’s terms, the harem was the space of sexualization of the “colonial reason.”

Montesquieu’s writing on the harem (both the *Persian Letters* published in 1724, and *De l'esprit des lois*, published in 1748) and Lady Mary Montagu’s *Turkish Embassy Letters*, (written during the years 1717-1718, and published a few years before Restif’s *Le Pornographe*), are two paradigmatic (and diverging) examples of the colonial construction of the Eastern harem during the eighteenth century. Once again, the opposition between Montesquieu and Lady Montagu reflects the Foucaultian tension

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between the interpretation of the brothel as disciplinary space or as \textit{hétérotopie}. Whereas Montesquieu described the seraglio as a political Island ruled according to the laws of polygamy, slavery, and male despotism, Lady Mary Montagu understood it as a “women only space” a sort of Eastern anticipation of Virginia Wolf “room of her own.”
Fig. 151-153. The colonial dragging was one of the logics of production of interior space within the early twentieth century Parisian brothels. Theatre and film decorators (rather than architects) were hired to design the thematic rooms for the high-class “maisons closes.” See for instance (up left) the “African Room” at the Parisian maison close One Two Two, and the imitation of a “hindu temple” (up left) designed by architect Alcal Trandving for the Parisian brothel located at 6, rue de Moulins, 1930s; Down: In the One Two Two the “chambre sous-marine” recreates an underwater cabin producing the illusion of space-time movement and travel. Archive: Musée de l’Érotisme, Paris.

Montesquieu’s description of the Turkish harem in the *Persian Letters* was a colonial
translation of French despotism and the French court, but also a critique of the Catholic monasteries and nunneries as irrational places for concealment and oppression.\(^{476}\) Described as “a hothouse of violence jealousy, sexuality, and surveillance,”\(^{477}\) the harem was the occasion to think the relationship between sexual despotism and female patriarchal servitude, whereas displacing these gender power relationships into the colonial context.\(^{478}\)

On the other hand, Lady Montagu saw Eastern harems and baths as “safe spaces where women can be among themselves.” \(^{479}\) Although recognizing that they were highly-controlled spaces, Lady Montagu saw in the harem the offspring of a “feminine space” where women exchange information and produce knowledge outside of the male

\(^{476}\) As Inge E. Boer has noticed, Montesquieu uses the *Letters* not only to represent the East, but also to question Western customs, religious and power practices. Inge E. Boer, “Despotism from under the Veil: Masculine and Feminine Readings of the Despot and the Harem,” *Cultural Critique*, 32 (Winter, 1995-1996): 43-73. “A Persian nobleman, Usbek, travels to Paris with his companion Rica. Usbek's correspondence can be divided into two parts: the letters he writes from Paris to friends about French culture, and his letters to the women he leaves behind in his harem. In their responses, the women testify about their loneliness in Usbek's absence and of their desire for him. The eunuchs who were supposed to control the harem have more and more difficulty in maintaining order with the prolonged absence of Usbek. Finally the system of control collapses, strained to its limits, as the increasingly anxious sequence of letters from several eunuchs shows. » Cited by Boer, “Despotism from under the Veil: Masculine and Feminine Readings of the Despot and the Harem,” 54.


\(^{479}\) Inge E. Boer, Ibid., 59
political institutions.  

It is interesting to notice that Lady Mary Montagu described the seraglio as as the architectural extension of the “veil” from women’s bodies to the space of the Eastern city. Against Montesquieu’s description, Lady Mary Montagu saw the female Turkish heavy veils and shapeless garments both as “camouflage,” and as “hygienic protection” which enabled them to escape the surveillance of the paternal and marital institutions, and to prevent contagion. First introduced by Montagu in Europe in the eighteenth century as an exotic garment, the oriental veil was promoted in the early 1900s in Europe as “smog veil” to prevent infectious diseases and to protect from the heavy smoke of the city of London. In 1951, the fetish British underground magazine *Bizarre* claimed the veil as not only “sexual fashion attire” but also a “hygienic gadget,” tracing a genealogy that goes from “the respirator” to the veil as erotic female urban garment.

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482 As John Willies put it: “Early in the century people jokingly referred to the city of London as “The Big Smoke.” Now there is a joke about it. Any town is a smoky mess,
Likewise, the walls of the harem, the water, and the vapors were understood by Lady Mary as a “veiled architecture” of “perpetual masquerade” that enabled women to move freely within a space that otherwise was kept under surveillance. In Foucaultian terms, the disciplinary architecture of the harem was for Lady Mary Montagu the “veil” that

and in London, long famous for its “pea soup” fog, the atmosphere has been so thick that people in desperation have had to wear a form of respirator to enable them to breathe. The last time the necessity arose for the public wearing of respirators was during the Spanish Flu epidemics in 1918... […] What is important is that Bizarre was not known then, but it is now, and the London lassies who work or play in the Great City have reason to be thankful for our fantastic flair in fashion, plus that wizard designing genius which resulted in the “smog mask” cover.” See: John Willie, “A Fashion Fantasia: The Smog Veil,” Bizarre, 14 (London, 1954): 23. Thus, the oriental veil as (sovereign) technique of gender segregation was turned, within the fetish underground culture during the atmospheric anxiety of Cold War, into an erotic and hygienic (pharmacopornographic) technique. About atmospheric anxiety during the Cold War See Beatriz Colomina, “Unbreathed Air,” in Domesticity At Work (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 193-238.

masked and preserved the Oriental female *hétérotopie*. For Lisa Lowe “the harem” as
described by Montagu, “is not merely an Orientalist voyeur's fantasy of imagined female
sexuality; it is also a possibility of an erotic universe in which there are no men, a site of
social and sexual practices that are not organized around the phallus or a central male
authority.” In the baths of Adrianople, Lady Montagu comments, for example, on
seeing so many “fine women naked in different postures, some in conversation, some
working, others drinking Coffee or sherbet, and many negligently lying on their
Cushions while their slaves (generally pretty Girls of 17 or 18) were employ'd in
braiding their hair in several pritty manners.” In this respect, the Eastern harem as
described by Lady Mary Montagu has been characterized by Mary Louise Pratt as an
idealized “*feminotopia*”: a civic community of women, a short of Oriental “women
coffee house,” an only women boudoir, a female collective cabinet made of baths,
painted walls, salons for drinking tea and reading “for Maids.”

Oscillating within the tension between Montesquieu and Lady Mary Montagu’s
descriptions of the Eastern Harem, the modern state brothel was represented according
both to colonial and despotic utopias where working class syphilitic women were at the
service of men clients, but also as “*feminotopia*” where “prostitutes,” free from the
burden of marriage and family, could create a new social harmony.

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and Feminine Readings of the Despot and the Harem,” 60.
Tristan and Maria Graham as being influenced by Lady Mary’s Eastern Harem.
Democratization of the Royal Brothel

Finally, we can try to understand eighteenth-century utopian projects for state brothels and their proposal for spatializing sexuality by taking into account Lynn Hunt’s reading of the French revolution in terms of a crisis within the familial and gender model of politics. Calling attention to the role of narratives in the constitution of power during the pre-revolutionary and revolutionary years, Hunt explores the links between gender and familiar relationship and social and political organizations. For Hunt, in the eighteenth century, the wide-ranging power of fathers both within the families and –in the person of the king – within the nation-state, came into question: “when the deputies overthrew and killed the king, they raised the issue of what should succeed him, both constitutionally and metaphorically; undermining and then killing the chief patriarchal symbol of power necessarily raised questions about where women and families would fit into the new arrangements; and until 1804 and the definitive formulation of the Code Civil, and by a reasonable extension, much of the rest of the population –remained deeply uncertain about how best to link fathers, mothers, families, and the state.”487 If the king was not only the father of the family, but also the father of the nation, as well as the chief figure of the royal harem, how was power reorganized and imagined after the fall of the kings’ head?488

The after-revolutionary democratic space was organized according to the same architectural logic of gender segregation that was already at work at the Secret Museum. Although women participated both discursively and bodily within the Revolution (more than three thousand women were said to have fought with weapons at the Bastille)\(^489\) the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen (1789), the Code Civil (1804), and the Napoleonic arrangement actively excluded women out of the democratic contract and by extension of the public space. This masculinist configuration of the new democratic space has taken feminist historians, such as Joan Landes, to argue that although being the French Revolution the birthplace of feminism, “the Republic was constructed against women.”\(^490\) As a result, the principle female figures of Revolution, such as Olympe De Gouges, author of the first Declaration of the Right of Women in 1791 and the Society of Revolutionary and Republican Women, were either killed (Olympe de Gouges was guillotined in November 1793\(^491\) ) or excluded out of the political field. In spite of this gender restriction of the democratic space, for Lynn Hunt, the eighteenth-century expansion of the reading practices, the increase in middle-class wealth and the liberal


market, introduced a “break with the patriarchal past” and their familiar model of power, being the modern institutions of domesticity, monogamy, prostitution, and heterosexuality the paradoxical nineteenth century outcome of this fallen revolution.

Fig. 158, 159. A crowd of 80,000 people watched the execution of Louis XVI in January 21th, 1793 in Paris. The guillotine sat where a statue of Louis XV had been previously – Place de la Concorde. Sanson, the executioner, snatched the detached head of Louis XVI to the crowd. The guillotine as « thanatopolitical machine » used to behead the King itself represents the end of the sovereign regime and the transition to new biopolitical forms of government. Left: Execution de Louis XVI, roi de France, estampe anonyme, BNF; Right: Villeneuve, Matière à réflexion pour les jongleurs couronnés. Gravure, Paris, Musée Carnavalet.

The state brothel and the domestic space, understood as disciplinary variations of the boudoir, are the two main modern gendering architecture confinement devices invented in the eighteenth century and aimed at privatizing female pleasure and reproductive

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fluids and producing two different types of sexuality: whereas the domestic space would be entirely dedicated to heterosexual reproduction, the brothel would be destined to the production of male heterosexual pleasure and national health. As Jacques Donzelot has argued, “this harmony between the order of families and the order of the state was more the result of a tactical collusion than that of a strategic alliance. For the one and the other were not scandalized by the same thing. What troubled families was adulterine children, rebellious youth, women ill reputed…By contrast, what worried the state was the squandering of vital forces, the unused or the useless individuals.”

The state brothel implied not only a rejection of the royal sovereign power but also of the gender egalitarian definition of public space within early revolutionary feminist movements, a rejection both of the exclusivity of the king’s sexual privileges and of the influence of women within politics. As Lynn Hunt argues: “The point of such establishments was not the liberation of women but the community of women to service men…[...] The new fraternity created by these complex intersections of voyeurism and objectification may have been democratic in the sense of social leveling, but in the end it was almost always leveling for men.” Strongly segregated in terms of gender and sexuality, the state brothel was a new male Republican space. Following Hunt’s inquiry, the state brothel could be understood as the utopian extension of the kingly privileges of a private court (the body of court prostitutes also called within colonial terms “royal harem”) to the totality of the male population, in order words, the (masculine)

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democratization of the sexual privileges of the royal court in the context of emerging liberal capitalism.

The Parthénon (forerunner of the twentieth century “maison closes”) worked as a disciplinary institution in the sense that it implied a method to assure constant subjection of the inhabitants imposing upon them docility and utility, “an uninterrupted, constant coercion, supervising the processes of the activity rather than its results and it is exercise according to a codification that partitions as closely as possible time, space, movement.”495 Nevertheless, it is important to notice with Michel Foucault and against traditional feminist conservative anti-pornography arguments that shall be developed within the 1980’s, that the power at work within the state brothel as disciplinary institution imagined by Restif de la Bretonne and latter by Nicolas Ledoux is different both from slavery “because it is not based on a relation of appropriation of bodies” and from service and vassalage since it does not articulate power in the form of “total, massive, non-analytical, unlimited relation of domination, established in the form of the individual will of the master.”496 In this respect, Restif’s state brothel is just as “democratic” as the French post-revolutionary public sphere in the early nineteenth century: a class, race and gender stratified space defined and aimed at the production of masculine power and pleasure.

495 Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish, 137.
496 Ibid.
In its functioning, or in its purpose, Restif’s and Ledoux’s houses of pleasure were far from the nineteenth century utopia of freedom in sexuality. The state brothel was an instance of order, at the joint between the monarchical and the forthcoming democratic regime that was taking shape at the time of the French Revolution. On the one hand, prostitution practices were directly linked with the royal power and the masculine sovereign sexuality within the court; on the other, the state brothel extended the royal benefits of the court (the so-called royal harem) to potentially all the masculine bourgeois subjects, placing sexuality within the domain of free market, and therefore putting into question royal power itself. The name Oïkema, for instance, related to the Greek “oikonomie,” from house (oikos) and law (nomos), prefigures the understanding of the state brothel as a democratic and Republican, male, collective, “domestic” environment.

Claude-Nicolas Ledoux’s Oïkema: Building the Parthénion

In the first volume of his treatise *L’Architecture considérée sous le rapport de l’art, des moeurs et de la législation*, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux presents the project for Oïkema in “Fragments of a Greek Monument,” giving details for Plan, Coupe, Emplacement, Distribution, Souterrains, Bains, Lavoirs, Séchoirs and Communs. Jean-Claude Courbin⁴⁹⁷ has argued that Ledoux, who self-edited his treatise with the advent of Napoleon in 1804, must have known Restif’s project for the Parthénon when designing the plans for Oïkema and the Maison du plaisir since *Le Pornographe* was highly

commented in Paris, being probably Ledoux’s strongest influence, together with Le Camus de Mézières’ *Le génie de l’Architecture* published in 1780.\(^{498}\) Claude-Nicolas Ledoux projects for Oïkema at the Saline of Chaux and for the House of Pleasure in Paris drawn between 1773 and 1775 (i.e. four years after the publication of *Le Pornographe*),\(^{499}\) can in fact be read as an architectonic translation of Restif’s pornographic plans.

Fig. 160, 161. Plan and view of the city of Chaux, 1773-79. Engraving after Claude-Nicolas Ledoux and after Berthault. BNF. Paris.

From a semantic point of view, it must be noticed that whereas Restif de la Bretonne’s essay is extraordinarily rich with architectural details, Ledoux’s descriptions are more moral than architectural, his final aim being to “épurer les mœurs publiques et rendre l’homme plus heureux,”\(^{500}\) as if the architect would wish to pass for a writer while the political writer embodies the role of the architect. In 1781 Louis Sébastian Mercier wrote in his *Tableau de Paris* against this degeneration of architecture’s styles and ideas:


“Architecture,” argued Mercer, “once majestic and unyielding, has succumbed to the licentiousness of our lifestyle and ideas. It anticipates and fulfills all the aims of debauchery and libertinage; secret passages and hidden stairways are in the same vein as the novels of the day. Architecture, complicit in our disorders, is not less licentious than our erotic poetry.” Ledoux was initiated to “the architectures of pleasure” working for Louis XV’s courtesan Madame Du Barry who commissioned him to design the setting for “entertainment” and illicit encounters known as the pavilion at Louveciennes, initially intended to house Jean-Honore Fragonard’s love scenes and later destined to shelter a series by Joseph-Marie Vien, that would be decorated by Ange-Jacques Gabriel, Louis Delanois and Pierre Gouthière. Madame Du Barry was, together with Madame Pompadour, one of the most famous courtesans of the eighteenth century, well known for transforming the Parc aux Cerfs into a royal pleasure pavilion. Oïkema and the Maison du Plaisir were for Ledoux the possibility of translating these early projects into institutional scale, an occasion to hybridize the architectures of libertinage and new disciplinary spaces.

Fig. 162, 163. Two versions of the “cadran de la volupté ou les Aventures de Chérubin Paris,” Théâtre de Montansier [s. d.], Réserve des livres rares, Enfer 611, faux-titre en frontispice. BNF, Paris.

The plans for the city of Chaux have been considered by Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter symbolic expressions of royal power, while the design of the industrial city, including housing and facilities for the working people, was, as Vidler and later Singley have underlined, closer to Bentham’s panopticon design for a industrial city and to Saint-Anne Hospital project by Bernard Poyet. But Oikema was also a “museum of vice”:

state regulated male cabinet. Ledoux’s brothel was the secret museum transformed into a hospital-prison, a barrack for female workers, a factory where women reproduce and men produced pleasure and national virtue. The two gardens of Restif’s Parthénon were transformed into a monumental portico with Greek columns, but still the building opened to two different interior corridors. Ledoux’s State brothel was a close box, its walls were totally opaque, with no windows and only zenithal light, which stresses the secret and internalized architecture suggested by Restif.


Ledoux’s Parthénon, rather than a panopticon, was a *sensorium*, a blind box where the subject must be conducted through smell and sound. Following Le Camus de Mézières’ architecture of the senses and prefiguring Brillant-Savarin’s physiology of taste, in Ledoux’s Oïkema the management of air was translated into an intense olfactory and hearing experience that impregnated not only the atmosphere but, like in the boudoir, took also the form of a thick natural vegetation that covered what in the plans seemed to be just smooth rational walls: “Le vallon est entouré des prestiges séducteurs; un vent doux caresse l’atmosphère; les variétés odoriférantes de la forêt, le thym, l’iris, la violette… soufflent leurs parfums sur ces murs; le feuillage qui les abrite répand les aires frais et s’agite en murmures. L’onde amoureuse tressaillit sur la rive et l’écho éclate en sons délicieux.”

Whereas pornography resurfaced as a modern archaeological, museological and hygienist category related to the restriction of the space, of the visual field and to the prohibition of touch, the notion of “eroticism” within the eighteenth century referred mostly to the senses of smell and taste. The word “*érotique*,” as historian Vernon A. Rosario has noticed, did not appear either in a licentious or sexual treatise, but in most important nineteenth century text of French gastronomy: *The Physiology of Taste, or Meditation on Transcendental Gastronomy* (1825) by the jurist, politician and gourmand Anthelme Brillant-Savarin. See: Jean Anathelme Brillant-Savarin, *The Physiology of Taste*, trans. M.F.K. Fisher (New York: Random House, 2009). For a study of the relationships between taste, touch and vision within early nineteenth-century French aesthetics see the reading of Brillat-Savarin in Rodolphe El-Khoury, “Delectable Decoration: Taste and Spectacle in Jean Francois De Bastide's La Petite Maison,” in *Taste and Nostalgia*, ed. Allen S. Weiss (New York: Lusitania Press, 1997), 49-62.

The phallic form of the “maison du plaisir,” rather than the role of architecture as sensorial apparatus and biopolitical technique, has often determined the reading of Ledoux’s state brothels within the history of architecture in symbolic and anatomic terms. For Hanno-Walter Kruft “the phallus shaped plan betrays the building function.” Likewise, Paulette Singley has studied what she calls “the phallic configurations” of the plans of Nicolas Ledoux for the Maison du Plaisir and Oïkema. Singley understands the plans for the state brothel as the result of a conflict between the aristocratic logic of the monarchic regime and the democratic logic of the Revolution. For Singley, the hidden phallic plans of the houses of pleasure are part of a larger political anatomy corresponding to Ledoux’s ideal city: “Responding to the exigencies of the Revolution, Ledoux has dismembered the classical anthropomorphic analogy and replaced it with a hybrid plan caught between monarchical centralization and a more democratic attempt to disrupt the dominant center with a series of satellite developments. Inverting the metaphor of decapitation by dissecting the body from a preexisting head Ledoux nevertheless organizes in his ideal city a confrontation between these two regimes.”

Following the anatomic metaphor, Singley has read Ledoux’s plans for the Maison de plaisir at Montmartre in Paris according to the theme of “penetration,” within “a circular womb engulfing all of the male genitals –sadly out of proportion with the space


506 Hanno-Walter Kruft, 1994, 163.
surrounding them.” Maybe this “out of proportion” does not only put into question Singley’s anamorphic logic but also the bodily relationship it presupposes. If we accept for a moment this body-architecture analogy, should not be more accurate to understand the plan as the diagram of a penis enclosed within a panopticon, as a possible representation of the sovereign masculine organ being reframed within a post-revolutionary disciplinary architecture? Conversely, Ledoux’s drawing of the eye reflecting the interior of the theater of Besançon could be read as a diagram of the panopticon within the eye, a mise en abîme of the reframing of theatrical classical architecture within a new regime of perspective and surveillance. If the last one stresses the relationship between the spatialization of vision and the rational disciplinary architecture of the panopticon, the first indicates how sexuality is defined and regulated according to space within the coming biopolitical regime. If the theater was for Ledoux, as Vidler has noticed, a space of “public instruction” and “public vision,” the Maison du plaisir and Oïkema were places of public moralization and instruction of sexuality: a theatre where class, gender, and sexual power relationships were performed and represented.

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508 Ibid., 180.
509 Anthony Vidler, 2005, 89.
But reading Ledoux and Restif with Foucault, the state brothel should not be understood simply as anatomical and symbolic architecture (sometimes described as a temple for communal love-liturgies shaped in plan like an erect penis with testicles surrounded by a great circle of “maisonnettes”) but rather as a biopolitical technology representing the medicalization of space and sexuality in relation to the fear of syphilis and the anxiety of the reproduction of the Nation within the colonial context. In order words, it is my contention that Ledoux’s pornotopies are neither wombs, not phalluses, but rather extruded urban biopolitical prophylactic techniques.

Secondly, Ledoux’s pornotopies could be seen as the effects of a process of erotization of the disciplinary power architectures and techniques of the Enlightenment (the prison-
factory and the hospital) and the result of their transformation into technologies of sexuality. If disciplinary architectures “produce subjected and practiced bodies, “docile” bodies,”510 the architecture of the Parthénon produces gendered and sexualized bodies of pleasure, while dissociating sexual production and political empowerment: whereas the brothel increases the sexual representation of the body (in economic terms of utility and capital production), it diminishes agency in term of political obedience,511 ultimately functioning as a biopolitical architecture of subjection.

Ledoux’s brothel is indeed one of the totalitarian utopias of the early modern democratic European society. Similar to the penitentiary and educative “total institutions,” the brothel is thought as a national factory where the sexual subject (understood as masculine, heterosexual and white) can explore his vicious instincts avoiding sexual contamination of the bourgeois society. The state brothel here is understood as a governmental abstract device, a short of collective sexual machine extended to the totality of the social space. Within Restif and Ledoux, the State brothel are meant to be “republican” and “democratic” (which doesn’t mean egalitarian): they aimed to create a theatrical-medical space, where the uses of the body and pleasures are determined by health, gender, class, sexual orientation, and race.

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510 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 138.
511 I use here Michel Foucault’s analyses of the paradoxical action of discipline as economically productive and politically repressive. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 138.
4. 2. SADE’S INSTITUTIONS OF LUST
THANATOPOLITICS, ARCHITECTURAL PARODY AND LIBERTINAGE

In spite of the success of Restif de la Bretonne’s pamphlet for the construction of the state brothels during the eighteenth century and its influence on the revolutionary architecture of Ledoux, it is not Restif de la Bretonne, but rather Donatien Alfonse François de Sade that is mostly commented by historians of architecture. Anthony Vidler, for instance, suggests reading both Sade’s and Ledoux’s projects for the construction of “Maisons du Plaisir” as “asylums of libertinage,” as part of the disciplinary institutions of “great confinement” that flourished in Europe and the United States during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. All along his work, from the writing of his first travel diaries *Voyage en Italie* in 1776 to the publication of *La Marquise de Gange* before his death in 1814, Sade reconstructed in philosophical dialogs, narrative texts, and theatre a series of “Temples of Venus,” describing in detail the architecture of the places that according to him should be dedicated to the practice of libertinage.\(^{512}\) The convent of Saint-Marie-des-Bois in *Justine* and the *Chatêau de Silling*\(^{513}\) in *Les 120 journées de Sodome*, where “the cruelest art and most refined

\(^{512}\) Anthony Vidler suggests reading Sade as an architect-writer who used language as his means of planning and design. Just as Playboy would use communications media as a form of architectural notation two centuries later, Sade used literature to set out building specifications: the floor plan, layout, furnishings, decor, the exact dimensions of the cross-section and the perimeter. See: Anthony Vidler, 1987, 103-8.

\(^{513}\) It is believed that the fictional Château de Silling, depicted in *The 120 Days of Sodom*, was based on the crenellated fortress which stands in the hilltop village of Saumane-de-Vaucluse, to the west of Lacoste. The Abbé's castle at Saumane-de-Vaucluse, situated halfway between Lacoste and Mazan was a gift from the popes at Avignon. The marquis grew up in the area around Lacoste. Banished from home because of his violent rages,
barbarity could invent in the way of atrocity,” remain until today two of the main pornotopias of the history of literature. Aside from his literary writing, Sade authored a report for the creation of a series of brothels that is often considered in alignment with Ledoux’s project for the state brothel. But can these Sadean architectures be understood, both in form and in function, according to the moral and biopolitical program of the state brothel as historians of architecture have claimed until now? Do Sade’s “asylums of libertinage” and “temples of lust” function in terms of urban hygienics and biopolitical regulation of sexual reproduction and venereal contagion as Ledoux’s Houses of Pleasure?

My aim here is not to analyze Sade’s literary writing, since a full study of Sade’s work exceeds the scope of this dissertation, but rather to think Sade’s architectures of libertinage in relation to the revolutionary project of the modern brothel as biopolitical utopia. It is my contention that, against traditional readings, Sade’s architectures of libertinage cannot be read in continuity with Restif’s and Ledoux’s projects. On the contrary, I would argue, they represent a radical criticism to the biopolitical and hygienic model of the state brothel.

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he spent 6 years of his childhood with his uncle, the noted cleric/scholar Abbé de Sade (who also happened to be a libertine) at the castle. Foreigners attracted to the marquis's reputation have turned Lacoste into a lively place. An American art school was founded here in the 1970s, and many locals are proud of their hometown boy. The castle has now been transformed into a theatre.
In order to develop this argument, I would like to call attention to a series of Sade’s works rarely commented when analyzing his “prisons of pleasure” that show his implication with the architectural and political discourses of his time. Likewise, in order to understand the radical difference between Restif’s and Ledoux’s projects for state brothels, and Sade’s sexual architectures, it is necessary to refer to the controversy that opposed Sade and Restif during the eighteenth century as well as the relationship between their published works.
First, I would like to consider Sade’s unconventional project for the construction of thirty-two houses of prostitution in Paris. The text “Projet de trente-deux maisons de prostitution à Paris” and a series of drawings were done most probably between the 1795 and 1796. This small text was almost certainly included within one of the versions of the Conversations du Château de Charmelle that were confiscated by the police in 1801 and that have not been found until today. We know of the existence of this project not only because a similar argument has been included by Sade himself in his text “Français encore un effort” published in La Philosophie dans le boudoir,514 but also, and most remarkably, because Restif de la Bretonne compares it to his own project for the construction of the state brothel in Le Pornographe.

In his autobiography Monsieur Nicolas,515 Restif de la Bretonne noticed that he had come to know Sade’s project on September 22nd, 1796, where Sade proposed, he said: “an imitation of my Le Pornographe to establish offices for public women, but adding a horrific feature: three of the nine different offices described by this wicked work are destined to offer women to the libertines to be tortured and killed for mere pleasure of the ruffians who share Sade’s taste. Libertines would pay double price if women are pregnant.”516 If we follow Restif’s notes, we understand that Sade’s writing is a parody of the project for the construction of state brothels in Europe done by Restif himself in

516 Ibid., Volume 2, 451-2.
A mockery of the revolutionary “Republican” and moral reports of Restif, Sade’s “Projet de trente-deux maisons de prostitution à Paris” is a pornographic pamphlet that, rather than following Restif, ridicules and makes fun of his biopolitical and hygienic initiatives to reform prostitution in European cities during the revolutionary period.

Restif de la Bretonne constructed himself as the Marquis de Sade’s literary and political rival, often being their works written signs of a long-time conflict. Taking into account their mutual enmity, as well as the radically different uses of their institutions of lust, it might be misleading to understand both Restif’s and Sade’s state brothels, together with Ledoux’s Oïkema, as part of a common project to built disciplinary “asylums of libertinage.” Restif attacked Sade calling him “monster auteur” and denouncing his cruelty as anti-revolutionary. Proof of their mutual hatred, Restif’s 1789 novel called Anti-Justine, which defended the possibility of an “eroticism without cruelty,” was a public response to Sade’s Justine. Closer to the architect Nicolas Ledoux than to Sade, Restif was driven by licentiousness but also concerned with morality.

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517 We know today that Sade had Restif’s Le Pornographe in his library as it has been found amongst his books in Charenton after his death. See: Mladen Kozul, Le Corps Dans le Monde: Récits et Espaces Sadiens (Louvain: Peeters, 2005), 17.
520 On Restif’s work and philosophy see: Charles Potter, Restif’s Novels or An Autobiography in Search of an Author (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967); and
reasonable sexual practice between a man and a woman was defined by nature’s fate and was intended to contribute to social order and national health. Unlike Restif and Ledoux, Sade questioned traditional kinship and family institutions such as marriage, and heterosexual monogamy, and opposed prohibitions against sodomy and incest. Restif’s projects were in this respect radically different from Sade’s, who explicitly questioned Restif’s morality and his complicity with the established power.

Fig. 169, 170. Hôtel Guimard, Plan and elevation, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, 1770-3, Paris. BNF. Paris.

The drawings included by Sade in his “mockery” project that were unknown for long time, have recently come to clarify this antagonism. A series of drawings concerning his project for prostitution houses were found for the first time in 2000 by historian Mark Poster, *The Utopian Though of Restif de la Bretonne* (New York: New York University Press, 1971).

521 Only a sketch for the “institution de débauche,” that was part of the collection of Xavier de Sade and had already been reproduced by Gilbert Lely, was well known since the 1960s.
Alexandre Stroev in a Russian museum. The so-called “Russian” drawings include a pencil hand drawing of a labyrinth and two versions (one penil another one pen) of the “institutions de débauche.” Alexandre Stroev stresses the formal similarities between the plan for the Maison du plaisir by Ledoux and Sade’s drawings. Mladen Kozul, who has dedicated a book to the study of “Sadean architectures,” has noticed that Sade was living during the time he draw the project for the institutions of pleasure in the Parisian area of Chaussée-D’Antin, close to two of the best well known Ledoux’s buildings: the hôtel for the dancer Guimard, also called the “Terphichore Hôtel,” decorated by Fragnorad, and the Hôtel Hocquart de Montfermeil.

523 The labyrinth is similar to the ones described by Sade in Justice for the Convent Saint, and the labyrinth of Madame de Valrose in Les Journées de Florbelle. See: Sade, “Notes pour les Journées de Florbelle,” Oeuvres Complètes, XI, 77.
Fig. 171. Marquis de Sade, First sketch for the “établissement de débauche.” Museum of State History, Moscow.

In spite of these formal similarities, it seems that Sade’s transgression of the Restif’s and Ledoux’s project did not lie on the plan, but in the comments and notes that Sade added to the different spaces, defining architectural programs and uses: “Ici on estropie,” “la on fout,” “ici on meutre.” “Here one dismembers,” “he one ejaculates,” “here one kills.”

In the second drawing, the parthénon was divided in three different parts that Sade named: “Entrée” (entrance), “Maison d’Arrêt” (detention center) and “Cimetière”

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525 Ibid, 18.
(cemetery), adding “400+ 400+400,” indicating the number of bodies to be tortured and killed in each building. Following a teleological sequence, the transfer of bodies within the building takes undoubtedly to the cemetery. This was the “horrific feature” that Restif referred to in his autobiography and that he understood as a sordid parody of his own governmental project for an institution aimed to improve health and manage lust within the city. Far away from Restif’s project, Sade’s state brothel is no longer a biopolitical institution, since the aim of the architecture itself is to give death, being the cemetery, as spatial inscription of death and terminal heterotopia, the achievement of the architectural program.
Sade’s projects should be read as two antagonist responses to the biopolitical management of health and sexuality during the eighteenth century envisioned by Restif and Ledoux. Whereas, as we have seen, Restif de la Bretonne and Ledoux transformed the state brothel into a hygienic female hospital-prison, Sade transformed the prison and the asylum, as well as their body techniques of restrain, control, surveillance, and death, into the unbearable scenario for his literary libertine adventures, deploying a corrosive critique of the confinement institutions from the Old Regime to the Empire.

In the first place, it is important to notice that, unlike Restif and Ledoux, Sade was physically confronted in his ordinary life to the violent practices of confinement, surveillance and body restriction of the prison and hospital system of the eighteenth century, since he spent most of his life imprisoned. Foucault was the first to highlight this relationship between the experience of confinement and sexual architectural utopias that use the prison as the spatial model for licentiousness:

“Sadism is not a name finally given to a practice as old as Eros; it is a massive cultural fact which appeared precisely at the end of the eighteenth century, and which constitutes one of the greatest conversions of Western imagination: unreason transformed into delirium of the heart, madness of desire, the insane dialogue of love and death in the limitless presumption of appetite. Sadism appears at the very moment that unreason, confined for over a century and reduced to silence, reappears, no longer as an
image of the world, no longer as *figura*, but as language and desire. And it is no accident that sadism, as an individual phenomenon bearing the name of a man, was born of confinement and, within confinement, that Sade's entire *oeuvre* is dominated by the images of the Fortress, the Cell, the Cellar, the Convent, the inaccessible island which thus forms, as it were, the natural habitat of unreason. It is not accident, either, that all the fantastic literature of madness and horror, which is contemporary with Sade’s *oeuvre*, takes place, preferentially, in the strongholds of confinement.”

Sade’s biography could be redefined as a geography of confinement where the political changes from a sovereign to a disciplinary regime could be traced following his own displacement within different penitentiary institutions: he lived more than twenty-five years within eleven prisons, hospitals and asylums, from the years of the Old Regime to the Empire. Being imprisoned for the first time at the age of twenty-three in 1778, he spent six years in Vincennes, five years in La Bastille (from which he was moved right before the revolutionary upheaval and siege), few months at the *Hospice religieux* de Charenton, the Convent of Made Itonnettes, the Maison des Carmes, and in Saint-Lazare prison, one year at the prison of Picpus, a few months at Saint-Pélagie, two years in Bicêtre, and eleven years at Charenton, where he died in 1814.

But Sade was not only an “inmate,” he worked also as a governmental “expert” in disciplinary institutions during a brief time of freedom in the revolutionary years, between 1789 and 1794: he was appointed as a member of the commission established

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526 Michel Foucault, 1988, 210.
by the Convention to oversee the hospices and hospitals of Paris, and he developed from this position a harsh critique of the French confinement institutions as “architectures of death,” putting into question the ability of the biopolitical hospital to protect the life of the population. In order to understand Sade’s critique of the eighteenth century confinement and disciplinary institutions, I would like to pay attention to a second minor work: Sade’s report “Observations présentées à l’Assemblée Administrative des Hopitaux” read to the Section of Picques in October 28th, 1792 and published for the first time by Gilbert Lely in 1966.  

Sade’s “Observations…” could be read today as a reflection on the process of medicalization of space that was taking place during the eighteenth century, a reflection on the relationship between the epistemological transformation taking place within the field of medicine, and the new practices of decentralized, disciplinary spatialization of power progressively introduced with the treatment of the plague and syphilis in France.

In this short text, Sade deplores what he calls the abuse of medical power within hospitals and criticizes the continuity of Old Regime religious and moral practices within the revolutionary institutions: the prevalence of cruel medical practices coming from medieval times, and the unhealthy conditions of the hospital and the asylum. Although intended to be an intuitional report, Sade’s “Observations…” are written more from the position of the hospital user and the sick body, than from that of the governmental

527 Gilbert Lely, Vie du Marquis de Sade (Paris: Au Cercle du Livre Précieux, 1966), 353-355. This brief text is poorly known and rarely commented: only the transcription done by Lely remains, since the two print copies of the corrected by Sade have been lost.
expert, and in this respect, could be considered as one of the first “user’s critique” on the pre-modern and modern confinement institutions.

Fig. 173. Marquis de Sade, Last version of the plan for the “établissement de débauche.” Collection Xavier de Sade.

Sade’s reports on hospitals and asylums were a plea for the biopolitical modernization of the hospital and the prison where he had suffered violence, sickness, isolation and death. When he was imprisoned at the Hospice de Charenton, he recalled the horror of being the witness of hundred of guillotine executions during the revolutionary period. Similar
to Italian penal reformer Cesare Beccaria and to Jeremy Bentham, Sade criticized death penalty and condemned the State’s absolute power to decide over the life of its subjects.

It is interesting to notice Sade’s reference to three architectural figures of the time: Sade credits J. R. Tenon and Claude-Hubert Pierron de Chamousset,528 the main architects of the French “revolutionary hospital,” and defends the introduction of new “medical techniques” within the hospital as a process of modernization. But Sade’s main reference is the Italian architect Iberti, a libertine and Sade’s personal friend with whom he visited Naples, Florence and Rome before being imprisoned. His unpublished Voyage en Italie,529 full of architectonic descriptions, is a trace of this trip with Iberti. Indeed, Iberti’s Observations générales sur les hôpitaux,530 first published in 1788, is the background model for Sade’s architectural and institutional writing.

529 Marquis de Sade, Voyage d’Italie, ed. Maurice Lever (Paris: Fayard, 1995). The first manuscript he intended for publication was Voyage d’Italie or A Critical, Historical and Philosophical Dissertation on the Cities of Florence, Rome and Naples (1775-6?). The manuscript, filled with descriptions of Italian architecture and artworks, was never published during his life. Instead, while he was captive in the Bastille, he used these notes to create a map of places for the draft of the novel Juliette.
530 Iberti, Observations générales sur les hôpitaux, suivies d’un projet d’hôpital, avec des plans détaillés, rédigés & dessinés par M. Delannoy (London, 1788).
In Observations générales sur les hôpitaux, Iberti denounces architecture as being the main problem of the modern hospital. He asks “how is it possible that the government has only thought about the hospital as a place of “subaltern surveillance” (“surveillance subalterne”)? Iberti does not hesitate to describe Old Regime hospitals as “architecture meurtrière” (“deathly architecture”): architecture kills, according to Iberti, because of the spatial distribution of beds, as well as the use of insalubrious air and water. But architecture is for Iberti a “pharmakon,” both the sickness and the remedy:

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531 Ibid., 3.
“les maladies prennent naissance dans des établissements de charité! Une espèce de fièvre dangereuse emprunte son nom des lieux même où l’on va chercher la santé!”

Fig. 175. M. Iberti, *Observations générales sur les hôpitaux*, suivies d'un projet d'hôpital, avec des plans détaillés, rédigés & dessinés par M. Delannoy (London, 1788). BNF. Paris.

532 Ibid., 29.
The *Observations* develop a new biopolitical argument according to which it is necessary to cure the poor in order to preserve the life of the rich, to increase, as a result, the population’s health.\(^{533}\) For Iberti, besides moral and humanist concerns, the construction of public hospitals and the treatment of the “poor” within clinical institutions is understood as a way of “treating” and “preserving” the life of the whole population. Iberti sees the transformation of the hospital into a school of medicine and “lieu où perfectionner l’art de guérir.”\(^{534}\) This way, the hospital is not only a treatment place, but also an epistemological machine to produce medical knowledge. Contributing to the reform that is taking place during the second half of the eighteenth century, Iberti does not claim for a suppression of the houses of confinement, but for an architectural reorganization of space, air, and water in order to reduce contamination “by destroying impurities and vapors, abating fermentations, preventing evil and disease from tainting the air and spreading their contagion in the atmosphere of the cities.”\(^{535}\) As a result, in the modern hospital, conceived as an “établissement nécessaire et digne de la protection

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\(^{533}\) Iberti, *Observations générales sur les hôpitaux*, 20.

\(^{534}\) Ibid., 21.

\(^{535}\) Michel Foucault, 1988, 206.
constante de tout bon gouvernement,” the spectacle of health and life must replace the old spectacle of morality and death.

Sade’s institutional writing on the hospital and the asylum can be read in continuity with Iberti’s, Tenon’s, and Chamouset’s architectural projects for biopolitical reform that sought to transform the houses of confinement of the Old Regime into “rational architectures” to “defend the life of the population” during the second half of the eighteenth century. But could Sade’s proposition be read as part of the project of reform of sexual and prostitutional practices proposed by Restif and designed by Ledoux?

For Foucault, not only Sade’s houses of pleasure were conceived in accordance with the panoptic model of the Enlightenment factory and prison, but even more, Sade introduced within sexuality the analytical plan, the segmentation of time and space, as well as the optical system that Bentham had only dreamed to apply to the rationalization of work through surveillance within the panopticon prison-factory. Whereas in the

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536 “The hospital is a necessary and worthy place for constant protection of the population for all governments,” Iberti, *Observations générales sur les hôpitaux*, 27.
538 For Foucault, the convent of Saint-Marie-des-Bois and the Panopticon are together with the Jesuits’ colony of Paraguay the three most characteristic forms of disciplinary power.
539 Vidler and Kozul will later follow Foucault in this interpretation.
1970s Sade was praised for his disruptive potential by Barthes, Bataille, Klossowski, by Passolini’s or Liliana Cavani’s films, to name just a few, for Foucault, Sade formulated at its best the eroticism of disciplinary society. As Foucault explained in an interview to *L’actualité cinématographique* in 1975, there could be no political resistance in Sade since he remained trapped within a conventional view of the body as an organic hierarchy which corresponds to the disciplinary architecture: “The body is still strongly organic, anchored in this hierarchy, the difference being that he hierarchy is not organized, as in the old fable, starting from the head, but starting from the genitalia….this is eroticism appropriated to a disciplinary society: a regulated society, anatomical, hierarchicalized, with is carefully allotted times, is controlled spaces, its duties and its surveillances….It is a question of escaping from all that. It is necessary to invent with the body, with its elements, its surfaces, its volumes, its depths, a non-disciplinary eroticism: that of the body plunged into a volatile and diffuse state through chance encounters and incalculable pleasures.”

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543 Pier Paolo Pasolini, Salò o les 120 giornate di Sodoma, 1975; Liliana Cavani, Il portieri di note, 1974.
545 See: Foucault, Interview with Gérardo Dupont, “Sade, sergent du sexe,” *Cinématographe. La Revue de L’actualité cinématographique*, 16, December 1975-
The risk of accepting Foucault’s reading of Sade is to interpret architecture as a literal translation of regimes of power-knowledge, without taking into account internal tensions, lines of flight and disruptions within a given architecture, as well as misuses, processes of resignification, overcodification, and decontextualization that radically reorganize the ways in which architecture functions as a technology for producing and installing the body and subjectivity.

Moreover, how to understand the fact that Sade’s “Projet de trente-deux maisons de prostitution à Paris” was intended as a parody of Restif’s project for the state brothel? How does a parody relate to what it parodies? Should a parody be interpreted as a mere “repetition” of what is being mocked? Against Foucault, I want to make a case for architectural parody in Sade as a way of “acting from within” and undoing biopolitics.

In order to understand the relationship between the architecture of confinement and Sade’s parody of eighteenth century state brothels, imprisonment should not be thought just as restriction of freedom but rather as a technology of the body – and therefore of sex, and sexuality. It is Sade’s body that is at stake here, a body that Foucault seemed not to have taken into account. Sade’s confinement during so many years radically modified his body: unlike most of the representations that have been done in theatre and cinema, Sade was hugely fat, had difficulties to move, suffered from syphilis, chronic headaches, and pains in the ocular area, including periods of blindness. In spite of his condition,

Sade was known for keeping a collection of dildoes, whips, and *martinets*, and for transforming his cell into a male boudoir, a reading, writing, and masturbating cabinet. Since the aristocratic prisoners of the time had the right of living within the prison with their furniture and private objects and even preparing their own food, Sade dedicated himself to eating and reading without natural light within his cell, gaining weight and loosing sight over the years. Nobody has better represented the somatic relationship that tied Sade’s body to the architecture of the prison than Man Ray: Sade looks at the Bastille prison building in flames from the outside – he was transferred from La Bastille a few days before the building was burned. Nevertheless, his “outside” position is paradoxical: Sade’s body has, in Man Ray’s drawing, become architecture, being made, like La Bastille, of building stones. One conclusion to be drawn from Man Ray’s representation is that the architecture of the prison turns the body of the prisoner itself into a piece of its own architecture. Sade was not only imprisoned, but rather his body was transformed into architecture of confinement. It is from this position of entanglement with discipline and confinement that Sade’s architectural parodies should be understood.

Linda Hutcheson’s analysis of the paradoxical political stand of the parody can provide the analytic framework to understand the complex relationship between Sade’s pornotopias and disciplinary architectures. On her classical study on postmodernism,

Hutcheson understands parody and pastiche as possible ways of political action and intervention. Against Frederic Jameson marxist’s disawoal of spatial pastiche as a deshistorized and depoliticized form of capitalist production,\textsuperscript{549} Hutcheon stresses the ways in which parody and pastiche can act critically. For Hutcheson the paradoxical political stand of the parody is that it "both legitimizes and subverts that which it parodies."\textsuperscript{550} Through a double process of installing and ironizing, Hutcheson argues, "parody signals how present representations come from past ones and what ideological consequences derive from both continuity and difference."\textsuperscript{551} If Sade’s architectures of pleasure function as a political parody, we could ask with Judith Butler taking Hutcheson’s intuitions further, “what are the conditions and the limits of that significant reversal? And does the reversal reiterate the logic of power that pretends to overcome?”\textsuperscript{552}

It is true that, like in a parody, most of the principles of the \textit{pornognomie} defined by Restif can be found within Sade’s architectures of pleasure.\textsuperscript{553} The characters of \textit{Justine} enter the convent by an underground route, a disguised door in the sacristy, through a tunnel that ended in the cells of the house of pleasure according to a Restif’s principles of access restriction, isolation, and camouflage: protected behind thick walls, impenetrable ramparts and thorn bushes, and disguised door, the convent’s architecture

\textsuperscript{551} Ibid., 93.
\textsuperscript{552} Judith Butler, \textit{Bodies That Matter} (New York: Routledge, 1993), 223.
is a mask (Sade transforms the outside of the convent into a “toit-jardin,” a very low building covered with a flat lead roof overgrown with grass) that at the same time hides and isolates the temple of pleasure. Likewise, the literary convent of Saint-Marie-des-Bois, was structured as a system of separated small rooms and *cachots* for confining and punishing sexual victims, but also to store food and wine, where space has been distributed according to species, gender and class: animals are separated from humans, women from men, aristocrats from ordinary people. In fact, “the entire building,” as Vidler has noticed, “set within concentric circles and *allées*, might have been designed by Ledoux – we recognize the quasi-Palladian plan of the central pavilion and the emphasis on circles within circles- but also a self-conscious transformation of the post-Platonic utopia – the city of Atlantis surrounded by its labyrinth – and the Renaissance ideal city.”

Nevertheless and against their apparent formal continuity, it is important to notice a major political difference between Sade’s fantasies and Restif’s or Ledoux’s architectural projects: whereas in Restif’s and Ledoux’s state brothels the architecture is designed as a prophylactic technique to protect the health of the male client and preserve his life and the reproduction of the nation, in the case of Sade, architecture not only does not preserve health, but on the contrary functions as a “*machine à tuer,*” a device for killing. From within confinement, Sade envisaged the architecture of his sexual utopias as fragmentary quotations, deviant and disruptive uses of both sovereign and disciplinary architectures of the Old Regime and the revolutionary period. Saint-Marie-des-Bois in

*Justine* is not just a *panopticon*, but rather a distopian and *thanopolitical parody* of Bentham’s design of the rational factory. If Restif’s and Ledoux’s project can be understood as the erotization of the biopolitical hygienic techniques emerging at the end of the eighteenth century, as well as the maximization of sovereign masculine pleasure within the brothel, Sade’s “temples of Venus,” “prisons of pleasure,” and “theaters of lubricity” must be read as a terminal parody of the Enlightenment project for the reform of the prostitution houses within European cities.

Sade’s fictions and his architectural fantasies (the Château de Silling, the convent, the forest as natural labyrinth, the *cachot*...), but also his project for the reform of prostitution houses in Paris, put forward a paradoxical and antagonist thesis: on one side, they are a corrosive critique of the “thanatopolitical techniques” at work within confinement institutions both during the Old Regime and during the Revolution; on the other side, they eroticize those very thanatopolitical techniques as techniques of production of pleasure, unveiling the libidinal economy at work within confinement and disciplinary institutions. This is what Foucault called “the survival and the reawakening of the fantastic in the very places where unreason had been reduced to silence.”

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556 Michel Foucault, 1988, 210.
Sade’s specific gesture consisted not only in exposing the very techniques of death that he had previously criticized in his institutional reports, but in transforming them into what could be called, using Linda Hutcheson’s critical term, thanatopolitical “metafiction”\textsuperscript{557} where the techniques of death work as a new grammar for the production of sexual pleasure. Sade did not limit himself to eroticizing symbols of theological and aristocratic power; he also eroticized the forms of diffuse power, scopic surveillance, penitentiary confinement and bodily restriction that emerged with disciplinary institutions. Sade’s parody reappropriates and resignifies the power

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techniques as techniques of production of pleasure revealing the libidinal economy hidden not only within sovereign techniques of power but also within the rational project of the Enlightenment disciplinary architectures: thus, the prison becomes a sexual theatre (let's remember that Sade used the prison and asylum as a theatre where he produced his own plays, using his fellow-inmates both as actors and public), the convent a castle of torture, cells become bloody boudoirs, and instruments of torture—chains, wheels, ropes, hooks—are turned into instruments of lust. The treatment of criminals typical of the Enlightenment prison system had been nevertheless replaced by a series of sexual techniques (sometimes very similar to correctional spatial restrictions, punishments, pedagogy and forms of torture) destined no longer to extract power or knowledge, but rather to produce pleasure or/as/pain. Spatial and scopic devices become sexual techniques for the production of pleasure and intensification of desire. Within Histoire de Juliette, the body and architecture are mixed and transformed into each other: Minski, the sadist doctor, builds furniture made of bodies and use them to sit or eat, while having in mind the possibility of destroying “living furniture” after using it.558

Sade turns techniques of surveillance, control and restriction into pleasure techniques, as an ultimate way of escaping and transgressing confinement from within. Theatre is here the heterotopic space where thanatopolitical and biopolitical techniques and fluids meet and converge: Sade brings Damien’s execution within the boudoir, transforms

Bentham’s panopticon into a peepshow where what is given to see is the very spectacle of death. Blood mixes with sperm.

Fig. 179, 180. Examples of erotization of the techniques of control and body restriction of the sovereign regime. Sade explores here the Inquisition torture techniques. He consulted a Traité de l’Inquisition and a History of Inquisition, that he had in his prison’s library. Left: Illustration for Sade’s Aline et Valcour, 1795, BNF; Right: Illustration for the Dutch edition of Sade, Histoire de Juliette, ou les Prospérités du vice, 1801, BNF. Paris.

For Sade, a detractor of the institutions of family and kinship, sexual pleasure cannot be reduced to the national project of reproduction of population and cannot be contained within hygienic measures for preventing the spread of syphilis. At distance from the moral reform proposed by Restif’s state brothel, Sade’s “Temples of Venus” and his
parodic “parthenion” provide a dystopian reading of revolutionary pornotopias. Sadean spaces are not meant to be hygienic hospitals for the practice of prostitution, but rather temples for the syphilitic where orgasm can be achieved otherwise than by genital penetration, and where, therefore, there is neither reproduction, nor preservation of health.559

Eric Marty reads Sade’s *Histoire de Juliette*, as the first historical project that thinks about an architecture of “mass extermination.”560 Sade transforms architecture into a series of techniques to end with a maximum amount of lives within a minimum amount of time: thus the Enlightenment *panopticon* and hospital are unmasked and turned upside down. This is why the brothel becomes a hospital not only for lust, but also for death. Sade’s pornotopias are no longer biopolitical architectures but rather thanatopolitical theaters. Whereas Restif’s and Ledoux’s seraglios are thought of as urban architectures to prevent the spread of venereal sickness and maximize life and the reproduction of the nation, Sade’s convents, castles and *cachots* are architectures made for the free circulation of sick and deadly fluids - sperm, sweat, urine, blood. Contrary to Restif’s idea of camouflage of disciplinary and hygienic techniques within a governmental project for the maximization of male pleasure, there is no intention in Sade to protect either the “executioner” or the “victim” from the risk of venereal disease. Architecture


becomes in Sade the carnal scenario where the circulation of contaminated and sick fluids is theatrically exhibited and celebrated: a temple of syphilis’ lust.
4.3. PORNOGRAPHY AS URBAN HYGIENICS
ALEXANDRE PARENT-DUCHÂTELET and WILLIAM ACTON

As we have seen with Restif de la Bretonne and Nicolas Ledoux, the invention of the state brothel was linked to a governmental practice of privatization and political surveillance of women’s sexual bodies, and reproductive fluids, and conversely, to the medical management of public space within the modern city. Throughout the nineteenth century, this notion of “pornography” that had been introduced by art historical discourse with the Secret Museum and was developed into the medical and architectural rhetoric of prevention of the spread of “the venereal virus” became an instrumental technique for spatialization of gender, class, race, sexuality, and power within the modern metropolis.
Fig. 181. L’Egout Royal, Estampe non identifiée, XVIII siècle, BNF. Paris.

Where the modern museum and its jealous supervision of the “secret cabinet” were intended to prevent women and children from accessing images or objects that might excite the viewer, “pornography,” as a new urban hygienic category, was above all concerned with regulating women’s sexuality in the public space, and managing the sexual services provided by women outside the new emerging institutional structures of heterosexual marriage and domestic space. During the nineteenth century, the early rhetoric of urban hygienism and the architectural treatment of syphilis, first embodied by Restif de la Bretonne’s and Nicolas Ledoux’s parthénon, was extended to the whole city space and transformed into an urban governmental technique.
Around 1840-50 and following Restif’s influential essay, European dictionaries began to define pornography as: “description of prostitutes or of prostitution, as a matter of public hygiene.” The term pornography was used for the first time to describe the hygiene measures taken by urban planners, police forces and health authorities to manage sexual activity in the public space, regulating the sale of sexual services and “the presence of lone women», but also «detritus, dead animals and other carrion” in the streets of Paris and London. According to this process of medicalization of space, Alexandre Parent-Duchâtelet’s, Michael Ryan’s, William Acton’s and J.D. Talbot’s administrative treatises on hygiene for the cities of Paris and London were considered as “pornographic” writings dealing with prostitutes and vagrants, but also with sewers, human faeces, pipes, paving, and drains. This new “hygienic pornography” was part of a process of “multiplication of discourses concerning sex in the field of power itself” that translated into specific technologies of the body and the city: pornography was becoming urban technique for supervising, domesticating and spatializing body organs and fluids, while preserving national health.

Alexandre Jean-Baptiste Parent-Duchâtelet is probably the most paradigmatic figure of the overlap between pornography, gynecology, prostitution, architecture, urban planning, and public hygiene during the nineteenth century. A doctor and a member of the Paris Municipal Sanitation Department in charge of Paris's public drainage system, Parent-Duchâlet wrote in 1836 the monumental treatise On Prostitution in the City of Paris,

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Considered with Regard to Public Hygiene, Morals, and Administration, which shall become a model for urban management in Europe.\textsuperscript{562}

Parent-Duchâtelet is said to have spent his entire life in the “underground,” in the mist of refuse dumps, putrid substances and humid sewers. He published his first report on the contamination of the river water of Bièvre in 1822 together with Pavet de Courteille.\textsuperscript{563}

Educated as a disciple of Doctor Hallé, creator of the first chair of “medical hygiene” of Paris Medical School, Parent-Duchâtelet became a physician and was appointed governmental expert to deal with the reconstruction of the Parisian sewers in 1824. The results of his first fieldwork on “morbid species” are gathered in Essai sur les cloaques ou égouts de la ville de Paris\textsuperscript{564} where he develops a theory of infection as the result of “absence of movement of water and air.”\textsuperscript{565} He died at the age of forty-six in 1835 (probably of side-effects of breathing contaminated fumes), just a few months before the publication of his influential work on prostitution.

Having refused the “speculative” method of many of his predecessors, Parent-Duchâtelet

\textsuperscript{563} Alexandre J.B. Parent-Duchâtelet, Recherches et considérations sur la rivière de Bièvre ou des Gobelins, et sur les moyens d’améliorer son cours... (Paris, 1822).
\textsuperscript{564} Alexandre J.B. Parent-Duchâtelet, Essai sur les cloaques ou égouts de la ville de Paris (Paris : Crevot, 1824).
is considered today the first “explorer of excretions,” and a precursor of urban empirical sociology for having conducted the first experimental surveys of the modern city. Parent-Duchâtelet’s theory of the nineteenth century city builds upon the biopolitical analogy between the urban drainage system and prostitution, and most precisely between female sexual organs, prostitution houses, and sewers. Understood as “glands” and “sexual ducts” of the modern metropolis, prostitutes, and female sexual organs, Parent-Duchâtelet argued, must be treated as part of the reform of the urban draining system. As Donald Reid has put it, “conflation of prostitutes’ orifices, brothels, and sewers encouraged a more specific conception of the sewer as gendered, a feminine site controlled by nature and not reason. Excretion and ejaculation were unavoidable natural function; the (male) state would have to intervene vigorously to regulate both.”

Since sexual and putrid fluids run around the city and flow within public institutions and private houses, the pornographic task involved, according to Parent-Duchatêt, the elaboration of a short of liquid cartography, registering city’s ducts, tubes, vessels, and passageways, but also describing the movement of air, water, and “unhealthy” fluids. Transgressing the separation between outside and inside, domestic and institutional, according to Parent-Duchâtelet, the “pornographer” must pay attention to walls and breaks in the walls, to leaks and filtrations, to open curtains and windows as well as to close doors, to facades and interiors, to running water and stagnant air, to human and animal faeces; the urban pornographer must separate edible animals from carrion, useful

items from refuse, the bed from the street; clean women from dirty ones.

French historian Alain Corbin defines Parent-Duchâtelet as a "veritable Linnaeus of prostitution" who developed an exhaustive taxonomy of prostitutes according to their client and social status, but specially to the place where they work: *filles en numéro,* *filles à la carte, filles à soldats,* “streetwalkers of *filles de barrière,*” etc.\footnote{Alain Corbin, *Women For Hire. Prostitution and Sexuality in France after 1850,* trans. Alan Sheridan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 6.} It is

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\footnote{Alain Corbin, *Women For Hire. Prostitution and Sexuality in France after 1850,* trans. Alan Sheridan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 6.}
important not to define the prostitute as a fixed or essential subject, but rather as a biopolitical constructed category invented by the new discourses on urban planning, gynecology and veneral disease. This Foucaultian reading enables us to understand the prostitute’s political condition as the effect of different governmental and disciplinary techniques. The modern metropolitan prostitute as specialized (and spatialized) sexual worker is constructed by Parent Duchâtelet as a topopolitical figure: many of the French names for a prostitute along the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries refer to a spatial category, a capacity to move in the city (“troutteuses,” “marcheuses,”) to circulate (“filles en circulation,”) to flow (“aquatiques,”) to cross frontiers, to enter into places (“visiteuses d’artistes,”) or to a body position within space (“horizontales.”)568 For historian of medicine Gillman Tilles “As a general rule, the syphilis contagion was considered as being transported into the families from the prostitutes or women of the working classes. By inciting the husband to commit adultery, they attacked the integrity of the social order and by transmitting syphilis, considered as hereditary, to honest families, prostitutes were regarded as playing an essential role in the degeneration of the race. So, the biological discourse of the contamination was superseded by that of a conflict of classes, prostitutes symbolizing more the de-moralisation of the society by sex than only the transmission of a contagious disease.”569 The prostitute as sexual workers is defined in relation to her ability to disrupt the norms of gender, class, as well as her tendency to cross the frontiers of the domestic space that are being constructed

568 Laure Adler, 1990, 10-11.
during the late seventeenth century. The prostitute is an economic, sexual and, space outlaw. French historian Laure Adler uses the legal and social administrative term “insoumise,” “to name the category of women who worked on their own and who have chosen not to be locked in the house, and to run the risk of being arrested for doing so.” The “maison close,” a nineteenth century governmental version of Restif’s state brothel, will be after Parent-Duchâtelet the architectonic biopolitical instrument to confine, control, discipline, and study les insoumises.


In Parent-Duchâtelet’s *topopolitical* language, “the public space” becomes for women a pathology that Restif had already named “*publicisme*” and that threatens the health not only of women themselves, but of the entire city and nation, putting “race” and “humanity” at risk. In continuity with this *topopolitical* taxonomy, in the nineteenth century the practice of sexuality within the public space will be considered the clinical cause producing the anomalies of *hysteria* (public display of female desire), *prostitution* (use of female sexuality within the market as working force), *exhibitionism* (public visual display of male sexuality) and *voyeurism* (public visual enjoyment of a private sexual practice) as described by the psychiatric study by Richard Krafft-Ebbing in *Psychopathia Sexualis* in 1886. As a result, most modern sexual deviations could be thought as pathologies of the sexual and political segmentation of public and private spaces: a same sexual practice becoming pathological when taking place out of the domestic or institutional realm.

The application of Parent-Duchâtelet medical and urban method to treat and prevent female “*publicisme*” will take to the development of the “*confinement system*” in France after the end of the nineteenth century. Alain Corbin has studied how “hygenist regulationism” was theorized by Parent-Duchâtelet to develop the urban sex industry in Paris under the model of "the prison system" to supervise prostitution in the name of public health. The confinement system worked as a *sexual sewer* on the city: it established a series of enclosed places from which the prostitute and her fluids could

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“safely” move and circulate without risking contagion or propagating fifth: the “maison close,” but also the hospital, the prison, and if required, “the refuge or establishment where a prostitute could repent of her life and find some rehabilitation.”

The “maison close” (literally the “looked house”) and its variations (“Maison de passe” - a low-class, unregistered establishment to which women took their clients, encountered in the street, for a "passé," or short time sexual service; “Maison de rendez-vous,” frequented by men higher up the social scale, were official surveillance, and “Maisons de tolérance,” "aimed at reproducing the atmosphere of a respectable bourgeois home" and officially registered573) were the central organs within this architecture of urban ducts. As Corbin has noticed, "Ideally the maison would be allowed to operate only in certain districts, known as quartiers réservés, thus reinforcing the sense of enclosure, making it possible to conceal the building itself from the sight of the female public, and encouraging panopticism, since "in a built-up area one may, at a glance, take in the whole area where places of ill repute exist…[…] The house was to be enclosed; entry could be gained only through a dual-door system; the windows were to be of frosted glass and barred…The girls would be allowed out only on rare occasions, and medical check-ups would take place in the house."574

572 Alain Corbin, 1990, 10.
573 Ibid., XVIII.
574 Ibid., 10.
The prostitute was not only understood as a gender and spatial transgressor, but also as a corruptor of air and water, and therefore as a biological danger for urban health. Restif de la Bretonne defined the prostitute ("putain") according to a dubious Latin etymology as the "putida," that "whose body smells bad." But it is with Parent-Duchâtelet’s scientific and urban discourse that the prostitute is invented as biopolitical body that, like the city underground, could be observed and rationalized. For historian Alain Corbin, the notion of the “putrid whore” as “moral rot” and “humoral sickness” was related to the glandular theory of Théophile Bordeu (1772-1776) – physician who directed Parent-Duchâtelet’s work on sewers - according to which organic fluids and “emuctories” determined the health of humors of the human body: whereas sperm introduced by

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discharge into the prostitute’s humoral system was considered to be the necessary complement to the equilibrium of the healthy female body, the excess of sperm in the prostitute body would produce humoral corruption and syphilis.\textsuperscript{576} Becoming a human receptacle for sperm, “the prostitute enables the social body to excrete the excess of seminal fluid that causes her stench and rots her.”\textsuperscript{577} Constructed upon a theory of circulation of urban fluids, based on the translation of Harvey’s blood and humors circuit scheme to social organisms, modern measures to deal with prostitution are at the same time moral, economical, and urban public hygienics operations. Within this biopolitical process of medicalization of the urban space and prior to the introduction of water as cleaning measure, the prostitute is not seen as mere waste, but rather as a functional organ “to eliminate the excess of sperm”\textsuperscript{578} within the city, and therefore as a necessary agent of urban development. This biopolitical image of the prostitute as urban “semenal drain” and “excretion organ” will explain the intervention of gynecologist and specialist of the reproductive system as “drain technicians” in the cities of Paris and London.

The second image that constructed the body of the prostitute as putrid was, according to Corbin, that of the corpse or cadaverous flesh, seen as source of bad smell, and infectious contagion. This explains not only the name “slaughter houses” or “\textit{maisons d’abattage}” for working-class brothels, but also the fact that the nineteenth century

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{576} See: Théophile de Bordeu, \textit{Recherches sur l’histoire de la médecine, Nouvelle édition revue et corrigée, enrichie d’une notice littéraire sur Bordeu}, par l’historiographe Lefeuve (Paris : A. Ghio, 1882).
\item \textsuperscript{577} Alain Corbin, “Commercial Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century France: A System of Images and Regulations,” 211.
\item \textsuperscript{578} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
regulations of prostitution would include hygiene measures taken by urban planners, police forces, and health authorities to manage sexual activity within the public space, regulating the sale of sexual services and the “presence of lone women,” but also of “shit, detritus, dead animals, and other carrion” in the streets of Paris and London.\textsuperscript{579}

![Image of underground tunnels](image)


Parent-Duchâlet’s theory of the city could be read as an early politics of garbage according to which prostitute’s sexual organs and urban sewers store, filter, and transport

the flux of excessive semen and rotten fluids in the industrial metropolitan space. The aim of Parent-Duchâlet medical and draining treatment is not to abolish prostitution, but rather, on the contrary, to “make glands work” in order to “cure the city,” protecting the urban center from waste concentration, encouraging the “healthy” movement of organic fluids and putrid substances (shit, urine, but also semen) within ducts and sewers. As Corbin puts it: "Parent-Duchâtelet regards prostitution as an indispensable excremental phenomenon that protects the social body from disease." The city is here represented as a sexual organism where prostitutes glands, ducts, and sewers act like “unavoidable” agents of contamination, but also as possible channels of evacuation and destruction of filth.


581 Alain Corbin, 1990, 4.
Fig. 186. Cross section of Thames embankment showing subway, sewer, and railway, London, 1867.

The subterranean city was not a natural fact that urban architects and engineers observed and described, but rather a “technological construct” where a sexual and a medical governmental plan was deployed. The process of reconstruction of the Parisian sewers was conducted by Baron Haussmann and Eugène Belgrand after 1850 following the hygienist instructions of Parent-Duchâtelet. The “Haussmannization” of Paris underground was thus not only a process of rationalization of urban space, but also a

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biopolitical process of sexualization and genderization of the city. The underground of the Hausmann city was a syphilitic whore.

The Sexual Physiology of the Victorian House in William Acton

Parent-Duchâtelet’s treatise *On Prostitution* opened up a new field of medical, but also urban knowledge generating a series of local surveys that rapidly spread along Europe and America. Following Parent-Duchâtelet, Michael Ryan, Victorian reformer and a doctor member of the Royal College of the Physicians, was the first to write a comparative study of three major cities, London, Paris, and New York, using prostitution as urban analytical tool.583 A few years later, and in a similar style, J. D. Talbot wrote *The Miseries of Prostitution*.584 These British surveys were superseded in 1857 by William Acton’s *Prostitution, considered in its Moral, Social, and Sanitary Aspects, in London and other Large Cities and Garrison Towns, with Proposal for the Control and Prevention of its Attendant Evils*.585

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The scientific “hygienic pornography” reached the United States with Dr. William W. Sanger’s *History of Prostitution* published in 1858\(^{586}\) introducing the analysis of “air, water, obscenity, and filth” within the city of New York. Departing from the “reformist” ideas of Parent-Duchâtelet and Willaim Acton, Sanger defended the possibility of eradicating prostitution, controlling not only biological contagion through vapors and fluids, but also through text and images, which took him to defend urban moral police, as well as new obscenity laws and censorship measures.

William Acton started his career as doctor in Paris in the 1830s studying diseases of the urinary and generative organs and working at the Female Veneral Hospital. He returned to England in 1840 to become surgeon as well as Fellow of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London where he was appointed as the first specialist in the study of syphilis. As Fellow of the Royal Society, Acton became a political agent who actively participated within the regulation of the practices of breast feeding, abortion, and prostitution, that would lead to the passage of the 1864 *Contagious Diseases Act* in England that established the obligation of legal surveillance, periodical medical examination, and enforced confinement for prostitutes: “Any woman who was found on examination to be diseased was hospitalized and treated at government expense; refusal to conform to the provisions of this act made her liable to be punished by imprisonment.”

Fig. 188, 189. Left: Gynecological speculum, J. Marion Sims, Silver Sutures in Surgery, 1858; Right: Drawing from Howard Kelly, Gynecology, 1928, showing “Sims position with speculum.”

William Acton is also known in the history of medicine for having introduced the speculum into general gynecological practice in England in the 1850s. The speculum examination was perceived by patients and doctors as voyeuristic and degrading act, one that inflicted medical and physical pain on the female. Marshal Hall, a physiologist, wrote an article in Lancet cautioning the readers that a speculum could damage the delicacy and purity of a moan and dull the edge of virgin modesty. Against this Victorian safeguard, William Acton defended the use of the speculum as a visual technology able to diagnose syphilis and enforced its use with the Contagious Disease Act: prostitutes were not only subjected to arrest but also to a speculum examination. In spite of the criticism of the speculum as “instrument of rape and torture” developed by feminist such as Josephine Butler during the 1880s, it was widely used for the medical examination of prostitutes, and extended later to the general practice. In the same way that William Acton encouraged the use of the speculum as a visual device to see the interior space of “public women’s” sexual organs, in order to detect the presence of sickness, by the end of the nineteenth century, Paris’s and London’s sewers were transformed into a “spectacle of Enlightenment”: “There were illuminated with some

thousands of moderator lamps, each provided with its silvered reflector...Rows of lamps that grow fainter and fainter in the distance, light up the vaulted gallery and cast their reflections in the black turgid water.”\textsuperscript{591} The spectacle of the city “ducts” and “glands,” at it is shown within Félix Nadar’s photographs of this period, was at the same time hygienic, medical, and pornographic.\textsuperscript{592}

Fig. 190, 191. The interior of the city sewers as public spectacle. Left : Une visite aux égouts de Paris, Le Magazin Pittoresque (1870). BNF, Paris ; Right : Egout collecteur construit sous le boulevard de Sébastopol à Paris, gravure du Monde Illustré (1858). BNF. Paris.

Although apparently opposed to the French system of licensing prostitution, Acton introduced public management of “prostitution and sewers” within the British context where prostitution practices were until then private and clandestine. He was thus an active advocate of the French “drainage system” which authorized governmental

\textsuperscript{591} Donald Reid, 1999, 41.
management of organic fluids and prostitution within the city of London and forced both
gynecological examination and confinement of any women suspected of prostitution as
well as the governmental control of the urban drainage system. But Acton’s most
remarkable gesture was to extend the surveillance of the *Contagious Diseases Act* from
the prostitution areas to the whole population and the totality of the city space,
recommending a preventive treatment of the urban “glands” and “ducts”: contagion and
sickness, depending on organic fluids, were no just a question of prostitution practices,
but spread through out the city within schools, hospitals, factories, and, most
importantly, private housing. “Three years after the publication of *Prostitution*, Acton
triggered a lively public debate by writing a letter to the *Lancet*, later reprinted in *The
Times*, complaining about the “wretchedly imperfect” drainage of a house he had rented
at Brighton.”593 The private family Victorian house was becoming the center of a new
biopolitical management.

Fig. 192. Pierre Patte (1723-1814), *Mémoires sur les objets les plus importants de

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Whereas sexuality of “public women” and/as garbage was regulated through urban management, new biopolitical rules turned the domestic space progressively into a disciplinary institution. William Acton’s 1857 popular work *The Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs*, dealing mainly with children’s masturbatory habits and the healthy preservation of sexual organs for reproduction became a guide for the management of sexuality within the middle-class Victorian domestic space. Whereas prostitutes and working class women were the main subjects of the pornographic urban discourse and biopolitical management, children were the central aim of a new domestic architectural control. During the late nineteenth century, industrial capitalism and heterosexual reproduction were explained according to an economic theory of fluids: Georg Simmel portrayed capital as a “liquid body able to take any form,”594 William Acton saw semen as organic money.595

595 As Steven Marcus has acutely pointed out, this relationship between economy and sexuality explains that the colloquial nineteenth century expression for having an orgasm was “to spend”. Steven Marcus, 1975, 22.

The male child as “potential masturbator” was described by Acton as a reservoir of reproductive fluids, a well of sperm, and in this respect, as a biopolitical and economic factory that shall be preserved for the heterosexual reproduction of the national population.\(^{596}\) For Acton, semen was a “highly organized fluid, requiring the expenditure of much vital force in its elaboration and in its expulsion,” while “spermatorrhoea,” the loss of semen, was defined as male pathology.\(^{597}\) Not surprisingly, Acton associates spermatorrhoea not only with masturbation, but also with syphilis, tuberculosis and impotency. For Acton, there must be a proportion between blood and semen, in such a way that “the large expenditure of semen exhausts the boy’s vital force.”\(^{598}\) Still unconscious of the moral and physical degradation of vicious pleasure, children must be taught contention and body control. The Victorian house was for Acton the governmental device able to shelter, preserve, manage and maximize the population’s reproductive fluids.

Within this process of medicalization and capitalization of the domestic space, sexual reproduction becomes eco-nomy, literary the “law of the house.” Thinking about the prevention of masturbation and waste of sperm, “every boy should have,” according to

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\(^{597}\) Ibid.

\(^{598}\) Ibid., 24.
Acton, “a separate bed, for evil practices are, I believe, most frequently learnt and practiced in bed.” ⁵⁹⁹ Acton’s recommendations to “watch the children,” “cold shower instead of remaining long in hot water,” and “healthy exercise” for boys turned the Victorian home into a penitentiary establishment, a hybrid of the sexual asylum and the school, where time and space must be analytically regulated, and where inhabitants were expected to act as “lawful spies” of each others. ⁶⁰⁰ Intentional masturbation, but also “nocturnal emissions and pollutions” as well as “children who wet their beds” were all considered by Acton as uncontrolled loses of organic fluids (both sperm and urine). Bowels, glands, and beds must be thus the object of a careful discipline and observation. The Victorian house and the furniture (from walls, doors, windows, beds, chairs and urinals) are meant to work as sexual ortheses that fixed upon the inhabitants’ bodies should come to regulate movement, direct action, and prevent waste and degeneration. Thus, the Victorian house itself was thought as medical device to control and maximize the use of reproducing fluids, both preserving boys’ seminal fluids for adult life, and using the adult male fluids for reproduction, promoting what Acton named the “healthy physiology of marriage” –and which Balzac used as ironic title for one of his novels. ⁶⁰¹ Not only the Victorian city, but also the house, traditionally represented as a private space, is thus progressively becoming a place of public control and surveillance of sexuality. If pornography was the physiology of the urban space, the emerging science of the reproductive organs was the physiology of the domestic Victorian house.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid., 37.
⁶⁰⁰ Steven Marcus, 1975, 17.
4. 4. NINETEENTH CENTURY ARCADES AS URBAN INDUSTRIAL PORNOTOPIA

The architecture of the arcades, paradigmatic space of the nineteenth European city, can be re-inscribed within a general cartography of modern pornotopias and be understood as the effect of a larger biopolitical process of spatialization of gender, sexuality and consumption taking place within industrial capitalism. Reading the arcade from a biopolitical point of view enables us to understand the influence of the utopian model of the eighteenth century state brothel for the invention of the nineteenth century city as well as the transformation of the management of reproductive bodies and fluids within industrial capitalism.

Fig. 194, 195. Left: The Galeries du Palais Royal represented as meeting place for prostitutes and clients, Louis-Léopold Boilly, Paris, 1809, Musée Carnavalet. In the nineteenth century Paris, the arcades of the Palais Royal became the sexual market of the city; Right: The arcade as “public interior” and “domestic outside”: Passage Jouffroy, Paris, 1855. BNF. Paris.
Constructed sexual differences between masculinity and femininity, between heterosexual married women and prostitutes are not only identity politics categories, but also spatial and urban notions. Susan Buck-Morss has studied how gender and sexual relationships translated into the space of the arcade as described by Walter Benjamin in *The Arcades Project*. For Benjamin, the Parisian arcades (Choiseuil, Vivienne, Colbert, Puteaux, Havre, Panoramas, Jouffroy, Verdeau, Caire, Grand-Cerf, Vero-Dodat…) and the architecture of Baron von Haussmann are the images that best contained the essence of the capitalist form of production and its spatialization within the modern city. Likewise, the two walkers of the arcades, the prostitute and the *flâneur* are for Benjamin the main historical figures who incarnate the modern relationship of the body to the merchandise and to the city: “Prostitution was indeed the female version of flânerie. …The flâneur was simply the name of a man who loitered; but all women who loitered risked being seen as whores, as the term “street-walker” or “tramp” applied to women makes clear.” From an economic and biopolitical point of view, the arcade space troubles the *sexual division of labor* that characterized the early modern capitalist regime, but also the theory of the separated spheres: “The body of the industrial prostitute,” Katerina Rüedi argues, “presents a dilemma; as a convergence of stereotypical images of desire, it conforms to the conventions of the commodity fetish. Yet it also overtly presents, at the point of sale, the normally concealed, alienated,

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physical body of the producer; present in the flesh as a living, breathing entity, it is at the same time an inanimate object, a product. Emerging as a mass phenomenon for the first time in the industrial cities of the nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries, industrial prostitution bares the alienated body as so bears the contradictions of capital.”

Reading Benjamin with Marx, feminist architecture historian Jane Rendell has investigated gender aspects of spatial practice, representation, and experience in the nineteenth century Burlington arcade in London. For Rendell, the architecture of the arcades can neither be simply explained as the result of the use of glass within the architecture of the city, nor as a formal derivation of garden models into urban spaces. Instead, Rendell understands the London arcades as new architectural techniques of spatialization of gender and sexual power relationships in the context of normalization of heterosexual domestic marriage and the criminalization of working class lonely women in the space of the Victorian city. As we have seen, the 1864 Contagious Diseases Acts, as legal inscription of the gender biopolitics of space developed by William Acton and Parent-Duchâtelet, treated working-class women and women circulating freely within the city as unhealthy spatial transgressors, and condemned them to reclusion within penitentiary and sanitary locked institutions. The Vagrancy Acts of 1882 destined to “clean the city” and “prevent contagion” regulated the circulation of prostitutes within

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the city of London associating women who circulate in public street and places with syphilis, sexual deviancy and criminality.⁶⁰⁴

Fig. 196, 197. Left: The arcade as space of prostitution: Passage de Panoramas, Philibert-Louis Debucourt, 1806, Paris, Musée Carnavalet; Right: Interior of the Burlington Arcade, From J. Tallis, London Street Views, London, 1838, 71.

The modern arcade can be understood as the creation of a gender hétérotopie, a space where conventional rules of spatialization of masculinity and femininity were shaken and reorganized. Within industrial capitalism, consumption became the main public practice authorized for women, being the arcade a short of artificial glass-house where modern female subjectivity and the new industrial merchandise shall be cultivated and displayed. The arcade was a new urban space dedicated to commodity consumption and

“promenade” where the labor force and the clientele were for the first time almost entirely female, women being at the same time “consumers and commodities.” In order to think the gender aspects of bourgeois consumption and the role of woman-as-commodity within the arcade, Rendell reminds us that during the nineteenth century the word commodity was used to describe women’s sexual organs – “a modest woman was a “private commodity” and a prostitute was a “public commodity.” On the other hand, the prostitute embodied a new political and economic position which threatened both the division between private (female) and public (masculine) spaces as well as the segregation between reproduction (female) and production (masculine) practices: “For Benjamin,” Susan Buck-Morss argues, “while the figure of the flâneur embodies the transformation of perception characteristic of modern subjectivity, the figure of the whore is the allegory for the transformation of objects, the world of things. As a dialectical image, she is “seller and commodity in one.”

On the other hand, the streets surrounding the arcade in the nineteenth century metropolis were often areas of male upper-class leisure, housing a large number of male and bachelor segregated venues, such ad coffee houses, male clubs, high class brothels, courtesans’ residences and gaming rooms. Because of its strategic location within an upper-class male district and the area of commerce of prostitution, the nineteenth century arcade “offered a covered place for prostitutes and their clients to promenade. The

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606 Ibid.
designs of the shops, as discrete (and discreet) self-contained units, each with individual and private staircases to upper chambers, allowed them to be used for prostitution by the shop girls themselves.”

Unlike the open street, represented as impure, unhealthy, and non-virtuous, the arcade created a subrogated clean inside, a transition space between the domesticated feminine and virtuous safety of the home environment and the street and public space, represented as masculine (let us remember that for Parent-Duchâtelet and Acton the street was a river of sperm) and unhealthy for women. The arcade was treated as a half-opened brothel, and a legal public female space under governmental surveillance: a space of consumption of sexuality for men, a shopping place for bourgeois women, but also a prostitution alley for working class women. Benjamin noted: “Dialect of flânerie: The interior as street (luxury)/the street as interior (misery).”

Fig. 198. The arcade boutiques became showrooms for nineteenth century sex workers.

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The arcades represented a first attempt to capture women and their labor force within the public pace of the city outside of penitentiary and disciplinary institutions. The nineteenth century European arcades were designed as intermediary spaces between the female interior domestic space and the male urban exterior. There were hybrid public/private spaces where women could walk, shop but also sell for the first time outside of the domestic realm. Walter Benjamin underlined this hybrid public/private condition of the arcade when he acutely noticed that “in an arcade, women are as in their boudoir.” In fact, the arcade was designed, like Restif de la Bretonne’s brothel, to be a “public” imitation of a female private space: constructed with windows, interior fireplaces and low doorways which represented bourgeois interiority, the arcade provided the first exterior interiority for women, while creating a commercialized public interior sphere for men. As Rendell put it: “Architecturally, the spaces of the arcade, having been constructed to maximize the potential for looking at commodities on display, provided easy places for men to gaze at “professional beauties”. This later term may have referred to the female shoppers and shop girls, as well as the prostitutes, and to pornographic images concealed inside snuff boxes and watches within tabacconists’ and jewellers’ shop display.”

On one side, the arcade, halfway between the public space of the street and the bourgeois domestic interior, was a public boudoir; on the other, as

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610 Walter Benjamin, 1972, 612.
Buck-Morss stresses, it was an “ideological attempt to reprivatize social space” through consumption and surveillance.

The arcade as collection of shops designed as miniature bourgeois interiors, with individual staircases, sleeping chambers, tearooms and mirrors but also with women shopers and sellers, provided a boudoir experience for sale. The arcade, in this respect similar to other modern pornotopias (secret museum, boudoir, or sate brothel), constructed a new form of perception in which the spectator was afflicted by an illusory consciousness, an experience that took the form of a self-provoked dream. The arcade was a theatrical system of representation were women as/and commodities (both as bodies and as images) were displayed using long corridors and scaled-down miniaturized elevations which created an “atmosphere of unreality” emphasized by the combination of glass and mirrors, the quantity of objects and images under artificial light. “The arcades, interior streets lined with luxury shops and open through iron and glass roofs to the stars,” Susan Buck-Morss explains, “were a wish-image, expressing the bourgeois individual’s desire to escape through the symbolic medium of objects from the isolation of his/her subjectivity.”

Joseph Paxton unachieved project for the construction of a Great Victorian Way, a “ten mile arcade linking all of London’s major railway stations with covered transport, apartments, shops, offices and facilities,” could be understood as a biopolitical utopian device to spatialize sexual difference and sexuality within the city. Conceived almost like a crystal boudoir and scattering arcade growing along the city of London, the Great Victorian Way could be thought as a “proposal for an enormous brothel,” a sort of glass Oïkema, a nineteenth century industrial materialization of Restif de la Bretonne’s dream for a total urban brothel. Although Paxton’s glass-brothel was never constructed, the Great Grid could be read as the utopian inscription within the city grid of Restif de la Bretonne’s and Parent-Duchâtelet biopolitical program for governing sexual bodies within space.

The modern urban arcade was thus both a materialization of Restif de la Bretonne’s principles for the construction of the State Brothel, and its transformation into a public consumption space. Like the Parthénion, the arcade was a “milieu clos,” a space under surveillance and a strong hierarchized system. In terms of gender, the dialectics street/interiority, public space/boudoir, translated into a power relationship between the flâneur as male client and the prostitute as female merchandise. Whereas for the flâneur the public-private space of the arcades reflected their access to leisure and their power of consumption, for the female prostitute the arcade was a space saturated by state surveillance, public hygienics and political constraint.

616 Ibid.
But unlike the Parthénon, the arcade was no longer a State disciplinary institution, but rather architecture of leisure and entertainment entirely dedicated to consumption, translating for the first time a disciplinary pornotopia within the context of urban industrial capitalism: displacing the Parthénon into the capitalism regime of production/consumption, the arcade was a first shopping space, a sexual department store where women and men could enjoy the fantasy of free circulation, while being constructed as consumers but also as merchandises, images and bodies on display.

By the end of the nineteenth century, sexual work itself was removed from the space of the arcades. The modern mall will be the result of this complex and paradoxical process of pornification and de-sexualization. For Elizabeth Wilson, “female sexuality became a symbol of the uncontrollable character of the nineteenth century city. Women plunged into space after space, opening up their senses and purses to the tactile experience of goods in the department stores, or offering up their bodies as commodities, whether for industrial labor or mass-production.” Walter Benjamin notes the violence with which the “coquettes were driven out of the arcades” in 1893 and how smell and touch were progressively replaced by the lust of vision and consumption. The transformation of the arcades in pornographic peep-show will be a sign of the conversion of the brothel-arcade into a scopic and shopping visual experience: If flânerie was for Benjamin the form of perception characteristic of mass society and urban space, contained within the principle

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“look but don’t touch,” the consumption of pornography within the arcade will become the form of representation and consumption of sexuality that corresponds to modern subjectivity and to the experience of the modern city.
PART 2

BIOPOLITICS OF ARCHITECTURE IN THE AGE OF

PHARMACOPORNOGRAPHIC REPRODUCTION
INTRODUCTION

From Disciplinary to Pharmacopornographic Regime

Producing Sex, Gender, and Sexual Subjectivity after the Second World War

In order to understand the specific relationship between architecture and sexuality during the twentieth century, it seems crucial to draw a cartography of the transformations occurring in biopolitical techniques for managing gender, sexuality and sexual reproduction after the Second World War. Whereas the impact of modes of transportation, electronics and visual techniques on the mutation of public and domestic spaces have been critically assessed by architectural discourses and urban studies, the effects of body and sexual technologies (both medical and biochemical techniques as well as the mechanization of previously biological perceptive or motor abilities) upon modes of inhabiting remain largely unexplored. Let me draw a fast chronology of the techno-somatic revolution that was taking place during the Cold War years in order to extend and question Foucault’s periodization of power regimes and his understanding of architecture as technique of “governmentality of the living.”
During the first decade after the Second World War, the United States invested more dollars in scientific research related to sex and sexuality than any other country had done before throughout history. Fordism, the automobile industry and mass-produced suburban housing, synthesized and defined a specific mode of production and of consumption during the 1940s. Fordism instituted a Taylorist protraction of life: a smooth and polychrome aesthetic of the inanimate object, a way of thinking about interior space and of living in the city, a conflicting, yet utopian, arrangement of the body and of the machine, a discontinued manner of desiring and of resisting. In the meantime, before the energy crisis and the collapse of the assembly line, new sectors (biochemical industry, electronics, informatics or communication) were already transforming global economy. The new biochemical and communication industries

Some of the most influential analyses of the current transformations of industrial
will progressively become industries for producing sexual subjectivity. This process started during the late 1930s: the war was a laboratory for transforming sex and sexuality. It constituted a moment without precedence for women’s visibility in public space as well as the emergence of visible and politicized forms of homosexuality in such unexpected places as, for example, the American army.619 Meanwhile, as Beatriz Colomina has pointed out, war techniques and products started to be converted into everyday American life objects and spaces: architects Ray and Charles Eames collaborated with the American army to manufacture small boards of moulded-plywood to use as splints for mutilated appendages. A few years later, the same material was used to build furniture that came to exemplify the light design of modern disposable American architecture.620 The process of application of war techniques for governing civil society after the war included new surveillance and communication strategies that were now used to manage and control bodies and sexual identities. American McCarthyism—rampant throughout the 50s—added to the patriotic fight against communism the scientific study and persecution of homosexuality as a form of anti-nationalism while exalting at the same time the family values of masculine labour and domestic maternity.621

621 John D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual
During the twentieth century, the “invention” of the biochemical notion of hormone and the pharmaceutical development of synthetic molecules for commercial uses radically modified traditional definitions of normal and pathological sexual identities. In 1941, the first natural molecules of progesterone and estrogens were obtained from the urine of pregnant mares (Premarin) and soon after synthetic hormones (Norethindrone) were commercialized. The same year, George Henry carried out the first demographic study of “sexual deviation,” a quantitative study of masses known as Sex Variants. The Kinsey Reports on human sexual behaviour (1948 and 1953) and Robert Stoller’s protocols for “femininity” and “masculinity” (1968) followed in sexological suit. In 1957, the North American pedo-psychiatrist John Money coined the term “gender,” differentiating it from the traditional term “sex,” to define an individual’s inclusion in a culturally recognized group of “masculine” or “feminine” behavior and physical expression. Money famously affirms that it is possible (using surgical, endocrinological and cultural techniques) to “change the gender of any baby up to 18 months.” Between 1946 and 1949 Harod Gillies was performing the first phalloplastic surgeries in the UK, including work on Michael Dillon, the first female-to-male transexual to have taken testosterone as part of the masculinization protocol. In 1952, U.S. soldier George W.

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623 Harold Gillies and Raph Millard J., The Principles and Art of Plastic Surgery (Boston: Little Brown, 1957), 385-88; Michael Dillon, Self: A Study in Ethics and Endocrinology (London: Heinemann, 1946); For a larger historical survey see also:
Jorgensen was transformed into Christine, the first transsexual person discussed widely in the popular press. During the early 50s and into the 60s, physician Harry Benjamin systematized the clinical use of hormonal molecules in the treatment of “sex change” and defined “transsexualism,” a term first introduced in 1954, as a curable condition.625

Fig. 201, 202. George H. Henry, Sex Variants. A Study of Homosexual Patterns, 1959, Research Image; Right: 20 Aug 1953 — Two Barry sisters read review of Alfred Kinsey Report on Women over the shoulder of Beverly Lawrence (c). — Image by © Bettmann/CORBIS.


Whereas Homosexuality was withdrawn from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) in 1973, in 1983, Gender Identity Disorder (clinical form of transsexuality) was included in the DSM with diagnostic criteria for this new pathology.
The invention of the contraceptive pill, first biochemical technique enabling the separation between heterosexual practice and reproduction, was a direct result of the expansion of endocrinological experimentation, and triggered a process of development of what could be called, twisting Eisenhower term, “the sex-gender industrial complex.”

In 1957, Searle & Co. commercialized Enovid, the first contraceptive pill (“the Pill”) made of a combination of mestranol and norethynodrei. First promoted for the treatment of menstrual disorders, the Pill was approved for contraceptive use four years later. The chemical components of the Pill would soon become the most used pharmaceutical molecules in the whole of human history.

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626 President Eisenhower used the term “military-industrial complex” in his Farewell to the Nation speech of 1961.

The Cold War was also a period of transformation of the governmental and economic regulations concerning pornography and prostitution. In 1946, ancient sex worker and spy Martha Richard convinced the French government to declare the “maison closes” illegal, which took to the end of the nineteenth century governmental system of brothels in France. In 1953, Hugh Hefner founded *Playboy*, the first North American “porn” magazine to be sold in newspaper stands, with a photograph of Marilyn Monroe naked on the front page of the first publication. In 1959, Hefner transformed an old Chicago’s house into the Playboy Mansion, which was promoted within the magazine and television as a “love palace” with 32 rooms, becoming soon the most popular American erotic utopia. In 1972, Gerard Damiano produced the *Deep Throat*. The film, starring Linda Lovelace, was widely commercialized in the United States and became the most watched movie of all times, grossing more than 600 million dollars. From this time on, porn film production boomed: from thirty clandestine films in 1950 to 2500 films in 1970.

Fig. 208. Before and after picture of Michael Dillon, first female-to-male transsexual, 1950. Private Collection.

If for years pornography was the dominant visual technology addressed to the male body for controlling his sexual reaction, during the 1950s the pharmaceutical industry looked for ways of triggering erection and sexual response using surgical and chemical prostheses. In 1974, the soviet Victor Konstantinovich Kalnberz patented the first penis implant using polyethylene plastic rods as a treatment for impotency, resulting in a permanently erect penis. These implants were abandoned for chemical variants because they were found to be “physically uncomfortable and emotionally disconcerting.” In 1984 Tom F. Lue, Emil A. Tanaghoy and Richard A. Schmidt implanted a “sexual pacemaker” in the penis of a patient. The contraption was a system of electrodes inserted close to the prostate that permits an erection by remote control. The molecule of
Sildenafil (commercialized as Viagra© by Pfizer laboratories in 1988) will become later the chemical treatment for “erectile dysfunction.”

Fig. 209, 210. First cyborg, 1960. A doctor lowering a human fetus into plastic, March 1948, Life Magazine.

The Cold War years were also the period of extension of psychotropic techniques first developed within military experimentation to medical and recreational uses for the civil population. During the 1950s, the United States Central Intelligence Agency performed a series of experiments involving electroshock techniques as well as psychedelic and hallucinogen drugs as part of a program of “brainwash,” military interrogation, and psychological torture. The aim of the experimental program of the CIA was to identify the chemical techniques able to directly modify the prisoner’s subjectivity, inflecting the levels of anxiety, dizziness, agitation, irritability, sexual excitement or fear.628 At the same time, the laboratories Eli Lilly (Indiana) commercialized the molecule called Methadone (the most simple opiate) as an analgesic and Secobarbital, a barbiturate with

anaesthetic, sedative and hypnotic properties conceived for the treatment of epilepsy, insomnia and as an anaesthetic for short surgery. Secobarbital, better known as “the red pill” or “doll,” became one of the drugs of the rock underground culture of the 60s. In 1977, the State of Oklahoma introduced the first lethal injection composed of barbiturates similar to the “red pill” to be used for the death penalty.

The Cold War military space race was also the site of production of a new form of technological embodiment. At the start of the 60s, Manfred E. Clynes and Nathan S. Kline used the term “cyborg” for the first time to refer to an organism technologically supplemented to live in an extraterrestrial environment where it could operate as an “integrated homeostatic system.” They experimented with a laboratory rat, which received an osmotic prosthesis implant that it dragged along—a cyber tail. Beyond the rat, the cyborg named a new techno-organic condition, a short of “soft machine” (to use Burroughs term) or a body with “electric skin” (to put it in Haus-Rucker & Co. terms) subjected to new forms of political control but also able to develop new forms of resistance. During the 1960s, as part of a military investigation program, Arpanet was

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629 Methadone became in the 70s the basic substitution treatment for heroine addiction. See: Tom Carnwath and Ian Smith, Heroin Century (New York: Routledge, 2002), 40–2.

630 The same method had already been applied in a Nazi German programme called “Action T4” for “racial hygiene” that euthanatized between 75,000 and 100,000 people with physical or psychic disabilities. It was abandoned because of the high pharmacological cost; instead it was substituted by gas chambers or simply death caused by inanition.


created; it was the predecessor of the global Internet, the first “net of nets” of interconnected computers capable of transmitting information.

Fig. 211, 212. Left: Haus-Rucker-Co, Electric Skin I, 1968; Right: Michael Webb (Archigram), Sutilo, 1967.

On the other hand, the surgical techniques developed for the treatment of “les geules cassées” of the First World War and the skin reconstruction techniques specially invented for the handling of the victims of the nuclear bomb will be transformed during the 1950s and 1960s into cosmetic and sexual surgeries.\(^6\) In response to the threat inferred by Nazism and racist rhetoric that claims that racial or religious differences can be detected in anatomical signs, “de-circumcision,” the artificial reconstruction of foreskin, was one of the most practiced cosmetic surgery operations in the United States.\(^3\) At the same time, facelifts, as well as various other cosmetic surgery operations, became mass-market techniques for a new middle-class body consumer.


Andy Warhol had himself photographed during a facelift, transforming his own body into a pop object.

Fig. 213, 214. Plastic surgery in a First World War soldier, Bibliothèque Interuniversitaire de Médecine Exhibition sur la chirurgie réparatrice des gueules cassées; right: Anti-nuclear activist Yoshida Katsuji after the nuclear attack. Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum.

Fig. 215, 216. Pneumatic war and post-war aesthetics: Left: War And Conflict-Bra 2 women modeling safety garb to prevent future occupational accidents among female war workers; woman on (L) wearing uniform & plastic eye goggles & woman on (R)
opening her uniform to reveal plastic bra, Life Magazine, 1943; Right: Young woman showing results after plastic surgery to enhance size of her breasts, Life Magazine.

Meanwhile, the use of a viscous, semi-rigid material that is waterproof, thermally and electrically resistant, produced by artificial propagation of carbon atoms in long chains of molecules of organic compounds derived from petroleum, and whose burning is highly polluting became generalized in manufacturing the objects of daily life. DuPont, who pioneered the development of plastics from the 1930s on, was also implicated in nuclear research for the Manhattan project. Together with plastics, we saw the exponential multiplication of the production of transuranic elements (the chemical elements with atomic numbers greater than 92 - the atomic number of Uranium), that became the material to be used in the civil sector, including plutonium, that had, before, been used as nuclear fuel in military operations. The level of toxicity of transuranic elements exceeds that of any other element on Earth, creating a new form of vulnerability for life. Cellulosic, polynosic, polyamide, polyester, acrylic, polypylene, spandex...became materials used equally for body consumption and for architecture. The mass consumption of plastic defined the material conditions of a large-scale ecological transformation that resulted in destruction of other (mostly lower) energy resources, rapid consumption and high pollution. The Trash Vortex, a floating mass of the size of

635 Pap A. Ndiaye, Nylon and Bombs: DuPont and the March of Modern America (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 2006).
Texas in the North Pacific made of plastic garbage, was to become the largest water architecture of the twenty first century.  

These are just some snapshots of a post-industrial, global, and multimedia regime that I will call from here onwards *pharmacopornographic* and that will be the focus of the second part of this dissertation. This term refers to the processes of a bio-molecular (*pharmaco*) and semiotic-technical and multimedia (*pornographic*) government of sexual subjectivity—of which the contraceptive pill (“The Pill”) and *Playboy* are two paradigmatic offspring.

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Fig. 219, 220. Technicians wearing protective polyethylene plastic suits while working in radioactive areas of the atomic energy plant. Life Magazine, February 22, 1954.

We are being confronted with a new type of hot, psychotropic capitalism that cannot longer be described in alignment with the disciplinary techniques for producing sex and sexuality that characterized the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and that we have seen in the first part of this dissertation.

Fig. 221, 222. Christine Jorgensen, Journal image showing “sex change,” 1975; Right: The Christine Jorgensen Story, The Film, Irving Rapper, 1970.
The transformation of biopolitical techniques that we are witnessing after the Second World War are characterized not only by the transformation of “gender,” “sex,” “sexuality,” “sexual identity,” and “pleasure” into objects of the political management of living, but also by the fact that this management itself is carried out through the new dynamics of advanced techno-capitalism, global media, and bio-technologies.

Whereas the strict continuity between sexuality and reproduction and the maximization of the use of reproductive organs and fluids (blood, sperm, eggs, and milk) were the central biopolitical laws of the disciplinary regime during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (inducing the pathologization of non-reproductive practices such as masturbation and homosexuality, but also the proliferation of disciplinary sexual segregated architectures and techniques for spatializing sexual difference and distributing body fluids and reproductive organs in space), the pharmacopornographic regime introduces during the 1950s two main ruptures within these disciplinary techniques for governing sexuality. On one side, the Pill comes to separate technically (and without the intervention of any “physical barrier”) sexuality and reproduction. On the other side, Playboy transforms pornography into popular culture introducing (male) masturbation within the chain of production of capital.
These Cold War transformations were imposing an ensemble of new micro-prosthetic mechanisms of control of subjectivity by means of bio-molecular and multi-media technical protocols. Under the Fordist economy a new biopolitical industry was growing dependent upon the production and circulation of hundreds of tons of synthetic steroids, on the global diffusion of a flood of pornographic images, on the production of pasteurized milk, prepared blood products and reproductive products (both sperm and eggs), on the elaboration and distribution of new varieties of synthetic legal and illegal psychotropic drugs (e.g., sercobital, dexi, speed…), on the flood of signs and circuits of the digital transmission of information, on the extension of a form of diffuse urban architecture to the entire planet in which megacities of misery knotted into high concentrations of capital.\(^{638}\)

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In this period of the body’s techno-management, the pharmacopornographic industry synthesizes and defines a specific mode of production and of consumption, a masturbatory temporalization of life, a virtual and hallucinogenic aesthetic of the body, a particular way of transforming the inner into virtual space and the city in a totally displayed environment by means of self-surveillance devices and ultra fast information distribution, resulting in continuous and uninterrupted loops of desire and resistance, of consumption and destruction, of evolution and self-extinction.

The invention of the category gender announces the arrival of the new pharmacopornographic regime of sexuality. Far from being the creation of 60s feminism, the category of gender belongs to the bio-technological discourse from the 1950s. “Gender,” “masculinity” and “femininity” as cosmetic and medical artifacts are inventions of the Second World War that would see their full commercial expansion during the Cold War, along with objects such as canned food, pasteurized milk, the computer, plastic chairs, nuclear energy, television, the credit card, the disposable pen, the bar code, the air bed and the artificial satellite.

Arguing against the rigidity of the nineteenth century concept of “sex,” John Money, who conducted the first methodological treatment of intersex babies, advanced the technological plasticity of “gender.” Money used the notion of “gender” in speaking about the possibility of technologically modifying, through the use of hormones and surgery, the bodily presentation of babies born with “unclassifiable” (according to
medicine’s visual and discursive criteria) feminine or masculine genital organs and/or chromosomes. With Anke Ehrhardt and Joan and John Hampson, Money would later develop his claim into a strict clinical procedure for tinkering with young intersexual bodies. \(^{639}\) When Money uses the term “gender” to refer to “psychological sex,” he thinks about the thrilling possibility of using technology to modify the “deviant body,” in order to bring it into accordance with pre-existing prescriptive ideals for feminine and masculine human bodies. If in the nineteenth century disciplinary system sex was natural, definitive, untransferable and transcendental, then gender now appears to be synthetic, malleable, variable, and susceptible of being transferred, imitated, produced and technically reproduced.

Fig. 225-227. Soft and pop technologies. Eduardo Paolozzi’s *Sack-o-Sauce* (1948), *Meet the People* (1948) and *Bunk, Evadne in Green Dimension* (1945).

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\(^{639}\) John Money, Joan Hampson, and John Hampson, “Imprinting and the Establishiment of Gender Role,” *Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry* 77 (1957): 333-36.
Far from the rigidity of exterior techniques to normalize the body practiced by the disciplinary system at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, the new gender techniques of the bio-capitalist pharmacopornographic regime are flexible, internal and assimilable. Twenty-first century gender functions as an abstract device of technical subjectivation: it is glued, it is cut, it is displaceable, it is named, it is imitated, it is swallowed, it is injected, it is grafted, it is digitalized, it is copied, it is designed, it is bought, it is sold, it is modified, it is mortgaged, it is transferred, it is downloaded, it is applied, it is transcribed, it is falsified, it is executed, it is certified, it is exchanged, it is dosed, it is provided, it is extracted, it shrinks, it is subtracted, it is denied, it is renounced, it is betrayed, it mutates.

How to think these new post-War technologies of production of gender, sexuality, and sex in relation to the Foucaultian history of biopolitics with which we have been working until now? How do they come to modify the relationship between architecture and sexuality? For Foucault the process of modernization that took place during the eighteenth century implied the transition from sovereign and thanatopolitical power techniques to disciplinary and biopolitical techniques aimed at controlling the life of the population in terms of health, national interest, urban hygenics, and sexual and racial reproduction. As we have seen in the first part of this dissertation, the male cabinet, the female boudoir, the state brothel, the urban arcade, the sewer system or the bourgeois domestic space were some of the spatial techniques developed as part of this new biopolitical regime. For Foucault, disciplinary spaces (including schools, barracks, prisons, hospital, but also brothels and domestic spaces) were the architectural
translation of the modern biopolitical governmental techniques. All these institutional and governmental devices took the form of political architectures *external* to the body. These systems had a firm command of orthopaedic politics and disciplinary exoskeletons. Let us remember that the model for these techniques of subjectivization was for Foucault Bentham’s architecture for the prison-factory and the scopic and surveillance techniques of panopticism that, as we have seen, extended into the boudoir, the brothel, and the domestic interior.

Fig. 228, 229. Tupperware party, 1952, Life Photo Archive; Information on I.U.D. birth control, February 1967, Life Photo Archive.

Although not always historically and chronologically exact, Foucault’s analytical overview of the eighteenth and nineteenth century biopolitical technologies is critically sharp. However, it is also true that the valuable insights he offers begin to blur the closer the analysis comes to twentieth century societies. It seems that Foucault does not consider the profound changes, beginning during the Second World War, that occur with a new set of technologies for producing sexual subjectivity. As I see it, these somatic-political technologies require us to conceptualize a third regime of power-knowledge,
not sovereign and not disciplinary, not pre-modern and not modern, in order to take into consideration the deep and lasting impact of these new body technologies on contemporary constructions of subjectivity. In the Postscript of *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari are inspired by Williams S. Burroughs to name this “new monster” of social organization derived from biopolitical control a “society of control.”⁶⁴⁰ I prefer to call it, reading Burroughs along with Bukowski, *pharmacopornographic regime*.

The somatic-political context after the Second World War seems to be dominated by a set of new technologies of the body (e.g. biotechnologies, surgery, endocrinology, prosthetics) and of representation (e.g. photography, film, television and cybernetics) that infiltrates and penetrates everyday life transforming domesticity as well as the city landscape. The Cold War period is an era of proliferating bio-molecular, digital and high-speed technologies; of the soft, light, slimy and jelly technologies; of the injectable, inhalable, and incorporable technologies. We are heavily involved in something that can be called—recalling the work of Zygmunt Bauman—a sophisticated form of “liquid” control.⁶⁴¹

Whereas in the disciplinary society, technologies of subjectivization control the body from the outside as an ortho-architectonic exterior device; in the pharmacopornographic society, technologies enter the body to form part of it: they dissolve in the body; they become the body. Here somatic-politics become tautological. Techno-politics take the

form of the body: techno-politics (in)corporated. In the middle of the twentieth century, the first signs of the slide towards a new somatic-political regime were the electrification, digitalization and bio-molecularization of devices of control that specifically produce sexual difference and sexual identities. Little by little, the orthopaedic sexual mechanisms and disciplinary architectonics are being absorbed by pharmacological micro-informatics and instant audiovisual transmission techniques. If in the disciplinary society, architecture and orthopaedics served as models to understand the relation of body-power, in the pharmacopornographic society, the models for body control are micro-prosthetics: pharmacopornpower acts through molecules that become part of our immune system; from the silicon that takes the form of breasts, to a neurotransmitter that modifies our way of perceiving and acting, to a hormone that regulates sexual reproduction and the social codification of femininity and masculinity.

The devices of surveillance and control that are common to a disciplinary sexual-political regime will thus progressively assist the pharmacopornographic subject’s miniaturization, internalization and reflexive introversion (a twist towards the inside, towards the space that was traditionally considered to be intimate, private). As we will see in the following chapters, disciplinary architectures become domestic “gizmo,” to put it in Reyner Banham’s terms, while pornotopias are being digitalized and broadcasted. Soft and pop technologies become the stuff of architecture and sexual

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subjectivity. Here the body no longer inhabits disciplinary spaces, but is inhabited by them. The pharmacopornographic subject does not simply inhabits architecture, but rather is inhabited by it. Architecture is becoming a somatic system. The bio-molecular and organic structure of the body is a last resort for these control systems. This moment contains all the horror and exaltation of the body’s political potential.


As we will see in the following chapters, the body in the pharmacopornographic era is not a passive substrate but a techno-organic interface, a biopolitical “standard-of-living-package”\textsuperscript{644} segmented and territorialized by different political models (textual, computing, bio-chemical).\textsuperscript{25} Unlike the disciplinary society, pharmacopornographic society no longer works over a modern corpus. The new pharmacopornographic body does not have its limits at the skeletal wrapping that the skin delineates. This post-war body cannot be understood as a biological substratum outside the framework of production and cultivation, typical features of techno-science. As Donna Haraway

teaches us, the contemporary body is a techno-living being, “a networking techno-organic-textual-mythic system.” Organism and machine, nature and culture are obsolete disciplinary fictions. This new condition of the body blurs the traditional modern distinction between art, performance, media, design, and architecture. The new pharmacological and surgical techniques set in motion tectonic construction processes that combine figurative representations derived from cinema and from architecture (editing, 3D modelling or personality design, etc.), according to which the organs, the vessels, the fluids (techno-blood, techno-sperm, techno-eggs, etc.) and the molecules are converted into the prime material from which our pharmacopornographic corporality is manufactured.

Fig. 232, 233. Left: Woman in a plastic bag, December 1958, Life Magazine; Right: Plastic Slint, January 1964, Life Magazine.

After the Second World War, the new biopolitical ideals of masculinity and femininity are created in laboratories: architecture (whether colonial domestic unit for pharmaceutical research, bachelor pad or Playboy Mansions, as we will see) functions as the scientific lab and the multimedia theatre where sexual subjectivity is produced.

These ideals of gender cannot exist in a pure state; they only exist in our confined sexual techno-ecosystems. As sexual subjects we inhabit a bio-capitalist theme park (providing entertainment, education, excitement, leisure …) surrounded by a gigantic junk backstage. We are laboratory man and woman. We are the effects of a kind of political and scientific bio-Platonism. But we are alive: at the same time we materialize the power of the pharmacopornographic system and its possibility of failure.

This sexual subject is not simply an effect of the pharmacopornographic systems of control; it is first and above all the materialization of “puissance de vie,” “power of life” that aspires to transfer to all and to every body. This is the paradoxical condition of contemporary resistance and revolt: Pharmacopornographic subjectivity is at the same time, as we shall see, the effect of biopolitical technologies of control and the ultimate site of resistance to them.⁶⁴⁶

The second part of this dissertation is dedicated to tracing the displacement from the disciplinary architecture that characterized the eighteenth and nineteenth century regime

of production of sex and sexuality, to the soft and pop pharmacopornographic technologies that appeared after the Second World War. Playboy architecture and what I shall call the architectures of the Pill will be the object of a genealogical study, working here as critical labs where to examine the emergence of new spatial techniques for producing gender, sex, race, and sexuality in the age of pharmacopornographic reproduction.
1. PLAYBOY PORNOTOPIA
“Las Vegas is analyzed here only as a phenomenon of architectural communication. Just as an analysis of the structure of a Gothic cathedral need not include a debate on the morality of medieval religion, so Las Vegas’ values are not questioned here.”

Robert Venturi, Denis Scott-Brown and Steven Izenour647

“Far from succumbing to the media, buildings, as one of the oldest form of communication, have now been joined by so many others that the burden of defining social space is now shared by a wide range of channels, of which the solid object is but one.”

Mark Wigley648

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In 1962 Hugh Hefner was photographed posing next to the scale model of a modern building, echoing the portraits of Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier taken a few years earlier. Indifferent to the camera and ignoring the viewer, Hefner's eyes seem intent on setting up a privileged connection to the building. His body turns towards the model, his arms embrace it, suggesting bonds of creation between the two. We see him gesturing towards the model with an elongated object as if to draw our attention to some particular detail or open one of its little windows. But this portrait differs in some respects from the canonical representation of the modern architect: the elongated object was neither a pencil nor a drafting pen, it was a pipe (have he seen Le Corbusier’s?), and Hefner was not an architect but the founder of adult magazine *Playboy*, posing next to a model of the Playboy Club-Hotel that was to be built in Los Angeles in the sixties.
Hefner’s architect pose was not a farce—rather, it revealed the architectural intentions behind what was an apparently banal erotic publication. *Playboy* was much more than print and girls without bikinis. In the fifties and sixties, the magazine had managed to create a series of spaces and publicize them so relentlessly through the media that they had come to create not only a new popular erotic utopia, but also to radically transform the uses and techniques of the domestic space of the Cold War years. *Playboy* had popularized the designs for the “Playboy Penthouse Apartment,” “Kitchenless Kitchen” and “Rotating Bed” that later materialized in the 1959 reconstruction of the Playboy Mansion. This “32 room *Love Palace*” would inspire the set for the first reality show in television history, broadcast in 1959, and became the setting for innumerable photographs destined for the magazine’s pages. Hefner himself defined the nature of the project as follows:

“I wanted the house to be a dream-house. A place where one could work and have fun without the trouble and conflicts of the outside world. Inside, a single man had absolute
control over his environment. I could change night into day screening a film at midnight and ordering a dinner at noon, having appointments in the middle of the night and romantic encounters in the afternoon. It was a haven and a sanctuary... While the rest of the world seemed to be out of control, everything inside the Playboy House was perfect. That was my plan. Being brought up in a very repressive and conformist manner, I created a universe of my own where I was free to live and love in a way that most people can only dream about.***

This was the start of an unprecedented media-architecture operation deployed during the sixties: Playboy scattered an archipelago of nightclubs and hotels throughout urban enclaves in America and Europe, and filled the pages of its magazines with reports offering glimpses into the inhabited interiors of these singular places. This dual process of construction and media dissemination culminated with the move from the Chicago Mansion to Los Angeles and the restoration of Playboy Mansion West in 1971.

Far from being *simply* an erotic magazine, Playboy forms part of the architectural imaginary of the second half of the twentieth century. Playboy is the Mansion and its parties, the tropical grotto and the underground glass-walled games room that lets guests watch the Bunnies swimming naked in the pool, it is the round bed where Hefner frolics with the Playmates; Playboy is the bachelor pad, the private jet, the club with its secret

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rooms, the garden-zoo, the secret castle and the urban oasis... Playboy would become the first “pornotopia” of the mass media age.

As the architect Reyner Banham pointed out in 1960, *Playboy* had done more for architecture and design in the United States than *Home and Garden* magazines.650 From 1953, almost every issue of the magazine had included a full-color spread on architecture, featuring Playboy's own interior design and decor projects. While other US magazines like *Ladies Home Journal* or *House Beautiful* launched a post-war crusade against the architecture of Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier, believing it to be foreign to the American tradition, *Playboy* was publishing glowing articles on Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, Philip Johnson, Frank Lloyd Wright and Wallace K. Harrison, and its pages were a medium for the “simple, functional and modern” designs of the Eames, of Saarinen, George Nelson, Harry Bertoia, Knoll. During the Cold War, Playboy had become a platform for spreading domestic architecture and design as masculine consumer goods for the new American popular culture.

Far from questioning the validity of the representation of Hugh Hefner as an architect and defending architecture as an exclusively professional or academic practice, what I propose here is to validate the photograph's performative power to produce meaning and accept Hefner's pose as a deliberate declaration of principles. Here is the risky initial

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hypothesis that I will test in these pages: it is possible to see Hugh Hefner as a pop-architect and the *Playboy* empire as an architectural multimedia production company, a paradigmatic example of the transformation of architecture through the media in the twentieth century⁶⁵¹. If Beatriz Colomina is right in pointing out that “what makes modern architecture modern is not its functionalism or use of materials, but its engagement with the media,”⁶⁵² we can affirm that not only did Playboy make an exemplary contribution to the “modernization” of architecture during the Cold War, but also operated as an authentic multimedia architectural production company that spread its model of urban, post-domestic, sexual utopia through an unprecedented media dissemination that spanned from the press to the Chicago and Los Angeles Mansions, as well as the clubs, hotels, travel agencies, merchandising, television programs, film, video, the Internet and videogames.

Playboy had managed to invent what Hugh Hefner called a “Disneyland for adults.”⁶⁵³ And Hefner himself was the pop-architect of this multimedia erotic *Follie*. He had somehow understood that in order to sculpt a new masculine subjectivity, one had to design a habitat: to create a space and invent a series of practices and uses of the domestic that could function as techno-habits of the male body. Transforming the

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⁶⁵¹ Beatriz Colomina was the first to propose a historical reading of architecture through its relationship to the mass media, taking the work of Le Corbusier and Loos as critical points of departure. See *Privacy and Publicity. Modern Architecture as Mass Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994).


⁶⁵³ Steven Watts, *Mr. Playboy*, 273.
American heterosexual man into a *playboy* meant also inventing a new erotic topos as an alternative to the suburban family home that was the dominant heterosexual space in post-war North American culture. This required getting inside the walls of the suburban house, penetrating every private home in America and inoculating, first via the magazine and then through the TV, a virtual space that only unfolded through text and images. By 1962, the magazine had become the centre of a multimedia network with soft tentacles spread throughout North American's urban fabric, from newsstands to television stations, clubs and hotels.

Fig. 237. “Bunnies and Champagne Highlight Groundbreaking for Playboy Center”

In 1962—the same year in which Hefner was photographed posing as an architect—Siegfried Giedion, the most influential architectural historian of the mid-twentieth century, coined the term "Playboy Architecture" in the introduction to the second edition of his bestselling book *Space, Time and Architecture*. Giedion’s classic text was part of a titanic effort—also involving authors like Emil Kaufman and Nikolaus Pevsner—to generate a new historiography of architecture that could account for the emergence of the “modern tradition” as the culmination of the technical, scientific and tectonic progress of modernity. Giedion saw American post-war architecture as a threat to the materialization of the “grand project” that had borne within it the spirit of European civilization, from the Parthenon to Le Corbusier. What is strange is that Giedion should have decided to call that threat “Playboy Architecture”:

“Contemporary architecture is regarded by some as a fashion and—as an American architect expressed it—many designers who had adopted the fashionable aspects of the “International Style” now found the fashion had worn thin and were engaged in a romantic orgy. This fashion, with its historical fragments picked at random, unfortunately infected many gifted architects. By the sixties, its results could be seen everywhere: in smallbreasted, gothicstyled colleges, in a lacework of glittering details inside and outside, in the toothpick stilts and assembly of isolated buildings of the largest cultural center. A kind of playboy-architecture became *en vogue*: an architecture treated
as playboys treat life, jumping from one sensation to another and quickly bored with everything.”

Gideon no longer saw it as a conflict between different styles, it was a moral battle in which the spread of “playboy-architecture” (the symptoms of which were “superficiality,” “fatigue,” “escapism,” “indecision,” and “promiscuity”) throws doubt on the values of “honesty,” “rightness,” “coherence,” and “fidelity to tradition” that had characterized the “modern tradition.”

What led Giedion to use the term “playboy” to describe what he considered a decadent trend in what was then known as the “International Style”? What architectural signs capable of spreading “superficiality” and “escapism” deserved to be branded “playboy”? In short, what exactly did Giedion mean when he used the syntagm “playboy-architecture” that he himself had invented?

Even though Giedion does not directly mention Hefner’s magazine when he talks about “playboy architecture,” we can guess that the semantic chain which allows him to compare the playboy lifestyle (“superficial” and “escapist”) with post-war American architecture was based on an elliptical signifier: sex, or better still pornography, the public representation of what was historically supposed to be the very essence of privacy - sexuality. In the history of architecture sketched out by Giedion, the word “playboy”

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exceeds a literal reference to the print publication and points to a mutation of American
culture brought about by a set of visual consumption practices. *Playboy* had entailed
more than just the transformation of porn into popular mass culture—as Giedion may
have sensed, it was also a frontal attack on modern domesticity and the traditional
relationship between gender, sex, and architecture.

In his introduction, Giedion talks about an “optical revolution” similar to that which
“had abolished the single viewpoint of perspective” at the start of the twentieth century
and had led to the “third space conception,” of which Le Corbusier was the greatest
exponent, and to the creation of new, specific conditions of movement, volume and the
interpenetration of inner and outer space. Perhaps what lurked behind the threat of
“playboy architecture” was the possibility of a further “revolution,” one that was
political and sexual rather than optical. And the possibility that it could change not only
ways of seeing but also ways of segmenting and inhabiting space, along with affects and
modes of pleasure production, and throw doubt on both the virile heterosexual spatial
order that had been dominant during the cold war and on the heroic male figure of the
modern architect.

Is it possible to read Giedion against Giedion, using his questions to decipher *Playboy*?
In other words, can we ask what social and political order, what gender and sexual
spatialization, made playboy architecture a “romantic orgy” and a “form of escapism”? What were the body, affects, and leaping, irrepresible desires that, in Giedion’s view, threatened the architectural project of European modernity? What did the “romantic
orgies,” the “jumping from one sensation to another,” the “hunting for forms,” the “glittering details,” and the “dangerous pastimes” of playboy architecture consist of? Did Giedion fear a critique of the traditional role of the architect and the disclosure of the links between pleasure and construction? Did he want to protect the autonomous language of architecture from the incursions of other lesser visual regimes rooted in popular culture, with their own economies of desire, consumption and reception?

So perhaps the elder architectural historian was not so far off the scent. In America, to talk about the cold fifties was to talk about Playboy, and architecture did not escape that cultural hegemony. Trying to conjure up his worst fears, Giedion had invented the pop brand “Playboy Architecture.” Moreover,—and perhaps much to Giedion’s regret—the playboy architecture label emphasized the power of the term “playboy” to function as a cultural key and a critical and historiographic criterion that could encompass the post-war period spanning from the first edition of *Space, Time and Architecture* in 1941 to the fourth edition in 1962, while at the same time it revealed the architectural aspect implicit in the popular meaning of “Playboy” as a notion (referring to the new masculine lifestyle as well as the magazine).

**I want to be an architect... I want to be a playboy**

The 1962 issue of *Architectural Forum* that published Giedion’s “Playboy Architecture” introduction to the new edition of *Time, Space and Architecture* also includes an extensive photographic spread featuring American architects like Philip Johnson, Raymond Loewy and Charles Goodman, in their studios, surrounded by their own
designs. A comparative analysis of the photographs allows us to draw some conclusions about the codes of representation that governed the construction of the figure of the architect in the fifties. In keeping with the strict gender division that segregated professional and domestic spaces in the fifties, they are all photographed in their studios. And continuing in the spirit of the genealogy of architecture created by male masters and marked by social prestige, all the architects photographed by the magazines are “men in black.” A portrait of an architect is a portrait of white masculinity. All of them (except Bruce Goff and Harri Amstron) wear a white shirt, a dark suit and a tie, thus reaffirming their social status and distancing themselves from working class or rural models of masculinity.

The architecture, represented through the sketches, models and photos of completed buildings and works in progress or simply indicated through the designer furniture, operates as a powerful gender signifier that emphasizes the representation of masculinity. But unlike the dense, opaque masculinity embodied by Mies's bulk and Le Corbusier's thick black-rimmed glasses, these photos construct a lighter and more playful masculinity. The blacked-rimmed glasses, the stylus or drafting pen and even Mies' emblematic Havana cigar have given way to cigarettes and a relaxed body language that suggests diversion and leisure rather than conceptual work or drawing.

Most of them have moved away from the drawing board and are lounging comfortably or even sitting at floor level. If we place Hefner’s portrait alongside these photographs we can conclude that—in a sign of the cultural change that was taking place and that
Giedion probably sensed with annoyance—while Hefner is striving to adopt the codes of visual representation of the architect's masculinity, the architects are beginning to want to be represented as playboys.

So it is no accident that in his portrait Hefner reappropriates the performative codes of identity production of the traditional architect. Rather, it reveals the process of a transformation of architecture in engagement with the media and popular culture. Hugh Hefner grasps and exploits the architecture’s “becoming-mass media” process that Colomina has theorized, just as some of the most important architects of the period did. While Le Corbusier, Philip Johnson and Buckminster Fuller used media (film, television, radio, etc.) as a means for the production and representation of architecture, Hefner understood architecture itself—the invention of forms and the design of an interior space—as part of Playboy’s multi-media expansion project.

**Warming up the Cold War**

The first issue of *Playboy* hit America’s newsstands in November 1953, at the height of the cold war, pirating a whole series of strict “anti-obscenity” laws that restricted the distribution of texts and images of a sexual nature in print and by post. The first *Playboy* launched by Hugh Hefner with his wife Millie Williams and some friends from Chicago did not even have a date or issue number on the cover, because nobody really believed there would be a second chance. Against all expectations, the first issue sold more than 50,000 copies, enough to cover costs and finance a second issue.
Fig. 238-241. Architects Nelson, Loewy, Basset and Ellwod, as portrayed in *Architectural Forum*, July, 1962
The first issue of Playboy included excerpts from Sherlock Holmes by Arthur Conan Doyle along with a drawing of a young junky shooting up, an article on jazz, a tale of adultery from the Decameron, an ironic text on the excessive financial burden on men following divorce and a photographic report on “modern office design.” None of this was by any means new, although the cold war could hardly be described as the ideal context for extolling black music, drug use, adultery and divorce in the midst of a “back to morality” campaign by government authorities. “When the first issue of Playboy hit the streets in 1953,” reminds the Los Angeles Times, “the United States had no counterculture to speak of and no recognizable bohemia apart from Greenwich Village. The Beats were still a few years away and Elvis was driving a truck in Memphis. Toting around a copy of Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* could get you branded a degenerate, maybe even land you on a chain gang busting rocks.”

It was almost certainly not the jazz that triggered the unexpected sale of 54,000 copies of that first *Playboy*, but the presence of Tom Kelley's color photo of Marilyn Monroe. Hefner had purchased the image at a reasonable price from Chicago-based John Baumgarth Calendar Company, which had decided not to distribute the Monroe nude by post for fear of being caught up in an obscenity charge.

The anti-obscenity legislation had been in force in America since 1712, but its criteria and actual functioning tended to be fluctuating if not downright arbitrary. While Walt

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Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* and Margaret Sanger’s articles on contraception had been banned and New York State locked up Mae West for acting in a play called *Sex*, nude photos that would later be considered pornographic had been widely produced and distributed during the first and second world wars by the American army as what the government once defined as "strategic support material” for the troops. The same state apparatus that had promoted the heterosexual male masturbatory practices of its troops during wartime in the guise of “strategic support,” now saw these same images as a threat to the reconstruction of the heterosexual family in peacetime, and persecuted them through the legal system as pornographic material. The post-war period thus produced the first legal definition of pornography explicitly bound to new image reproduction and transport technologies: photography and mail distributed by air or rail. In this way the national postal service functioned as a state network for the control of the circulation and diffusion of information. An apparently decentralized, democratic communication system was in reality a censorship and surveillance apparatus.

Defying the erratic anti-obscenity laws that were in force in Chicago in the fifties, Hefner decided to turn Tom Kelly’s photograph into a color centerfold, transforming it into a cultural icon. Monroe poses naked, looking at the camera but leaning back on a red velvet backdrop in such a way that her pelvis remains hidden and only one of her breasts is directly visible. By 1953, Marilyn Monroe—who had started out as a model

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656 Playboy was lucky to escape the censor’s attention that first time. See Russell Miller, *Bunny: The Real Story of Playboy* (London: Michel Joseph, 1984), 44. However, the Playboy offices on East Superior Street were often under police surveillance during the fifties. The magazine was finally granted a legal postal distribution permit in 1956.
and an actress in minor porn films—had bleached her hair, followed her agent’s advice to get a nose job, made headway in the mainstream film industry with roles in *The Asphalt Jungle* and *All About Eve*, and eventually made the cover of *Life* magazine (fully clothed, of course). The distribution of the color photograph of a naked Marilyn throughout the length and breadth of North America was an unprecedented mass phenomenon. Hefner had invented modern pornography: not by using a human nude—this was common in the illegal "nudie" magazines of the time—but through the layout and color and the transformation of the image into a fold-out that made the magazine a portable “strategic support” technique (to borrow the American army's expression) for male masturbation. In the photograph of Marilyn, the contrast of red and flesh color and the enlargement to a double page could be considered as pornographic as the nude itself. The notion of pornography is not intended to deliver a moral or aesthetic judgment here, but simply to identify new image consumption practices that were brought about by new production, distribution and consumption techniques and at the same time codified a set of innovative relationships between image, pleasure, advertising, privacy and the production of subjectivity. What made *Playboy* pornographic was not the use of certain photographs considered obscene by government authorities in charge of censorship and protecting public decorum, it was the fact that, through it, what had until then been considered private burst onto the public sphere. What was pornographically modern was Marilyn’s transformation into mechanically reproducible visual information capable of arousing bodily affects.
Fig. 242-244. From left to right: Marilyn Monroe was *Life* magazine’s cover in April 1952; First *Playboy* magazine, November 1953; *Playboy* magazine Tom Kelly’s portrait of Marilyn Monroe, November 1953.

As Gay Talese remembers: “Prior to *Playboy*, few men had ever seen a color photograph of a nude woman, and they were overwhelmed and embarrassed as they bought *Playboy* at the newsstand, folding the cover inward as they walked away.”\(^{657}\) The fact that it was integrated into a broader textual content allowed the image to operate as a mobile, portable visual segment that could circulate and spread through the city publicly and indiscriminately, infiltrating spaces and arousing affects that before then had been private.

At the height of the cold war, *Playboy* was changing the landscape of American popular culture. A few months after its first issue was published, *Playboy* had reached sales of 250,000, overtaking the established magazine *Esquire*. By 1959, with each issue selling

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\(^{657}\) Gay Talese, quoted in *Playboy. 50s under the covers*. Digital file.
in excess of a million copies, *Playboy* was the most widely distributed magazine in the United States. By the late sixties, its readership had grown to more than six million. As the editor Leopold Froehlich remembers, “in only six years, from 1953 to 1959, Hugh Hefner had taken America by storm. The fifties belonged to *Playboy*. That was the decade when *Playboy* conquered America.” Playboy logic was based on making photos of naked girls taken by Russ Meyer or Bunny Yeager coexist in the pages of the same magazine with texts, interviews and reports on Andy Warhol, Jack Kerouac, James Baldwin and Frank Lloyd Wright, as well as color features on architecture, interior design and male fashion. The idea, Hefner later explained, was to “add the spice of pin-up art to the sophistication of *Esquire* and the *New York Times*.” What Playboy was really doing was inventing new modes for the production of public domesticity and male subjectivity that were to characterize American culture in the late 20th century.

Unlike *Esquire* and *The New Yorker*, *Playboy* directly addressed the sexual desire of its readers (who were ideally cast as male, white, and heterosexual) and exposed the carnal aspect of their consumption practices, requiring the involvement of their bodies and their affects. The magazine combined into a single medium the practices of reading texts and images, and masturbation. It made sexual desire extend indiscriminately from jazz to the Formica panels used in the office desks advertised in its pages. By intercepting

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659 *Playboy: 50s under the covers*. Digital file.
660 The juxtaposition of cultural discourse and masturbation was not new: it had been a fundamental element in eighteenth century revolutionary, anticlerical and libertine political publications in France. For the origins of pornographic publications in the
traditional reading practice, *Playboy* did more than just construct a new urban male consumer—it designed a new type of affect, desire and sexual practice unlike the one that dominated the “breadwinner” ethic: the white, heterosexual, working man and good husband promoted by US governmental discourse after World War II and the traditional domestic space. *Playboy* was sculpting a new masculine soul, designing a new body and carving a new habitat within the quarry of American popular culture.

2. MANIFESTO FOR AN INDOOR MAN

The Awakening of the Playboy’s Domestic Consciousness

The image of Hugh Hefner that first springs to mind is not the photograph of him posing alongside a scale model of the Los Angeles Playboy Club, but the endless variations of Hefner in pyjamas, dressing gown and slippers, surrounded by a group of “Bunnies,” somewhere within the bounds of the Playboy Mansion. Indeed, it would be difficult to represent him in any other way, given his biographers’ claims that Hefner has not left his home in over forty years except for rare trips between his Chicago and Hollywood homes, and even then always aboard his “Big Bunny” private jet – a DC-9 fitted out with a dance floor, oval bed and Roman baths. Hugh Hefner could well be the first twenty-first century public masculine figure to have been represented essentially as an “indoor man”: the first male body to go down in history wearing no suit other than an impeccable silk pyjama and a short velvet dressing gown.

Fig. 246-248. Images from the Playboy Mansion, 1959, Inside The Playboy Mansion, Playboy Enterprises, 1998.
In her book *Inside the Playboy Mansion*, commissioned by Playboy Enterprises, the journalist Gretchen Edgren reconstructs Hefner’s biography and the magazine’s story through more than one thousand photographs of the interior of his houses: the Playboy House, built in a former public building in Chicago in 1959, and Playboy Mansion West in Los Angeles, which became Hugh Hefner’s official residence from 1972 onwards. Hefner’s biography is a domestic topography.

Edgren ushers us into a supposedly private archive of Hefner’s life: we see the people who entered the house, the nocturnal games, the screenings at the home movie theatre, we see Hefner choosing the photos for the magazine using his rotating bed as a huge visual display area, getting his hair cut by his private hairdresser, feeding the caged monkeys, playing ping pong, and arranging his many different-coloured pajamas in his wardrobe and the parties held at night at the house; but we also see the TV cameras filming the first program in a set identical to the Mansion in 1959- the “Playboy Penthouse” TV show premiered on October 24, 1959 and ran for two seasons on Saturdays nights at 11.30pm on WBKB Chicago, Channel 7. In fact, the Mansion interior space was a real-size photography and television set.

We hardly see a single image of the exterior of the property, and we never cross the threshold of the Chicago House or move beyond the gardens of Mansion West. Even the images of the Playboy jet and yacht only depict interior spaces. In Edgren’s

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architectural-epic account of *Playboy*, the emergence of the magazine is only one milestone in a much more ambitious plan to design a new kind of interior space, which eventually materialized in the Mansion. Edgren suggests that Playboy deployed a range of audiovisual media in order to pursue what was essentially a political and architectural goal (not at all pornographic, and only secondarily media-related): to stir up a male sexual liberation movement, to arouse the American man’s political awareness of the male right to domestic space, and to construct an autonomous space free of the sexual and moral laws that governed heterosexual marriage. All of it, Hefner later boasted, much earlier than the awakening of feminism and sexual liberation movements.

According to this narrative, faced with the “empire of the heterosexual family home” of the fifties – the generative topos of the American dream –, *Playboy* fought to construct a parallel utopia: “the empire of the urban bachelor.” The web page dedicated to the history of *Playboy* at Salon.com gives this account of the magazine’s “masculinist” revolution:

“*Playboy* brought men indoors. It made it OK for boys to stay inside and play. Where other men's magazines – Argosy, Field & Stream, True – affirmed their readers' places in duck blinds and trout streams, Hef's took men inside to mix drinks, sit by the fire and play backgammon or neck with a girlfriend. In what would later become an ironic collusion with feminists such as Betty Friedan, Playboy critiqued the staid institutions of marriage, domesticity and suburban family life. Suddenly bachelorhood was a choice, one decorated with intelligent drinks, hi-fis and an urbane apartment that put white picket fences to shame. Sophistication had become a viable option for men: The Playboy universe encouraged appreciation of "the finer things" – literature, a good pipe, a
cashmere pullover, a beautiful lady. America was seeing the advent of the urban single
male who, lest his subversive departure from domestic norms suggest homosexuality,
was now enjoying new photos of nude women every month.”662

From 1953 to 1963, Playboy pushed a spirited discourse in favour of the production a
new male identity – the young-urban-domestic-bachelor. The new urban bachelor (or
divorcee) and his apartment came to be the central figures in Playboy’s counter-narrative
to the American dream. In the editorial of the second issue in 1953, Hefner already
defined Playboy as an “indoors magazine,” unexpectedly bringing it into the sphere of
women’s, architectural and home décor magazines rather than traditional men’s
magazines: “Most of today's 'magazines for men' spend all their time out-of-doors
thrashing thorny thickets or splashing about in fast flowing streams. We'll be out there
too, occasionally, but we don't mind telling you in advance -we plan on spending most of
our time inside. We like our apartment.”663

Playboy’s indoor heterosexual masculinism was an attack on the spatial divisions that
governed social life in the United States during the Cold War. In a larger sense, the
popular success of the Playboy “indoors man” model could be understood as a sign of the
displacement from a disciplinary spatial biopolitics of gender to a post-industrial regime.
Playboy’s defence of men’s occupation of domestic space was not intended to drive
bachelors back into forced seclusion in the traditionally female suburban home. Instead,

663 Playboy, December, 1953, 1.
it promoted the creation of a new space that would be radically unlike the “habitat” of the American nuclear family.

**A Room of his Own**

Against the technical reinstatement of separate sexual spheres that urged men to leave the suburban home to women’s hands, Playboy encouraged men to occupy, recover and even “colonise” domestic space and the city downtown. Against the return to the suburban single-family home, Playboy chose to construct a parallel utopia, “a haven for the bachelor in town”: the townhouse.\(^{664}\) The return of the male to the interior space was presented by *Playboy* as a form of active compensation, a way of counterbalancing the excessive “rancher virility” that threatened to lead the traditional American male to neglect the details of his home. *Playboy’s* early editorials can be read as a manifesto of “male liberation from domestic ideology.”\(^{665}\) However, this “liberation” did not consist of escaping from domesticity, as feminism did, but paradoxically, of constructing a specifically “male” domestic space. If *Playboy* was to remove men from the suburban reproductive cell in this context, it would also have to mobilise an unrelenting defence of heterosexuality and consumption in order to avoid the suspicions of the “anti-American vices” of homosexuality and communism.

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As part of this agenda of male conquest of domestic space, every issue of *Playboy* from 1953 onwards included an article reporting on the reappropriation of an interior quasi-domestic space for the urban bachelor: the glamorous weekend house-party in the country, the private yacht, the studio, the bed, the office and the car became part of this re-conquering strategy.


These spaces were surrogate homes, alternative masculine incubators, substitute interiorities for the production of a new type of male subjectivity based on alternative forms of power, vision and economic production that did not match those of the
traditional American model. The climactic point within this program of “recolonisation” of the interior was the reportage on the “Playboy Penthouse Apartment” published in September and October 1956.

The color sketches of the penthouse were based on the apartment belonging to one of Hefner’s partners, the recently divorced Victor A. Lowes, who had left his family in order to escape what he defined – in words that anticipate the language of feminism that Betty Friedan would use to describe the situation of women in the suburban home – as being “trapped in marriage and green-lawn suburbia.” Hefner describes Victor A. Lowes’ decision to leave the family home as a process of male sexual liberation which Playboy characterized as the “he went out to buy cigarettes and never came back” syndrome:

“He had everything a man could want - a beautiful, loving wife, two fine children, a magnificent home and a good job. The problem was, he was bored beyond belief. He hated tennis club, the endless round of cocktail parties and barbecues, the small talk and the smug respectability of the middle-class American dream. Extra-marital sex, he ruefully reflected, represented his only prospect of excitement. One day in 1953, he simply walked out and never returned.”

Lowes soon moved into a single-room apartment in the city, in which the bedroom was a curtained recess in the corner. Playboy summed up a space that was already showing signs of the coming pornotopia in a single sentence: “it was like having a night club in

666 Victor A. Lownes, quoted in Russell Miller, 1984, 62.
your own home.”

But how does Playboy’s domesticity relate to the traditional disciplinary biopolitical architecture of gender and sexuality? Can we still call domestic a space that disrupts the gender spatial arrangements of the two spheres? How does a movement of masculinization of domesticity affect the economic division of production and reproduction?

Well before the post-structural and linguistic turns in the interpretation of gender identity, Playboy defined and understood masculinity not as biological or psychological but rather as determined by architecture and spatial segregation. What was put forward by Playboy was not so much what we could call with Judith Butler a “performative theory of gender” but rather a pop theory of gender and sexual identity as determined by the theatre (the spatial and visual relationships) where gender and sexual identity are performed. This performative theory of space is in a sense a result of the incubator model according to which architecture is a biopolitical surrogated womb where the process of becoming male or female is fully achieved. Therefore, the new male identity embodied by the just-divorced Lownes was not defined by distinct psychological characteristics, but by a habitat: the bachelor pad, where the future-playboy had to retreat in search of his lost freedom. This seclusion among designer objects, however, was a paradoxical process in which the new-divorcee gambled his autonomy and masculinity. On one hand, the playboy could only really feel free in the captivity of his apartment. On the other, the just-divorced man could only become a playboy through an
exercise involving the reappropriation of domestic space and interior design, practices traditionally linked to femininity. In this sense, the playboy was on the threshold of femininity, “masculinising” practices (consumption and domesticity) that had until then been undervalued in the production economy that defined men. This was the reason behind the importance of the visual and discursive link to heterosexual pornography. The association between domestic interiors and naked girls ensured that *Playboy* was not simply a women’s or a queer magazine.

Fig. 251, 252. “The Compleat Fidelitarian,” *Playboy*, October, 1956.

The playboy’s shift towards the home and his relative move away from the exterior was
not, however, a withdrawal from the public sphere. Instead, it coincided with the process of politicization and commercialization of private life that took place during the post-war period.\textsuperscript{667} Playboy’s strategic move indoors could be read as part of a broader process in which the market, information and political control expanded into the domestic interior. The bachelor pad, full of “the good things that come in leather cases: binoculars, stereo, and reflex cameras, portable radio, and guns,”\textsuperscript{668} was not just a refuge from the outside world, designed for sexual pleasure. It was actually a sort of safe observatory, an information-management centre for the production of fictional media versions of the public sphere. As we will see, pleasure would be just one of the collateral effects of the constant circulation of information and images.

To avoid homosexual contamination, Playboy worked hard to define its move indoors as a masculinization of domestic space, and not just a “womanization” of the urban bachelor. Playboy considered the restructuring of gender and sexuality codes as a semiotic and aesthetic battle, fought through information, architecture and consumer objects. The playboy’s masculinity was constructed through a precise exercise in dramatization, in which the mise en scène and the set design were just as important as psychological aspects. Playboy rejected a naturalist view of masculinity in favour of a constructed masculinity that emerged as a result of the use of image and information technologies. Although many fictions could be applied to the artificial identity of the occupant of the Playboy Penthouse, the most fitting is that of the spy. The penthouse is a


\textsuperscript{668} Playboy, September, 1956.
centre of operations that enabled the soldier/husband to become the spy/lover. While the brave, warrior soldier, physical and primal, was the central male figure during the second world war, the artificial, impenetrable, dual, seductive, chameleonic and sophisticated spy (embodied in literature and films in the guise of James Bond) made his appearance as the new political figure in the Cold War years.

Fig. 253. “Choice cache for Christmas,” Playboy, November, 1958.

The bachelor pad was a safe and hidden observatory were the male retreated from the dangers of the atomic post-war exterior environment, supplementing his vulnerable body with certain goods and communication techniques that functioned like skin-covered prostheses (“in leather cases,”) and kept him constantly plugged-in to the vital flow of information. In the cocoon of his private pad, more or less safe from the threat of war, but still equipped with the weapons of the last battle, the new playboy could finally freely dedicate his life to the simple (though previously unattainable) pleasures of sex.
and consumption.

The occupant of the Playboy penthouse is an eroticized, commercialized version of McLuhan’s ultra-connected man.

The report on the “Playboy Penthouse” did not just present a refuge for the exhausted just-divorced male. Turning Virginia Woolf’s plea for women’s independence and “a room of her own” inside out, it demanded that domestic space be returned to man, presenting it as an enclave historically run and dominated by women. With the pedagogic aid of Playboy magazine, the new bachelor could learn to re-conquer the space that women had “expropriated from him” by means of a moral ideology that attempted to set up a natural equivalence between femininity, marriage and family. The Playboy editorial explains:

“A man yearns for ‘a quarters of his own’. More than a place to hang his hat, a man dreams of his own domain, a place that is exclusively his…Playboy has designed, planned and decorated, from the floor up, a penthouse apartment for the urban bachelor - a man who enjoys good living, a sophisticated connoisseur of the lively arts, of food and drink, and congenial companions of both sexes.”

The October 1956 issue, dedicated to the bedroom and the bathroom, adds: “A man's home is not only his castle, it is or should be, the outward reflection of his inner self -a comfortable, liveable, and yet exciting expression of the person he is and the life he

669 Playboy, September, 1956, 54.
leads. But the overwhelming percentage of homes is furnished by women. What of the bachelor and his need for a place to call his own? By questioning the historical relationship between domestic space and femininity, *Playboy* was engaging in an exercise that brought it into line with feminism’s attempts to de-naturalize domesticity, although the two were opposites in a sense. Apparently shifting the gender oppositions of the post-war American society, *Playboy*’s return to the interior space translated into a rejection of the political arena, traditionally a male-only territory: “We don't expect to solve any world problems,” declared *Playboy*’s first editorial, “or prove any great moral truths. If we are able to give the American male a few extra laughs and a little diversion from the anxieties of the Atomic Age, we'll feel we've justified our existence.”

*Playboy*’s push towards interior space can be read as an attempt to re-signify a traditionally “female” and “private” domain, at a time when women had gained access to the public and professional spheres. *Playboy* developed a kind of “masculinism” that opposed the dominant values of the heterosexual family and heroic masculinity, and also rejected the critique of the dominance of men and heterosexual institutions that the incipient feminist and homosexual movements were already beginning to articulate.

World War II had radically transformed the scope of the feminist debate in the United States. “First-wave” feminism, which had centred on vote equality, had remained faithful the idea of the “separate spheres,” and still saw femininity as naturally tied to maternal

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670 *Playboy*, October, 1956, 65.
671 *Playboy*, December, 1953, 1.
and domestic tasks. In the field of theory, the pioneering work of the anthropologist Margaret Mead had theorised the first distinction between biological sex and social behaviour (which would later be called “gender”) in 1935, but it did not sever the link between domesticity and maternal tasks of reproduction. 672 In 1949, Simone de Beauvoir had formulated the first political critique of femininity, defined not as a biological essence, but as a product of the social oppression that weights upon women’s bodies and their reproductive capacity. Her critique of the institution of marriage, her bisexual practice and her decision to reject the conjugal home and live in a single hotel room, made De Beauvoir an anti-domestic feminist model. But it was the American Betty Friedan's work that contained the most explicit critique of the suburban domestic regime, and became the core of the National Organization for Women’s feminist movement. 673

Friedan’s work was a response to the toughening of gender norms and spatial segregation in suburban cities, given that the end of World War II had led to doubts on the process of expansion of the public sphere that had begun in the twenties. By the mid-fifties, there had been a dramatic decrease in the numbers of women entering university, and marriage and reproduction had come to seem like the natural paths to fulfilment for women. *The Feminine Mystique* could be defined as the manifesto of the “suburban wife” who struggles to break free from the regime of confinement in the single-family home-incubator. Friedan was one of the first to declare that the American dream

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domestic “paradise” functioned as a variation of the disciplinary prison architecture in which women were locked up for life and kept at a distance from the political sphere, paid employment and the fields of culture and the production of social communication. This political analysis led her to condemn the single-family suburban house as “a comfortable concentration camp” for women. Like Virginia Wolf before her, Friedan questioned the traditional mythical figure of the “housewife” and the “angel in the house.” She demanded that women break away from the domestic space and enter public life and paid labor on an equal footing, but without giving up the conventions of heterosexual marriage and the family.

Despite the internal differences between the two discourses, Friedan’s feminist critique of the single-family home and Playboy’s defence of men’s right to a domestic urban space unfettered by marital morality are two of the most significant heterosexual counter-narratives to the gender divisions of the Cold War regime of the mid 1950s. In its efforts to stake its claim in a political mosaic structured around conflicting positions, Playboy developed a male, teenage, heterosexual, consumer discourse that allowed it to remain at a strategic distance from the strict sexual morality and gender divisions of the suburban home, but also from the feminist defence of women’s expansion into public space.

In a conservative social context and a geopolitical climate shaped by the threat of nuclear war, the brutal repression of colonised peoples’ struggles for self-determination, and the

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674 Betty Friedan, *Feminine Mystique*, Chapter 12.
Vietnam war, social movements began to assert themselves and develop critical concepts, using new techniques of occupation of public space to make their political demands visible. Black civil rights movements in the United States were the first to mobilise, gradually attaining legal equality. The first peace mobilisations against the Vietnam War began to take shape in the sixties, and in the wake of these political struggles, the feminist, homosexual liberation and postcolonial movements adopted similar forms of action and awareness raising.

*Playboy* retrospectively tried to position itself within these social movements, as a dissident discourse opposing the white colonial heterosexual language of the fifties that prevailed in the United States, represented by McCarthyism. Today, Hefner does not hesitate to argue that Playboy was a “precursor to the sexual revolution” and that its impact was on a par with that of the feminist, anti-racist and decolonization movements. However, it may be more prudent to see Playboy’s discourse as spearheading a process of mutation of the dominant languages, which would lead society from the disciplinary regimes typical of the nineteenth century (with McCarthyism being an extreme expression) to the flexible neoliberal capitalist forms of production and control that defined the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. These would eventually lead to the consolidation of new sexual identities, new forms of masculinity and femininity that would function as new centres of pharmacopornographic consumption and production.

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STAG SPACE

But was the playboy’s withdrawal from the external world an actual rejection of public space? Was the bachelor’s return to the domestic space a sign of his “womanization”? Or was it instead a strategic reaction to the movement of women towards the public arena with the emergence of feminism and the post war period in America? What were the limits of the “gender reversibility” of the playboy?

While playboy’s movement inwards contributed to the active deconstruction of the boundaries that re-naturalised interior space as feminine and exterior space as masculine, and therefore seemed futuristic and revolutionary, *Playboy’s* ideals were certainly closer to the pre-modern distribution of gendered-spaces. Above all, Playboy aspired to a new definition of heterosexual masculinity, one that challenged Victorian sexual morality and the bourgeois codes of the traditional institutions of marriage and the family. The masculinity championed by Playboy was not just heterosexual, in the traditional biopolitical sense that the term took on from the eighteenth century onwards. In 1962, Hefner’s distrust of suburban monogamous morality led him to declare: “We will vote in favour of a heterosexual society until something better comes along.”

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676 In response to the fear of feminization and the threat of homosexuality implicit in the return to the domestic sphere, Philip Wylie’s “The Womanization of America” – a critical response to the rise of the feminist movement in the United States – became one of the constant references quoted in *Playboy*.

assiduous reader of Alfred Kinsey, introduced the ideal of psycho-social health into popular discourse on sexuality, pitting “healthy sexuality” against what Playboy called “pious pornographers”: the “sick” and “perverted” sex of “virginal wives,” “jealousy,” “child-molesters,” and “homosexuality.”678 Playboy drew a line between what it called “healthy heterosexuality” and the rigid gender division encouraged by the morality of the fifties, which, the magazine claimed, incited homosexuality: the men who leave women at home while they “hunted, drank beer and bonded with other men.” “On a Freudian level,” the magazine claimed, “you could consider them blatantly homosexual.”679 This kind of pop-psychology allowed Playboy to define a new spectrum of normal and deviant sexualities, in which both monogamous heterosexual marriage and homosexuality were considered to be perverse. In contrast to both of these, Playboy offered its “clean,” “healthy,” “rational” heterosexuality as a new model of psycho-social health: monogamous marriage and homosexuality were linked to repression and guilt, while the new healthy heterosexuality was characterised by freedom and pleasure.

Although Playboy’s discourse seemed to be a radical departure from traditional masculinity, there was also something of a nostalgic quality to Playboy’s new “city-bred, guy-breezy, sophisticated” bachelor.680 In fact, Playboy’s original name, Stag Party, referred to a group of men gathering in a private house to watch the first American pornographic movies known as “stag films.”681 Rather than a marketing strategy, it was

678 See Steven Watts, 111-12.
679 Steven Watts, 112.
680 Playboy, September, 1956, 54-58.
681 “Stag Party was to be a magazine for the bright, young, urban man interested in girls,
yet another biographical reference: in 1952, long before divorcing his first wife Millie, Hefner had started to hold small swingers parties at his Hyde Park apartment, transformed his living room into a movie theatre to screen pornographic films for his friends, and made his first porn film, “After the Masquerade,” in which he himself played the lead, wearing a mask to protect his identity.682

Produced by men for male-only private viewing, “stag films” defined the grammar of modern porn films. In contrast to late sixties color and sound films watched in movie theatres, these black and white, single-reel silent films were screened in an enclosed, private scenario that strengthened the social bonding and camaraderie of an exclusively male audience.683 The transformation of pornography within the twentieth theory came with the appearance of photography and cinema as technical apparatuses for intensifying sight. The invention of photography and cinema as techniques that visually represented the normal and the pathological sexual subjects marked a turning point in the production of modern notions of sex, race and disability as visual codes,684 but also in the

fun and good living: the “contemporary equivalent,” Hefner would explain, “of wine, women and song, though not necessarily in that order.”” Russell Miller, 37.

682 Steven Watts, 59-60.


684 It is impossible to disassociate the history of early pornographic images from the history of medical archives of deviant, deformed and crippled bodies and from colonial photography. Using Bruno Latour’s and Steve Woolgar’s concepts beyond the scientific context, we could consider pornography as an “inscription device” aimed to produce the modern sexual subject and its pleasures as visible and naturalized facts. The homosexual, the hysterical, the fetishist, the sadomasochist, and later the intersexed and transsexual subjects were invented as visual and depictable typologies.
production of private and public places for consumption of sexuality.

These early sexually explicit cinematic representations and stag Films produce not only new modes of visual consumption, but also new forms of spatialization of sexuality and sexualization of spaces with the introduction of the kinetoscope, Peep-shows, the arcades, and the advent of stag-rooms. Pornography depended not only on a specific cinematic grammar and on a “meat” visual language, but also on a political architecture that produced gender segregated spaces for visual pleasure.

What set stag films apart were not only the material conditions of production and reception, but also the specific space where they were projected. Stag movies introduced a strong gender segregation within visual consumption. As Playboy articles would later argue, the homoerotic structure of the stag party – reserved to men only- showed that not only did heterosexual men not need women to enjoy themselves, but they actually had more fun without them. A pleasure even more intense than sexual pleasure, based on the exclusion of women and the homoerotic consumption of female images, seemed to define the visual economy of pornography: the gender-pleasure arising from the production of masculinity. By choosing the name “stag party,” Hefner claimed allegiance to these porn screening sessions, positioning the magazine within the tradition of “for-men-only” voyeurism.

Moving-image pornography operated as a virtual, external and mobile masturbatory prosthesis of subject production, which was characterized—at least from its origins to early 1970s—by the fact that it was confined to male use. The visual techniques of production of sexual pleasure were segregated by gender, age, race and social class. There is nothing ontologically “masculine” to the pornographic image or apparatus. Instead, culturally and historically, women have been kept away from audiovisual masturbatory techniques—this distancing is comparable to the exclusion of women from the Secret Museum, from the street and the sex trade. A male body could be redefined as that to which a porn-prosthetic visual device for producing (normative, mostly straight) pleasure has been culturally grafted. This historical understanding of pornography as a masculine technique of pleasure resulted in the construction of public sexual sphere as a white masculine space. Nevertheless, as Thomas Waugh has pointed out, this restriction
of pornography in terms of gender led to an interesting paradox: the creation of a homoerotic context of reception. Projection of pornographic images in a space from which women are excluded inevitably tends to sexualize relations between heterosexual men, complicating traditional divisions between heterosexuality and homosexuality. With the stag-room a new disciplinary space was invented paradoxically dedicated to the production of pleasure and subjectivity through vision.

The male pleasure of seeing without being seen was a constant feature of *Playboy’s* photographic reportages. Readers were positioned as voyeurs looking through a peephole, a crack, or a window into what had previously been a private space. The fourth wall of the domestic space had been knocked down and replaced by a camera. Through the magazine, a collective male eye gained access to a carefully choreographed female privacy. The photographs showed women going about their lives, oblivious to the fact they were being watched: stepping out of the shower on little rubber ducks, putting on make up in front of a mirror with their dress half-zipped, decorating the Christmas tree unaware that their skirt had gotten caught on the ladder leaving their thighs exposed, placing a turkey in the oven revealing a plunging neckline as their necklace almost dipped into the sauce, hitting their thumb with a hammer as they hung pictures on the wall... Their simple actions and child-like, self-absorbed expressions were directly proportional to the stupidity of the male gaze, the gullible and naive means that underpinned *Playboy’s* masturbatory visual mechanism. There was no threat, no risk.

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The masturbatory dispositif was repeated over and over again, like a ritual intended to ease male anxiety in the face of social change. To ensure the masturbatory mechanism and avoid homosexual desire, the gaze was necessarily always one-way. The women were never represented in the company of men, in order to set up a rigorous separation of the subject and the object of the gaze. The voyeur could only be male, the object of visual pleasure could only be female. This voyeuristic structure of the visual field was later mirrored in the surveillance and audiovisual transmission devices that were installed throughout the Playboy Mansion for the purpose of producing and watching films. By projecting a future retro-paradise in which the heterosexual man gains access to the public vision of the private sphere, Playboy managed to create a virtual reproduction of what we could call a “stag space.”

Playboy’s ambiguities in terms of domesticity and gender-space reversibility, which were latent in the design of the Playboy Penthouse, were openly expressed in the production of the Playboy Bunny logo through a semantic and visual metamorphosis by which “stag” became “bunny.” In 1953, a few months before the launch of Playboy, Hefner decided to choose a mascot (something similar to the little plasticine “Esky” puppet that appeared regularly on the cover of Esquire magazine) to represent his magazine. The first drawing, done by Arv Miller, portrayed a male deer wearing a dressing gown and slippers, smoking a pipe. The sketch not only played with the double meaning of the word “stag,” which is both a “male deer” and “man who attends social gatherings unaccompanied by woman,” but, by transferring Hefner's gown and sleepers to the deer, it also gave a wild animal an unexpectedly domestic touch. True to Playboy’s
internal oppositions, the mascot expressed the tensions between hunter and captured animal, outdoor and indoor hunting, wild and domesticated. But just when he was about to officially register the magazine, Hefner was informed that “Stag” was already the name and logo (though without pipe, gown and slippers) of an American field-and-fishing magazine. After a group brainstorming session, Hefner’s friend Eldon Sellers suggested the name “Playboy,” perhaps thinking of the then relatively unknown “Playboy sports car” designed by the Playboy motor car corporation in Buffalo, New York, where Sellers’ mother had worked as a secretary.\textsuperscript{686}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{womanization.png}
\caption{“The Womanization of America,” \textit{Playboy}, September, 1958.}
\end{figure}

\begin{flushleft}\textsuperscript{686} Steven Watts, 64.\end{flushleft}
Hefner was fascinated by the name, but since he insisted on keeping the hunting reference, he proposed a slight transformation of Miller’s drawing: instead of a deer, he decided that a rabbit in a tuxedo would be “cute, frisky and sexy”\footnote{Russell Miller, 44.}. By the time Art Paul finalised the design of the new company logo, the deer had become the “Playboy bunny”: an unattached, childish animal hunting the female sex without leaving home. The semantic shifts that lead from “stag” to “bunny” contain a theory of power and subject production in response to the cultural transformation that was taking place during the fifties. The serious grown-up figure of the stag was replaced by the childish image of the rejuvenated, playful, excitable, domestic “bunny” subjectivity. Forms of power and modes of relating were mutating from “big game” to “small game” hunting: the Protestant, austere and moralistic stag subjectivity that aspired to securing a unique big trophy (a wife that would last forever), was being replaced by rabbit totemic, polytheistic and amoral rabbit subjectivity, which derived less pleasure from the actual capture than from chasing multiple little pieces (many light, inconsequential, ephemeral sexual affairs). Furthermore, while stag subjectivity was inescapably male, rabbit subjectivity inevitably fluctuated between the ambiguity of the double meaning of “bunny”: rabbit and babe. As such, it was hardly surprising that the Playboy bunny was transformed into a “Playmate” in the January 1954 issue, becoming a woman-bunny. The bunny conflated the viewer and the sexual object, masculinity and femininity, the pleasure of looking at and the innocence of being observed without knowing, the human and the animal, knowledge and affect.
Playboy finally introduced its world-famous black and white bunny logo in 1956, for use in mass-produced accessories like cuff-links, earrings, bracelets, tie tacks and shirts. After the reconstruction of the Playboy House in 1960, the logo replaced the address of the house on Playboy’s mailing envelopes, working as a topographic marker.

Fig. 256-258. From left to right: First female bunny, Playboy, January 1954; Middle: The male “Bunny” at Playboy magazine, cover, March 1956; Rigt: The Bunny logo designed by Art Paul at Playboy magazine, cover, April 1956.

**Rabbit Plays**

By means of the magazine and the Playboy House, between 1953 and 1963 Playboy was able to develop a spatial economy structured around the binary oppositions that prevailed in the post-war political landscape: inside/outside, private/public, work/leisure, dressed/undressed, one/many, human/animal, control/relaxed, in-couple/promiscuous, vertical/horizontal, white/black and family/stranger. Although it was certainly not the only magazine working within this binary framework in the United States at the time, Playboy was unique in the way it articulated the oppositions. Esquire, the most important
men’s magazine of the thirties and forties, advocated the exemplary figure of the public, outdoors, hard-working, human, dressed, dry, self-controlled, faithful, white and vertical American man. The unity of the family and the nation depended on these values. At the other extreme, magazines like *Sunshine and Health* and *Modern Sunbath* only published female nudes: these magazines were purely for entertainment and promoted wet, horizontal, relaxed and promiscuous values. *Playboy* positioned itself between these extremes as a conversion device that constantly switched between the two. Reluctant to take a position among the moral contradictions, the playboy appeared as a liminal subject, whose final decision is just “to play.” This “playing” was reflected in the name of the magazine, but it also materialised as what we could call “dispositifs of rotation,” which enabled a constant conversion one of pole into its opposite, and which were often praised in *Playboy* for their flexibility, reversibility and circularity: reclining lounges, hidden cameras, one-way mirrors, passageways, rotating beds, trap doors, false bottoms...

Two features defined the “play” of these dispositifs and their reversibility. Firstly, the actor, the only person entitled to “play,” is the male reader-client (and later TV-viewer): he is the real target of the rhetoric of seduction, who can bring about the conversion of one extreme to the other. Secondly, the switch between opposites produces pleasure and capital. Pleasure is generated by the constant move from one extreme to the other, and the transformation of the private into public functions as a mechanism of sexual arousal. This is the “play” that gives the magazine its name.

But who was this player who could cheerfully swing between the political poles that had
been crucial to the definition of white middle-class masculinity? The playboy, an indoor athlete and juggler of moral tensions, was a variant of the new apolitical consumer created by the society of abundance and postwar communication: the teenager. The economist Eugene Gilbert had coined the notion of “teen-ager” in the forties to describe a new demographic segment of the consumer market: the important thing about the teenager was not his age but his ability to consume without moral restrictions. In 1942, the sociologist Talcott Parsons invented the term “youth culture” to define a set of new social practices that characterised these adolescent consumers of music, alcohol and drugs, who were not bound by the restrictions of the suburban morality of family and work for a few years. The post-war baby boom had created a block of ten million young consumers who were shaping up to be an unprecedented target market, thanks to education and the economic prosperity of the American middle-classes. The young white heterosexual teenager was the focus of a new cultural market structured around university life, jazz and rock and roll, movies, sport, cars and girls. The teenager, who was not yet tied down by marriage, had purchasing power, and owned his own body for the first time (it had not yet been claimed by the State for new wars), was the ideal consumer of the new pornographic image and the magazine’s new discourse on the urban male: 688 “Playboy has a professional polish and a formula targeted at male teenagers of all ages.” 689 While working class or Afro American teenagers without purchasing power were represented as potential criminals, white middle class teenagers (of all ages) could aspire to achieving “playboy” status.

688 In the fifties and sixties, 25% of Playboy purchasers were teenagers and young adults, specially middle class residents of university campuses and colleges.  
689 Quoted in Playboy. 50s Under The Covers. Digital file.
3. UNFOLDING DOMESTICITY

THE POST-DOMESTIC INTERIOR

AND THE INVENTION OF "THE NEXT-DOOR-GIRL"

*Playboy*'s discourse against traditional family, marriage and suburban housing and its vindication of the figure of the urban bachelor, threatened both the Cold War cultural image of white women as housewifes but also of the playboy as a potentially heterosexual male. Without any female presence, the space of the rabbit could be interpreted as a homosexual topos. It was therefore urgent to create a female figure complementary to the playboy. But what kind of woman could inhabit a post-domestic space?

In the 1953 programmatic editorial of the *Playboy* magazine, Hefner affirmed: 
"We want to make it very clear from the start, we aren't a family magazine. If you're somebody's sister, wife or mother-in-law and picked us up by mistake, please pass us along to the man in your life and get back to the Ladies Home Companion." 690 Among middle class women, the editorial caused a strong reaction. *Playboy*'s anti-family and anti-marriage discourse, together with its presentation of the new bachelor as gender flexible and producer of a new type of domesticity, seemed to put into jeopardy the traditional

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690 Hugh Hefner, *Playboy*, November, 1956, 2. The reference to *Ladies Home Companion*, one of the most influencial femenine magazines of the period, is far from being unproblematic, since the male magazines of the twentieth century (such as *Esquire*, and later *Playboy*) were in fact masculine versions of the early twentieth century magazines dedicated to the education of the bourgeois female consumer, to interior decoration and to fashion. See: Tom Pendergast, *Creating the Modern Man: American Consumer Culture 1900-1950* (Columbia: Missouri Press, 2000), 206-223.
bourgeois heterosexual woman's status as wife, mother and house keeper. Inside the January 1959 issue, Playboy published the letter of complain coming from Mrs. Rose Marie Shelley, from Emporia, Kansas: "A woman who accepts her husband's celebrating the appeal of other women becomes, in reality, nothing more than his legal bitch; certainly not a real woman or wife -much less a mother worth the title. The nation doesn't need more "understanding women" but more men and women who make their marriage vows on their wedding day and stick to them -without exception…Since when is it man's "prerogative" to practice licentiousness, philandering, adultery, etc.? How can women possibly give men a rank of superiority, when men don't have character or conscience? Your playboys will have to earn women's respect before you ever establish your male supremacy! Show me the woman who doesn't agree!" 

Playboy’s rhetorical strategy consisted on undoing the very logic of gender complementarity at work at the American dream narrative, according to which a perfect heterosexual marriage was the result of a spatial political arrangement: women taking care of the domestic sphere and reproduction and men in charge of productive economy and public affairs. Together, like naturally complementary pieces of a metaphysical puzzle, they formed a unit of reproduction and consumption that assured the economic and biopolitical growing of the just re-born post-war American nation. Against this spatial definition of heterosexual complementarity, Playboy projected a figure of masculinity based on consumption, urban life and the maximization of sexual encounters.

691 *Playboy*, January 1959, 7.
The playboy's sexual success and his spatial conquest depended on the exclusion of three forms of femininity out of his just-born postdomestic cell - the mother, the wife and the housewife - that had until then defined interior space. In order to produce his multiple ideal sexual companions, Playboy relied on a spatial strategy. In fact, Playboy’s definition of the playmate was not sexual, but topographical. Placed right at the threshold of the bachelor's own house, accessible and yet separated from his own domestic environment, the next-door-girl was to become the new raw material to build the ideal playmate.

A few years later, Hefner shall no doubt re-write history skillfully in order to describe the invention of the playmate as the creation of a new political subjetivity whose importance was only to be compared to the one generated by the feminism movement:

"The Playmate of the month was a political proclamation. Playboy wanted to realise an American dream, inspired in the pin-up illustrations and photographs of the thirties and forties: the idea was to transform the next door neighbour girl into a sex symbol. And this implied a number of changes in relation to the issue of feminine sexuality, meaning that even the nice girls enjoyed sex. It was a very important message, as important as all the feminist disputes."

If the playboy is the central figure of the ongoing theatrical production of a male post-domestic interior; the playmate is an anonymous agent of re-sexualization of the

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every-day-life. Hefner called this in-your-neighbourhood campaign of re-sexualization "the-girl-next-door effect": "We supposed it's natural to think of the pulchritudinous Playmates as existing in a world apart. Actually, potential Playmates are all around you: the new secretary at your office, the doe-eyed beauty who sat opposite you at lunch yesterday, the girl who sells you shirts and ties at your favourite store. We found Miss July in our own circulation department…"693

The Playmate did her début in the second issue of Playboy magazine in 1954 with Margie Harrison, although the visual and discursive model was not definitely established until the publication of the center-fold of Janet Pilgrim in July 1955. Omitting her liaison with Playboy's boss, Jane Pilgrim (Charlaine Karalus) was presented as "a secretary who came to Hefner looking for an Addressograph machine due to the increasing volume of subscriptions. Hefner told that he accepted to buy her one if she would pose nude."694

Playboy’s blurring of the Fordist distance between labor and sexuality, between publicity and privacy could be understood as a paradigmatic example of the transformation of the working practices within neoliberal economies in the second half of the twentieth century. As Italian political theorists Christian Marazzi and Maurizio Lazzarato have pointed out, one of the main features of the advent of the so-called post-Fordist turn during the early 1970s was the entrance of what was considered until then “private life” (domesticity, the body, and communication) within the productive economy.695

693 Russell Miller, 56.
695 See: Christian Marazzi, Capital and Language. From the new economy to the war
This transformation of economy has been recently expressed in the concept of “immaterial labor,” which is “defined as the labor that produces the informational and cultural content of the commodity,” being audiovisual production, advertising, fashion, software production, photography, subject management and cultural activities its new workforces. Emerging within the early 1950s in which appeared to be the climax of the Taylorized mode of production, *Playboy* located itself at the crossroad (or even better, as the interface) of a new relationship between production and consumption materialized within the process of communication (which in its case took the form of erotic excitement). Establishing itself as a multimedia enterprise and introducing domesticity, sexuality, the body and intimacy as forces within the economy of the company, *Playboy* anticipated and pioneered the defeat of the Fordist worker and the recognition of the centrality of “living labor” within neoliberal capitalist production.

The transformation of the secretary and lover into “playmate of the month” and the publication of a visual and narrative fiction of her private life was in fact part of this process of production and capitalization of privacy. It was not only the photographic image of Pilgrim what was to become a mass media commodity, but also what was described by Playboy as “her intimacy”: “her voice” and “her time.” In 1957 *Playboy*

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promised to the new readers who subscribe to the magazine that they will be rewarded by a personal phone call by Janet Pilgrim herself – which was nevertheless Pilgrim’s work since she was the secretary in charged of the magazine subscriptions.⁶⁹⁷ In a way, intimacy -materialized in the playmate’s apartment (domesticity), body (sexuality), voice (communication) and time (life), in the Penthouse and later in the Mansion- was to the pharmacopornographic economy what the car had been to Fordism: the serial product of a process of immaterial production of capital. The main difference with the Fordist good being that intimacy was no longer an object but a multimedia fiction. As Lazzarato has pointed out: “The particularity of the commodity produced though immaterial labor (its essential use value being given by its value as informational and cultural content) consist in the fact that it is not destroyed in the act of consumption, but rather it enlarges, transforms, and creates the “ideological” and cultural environment of the consumer. This commodity does not produce the physical capacity of labor power; instead, it transforms the person who uses it.”⁶⁹⁸

⁶⁹⁷ Steven Watts, 116.
⁶⁹⁸ Maurizio Lazzarato, “Immaterial Labor,” 137.
Pilgrim, an early precursor of the future unknown-famous and ordinary-cult figures of the real TV late twentieth-century period, reached during the late 1950s a success only achieved by Hollywood stars. After Pilgrim, Playboy produced Miss January, Betty Page. Later would come Jacquelin Prescott, Carri Radison, Tedi Smith, Joni Mattis…The Pilgrim effect enabled Hefner to identify and improve the next-door-girl formula. But rather than a natural being to be found right around the penthouse corner, the Playmate was the result of a number of representation strategies. The first technique was the translation of the pictoric pop aesthetics of the pin-up paintings to color photography ready to be published in a magazine. The pin-up paintings were representations (drawings or photographs) of women produced during the 1930s and
1940s in the United States to be published in calendars, advertising or erotic postcards and became popular during the Second War World when the American army used them to decorate military dorms and equipment. The first American pin-up drawings done by Charles Dana Gibson were in fact variations around the drawings and photographs of early twentieth century French cabaret and vaudeville women dancers, such as the Ziegfield girls, the famous troupe of Paris Folies Bergères.

The pin-up was the erotic glamorization of the American heterosexual woman in relation to the European early century ideals. The first photographs published by *Playboy* belonged to this American tradition of pin-up paintings. Alberto Vargas, one of the most glamorous pin-up artists of the period, worked exclusively for *Playboy* after 1957. By then, he was already known for his aquarelles for the 1927 film *Glorifying the American Girl*, as well as for the posters for the Twenty Century Fox, and for his collaboration with the male magazines *Esquire* and the British publication *Men Only*. In *Playboy*, the rounded and pleasant airbrush textures were replaced by the saturated colors and the well-defined visual edges of the photography, which gave to the playmate a quasi-three dimensional hyperreal status.
OUR OFFICE PLAYMATE

Janet Pilgrim was hired to manage our subscription department back when that was a two-girl operation (it now involves nearly 60) and the idea of Janet's posing as a Playmate of the Month started more as a gag than anything else. But the appearance of a Playboy staff member as Miss July of 1955 so intrigued readers that Janet was brought back as Playmate twice again (December 1955 and October 1956) and is the only girl so featured three separate times. As Janet became better known, her association with the magazine became more valuable, and she spent an ever increasing amount of time in public relations and promotional duties for Playboy; she was Guest of Honor at a statewide Junior Chamber of Commerce convention in Atlanta, Georgia, and at an all-Playboy weekend at Dartmouth; gave out the awards to the winning sports car drivers in the races at Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin; represented the magazine at three National Association of Retail Clerks and Furnishings conventions; presented Benny Goodman with his silver Jazz Medal and Steve Allen with a special Playboy award on his TV show. She has received more personal fan mail than any other girl to appear in the magazine; when we mentioned that she likes to wear men's PJs tops to bed, readers responded with dozens of pajama tops in every imaginable color. Janet is now in charge of Reader Service, the Playboy department that supplies additional information on items featured or advertised in the magazine.

Fig. 260. “Our office Playmate,” Playboy, June, 1956.
PHOTOGRAPHING YOUR OWN PLAYMATE

one of our office girls
helps us show you how to take
a prize pin-up photo

Note: We are purchasing a new
erotic bedroom suite, consisting
of wrought iron, with pink quilted
wood box, spread & accessories.
Pink rug, pink & black
shapes, New Orleans type.

A box of fancy

She can sleep in it.

And here is a girl in the bed.

Here is a bed.
For the first edition of *Playboy*, Hefner wanted to publish Marylin's nude as a three-dimensional picture to be seen with the aid of glasses, but he finally declined the project due to the high cost. After the publication, he considered that the contrast between colors and texture, the red velvet against the white flesh, produced a similar effect. The most overcoded sign of the generative relationship between the playmate, the pin-up painting and the bunny will be the appearance of the playmate of January 1954 wearing a bunny gown with ears and cotton tail, probably inspired by George Petty's 1947 calendar “Bunny Girl” that represented an ice skating bunny girl in pink and that Hefner had always liked. The playmate was the living pin-up or rather its transformation into a full color mass media sign. The pin-up could be defined as a somatic billboard, whose body-architecture we could put into relationship with the “sandwichman,” a familiar worker of Paris in the 1920s and 1930s and a central figure of Walter Benjamin’s *Passagen-Werk*. Whereas the sandwichman use a billboard to advertised and publicized products and events of the bourgeois consume society, the pin-up’s body itself shall become a bio-billboard.

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699 According to biographer Steven Watts, 32.
If Vargas, as well as other pin-up painters, such as Gil Elvgreen or Earl Mac Pherson, had mastered the technique of transforming a carefully staged scene of the "every-day-life" of an "American girl" into a fixed colour image ready for mechanical reproduction and distribution, *Playboy* would invest the performative power of the photographic technique to make "the Varga girl" real. If the pin-up artist's model was most often a close girlfriend (like Alberto Vargas and Anna May Clift, or George Petty and his wife - and latter her daughter), *Playboy* would soon provide its photographs with more than twenty living playmates dwelling night and day inside the ever-ready post-domestic theatrical setting of the Playboy Mansion. The pin-up girl lying on a red modern armchair by Lou Shabner was replaced by a Marylin Monroe looking playmate (Lisa Winters) on a Saarinen red armchair that furnished the décor of the Playboy penthouse. Hollywood codes, Cold War design, photographic techniques and Kodak colors came together to produce the unprecedented effect of erotic realism.

The second visual technique to create the playmate was the construction of a visual narrative, placing a series of pictures of “the girl next door” in the centerfold reportage of the magazine that produced the effect of cinematic montage thanks to the turning and the unfolding of the pages. The *Playboy* centerfold had such an impact in the public reader that, as the humorist Mort Sahl put it: “a whole generation of American men came of age believing that young women had a staple in their midsection.”\(^{701}\) The centerfold

\(^{701}\) Cited by Steven Watts, 115.
produced a rotacional, non-directional space where the model could be seen from any point of view.  

Fig. 263. Alberto Vargas working with his wife Anna Mae, 1948.

The centerfold was a visual machine similar to the rotating devices of the penthouse: on the first page, the "next-door-girl" was represented in what Hefner called "her natural habitat," meaning mostly her house or the office where she works (usually as secretary). In this first stage, she performs the role of a rather helpless and infantile girl. At this stage, the key of the representation of the “Playmate,” as a possibility already embedded

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702 Indeed, this pornographic view could be compared to the modernist imperative of vision in Cubism, such as Picasso’s Algerian Women. I thank Spyros Papapetros for this remark. See: Leo Steinberg, “The Algerian Women and Picasso at Large,” in Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth Century Art (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 125-235.
in any "next-door-girl," was to distinguish her not only from the lousy girl and the common prostitute, but also from the predator woman, as Playboy put it: "The attraction of Playmate was the absence of threat. Playmates were nice clean girls; there was nothing to fear from seducing them." Unfolding the next three pages image, thanks once more to a flip-flop move similar to the Borsani's couch, the same girl appeared nude. It is really the male-play of turning the page that operates the transformation of "the next-door-neighbor" into a real Playmate, that converts dressed into undressed, folded into opened, hidden into exposed, private into public, and finally the "peeping" into "instant sex." The unfolding of the four pages centerfold reportage made sure the reversibility effect.

Fig. 264, 265. Photographer Bunny Yeager and her model Betty Page, 1958.

703 Russell Miller, 57.
During the early 1960s, before the expansion of pornographic cinema, the centerfold functioned as a sort of low-tech erotic mass media in America. Placed at the core of the magazine, the centerfold enabled to make visible and expose the interior space of the girl-next-door, both its domestic interior and its body. It functioned as a viewing technique, similar to a revolving door or a sliding window, which enabled the reader/viewer to see through walls, producing images of interiority, undressing both domesticity and the female body. The simple operation of turning the page established a new relationship between the eye and the hand (both reading and masturbating organs) and produced the playmate and pleasure (immaterial products) as the result of the very exercise of reading.
Fig. 266, 267. Janet Pilgrim’s figure blurred behind the window, *Playboy* cover, December 1958; “For your dream bedroom...a color telephone,” Pacific Telephone Advertising, 1958.

Finally, every playmate is represented, no matter how nude, in relation always to an exterior object - the most common of which during the fifties and sixties were the two key technical tools of the Fordist and post-Fordist economies, the car and the telephone. The unexpected object within a pornographic representation, like a sign of masculine technology, unpacks the male seduction narrative behind the image. The technical object is a sign of the seducer, a trace of his power to produce the image, and it comes always to complete the frame out of which he has wisely steeped out right before the picture was taken. It is within this male narrative that the girl next door becomes a Playmate. Thus, Miss April 1955 was pictured lounging on a charcoal-grey sofa in a pair of checkered matador pants and nothing else, with Hefner's pipe lying prominently in an ashtray nearby. Miss November 1955 posed nude with a towel wrapped loosely around her while Hefner's tie appeared hung over the bathroom mirror. At once seduced eye and constituting eye who enables the transformation of any woman into a real Playmate, the Playboy is then, from the outside, always present in the images. As John Berger has noticed analyzing the tradition of European art of oil painting of nudes, and feminist readers as Laura Mulvey and Linda Williams have strongly criticized, the real subject of pornographic representation is precisely the male eye that has been carefully excluded...
from the picture. Indeed, the male eye or gaze is neither a biological organ nor a physical body but rather a political and cultural constructed condition for image production.

The Playmate was the result of all these representational techniques, a double process of visual publication of intimacy and economic privatization and labeling of life. The realistic genre of the photographic reportage would finally assure the reader that “American girls are really like that.” As the poster by Edward D'Ancona shows, American pornography would come to close the circle of production of what Foucault called "the truth of sex" started by the European medical science at the end of the XVIII century: the Playmate, at once pure representation and next-door-girl, is at the same time “the naked truth,” the “bare Facuss” and “the body.” Domesticy, as a visual and narrative fiction, is the topos where these processes of production of truth converge. The December 1955 article – a paradigmatic instance of production of the Playmate, shows the everyday life of Pilgrim, comfortably reading, wearing only a male pajamas top, at what is represented as her own apartment. Nakedness is here relatively secondary, compared to the centrality of Pilgrim’s interior domestic space. This was the key of the apparent banality of Playboy images – everyday life taking place within domestic contexts: girls taking showers, laying the table, talking to the phone while in the toilet…


In fact, pornography was not so much about unclothing the body but rather about the possibility of constructing a visual fiction that enabled the reader to erotize everyday architecture: to see what happening behind stranger’s windows, to view through opaque walls, to peek into hidden interiors…Cold war pornography was the unfolding of a carefully constructed domesticity – being the female body a constitutive object of this domestic interior.

Fig. 268, 269. Left: Al Brulé, Pin-up drawing, circa 1950; right: X-Ray Pin-up drawing, Gil Elvgreen.

This process of public production of privacy at work both in the pornographic image and in the representation of domestic architecture was also taking place in the production of the body as visible object through medical technologies. In her seminal essay *Screening the Body: Tracing Medicine’s Visual Culture*, Lisa Carthwright understands X-rays technology not only as a “major technique of 20th century medical knowledge and power,” but also as “a cultural apparatus”…[...][... “that confounds the distinction
between the public and the private." Gil Elvgren’s pin-up painting of a woman looking with amazement at the image of her own (genderless and sexless) skeleton revealed by an X-ray seems to represent medical visual technologies as the ultimate pornographic tool to make the interior of the body visible. Whereas X-ray technologies undressed the body stripping down its skin and producing a sectional image, an ultimate form of abstract interiority, a short of conceptual body without organs, Playboy produced an overcoded desirable interiority, a domesticity without housewives, and therefore a totally sexualized topos.

Fig. 270, 271. George Petty’s 1947 calendar “Bunny Girl”; Playboy Club, 1963, Bruce Davidson, Magnum.

According to Lisa Carthwright it was the double-edged quality of the X-ray, its power to “destroy the body in the very act of illuminating it and making it visible,” to represent the living body as if it were already dead, that make the X-ray a controversial image within popular culture. Mass media technologies, pornography and X-ray techniques share this conflicting relationship between knowledge and surveillance, between pleasure and control, between life and death: the very visual techniques used to make visible domesticity and the female body both expose and conceal, construct and destroy the domesticity and the body they aimed to represent. Pornography and X-ray techniques are part of a same bio-thanato-political apparatus to represent the body, which produces interiority as exteriorized image and sexuality as the inner truth of the subject. This process of exteriorization and image production should not be understood as a simple revelation of something that was hidden, but as an active process of production of interiority through performative (visual, theatrical, narrative…) techniques. The striptease rhetoric at work in the *Playboy* photographic reportages effectively invented the interior of young, white, heterosexual American women, but also white, middle class bachelor domestic interior, until producing a total pornotopic site, the Playboy Mansion.

In *Playboy*, photography and writing will be to domesticity and the interior space what X-rays where to the interior of the body. As well as X-ray images did not reflect the “reality” of the body, but rather produced an abstract code that only trained physicians could properly interpret as healthy or sick, the images of male, urban domesticity and

erotic images of women produced by *Playboy* were the result of a highly coded theatrical arrangement of space that, according to *Playboy*, should only be interpreted by the male reader. Russ Meyer, before becoming the famous director of *Pussycat! Kill! Kill!* was in charge both of Playboy erotic pictures of women and apartments. His work often implied creating a cinematographic script that was recreated through a serial photographic montage of static images. But, against an essentialist reading of the erotic “male gaze” but also against Playboy’s own male-only discourse, Playboy’s most influential photographer of the 1950s and 1960s was not a man, but a woman: Bunny Yeager.

According to her own definition, Yeager always wanted to become a pin-up girl, began working as a model and secondary actress before studying photography at the Miami Art School and started taking pictures of her female friends. Bunny Yeager sold her first picture to Playboy in 1954. By 1959 she became the “best American photographer of the year” and one of the best paid professional workers not only at Playboy but at any magazine in the entire world. It was Yeager who made Bettie Page, Lisa Winters, Maria Stiner and Ursula Andress into visual popular icons, who created the aesthetic of leopard-print bikinis and straight fringe, who decided the colonial settings with white girls and wild animals and the domestic interiors with red and green Formica furniture. Although many of the models were Yeager’s own friends, her pictures were far from being casual. In 1955 Hefner sent a list of rules governing the photographic representation of the Playboy girl: “Setting: Playmates should be shot indoors and in natural setting. *Playboy* is an indoor men’s magazine for the urban man and the

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Playmates should suggest that….The setting should be a modern, sophisticated one.”

To fully close the cycle of construction of intimacy, in 1958 *Playboy* published the article “Photographing your own playmate,” where the readers were invited to transform their work places and houses into improvised photographic studios where unknown stars could be brought to light. After all, wasn’t exactly what Hefner always wanted to do with his own apartment?

Fig. 272, 273. German Lilli Doll, 1952; First Barbie designed by Jack Ryan, 1958.

**Barbie and the invention of post-domestic femininity: from German sex worker to American female icon**

In spite of the endless proliferation of playmates or maybe because of the impossibility of factual women not only to displace but just to incarnate the transcendental femininity of the playmate, the best materialization of the female counter figure of the playboy was

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709 Letter from Hugh Hefner to Bunny Yeager, April 21th 1955, Playboy Archives.
not to be created by *Playboy* itself but rather by Mattel, a small toy workshop located in California, not far from Disneyland, that shall become a global leading toys production company after the Second World War. In 1958 Mattel launched Barbie, which I shall argue could be understood as an affordable and miniaturized Playmate, but also as the first post-domestic female toy.

Fig. 274, 275. Bild Lilli Doll designed by Max Weissbrodt in 1953.

Fig. 276. Bild Zeitung, “Lilli” by Reinhard Benthien, Hamburg, 1950.

Barbie, created by the engineer Jack Ryan—who went from designing weapons for the
Cold War Pentagon to inventing the first mass produced plastic doll- was modeled neither after the American housewife no after the to-be-married woman, but after a European “slutty doll.” Jack Ryan was commissioned by Elliot and Ruth Handler, the owners of Mattel, to create a female doll fashioned after a German doll called Lilli that the couple found in a travel to Europe in the mid 1950s. In fact, Lilli was a “lousy, street girl,” a cartoon character that appeared in the West German Newsletter Bild, a comic pin-up created by Reinhard Benthien that was transformed into a popular toy in 1953. As Jerry Openheimmer notes in his critical history of Mattel: "Because of Lilli's immense popularity, the newspaper had commissioned a well known German doll designer, Max Weissbrodt, to turn her into an adult novelty, a doll men hung from their rearview mirrors or gave as suggestive gifts to their women." Made by O&M Hausse of soft plastic, with pale skin, red nails, high heels, a blonde ponytail and a clearly designed bosom, Lilli was not considered in the early 1950s as a toy for children, but as an adult toy sold in bars, tobacco shops and night clubs. According to the cartoon, Lilli maintained a day job as a secretary, but “enjoyed the company of rich men at night.” As Mattel owner Ruth Handler recalled: "Lilli had the look of an erotic Deutschland dominatrix with arched eyebrows and a tightly pulled-back pony tail." According to Openheimmer, the designer Jack Ryan, known as the "Father of Barbie" compared himself to Hugh Hufner for having the power of producing plastic "playmates": he lived

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in a “Hefneresque Bel-Air Tudor Mansion,” and pictured himself as a playboy surrounded by “real-life Barbie dolls.” “Ryan fancied himself as a sort of funny-looking Hugh Hefner. Hefner had his own Barbie doll Barbi (no e at the end) Beton, the Playboy’s founder’s longtime playmate who, with a singing career in mind, once recorded a dud called ”Barbi Doll.”

Fig. 277, 278. Chicago Playboy Mansion, 1959; Barbie Doll House designed by Jack Ryan, 1961.

Closer to the female figures of the drawings published by John Willie at the British fetish magazine Bizarre during the late 1940s and early 1950s than to the Cold War housewife, Lilli, a “city working girl,” troubled the traditional gender association between domesticity and femaleness, and defined herself by her unconventional use of the city and the public space. Before Mattel produced Barbie, O & M tried, without much success to take Lilli to the children market, transforming the “city girl” into a “home woman” by creating a Lilli doll house. But Lilli did not reach the children’s market until

711 Jerry Oppenheimer, 7.
it became Barbie. The passage from Lilli to Barbie is paradigmatic of a double process of domestication of public sexuality and pornification of the domestic.

Fig. 279, 280. Barbie Malibu Dream House, Toy Model and interior decoration designed by Jonathan Adler, 2009.

The playboy and Barbie, a multimedia man and a plastic female toy (rather than the playmate and Ken, simply secondary characters) are the iconic couple of the Cold War American culture, whose primary (virtual) existence is devoted to mass media communication and consumption. Playboy’s and Mattel’s spatial products, the Playboy Mansion and the “Pink Wall” - the supermarket wall of Barbie's life accessories, including the 1960s portable Barbie Dream House (a “bachelor” Barbie apartment with single bed, coffee table and wardrobe), and later, the Barbie “Magical Mansion,” a pink "hefneresque" Tudor house – shall become the most extended popular culture media mass-produced fictional topoi of the late twentieth century. To celebrate the 50th anniversary, in March 2009, Mattel commissioned Jonathan Adler to create the all pink interior decoration for the Barbie Malibu Dream House, a 3500 square feet life-size house-shop, with the capacity to store the largest “Mattel Archive” of more than 300
collector Barbies. Like the Playboy Mansion, the Barbie Malibu Dream House is not a family home, but rather a fantasy for a single consumer. As designer Jonathan Adler puts it: "Barbie was a dream client because she doesn't have a husband to rein in the fantasy or tone down the glamour." As well as Playboy’s media discourse ended up producing an externalized physical pornotopia, Mattel will aim at surpassing the toy instrumental dimension to produce a total inhabitable ludotopia. Conflating within a single space the domicile, the shop and the museum, Playboy and Mattel invented respectively the mall-brothel and the mall-playground as total living at the same time public and domestic interiors.

Public nudity as a political and social category, as a moral or legal transgression, but also as a spectacle is a recent invention. Only modernity has stylized the feminine nude until it became a coded as well as a marketable practice. Although a pre-modern tradition of the theatrical, sacred or comic nude already existed, the striptease -as a commercial exploitation of nudity in a public spectacle, as a spectacle which unravels the body, which undresses it in a progressive and choreographic manner in the sight of a public who pays- appears with the bourgeois modesty ethics and the new spaces of consumerism and entertainment in the modern city: circuses, popular theatres, freak shows, music halls, concerts in small cafés, cabarets, water shows,… It is within this turmoil context of the colonial and mercantile metropolis in London, Paris, Berlin and New York, among improvised boxing rings, trapeze acrobatics and human zoo exhibits\(^{713}\) where the French cancan and the “deshabillage,” the exotic dance, the American burlesque, the extravaganza, lap-dancing or table dancing emerge. The first performances which codified nudity are the result of the shift of the prostitutes’ seduction techniques from the brothels to other urban spaces of entertainment. In other cases, like in the famous “Coucher d’Yvette” or “Cocher de la Soubrette” the performances of nudity dramatize a frame of the domestic interior in the public space:

the spectator is supposed to be given access to watch how Yvette undresses herself before laying in her bed. What all of these performances have in common is the usage of garments and its opacity or transparency within a theatrical frame where the body is unraveled and shown. This theatrical body, which includes wigs, knits, feathers and even sculptured armors, works as a masturbatory architecture which hides it and, at the same time, reveals, covers, and exposes it.

At the end of the nineteenth Century the same dialectics between modesty and seduction affecting the body and unbarring it, took the bourgeoisie to “dress the furniture,” inventing pants which cover the piano legs. Legal historian Marcela Iacub has showed, following Foucault, that the legal definitions of “obscenity” and “pornography” which appear during this time and which affect the representations of the body and of sexuality don’t have so much to do with image, with that which is shown, but rather, with the regulation of its usage in public spaces and the fiction of private domesticity and the intimate body, bastions of the bourgeois culture.

Reintroducing the logic of the Secret Museum within the space of the city, the different anti-obscenity and anti-pornography regulations don’t seek to repress or to make the representation of sexuality disappear, but rather “to distribute it in space,” “to segment it in two opposing regimens of visibility, a private and a public one, defined according to the spaces they occupy. It was possible to enjoy the sexual liberties prohibited by the

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714 About the history of the striptease, see: Rémy Fuentes, Strip-tease. Histoire et légendes (Paris: La Musardine, 2006).
penal code in the private space, while in the public space it was imperative to hide them. What depicts sexual acts and the sexual representations as lawful or unlawful is not their content, but rather, the space where exhibition takes place. Modern sexuality doesn’t exist without a political topology, without a regulatory wall that divides the spaces in public (which means, the ones that are watched by the State’s moral eye) and private (only watched by the individual conscience, by the eye of God – or rather by the eye of the artificial satellite).

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Fig. 283. Raymon Loewy, “Evolutionary Chart of Design,” 1930. Loewy saw
female (not male) undressing as part of the rational evolution of modern design.


Bombs, bikinis and biopolitical topographies

The years that followed the Second World War during which Playboy emerged were crucial to the reconstruction of a visual political topology where the representation of domesticity and the female body played as key signifiers. In July 1946 while American government exploded a 23 kiloton nuclear bomb at the small Pacific islands of the "Bikini Atoll" as part of the Operation Crossroad, two different French designers, Louis Réard and Jacques Heim, publicly introduced a two-piece bathing suit model for women
and called it respectively the “Bikini” and the “Atom.” Situated at the very junction of the individual body and the political body of the Nation-State, the “bikini” (or the “atom”) condenses the conflicting practices of political management that regulated the visibility of female bodies within the public space during the Cold War, moving from a strictly geopolitical ground to domestic architecture into fashion and popular culture.

![Fig. 286, 287. Left: Adventures Inside the Atom, a comic book history of nuclear energy that was produced in 1948 by the General Electric Company; Right: High ranking military personnel sit in rows of deck chairs, wearing goggles, while illuminated by the flare of an atomic detonation at the Atomic Energy Commission's Pacific Proving Ground during Operation Greenhouse, 1951, Life Magazine.](image)

The name “bikini” chosen by the French Louis Réard does not come from the Latin bi, meaning "two," and kini, meaning "square inches of clothing," as sometimes is

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suggested, but it is was rather a direct reference to the atoll associated with the destructive atomic energy of the bomb understood as “sexual” and “female” and with the iconic image of pin-ups pasted to the weapons, among which Rita Hayworth was undoubtedly the most popular: According to a media gossip launched by Los Angeles Herald Express, the picture of Rita Hayworth was stack to one of the first atomic bomb (the so-called “Gilda Bomb”) that was dropped on the Bikini atoll in 1946 as part of the Operation Crossroad becoming a popular emblem of the cultural relationship between sexuality, female nudity and the atomic fear. As Réard suggested when he presented the first bikini the smallest piece of clothing ever designed could create the same dramatic impact on the public that an atomic bomb.

Fig. 288, 289. Left: Naming the Atomic Bomb “Gilda,” 1946; Right: “Gilda, Femme Fatale: Scientists, Engineers Christen Test A-Bomb,” Philadelphia Inquirer, June 30, 1946.

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The association between visibility of the female body in the public sphere and atomic energy, which Réard’s bikini and later the Playboy pin-up came to materialize as cultural objects, was already at work within postwar political discourse. In "Explosive Issues: Sex, Women and the Bomb," Elaine Tyler May discusses the ways in which the Cold War policy of containment equated the atomic threat to American society with the perceived threat of female sexuality to the stability of the American family.719 According to Tyler May, understanding female sexuality and atomic energy as disruptive forces, while the American State Department tried to contain the Soviet menace, the domestic policies tried to contain women within the domestic sphere. For Elaine Tyler May, the American Social Hygiene Association saw the Atomic bomb not only as a military threat against America, but also as the possible cause of family desintegration and sexual promiscuity. Charles Walter Clark, from the Social Hygiene Association wrote in 1951: "Following an atom bomb explosion families would become separated and lost from each other in confusion. Supports of normal family and community life would be broken down." In order to prevent this moral desintegration, Clark called for a "strict policing . . . vigorous repression of prostitution, and measures to discourage promiscuity, drunkenness, and disorder."720

The slippage from the Atomic bomb to sexual promiscuity as national dangers depends on a biopolitical figure already at work in the disciplinary regime of the nineteenth

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century that equated the domestic sphere and the female body and understood both as the generative spaces of the racial and sexual purity of the Nation-State whose borders and reproduction techniques should, therefore, be scrutinized and regulated. Within this biopolitical discourse, the nuclear outburst was read as a course of moral division and disintegration: the physical process in which a nucleus or other subatomic particles emit a smaller particle and divides into smaller units destroying the existing unity of a given body played as a signifier of moral disruption and disintegration of traditional national, domestic and bodily frontiers. The American Social Hygiene Association and the Federal Civil Defense Administration saw the increasing presence of women within the public sphere during and right after the war both as a civil danger and a sign of sexual disorder, relating paid work and economic independence with promiscuity and prostitution. According to this logic, women outside the domestic space were atomic bombs. This biopolitical metaphor that made women’s visibility within the public sphere a danger only equivalent to atomic radiation lead to a intensification of the defense of domesticity and the privacy of women’s bodies.

According to Elaine Tyler May, the connection between fear of the atomic age and worries about disruptive sexuality was so pervasive that as late as 1972 civil defense pamphlet published by the government continued to personified radioactive rays (Alpha, Beta, and Gamma) as sexy female “bombshells”: “The pamphlets made explicit the message that sexually liberated women were potentially destructive creatures who might, like atomic energy, be tamed and domesticated for social benefit. […] Beside this explanation was a drawing of the three "harmful and helpful" rays, personified as sexy
and flirtatious women in seductive poses. The large-breasted battling beauties wore ribbons across their torsos as if they were beauty queens, with the names "Alpha," "Beta," and "Gamma" emblazoned across each figure's chest.  

Although long after the climax of the anxiety period of the 1940s and 50s, the association of images used in this government pamphlet constructed a narrative where the sexual and economic emancipation of women were still represented as a dangerous force able to destruct traditional domesticity and the Nation-State.

As Beatriz Colomina has noted, within American public policy, the protection of the home as bulwark against the dangers of the atomic age translated into the boom of the underground fallout shelters, specially promoted by Jane Wood Fuller, president of the California Federation of Republican Women and Republican representative of the FCDA. Studying Jay Swayze projects for the Underground Home Corporation during the postwar years, Colomina has underlined how the shelter constructed a totally interiorized domesticity, which excluded the window view and the outside whether. Following the biopolitical and visual implications of Colomina’s statement, we could further argue that the fallout shelter was the ultimate and almost literal attempt to control, re-privatize, render invisible and bury not only domesticity but also women’s sexuality. There were women’s bodies and their reproductive power that had to be concealed and protected.

721 Elaine Tyler May, 106.
from the radiations of public visibility and sexual deviation, being the fallout shelter an extreme gesture of removal of domesticity and the female sexuality from public visibility.

Playing within this biopolitical narrative, the invention of the bikini in 1946 meant the visual inscription upon the physical body of the conflicting fears and desires represented by female sexuality outside the domestic sphere. If the atomic bomb was a threat to the integrity of the biological body of the individual and the political body of the Nation-State, the bikini was the representation within the public space of the paradoxical status of female sexuality: a disruptive energy that must be governmentally controlled and kept within the borders of domesticity, but also a seductive energy and the object of heterosexual male visual desire. Before becoming a fashion popular garment, the bikini was a textile architecture, a technique for strategically revealing certain parts of the female body while concealing others, a visual design which gave a new status of public visibility to the female body outside the domestic sphere but also outside the realms of pornography and prostitution.
It would be impossible to explain how Louis Réard, a car engineer who worked at the Régie Nationale des Usines Renault SA in Billacourt, where he developed and refined such 1930’s models as the Primaquarte and Nervasport, ended up designing the first bikini without a reference to the Parisian night clubs and cabarets: In fact, Louis Réard worked during the forties with his mother running the shoe shop for the famous Paris female cabaret show Les Folies Bergères. Réard bath-suit was probably inspired by the dancing suits of the Cabaret: it made of just 30 inches of fabric, consisting of a bra top and two inverted triangles of cloth connected simply by a string leaving both the bellybutton and the hips uncovered.

Réard insight was to understand that the cultural and political meaning of a piece of clothing could be totally modified by changing the topography of its exhibition. Whereas in Les Folies Bergères the two piece garment were considered as part of the exercise of unveiling the body and therefore they “strip” female nudity; outside of the cabaret theatre, taken to the public stage of a swimming pool, the two piece became a strategic technique for covering (instead of revealing) the sexualized areas of the female body.

This tricky transition from the erotic and pornographic domains to popular culture was stressed by the fact that the first woman to publicly wear Réard’s bikini was Micheline Bernardini, a nude dancer who worked at the Casino de Paris who officially introduced it four days after the Bikini atomic bomb tests, on July 5th in 1946, at one of the most popular Parisian pools, the 1929 Art Deco “Piscine Molitor” located at Auteuil, not far from Rolan Garros Stadium.

Almost the same year, another French designer, Jacques Heim, created his own two-piece bathing suit, which he called “L’Atome,” describing it as “the world's smallest bathing suit”. If Réard took his inspiration from the Folies Bergères dancer’s suits, Heim said that “l’atome” was the French version of the Tahitian garments that he saw at the Paris colonial exhibition of 1931, but also the transformation of sportswear into everyday life clothing.

Fig. 292, 293. Left: Jacques Heim, Fall 1963 collection; Right: Jacques Heim, “L’Atome,” 1946.
Although very similar to each other, the main difference between the bikini and the atom was that Heim’s model bottom piece was large enough to cover the female bellybutton. As the battles between the two models show, the two piece bathing suit was not simply the exteriorization and exhibition of female underwear to public gaze, but rather the invention of a new political and visual order where the borders between publicity and privacy where reorganized.

**Sweet home, public home**

Playboy will challenge the regulation of private and public spaces, controlled through surveillance and secrecy, but also through photography and media dissemination. Playboy’s transgression of the visual politics of the Cold War doesn’t depend on the bodies it shows but rather on the intent of modifying the political frontier that separates the public and private spaces. Using pornographic techniques invented by the cabaret theatre, *Playboy* did a striptease of the spaces that until then had remained hidden, through each turn of the page of the magazine: the articles and stories unveiled the interior of apartments, bachelor pads and, finally, the Mansion. *Playboy* wasundressing the private space in front of the eyes of North America, and by doing so, it was shaking its conventions and its codes of representation.
Fig. 294-296. Left: Casting a mold of the burlesque queen Tempest Storm, San Francisco, 1954; Middle: “Striptease,” Montparnasse club, Paris, 1950; Right: “La pêche à la ligne,” Parisian striptease club, 1954.

In fact, Hefner began this process of public exhibition (or publication) of the private even before the launch of Playboy magazine in 1953. Young Hefner, the one who had worked as a journalist for Esquire magazine and as a selling agent for the little wholesalers of Nudies magazines during the 1940s, self-financed the printing of the first comic-book: That Toodlin’ Town: A Rowdy Burlesque of Chicago Manners and Morals in 1951. In this book, thought as a Chicago alternative guide, the different vignettes created a fictitious map of the city: Union Station and the chaotic metropolitan traffic, the bodily experience of the crowds in North Avenue Beach, the urban landscape of skyscrapers as spectacle, the night clubs of West Madison Street and North Clark Street where naked girls swim in see-through pools for clients, prostitutes, vagabonds and cheap soothsayers in Maxwell Street… Hefner presents, in a comical tone, a city

724 See: Hugh Hefner, That Toodlin’ Town: A Rowdy Burlesque of Chicago Manners and Morals (Chicago: Chi Publishers, 1951). Hefner also worked as cartoonist of Esquire and sales director of the magazine Children’s Activities.
dominated by violence and police vigil, where women are vamps and men are mobsters, it doesn’t really matter if they are bankers or roulette players.

That was the Chicago which embraced the publishing of Playboy magazine and where the first Pornotopia of the Playboy Mansion was installed. With the end of the prohibition in 1933 and with police attention on communism and espionage during the post-war years, the mob could control the city of Chicago easier. In the 40s it expanded unto Rush Street (in the heart of the old northern red district where the cabaret used to be), and into the Cicero suburbs (famous for being Al Capone’s birth city) and in the Strip of southern Calumet City, the most important web of casinos, game houses and brothels in all of North America.

Superimposed on the legal map of the city of Chicago, a nocturnal cartography existed, where the game and sex industry mapped its own streets and access routes. As John J.
Binder reminds us, “Local gambling included the famous "Floating Crap Game,” so-called because its location was changed regularly to avoid detection. Gamblers did not find it, instead they were ferried from downtown hotels by drivers to some nondescript location in the surrounding area." The transformation, in Chicago, of the traditional brothels into striptease clubs happened during this time. The striptease club was a new space for socializing where millionaires, politicians and strippers came together. “The Mob’s vice activities, explains Binder, had moved from outright prostitution, because society no longer tolerated visible brothels, to running striptease clubs, with girls serving the customers in a less visible fashion.”

![Burlesque theatre, Chicago, John Vachon, 1941.](image)

Chicago’s club strip will afterwards become an exportable model for the construction of red districts in other insular paradises, like it happened a few years later in Cuba and after that, in other “legal and economic islands” built within the country, like Las Vegas: “Chicago’s mob invested first in hotel casinos in Havana, Cuba and after the mid 50s

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went into Las Vegas and helped build the Strip. Beginning with the Stardust, by 1961 Chicago had major interests in the Riviera, the Fremont and the Desert Inn.”

According to Rem Koolhaas, “buildings have both an interior and an exterior. In Western architecture there has been the humanistic assumption that it is desirable to establish a moral relationship between the two, whereby the exterior makes certain revelations about the interior that the interior corroborates. The “honest” facade speaks about the activities it conceals.” Hefner’s cartoon book stripped Chicago skyscrapers' façades out to show the underlying class and crime conflicts (made by blood and sex, according to Hefner) and therefore put the moral relationship between architecture’s interiority and exteriority into question. *Playboy* will continue the task of theatrically revealing what was hidden behind modern facades.

**Domestic writing or interior decoration as self-fiction**

Striptease as a journalistic technique becomes even more explicit when, two years after the publication of his first comic, Hefner sold the article entitled “How a cartoonist lives” to the *Chicago Daily News*. The story would be published on March 21st 1953 and portrays, through interviews and photographs, the private life of an anonymous couple and the interior of a Chicago apartment. However, it wasn’t just any story: the newlyweds were the Hefners (Hugh and Millie along with their baby, Christie), and the

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726Ibid.
728 Russell Miller, 34.
apartment was their own living house in 6052 South Harper in southern Chicago. Using self-fictional writing and representation, Hefner turned theatrical, media and surveillance devices to his own interior rendering his domestic space visible.

Displacing the striptease technique of publication of the private towards his own life, Hefner began, even before the publication of Playboy, a domestic self-exhibiting process which prefigures the later spectacularization of the bachelor pad and the Mansion, and anticipates the consumption of intimacy which would later characterize the end of the twentieth Century, with the arrival of the reality show or the Jennicam.

The article consisted of a story about “urban modern life” and five photographs of the apartment where Hefner himself, his wife and his daughter posed for the camera. The Hefner house, decorated by Hugh himself, is represented as an example of “modern living,” with “simple and functional” designs among which an orange womb chair designed by Hans Knoll and Herman Miller, fiberglass chairs and a television in the living room. According to the *Chicago Daily News*, this impression of modernity was accompanied by examples of visual advancement in art and science with a reproduction of a Picasso painting and a pair of Hugh and Millie’s thoraxes’ X-rays hanging on the walls. A few months later, Hefner would end up pawning these same pieces of furniture for 600 dollars to be able to pay for Playboy magazine’s first issue.729

“Modern living,” the article explained, “is a favorite subject in Hugh Hefner cartoons.

729 *Playboy: 50s under the covers*, Digital file.
He pokes fun at their stark simplicity and functionalism. But the apartment he and wife Millie call home is simple, modern, and functional. They were thrilled when they found an old apartment in a building at 6052 S. Harper. It needed a lot of work before it suited them, but one look at it now compensates them for their labor. The landlord removed the old paper and had major replastering done. Then the Hefners went to work – spackling, cleaning, painting, varnishing, and papering. The end result is an apartment chock full of originality and personal touches.”

The master bedroom “is simply furnished with yet low walls, contrasting dark green bamboo shades.” The dinning room: “Walnut dining set is by Herman Miller, record cabinet was built at home by Hefner.” “Cartoons are used in Christine’s room... One wall is papered in strips from “Pogo” which appeared in the Daily News!”

However, what grasps our attention to these images beyond the few pieces of furniture, is the way in which the private life of the American heterosexual white family has been theatricalised by the Hefners. In this modern scenery, Hugh and Millie occupy positions that are as scrutinized as their furniture. However, the traditional gendered codes of representation in the suburban house during the post-war era have been subtly inverted: in the living room, while Millie appears in the couch reading the newspaper (an activity typically coded as masculine), Hefner seats on the floor, positioning himself, in the photograph, in an inferior level than his wife, and with the baby on his knees. More than a feminization of the masculine position, we could say that Hefner avoids the classical 1950s masculine emplacement, to locate himself in the site of infancy, a space before verticality, rejecting the superior level of adulthood as well as the gender norms, which
govern within it.

Prefiguring the photographic reportage and the television show, which would later take place in the Playboy Mansion, Hefner exposes and makes the interior of his own apartment visible by a theatrical construction of a domestic self-fiction. What we are shown is a striptease of American heterosexual domestic life. Nevertheless, this is not an unveiling of a hidden truth, but rather, a theatrical production and a narrative construction process in which each detail has been technically orchestrated. In fact, the article produced a fiction of domesticity which had little to do with reality: by that time the Hefners had already decided on divorcing and Hefner had began sexual experimentation at the swingers parties, although, they decided to “play the part” of the perfect couple, as Millie would later explain.\footnote{Steven Watts, 58-9.}

This spectacle of interiority is the first instance of what would later become Playboy’s representation strategy per excellence: the production of a theatricalised and public self-fiction of domesticity. The most striking aspect of this story is the display of what we could call “architectonic self-fiction,” a visual narrative where autobiography is produced through the representation of interior design. There are no psychological details in the article, which would allow one to delve in the characters’ intimacy. The main hypothesis working behind this first photo-article -which would later gain strength within Playboy- is that modern subjectivity can not be accessed through a psychological narrative, but rather, must be constructed through architectonic representation. The
question “How does a cartoonist live?” is answered by the exhibit of his domestic interior space. If we take into account that domesticity has been historically defined after the appearance of the bourgeois interior space in the nineteenth Century as opposed to public space and publicity, we could then say that the operation initiated, tactically, with this article in the *Chicago Daily News* and would later unfold in its whole vastness in *Playboy*, is a de-domestication process of the bourgeois interior, its very production as media exhibit – a condition which will come to characterize a new *undomestic domesticity*. This is not just a process of showing a domesticity that already exists, but rather, a production of a fiction of domesticity through media representation. In *Playboy*, domesticity will take the form of a pornotopia, a theatrical and multimedia interior produced and reproduced through media, surveillance and pornographic techniques.

A process of reconstruction of traditional limits between privacy and publicity, similar to the one Hefner set through the self-display exercises of the domestic was taking place in some of the best known architectural projects in the 50s. While Mies van der Rohe ⁷³¹ and Philip Johnson ⁷³² eliminated the internal divisions and used the crystal walls to

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⁷³² In Philip Johnson’s Glass House, the different opacity and transparency games of the crystal will play as a closet metaphor, and its logic of showing and hiding homosexuality. See: Alice T. Friedman, *Women and the Making of the Modern House*
uncover domesticity (another way of undressing architecture), Hefner insists in representing domesticity as/in media (first with photography and writing and later on through television, cinema, video and even videogames). What is being revealed is architecture’s theatrical and political character, the cultural conditions separating the visible from the invisible which had funded the private and the public regime since the nineteenth Century and up to the Cold War. This unveiling of domesticity taking place in Mies van der Rohe and Johnson as well as in Playboy will result on the production of a “post-domestic” interior which no longer is characterized by its privacy and in which the inhabitants are conscious of their double theatrical condition: serving at the same time as actors, and, spectators.

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5. THE MALE ELECTRONIC BOUDOIR

The Urban Bachelor Apartment

“We should not shrug off the excesses of those who make the design of this year’s Playboy apartment.”

Peter Cook, 1970

Walter Benjamin described this way the advent of the bourgeois interior as “box in the theater of the world”: “The interior is not just the universe of the private individual; it is also his étui. Ever since the time of Louis Philippe, the bourgeois has shown a tendency to compensate for the absence of any trace of private life in the big city. He tries to do this within the four walls of his apartment. It is as if he had made it a point of honor not to allow the traces of his everyday objects and accessories to be lost. Indefatigably, he takes the impression of a host of objects; for his slippers and his watches, his blankets and his umbrellas, he devises coverlets and cases…[...] the apartment becomes a sort of cockpit. The traces of the inhabitant are molded into the interior. Here is the origin of the detective story, which inquires into these traces and follows these tracks.”


The penthouse was a cold war boudoir, a mechanized and electrical “Petite Maison” that like Bastide’s niche was designed for heterosexual seduction. (See the chapter on the Boudoir in the first part). But unlike in the case of Bastide, the boudoir within Playboy’s narrative is a completely masculine space.

If you want to change a man, change his apartment. If you want to modify gender, transform architecture. If you want to construct subjectivity act upon interior space. This could be Playboy’s motto as it embarked on its campaign for social change in the fifties. Just as the Enlightenment believed in the single-person cell as an enclave for the reconstruction of the criminal soul, Playboy relied on the bachelor pad as a niche for the manufacture of the new, modern male. Whereas the disciplinary regime was characterized by a “strict discipline as an art of correct training,” within the pharmacopornographic regime, training itself takes the form of media arousal. Whereas disciplinary power “separates, analyses, differentiates, carries its procedures of decomposition to the point of necessary and sufficient single units,” training the “moving, confused, useless multitude of bodies and forces into a multiplicity of individual elements – small, separate cells, organic autonomies, genetic identities and continuities, combinatory segments,” pharmacopornographic power links the previously separated cells and autonomous bodies into a larger media network. Whereas disciplinary power invented large institutions that worked as “observatories of human

735 Hefner went as far as saying that it was the Mansion that enabled him to “reinvent himself as a playboy.” Edgreen, 11.
736 Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish, 170.
737 Ibid.
multiplicity,“ within the pharmacopornographic regime the domestic cell becomes the main media observatory and broadcasting unit where new techniques of subjection act upon the body and its pleasures. Whereas discipline made “individuals,” the specific techniques of power of the pharmacopornographic regimes produce “dividuals,” to put it with Deleuze, that can only act enabled by multimedia and prosthetic technologies. For Deleuze, the “dividual” is the fragmented effect of representation and information technologies and control apparatuses of the second half of the twentieth century. Contructed by the market and by visual culture, the “dividual” is an image before being a body, an affected consumer before being a citizen. The playboy is the dividual of the Cold War years, and the penthouse apartment, his multimedia cell.

Fig. 303. “Playboy’s Penthouse Apartment: A High Handsome Haven for the Bachelor

738 Ibid., 171.

In two articles dedicated to the Playboy Penthouse Apartment published in September and October 1956, the magazine presented the bachelor apartment as a theater of masculinity in which men could shed their former habits and learn the game skills of the playboy-rabbit – an amoral consumer represented as white middle class urban adult. The Penthouse was more than just an advertising stage set, it was a gender performative machine capable of transforming the existing man-stag into a Playboy-rabbit. The apartment functioned as a gender training ground where the former deer-man could become familiar with the playful ethos of the rabbit through the use of a series of *apparatuses* of rotation that stressed the flexibility, reversibility and circularity of the gender, sexual, social and political norms that dominated American postwar society. “Apparatus” is here the translation of the French word “dispositif” used by Michel Foucault during the 1970s to refer to a series of “discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions…” that work as a “technologies of power and subjectivation.” Giorgio Agamben has stressed the similarity of the notion of “dispositif” to Heidegger’s concept of Gestell, understanding the apparatus as “the gathering together of installation that installs man, this is to say challenges him to expose

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the real in the mode of ordering.” Following both Heidegger and Foucault, for Agamben an apparatus is “anything that has in some way the capacity to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control or secure the gestures, behaviors, or discourses of living beings.” In governmental terms, apparatuses work at the joint between anatomopolitics and biopolitics, between techniques of body regulation and techniques of control and production of population. Within the Cold War regime, interior design, gadgets and multimedia techniques become “pharmacopornographic apparatuses,” new governmental technologies of gender and sexual subjectivation.

Fig. 304. “Playboy Penthouse Apartment: A Second Look at a Hight Hadsome Haven – Pre-planned and Furnished for the Bachelor in Town,” *Playboy*, October, 1956, 65.

Designed to endlessly convert work into leisure, dressed into undressed, dry into wet,

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742 Giorgio Agamben, 14.
homosexual into heterosexual, monogamous into polygamous, to transform the black into white and vice versa, the interior design of the 1956 Playboy penthouse apartment, its visual devices, furnishings and household appliances behave as apparatuses of subject production. The Penthouse apartment itself is a meta-apparatus for endless playing. Nevertheless, there was no real danger involved in playing, since the option to “go back home” was always there. The game was neither a free network of relationships nor a totally open system. It was a controlled, safe exercise involving a temporary suspension of the moral validity of the social norms that weighed upon the obsolete male subjectivity of the middle-aged American man-stag, at least at the imaginary level. Beyond the sexual arousal that the images timidly invited, this moral suspension produced an erotic “surplus value” that fueled the emerging “rabbit” subjectivity. Playboy’s success consisted in putting the American suburban male reader – who remained embedded in the postwar economy’s logic of consumption and leisure, and complicit in the social structures that segregated gender, class and race – in the role of a player, and granting him a brief taste of moral transgression before inviting him to return to his life of worker-deer, his suburban house and his lawn.

The Playboy article promised readers a key that would allow them to enter the bachelor penthouse through the pages of the magazine. The management of interior space was the precondition for the Playboy’s sex life. The guided tour – an instruction manual aimed at readers as potential future users of the new space and its functional objects – introduces the sexually inexperienced middle-class American male to the management of multiple sexual encounters in a single space, and presents sex as the ultimate consumption object
among a deluge of designer objects that are also consumed erotically. As critic Bill Osgerby has shown, what was unusual here was not the space – which wasn’t that different to the “bachelor pads” presented in other male interior design magazines at the time –, but the discourse put forward by *Playboy*, the ability to “animate” architecture through the construction of an erotic narrative. In fact, the Borsani flip-flop device could be also understood as a post-war pop version of the “fauteuil d’amour” that made the *boudoir* of Madame Gourdan famous in the Eighteenth century, and that according to Romi: “when a woman sits down on the back of the chair bent backwards in such a way that the woman was totally lied down, with the legs open and almost tied, ready to become the object of all kinds of shameful practices.”

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Fig. 305. Bedroom, Studio and Bathoom at the “Playboy Penthouse Apartment: A Second Look at a Hight Handsome Haven – Pre-planned and Furnished for the Bachelor in Town,” *Playboy*, October, 1956, p. 66, 68-9.

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744 Taking their lead from *Playboy*, the American magazines *Rogue* and *Escapade* also published visual reports on the interior design of bachelor pads. See: Bill Osgerby, 106.

745 Romi quoted by Paul Teyssier, 17. My translation.
*Playboy* attempts to train the sexually unsophisticated American male in the skills required to manage multiple sexual encounters within a single interior space, which is no longer purely private or totally domestic. This sexo-architectonic pedagogy equates management of one’s interior space with management of one’s sex life. The Penthouse’s particular vale was its ability to produce a gender economy alternative to the one promoted by the single family home. Through its unusual erotic interpretation of interior architecture, *Playboy* suggested that the “multiple functionality” of open space, the “flexibility of the modules” and the playful, “flip-flop” character of its furniture, embodied in the designs of Eero Saarinen, Osvald Borsani and Ray and Charles Eames, made it possible to host as many women as was deemed necessary to satisfy the bachelor’s (or better still, new divorced man’s) sexual desire, while at the same time protecting his space from what *Playboy* called “female domestication.”

For *Playboy*, the biggest threat to a male urban bachelor apartment is a young woman eager to get hitched and move to the suburbs. Thus, the bachelor apartment is obviously a heterosexual theater, but to evade the clutches of matrimony it must also be fastidiously gender-segregated. While the female home is characterized as a natural space that privileges reproduction tasks, the playboy’s postdomestic space is a technified enclave, ultra-connected to communication networks, and given over to the production of pleasure=work=leisure=capital.

The apartment (not the playboy) works like a male externalized sexual organ that attracts
women and, just as effectively, as a household appliance that gets rid of them afterwards. For the first time, thanks to the apartments “flip-flop” devices that mechanize flirting, the bachelor could afford to be flippant about women. As soon as the female guest crossed the threshold into the apartment, every furniture detail operated as a hidden trap to help the bachelor get what the magazine calls “instant sex.”

Mechanical gadgetry changes the old ways of hunting the stag into new forms of sexual management proper to the Playboy-rabbit. Saarinen’s Tulip chairs, a turning cabinet bar, sliding screens, and the translucent drapes behave as apparatuses of rotation that constantly restructure the space of the apartment to technically assist the bachelor’s efforts in defeating the female visitor’s resistance to sex. The furniture in the penthouse becomes a series of machines for making out. The Playboy article maintained: “Speaking of entertainment, one of the hanging Knoll cabinets beneath the windows holds a built-in bar. This permits the canny bachelor to remain in the room while mixing a cool one for his intended quarry. No chance of missing the proper psychological moment – no chance of leaving her cozily curled up on the couch and returning to find her mind changed, purse in hand, and the

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746 Playboy, September 1959, 59-60.
747 In keeping with the tradition of the “stag,” hunting would become one of the constant subjects of Playboy. In March 1958 the magazine published “The Right Honourable Hide,” which accompanied a selection of hunting accessories for the urban Playboy. A slight transformation has taken place: the hunting weapons have become ornamental objects, souvenirs coming from a colonial safari that now cover the wall of the bachelor apartment; a design chair takes the place of the horse; a mini-bar replaces water and food provisions; and the balls of the portable casino game replace munitions. Playboy introduces the young urban male to indoor hunting: “It can tote your whiskey, keep your ice cubes frosty, offer you a spot to sit down, protect your Francotte shotgun, cart your pipe cool, your cigarette firm, your feet dry, your money crisp, and your pants in place.” Playboy, March 1958, 56.
young lady ready to go home, dammit.”


The penthouse was presented as a domestic office or a professional pad in which the bachelor could organize his multiple sexual encounters, but also as a recycling station in which the playboy gets rid of his prey once he has consumed them. It is precisely the rotating apparatuses and “flip-flop” objects that simplify the operations involved in getting the women into the house and out again. *Playboy* claimed that in addition to assisting with the management of time, these technical accessories prevent two female

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748 *Playboy*, September 1956, 59. Playboy seems to be extending to sexuality the mechanical qualities of comfort and hygiene that Le Corbusier attributed to the Morris chairs already in 1921. Le Corbusier noted: “Morris chair with a movable stand for the book you are reading, a place for your coffee cup, an extending footrest, a back that raises and lowers with a handle to achieve the very best positions for everything from a nap to work, hygienically, comfortably, correctly.” Le Corbusier, “Des Yeux qui ne voient pas...II: Les avions,” *L’Esprit Nouveau* 9 (1921): 984.
guests from encountering each other within the space of the apartment and prohibit the “wanting-to-be-a-wife girl” from taking it over: the phone, for instance, is equipped with “on-off widgets... so that the jangling bell or, what’s worse, a chatty call from the date of the night before won’t shatter the spell being woven. (Don’t worry about missing any fun this way: there’s a phone-message-taker hooked to the tape recorder.)”

The anti-female-domesticity training given by Playboy – first, to get rid of women after sex; second, to eliminate their traces; and third, to prevent women from taking back the kitchen (until now their domestic headquarters) – radically transformed the image of the bachelor. The playboy was no longer a future husband but rather a serial seducer, technically assisted by media and appliances in his never-ending work of hunting and cleaning. Driven by the constant need to remove the traces of his previous evening’s sexual conquests and de-feminizing his space as though he were purging or disinfecting, the playboy rabbit behaves like a double agent or spy.

With its vision of technology and modern design as natural accessories of the male body, Playboy endows furniture with supernatural qualities, presenting them as bachelor prostheses that enhance his ability to pick up without being snapped up. On one side of the living room, the article went on, the Saarinen Womb chair could be moved to the right or to the left, transforming a working area into a cruising area (and vice versa) and minimizing the bachelor’s waste of time and effort. Saarinen’s and Eames’s attempt to create a “comfortable chair, which would allow several sitting positions rather one rigid

749 Playboy, September 1956, 59.
one, and [incorporate] a number of loose cushions” fit perfectly within “work is leisure” agenda of the Playboy rabbit. The “flip-flop couch,” praised in the Playboy article for its ability to mechanize seduction was Borsani’s Divan D 70. With the D 70, and also the P 40 chaise lounge, Borsani brought into industrial design a rhetoric of camouflage, mutation, mobility and flexibility, that would become central to Playboy’s spatial, but also sexual economy. Thanks to a transversal steel mechanism, the divan could be transformed into a bed, a transformation Playboy saw as a physical expression of the almost metaphysical leap from vertical to horizontal values: “The rest of the living room is best seen by utilizing a unique feature of the couch. It flips, literally: at the touch of a knob at its end, the back becomes seat and vice versa – and now we’re facing the other way.” No need for convincing the guest; the flip-flop couch converts a casual talk around the table into a romantic tête-à-tête in front of the fireplace. This apparatus of rotation enabled the bachelor to transform his female visitor, with charm and delicacy,

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750 One Hundred Masterpieces from the Vitra Design Museum Collection, ed. Alexander von Vegesack, Peter Dumas and Mathias Schwartz-Clauss, Exhibition catalogue (Weil am Rhein: Vitra Design Museum, 1996), 38. I thank Alexandra Midal for her help with the research concerning design.

751 Borsani’s Divan D 70 was designed between 1953 and 1954 and produced by Tecno. Represented in its “smiling” form and marked by a T, the divan became the symbol of the Italian factory. It was awarded first prize at the Tenth Triennial in Milan in 1954. La Collection de design du Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée National d’Art moderne–Centre de Création Industrielle (Paris: Editions du Centre Georges Pompidou, 2001), 72-73. Saarinen’s Tulip chair was designed in 1956 and is still produced by Knoll Associated. The characteristic feature of the Tulip series is that the supporting structure has been pared to a central stem, “like a wineglass,” in order to emphasize the uniformity of table and chair and to facilitate movement. The Womb chair, designed in 1947 (the first with a plastic shell), was the result of a joint attempt by Saarinen and Eames “to mold laminated wood three-dimensionally.” This joint attempt resulted in the winning chair at the 1940 Organic Design in Home Furnishings competition, held by the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Continued design development by Saarinen finally led to the Womb chair of 1947. Ibid.

752 Playboy, September 1956, 57.
from the vertical to the horizontal position, from woman to bunny, from dressed to nude. With just one more flip-flop movement, the Playboy could take his guest/prey from divan to platform bed – the “final trap,” the ultimate apparatus.

Fig. 308-310. From left to right: Borsani’s D-70; Noguchi rocking stools; and Playboy, September, 1956, 57; Kitchen-unit at the Playboy Kitchenless Kitchen, Playboy, October, 1959, 54.

As we will see later in detail, the reclining couch and the bed (architecture of privatization of sexuality, traditionally associated with marriage) have been transformed into highly technified platforms fitted out with a telephone, remote control and radio (anticipating Hefner’s famous rotating bed), that bring to mind a military observatory or a control room more than a traditional bed: “Now we’ve sipped the nocturnal dram and its bedtime. Having said “night-night” (or, “come along now, dearest”) to the last guest; it’s time to sink into the arms of Morpheus (or a more comely substitute). Do we go through the house turning out the lights and locking up? No sir: flopping on the luxurious bed, we have within easy reach the multiple controls of its unique headboard. Here we have the silent mercury switches and a rheostat that control every light in the
place and can subtly dim the bedroom to just the right romantic level. Here, too, are the
switches, which control the circuits for front door and terrace window locks. Beside
them are push buttons to draw the continuous, heavy, pure-linen, lined draperies on sail
track, which can insure darkness at morning.”

The bachelor penthouse operates as an office and a callhouse simultaneously, in a
curious superimposition of a new space of production of capitalism – the office – and an
old space of sexual consumption and production – the brothel. The Playboy Mansion
was to be an even more intense and literal instance of this pornotopian superimposition.

**Cinematic solutions for moral dilemmas**

Looking at magazines and films of the period, American postwar popular uses of
architecture were caught between a romantic and an economic meaning. On one hand,
architecture was the external solidification of sexual and social identity, a sort of exo-
skeleton crystallized upon and around subjectivity that made interior psychology visible.
Within this logic (not far from Giedion’s theory and somehow the base for his argument
against “Playboy Architecture”), architecture was supposed to be a material inscription
of political and moral differences. According to this distinction (and this time against
Giedion himself), for the *Ladies Home Journal* traditional and vernacular architectures
conveyed normative social and sexual values, on the contrary, modern and urban
architectures were signs of social and sexual deviance. Whereas suburban and traditional
houses shelter heterosexual and stable families, modern architecture and design were

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753 *Playboy*, October 1956, 67-68.
codes of individual immorality, luxury, perversion, homosexuality, pornography and crime. This moral psychology of architecture is clearly reflected within American cinema of the period. Analyzing popular films produced right before or immediately after the Second World War, such as Susan Lenox: Her Fall and Rise (1931), Dark Victory (1939) and Christmas in Connecticut (1945), historian Joseph Rosa concludes that: “There was a significant differentiation made between the portrayal of those living in apartments and those living in penthouses. The apartment-dweller was generally young, naïve, ambitious, in a precarious financial situation, and on his or her own for the first time. The penthouse was typically reserved for the wealthy older, well educated and sentimental. The penthouse-dweller lived in the present and looked toward the future with little concern for the past – with the exception of its bearing on this or her social status. It was almost never the home for a married family with children, though a typical story line had a penthouse-dweller coming to his or her senses, falling in love, and relocating to a more traditional home.”

On the other hand, architecture and design were presented within exhibitions and magazines (from House Beautiful to Playboy) as the most significant objects of consumption and success markers of industrial capitalism. But whereas for House Beautiful the relationship between individual morality and economic success was a conflicting one, for Playboy, modern architecture worked as a material swivel between two domains yet to be connected: the masculine moral soul and the market non-moral

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fluxes. During the late 1950s, *Playboy* managed to change the popular image of modern architecture creating an equation between the rejection of the domestic heterosexual regime and financial success and glamourized masculinity. As Joseph Rosa underlines, this relationship is paradigmatically represented by the cinema sets designs by art director Kem Adams at Pinewood Studios for James Bond’s movies. In *Diamonts are for ever* (1971), for instance, the poured-in-place concrete house where Bond hides, with sweeping views of what is supposedly the Nevada Desert, is actually the 1968 Arthur Elrod Residence, the ultimate bachelor pad designed by John Lautner and located at 2175 Southridge Drive in Palm Springs. Significantly enough, it is in this movie that James Bond revels that he is a Playboy Club member. To end up the cycle of becoming-image of architecture, the Lautner house will be the object of a photo-reportage within *Playboy* magazine the same year.

The opposition between domestic normality and the perversion of modern architecture will be intensified with the advent of the neoliberal and conservative politics at the beginning of the 1980s. Whereas during the 1950-1970s period, the association with the “International Style” denoted social and sexual disruption but also economic and masculine success (as in Playboy and the Bond films), from the early 1980s on modern architecture does not mean anymore technological sophistication, futurism, and human capital but rather, the modern architecture popular icons (such as the Farnsworth House or the Elrod Residence), suspended within space and time, denote simply moral

755 Joseph Rosa, 164.
perversion, social exclusion and criminality. This is the case of the Malin Residence, better known as Chemosphere (built by Lautner in 1960), that appears in Brian de Palma’s *Body Double* (1984) where the inhabitant is an addicted voyeur who witnesses the staged killing of a porn actress. For the 1980s, modern penthouses, following a transformation from Playboy’s soft-porn into Hustler’s hard-core, will become sites of have become sexual perversion and felony.

Fig. 311. Kitchen at the “Playboy’s Penthouse Apartment: A High Handsome Haven for the Bachelor in Town,” *Playboy*, September, 1956, 58-9.

**The Kitchenless Kitchen**
De-feminizing the domestic, de-domesticating the feminine

Playboy appeals to our architectural imaginary, shows us its theatrical and performative side constructed by arbitrary cultural conventions, in order to bring about a shift in traditional ways of inhabiting space and conceiving masculinity. Articulating gender difference around the opposition male-technical/woman-natural, *Playboy* magazine maintained that the new domestic environment, saturated with media, mechanical and electrical appliances, was the rightful domain of masculinity. While the women’s magazines of the time made efforts to redefine the role of the modern housewife as a technician or manager of the home,\(^{757}\) *Playboy* would claim that men and not women, trained professionally as media-operators, tool-makers and machine-user, were most suited for carrying out newly-automated domestic tasks.

The design of the “Kitchenless Kitchen” in *Playboy’s* Penthouse Apartment, which the magazine’s editors repeatedly evoked until it became a classic in the sixties, signaled this redefinition of a traditionally female space as masculine. The kitchen is camouflaged from the rest of the penthouse – an almost totally open space – by a fiberglass screen. Behind the screen, the interior can hardly be recognized as a kitchen: it has become a stage for performing post-domestic masculinity. Within this theatrical setting surrounded by the screens, every cooking and cleaning appliance has taken the form (at least to the

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period observer) of a highly sophisticated piece of technology:

“The kitchen walls consist of six Japanese-style Shoji screens, which can slide to completely close or completely open the kitchen. Frames are of elm, covering its translucent fiberglass... Now lets roll back those Shojis and enter the kitchen. Your first thought might be, where is everything? It’s all there, as you shall see, but all is neatly stowed and designed for efficiency with the absolute minimization of fuss and hausfrau labor. For this is a bachelor kitchen, remember, and unless you’re a very odd-ball bachelor indeed, you like to cook and whomp up short-order specialties to exactly the same degree that you actively dislike dishwashing, marketing and tidying up.”


The surprised exclamation of the visitor, “Where is everything?” does not result from

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758 *Playboy*, September 1959, 60.
the technical character of the appliances, which was a constant in American advertisements for the kitchen at the time. Rather, the word “everything” replaces the word “housewife” in a Freudian slippage. The real question is, “Where is the housewife?” *Playboy* had broken the last taboo, smashed the last icon of the suburban house: it had made the woman disappear from the kitchen. Cleaning, considered by Playboy as typical “*hausfrau* manual labor” has been taken over by machines, transforming the kitchen into a playground for the “young connoisseur of meat and wines.” All the redefinition of kitchen activities in terms of technical efficiency and male skill safely eliminate any risk of feminizing or emasculating the bachelor (that the article describes as the danger of being an “odd-ball bachelor”).

Rejecting at once the “antiseptic medical look of so many modern kitchens” and the feminine character of kitchen appliances, *Playboy* succeeded in making the technical kitchen a necessary accessory, as important a component of the urban seducer’s lifestyle as the automobile. The “kitchenless kitchen” takes over the traditional feminine tasks of transforming dirty into clean, raw into cooked, not through the efforts of the housewife’s working hands but through the utopian effectiveness of modern industrial technology

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760 *Playboy* does not hesitate to advise the bachelor to hire a maid once a week to finish the cleaning activities, fearing the possibility of a woman taking back these duties. *Playboy*, September 1956, 60.
recounted by Playboy. The kitchen’s ultrasound dishwasher uses inaudible sound frequencies to clean its contents, pretended to eliminate the need for manual dishwashing. The morning after a successful conquest at home, breakfast is supposed to be prepared by the flick of a remote-controlled switch installed on the bachelor’s bed panel. *Playboy* describes the bachelor’s routine: “Reaching lazily to the control panel, you press the buttons for the kitchen circuits and immediately raw bacon, eggs, bread and ground coffee you did the right things with the night before... start the metamorphosis into crisp bacon, eggs fried just right and steaming-hot fresh java.”761 Whereas within the 1959 American National Exhibition in Moscow the (same) kitchen was promoted as a technical aid for the female heterosexual housewife, *Playboy* dared to get rid of the housewife replacing her by technology. In *Playboy*, technical appliances not only come to stand in for the figure of the housewife, but also help the serial seducer eliminate all traces of the women who visit the penthouse. Thus, the dishwasher is not only convenient because it is noiseless but also because it removes “the imprints of the lipstick kiss” from the night before.762 Like the sliding screen of the kitchen, the bachelor’s female guests operate is the object of the same visual law: now you see it, now you don’t.

*Playboy* interpreted the process of transforming the private domestic space of the kitchen into a public showroom – a process generalized in American architecture during the fifties – as a direct effect of transforming the kitchen into an exclusively male territory.

761 *Playboy*, October 1956, 70.
762 *Playboy*, September 1956, 60.
The woman had lost her leading role on the kitchen stage and become a spectator in a theater of masculinity. With regard to the male user of the “radiant broiler-roaster,” Playboy wagered, “It is our bet that the manipulation of this broiler, and the sight through the dome of a sizzling steak, will prove for your guest a rival attraction to the best on TV. And you’ll be the director of the show.” It is as if, for Playboy, the transparent dome broiler – like the apartment itself, with its glass windows and undivided spaces – would imitate the structure of the TV set or the show. Once again, both the broiler and the penthouse operate as peep-show display mechanisms that offer the desired object (the roasted meet, the pink flesh of the young female guest) to the male eye, creating the effect of realism and proximity while still protecting the spectator from direct contact.

Although women could visit, stay overnight and witness a virtuoso culinary exercise in the kitchen, privacy – meaning total female exclusion – was preserved within two enclosed spaces inside the penthouse: the study, “a sanctum sanctorum where women are seldom invited,” and the lavatory, a short of media-pod, which includes “john, bidet, magazine rack, ashtray and telephone,” and which Playboy describes English-style as the “throne room” – the ultimate retreat, where the bachelor-king “gets away from everything.” The ultimate privatization of brain and anus in the form of the study and the lavatory indicates the limits of the bodily gender construction of the playboy: whereas his eyes, hands and penis are totally devoted to the maximization of sexual

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763 Ibid.
764 Playboy, October 1956, 70.
pleasure – and thus subject to a constant process of publicizing –, his reasoning and anal functions, as superior male faculties, are protected from the menace of feminization and homosexuality. Study and lavatory, male intelligence and anality, are the only enclaves that escape the theatrical display, publicizing and exhibition process that otherwise spreads throughout the entire domestic realm.

**Backing Away from Glass Dresses**

**Inventing Vikki Dugan**

The penthouse’s mechanical gadgets were not the only things to operate as rotating and flipping devices. The same *apparatus* of rotation that enabled the Borsani couch to become horizontal, the round bed to turn 360 degrees and the kitchen to become a theater was behind the production of one of the most famous Playmates of the fifties, known as “The Back.” In June 1957, *Playboy* published photographs taken by Sam Baker of Vikki Dugan’s nude back. One month later, the magazine dedicated a three-page story to the new Playmate sensation: “At the Hollywood Foreign Press Association’s 1957 award banquet, Vikki turned up in a gown that was not only backless but virtually seatless too – cut down to reveal several startling inches of reverse cleavage. “Eyeballs popped,” as did the flashbulbs of the United Press, who caught Vikki with her rearguard down and sent the wires a fascinating photo that has to be judiciously cropped for newspaper

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765 Before becoming a Playmate, Dugan was known for her 1956 role in the film *The Great Man*, by José Ferrer (Universal), in which she played “the network receptionist who ‘made a great exit’ from Keenan Wynn’s apartment.” In 1957 she appeared in the TV series “And-Away-We-Go-Girls,” with Jackie Gleason.
In the article Dugan denounced the hypocrisy of what she called “people in glass dresses” (an expression that had already been applied to the International Style architecture), a criticism of the models who posed dressed in transparent tissue, which was the most common way of showing a female nude in the classic pin-ups by George Petty or Alberto Vargas. Dugan argued for a different way of showing and concealing the female body. She was portrayed wearing an opaque fabric dress that revealed not just the usual *decolletage* but also its posterior, something which Playboy judged to be “wild.” Once the “hidden parts” of Dugan were selected, photographed and cropped, the metonymic process could begin: Dugan became “The Back.”

![Image](image_url)

Fig. 313-315. From left to right: Vikki Dugan, 1957; George Petty’s pin-up with transparent dress, 1956; Mies van der Rohe’s Farnsworth House 1951, Plano Illinois.

The possibility of “looking things from behind” was not only a consolation for women such as Vikki Dugan who, claimed the magazine, “were not bustly”\(^{767}\): turning the bustless girl to discover the back of a Playmate was another rotation game through which

\(^{766}\) *Playboy*, July 1957, 60.

Playboy inverted the laws of the gaze. What was back became front, exactly in the same way that, through the use of the TV camera, the “private” rooms of Hefner’s house became public and what was hidden became exposed, and all without the need for “glass dresses” (that is, without windows or glass facades). Like the cropping of Dugan’s back, the visibility of the Mansion was regulated through a very precise selection of images, staged for the public eye. In fact, Hefner used his television show as a way of “focusing in” and “opening” to the public eye some of the staged scenes already published in the magazine, offering what he called (in a phrase that underscored the production of the “private”) “a behind-the-scenes view of America’s most sophisticated magazine.”

The Mansion’s devices will later come to intensify the multimedia feedback between the house, the magazine and the TV show.

Just like the rotating bed, which Hefner literally used as a game board on which he moved the images that would make up the magazine, the pornographic language created by Playboy magazine can be understood as a horizontal plane, an ideal grid upon which all the fragmented body parts captured by the many technical recording systems relate to each other, like in an anatomic variation of Saussure's structuralist system. Within this plane in which a particular cropped organ referred to another, by homology or by difference not only did Dugan’s back establish a “flip-flop” relationship with the bust of another prominent playmate, June Wilkinson, but the blonde hair and smiling face of the

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769 Playboy, January 1960, 47.
as-yet-unknown girl-next-door Stella Stevens were analogically linked to those of Marilyn Monroe and Kim Novak. The two-dimensional space of the photograph, which provides the possibility of cutting and combining different body parts endlessly, and the Photoshop techniques that would come later, served to emphasize this abstract visual economy. The pornographic body is constructed through collage as architecture. The space extends itself without relief toward the past and the future equally, embracing every woman that ever existed or will ever exist (“woman” here has no content other than as a visual sign). It is within this plane of analogies that the girl-next-door, innocent or unlovely as she might be, is already connected in an abstract and timeless way to some other feature of Brigitte Bardot. Moreover, in this visual chessboard, Bardot herself becomes merely a gracious combinatory formula of Gina Lollobrigida, Jayne Mansfield, Anita Ekberg and later…Paris Hilton.

As the pairing of “The Back” and “The Bust,” shows, the apparatus of rotation establishes a relationship between two objects or body parts that do not necessarily belong to the same owner, in exactly the same way as the pornographic and architectural montage cuts hands, mouths and genitals from different sources and pastes them together as part of a sexual narrative. The transformation of Dugan into “The Back” exemplifies a strategy of multiple composition out of which not only the Playmates but also their position in the Playboy Mansion are constructed.

Pin-Up Architecture
“L’Architecture, c’est avec des matieres bruts, établir des rapports émouvants.”

Le Corbusier, *Vers une Architecture*, 1923

In the late fifties and the sixties, only one other article published in *Playboy* managed to match the popularity of the playmate nudes: the foldout of the second feature on the playboy penthouse published in 1959.770 Relying on the same visual and consumption economy of striptease, the chaste watercolour illustrations of the apartment aroused as much fascination as the Marilyn Monroe and Betty Page nudes. The interior of the penthouse unfolded just as the bodies of the pin-ups had done. By turning the pages, readers opened and closed doors and windows, walked along corridors, and created transparencies that invited them to travel endlessly back and forth between the private and the public.

We could argue, following Colomina, that nowhere has this process been more intense and influenced by popular culture image production techniques (including pornography) than at *Playboy*. It is important to note that the urban bachelor pad drawings and models did not intent to be documents of projects to be built. Later on, Playboy Houses (from the Chanskin House to the Playboy Mansion) will not follow the design directions found at the penthouse drawings. In fact, the power of Playboy architecture was to exist only as media or (even when it was built) *within* media connections.

770 Following the publication of this article, the Playboy offices were flooded with hundreds of letters from fans of the project, who wanted to know where to purchase the objects and furniture in the penthouse.
Playboy decided to follow up the success of the 1959 report on the fictional bachelor penthouse by transforming an actual physical space into photographic images, and coined the term “Playboy House” for the occasion. Nevertheless, the Chaskin house did not share architecture style or interior design with the urban bachelor apartment. In May 1959, it published a ten-page color report by Bunny Yeager shot inside the bachelor house of Hefner’s friend Harold Chaskin, in Biscayne Bay, Miami. The focus was no longer on the furniture, but on the lifestyle that the architecture of the house made possible. The report also turned into a kind of “advertorial” publicizing the floor tiles that Chaskin manufactured in his Florida factory. And, in Chaskin’s house, tiles covered everything: bathrooms, terraces, solarium, swimming pools... The use of tiles extending

771 Playboy, May 1959, 50-60.
from indoor spaces like the bathrooms and the indoor pool, to outdoor spaces like the solarium and terraces created a homogenous, uninterrupted surface, a continuous cladded skin that made no distinction between inside and outside the house, transforming everything into an acclimatized interior - regardless of whether the climate was natural or generated by air conditioning.

“The center of the house,” the article explains, “is an indoor swimming pool with a retractable roof and a sliding wall that, when open, connects to the living room and turns the whole area into a games zone.” Yeager’s photographs of Chaskin’s indoor pool are a paradigmatic example of the architectural and photographic (but also pornographic) devices used by *Playboy* to produce domesticity as a visible interior. The glass-walled indoor pool in the living room functioned like a home peep-show creating an exhibitionism/voyeurism dialectics and allowing visitors to observe the bodies swimming half-naked, without getting wet. Guests looked through a window that instead of leading to the outside in the usual way, it looked into another interior space: the blue-tiled pool and its naked girls. Likewise, a two-way mirror in the solarium allowed the occupants of the house to look at the sunbathing bodies outside without being seen. Readers of the magazine repeat this specular consumption, observing without getting their feet wet and looking without being seen.

Perhaps because the United States was starting to move away from McCarthyism’s

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772 Ibid. 54.
773 Gretchen Edgren, 8.
“witch hunt” against communists and homosexuals, or maybe as a reaction against these repressive policies, the 1959 issue of Playboy containing the report on the Chaskin house sold more than a million copies, overtaking Esquire for the first time. The success of the Chaskin house piece showed Hefner that Playboy readers liked nothing better than to inhabit architecture visually, to dwell within images. Photography and publications were making possible a new relationship to domesticity, since for the first time the interior could be produced and exhibited as pure image. Probably, the success of the Chaskin reportage encouraged Hefner to retrieve the idea of producing his own domestic interior as an ongoing visual narrative to be displayed within the magazine pages, as he had first done at Chicago Daily News in 1952.

On his return from Miami, Hefner began developing a plan to build a house in Chicago modeled on the Chaskin house in Florida, in spite of differing climates of the two cities. He bought a block of land at 28 Bellevue East in Chicago, and commissioned the architect Donald Jaye to renovate and redesign a multi-story house around an indoor swimming pool. Meanwhile, through the influence of either the local Catholic church or the Mafia, Hefner was denied permission to set his building among the venerable bourgeois buildings of East Bellevue. Although the house was never built, in May 1962 Playboy achieved another hit when it published the unbuilt designs in one of the most famous articles of the period. The color illustrations by Donald Jaye showed the

774 Russell Miller, 76.
775 The links between Hefner and the Chicago Mafia have not been cleared up. There are several versions in different biographies of the publisher, and in the stories that circulated within the Playboy empire.
facade, a cross-section and some interior details of the house. It was the first time that interior architecture was used as more than a mere backdrop for articles of a more or less pornographic nature. Even the girls were no longer necessary. The naked interior space had become the pornographic object par excellence.

The almost cartoonishly modern three-story building, designed to be built with concrete walls and a clear glass facade, appeared pasted between two traditional Chicago houses dating from the turn of the 20 century, producing a sandwich of architectural styles, an abrupt montage of historical regimes of visibility and modes of accessing interiority. The most striking thing was the contrast between the opacity of the adjacent houses and the transparency of Donald Jaye’s design. And taking the effect of the glass facades even further, several exterior lights seemed to illuminate the house during the night, rendering the interior even more visible. The second story, housing a living room with a spiral staircase, was totally open to public view. The ground floor was also visible from the street, and sheltered a bright blue Porsche.

The piece of furniture that created the greatest sensation among Playboy readers was the round, rotating, and shaking bed, equipped, as it had been in the 1956 paper penthouse, with a control panel, telephone, radio, bar and night table. The cross-section reveals that the house is symmetrically divided by a large central open space, at the bottom of which is an irregularly shaped swimming pool, or rather a natural cave, as if the house

776 A more detailed study of the plans and cross-section shows that the rotating bed may have been added later, perhaps after Hefner’s own bed had been built. Playboy, June 1962. See also Chicago Daily News, September 23, 1959.
had risen up on the very edge of an invisible water source. Although the rooms seem identical and rather repetitive, as if multiple and similar scenes could be happening in many places at the same time (the same living room, with its Eames armchairs, is reproduced three times), the sharp split that the swimming pool creates between the front and back of the house operates as a transfer and exchange passage that modifies and unsettles the building as a whole.

This division reinforces the duality of the playboy’s lifestyle, articulating the transition from work into leisure, dressed into nude, the professional visit into the sexual encounter. Here, the swimming pool simultaneously functioned as the dispositif of rotation that enabled the playboy to move between the front and back sections of the house, and as a liquid frontier that separates two non-reconcilable “stages,” where different (and even incongruous) actions can take place. This dual structure of the house, as the advertisement for Porsche suggests “lets the playboy lead a double life.”

The vertical cut reveals a bisected structure, with the building split symmetrically in two by a pool that seems to connect the house to an underground spring. As we will see, in keeping with the classic utopian tradition such as Plato’s Atlantis and Thomas More’s islands, the Playboy houses are built upon watery foundations. Here, the swimming pool seems to simultaneously connect and separate two neighboring but disjointed houses. And this dual programme seems to permit the chameleonic life of the playboy who, like

777 The ad said: “Porsche: the car that lets the playboy ‘lead a double life’.” *Playboy*, June 1962, 49.
a modern-day Sisyphus confined in this own domestic space, is doomed to move endlessly from one to the other.

Never to be built, Donald Jaye’s drawings no longer represented a plan for a future house, but a utopia without a time or a place. By the time the article was published in 1962, Hefner had moved into the Playboy Mansion, an enormous renovated building that, at least on the outside, was totally unlike the concrete and glass designs envisaged for the urban playboy.
6. THE PLAYBOY MANSION

American Oïkema

“To think about the architecture of the twentieth century will be to rethink the house/media interface.”  

Beatriz Colomina

“Pornography is less about the encounter of bodies and more about the physical encounter with an eroticized technological apparatus.”  

Linda Williams

A Mansion is not a Home

In December 1959, Hefner bought a regal brick and stone townhouse built in 1899 at 1340 North State Parkway on Chicago's Gold Coast, not far from Lake Michigan. The house had been built by James Gamble Rogers, an architect known for his designs for institutional buildings such as Yale and Columbia universities in the late nineteenth century, in which stone cladding concealed underlying steel frames and the stone was treated to simulate age. The Chicago building, which had been designed for city father Georges S. Isham, had been the centre of an intense social scene at the turn of the century. During the Great Depression, it had been converted into apartments, but the second floor retained the structure of a public house, with its large marble fireplace, ballroom and hotel kitchen. The 6,600-square-foot-house was to be rebuilt by Hefner and represented in the pages of Playboy, as more than a penthouse, an authentic urban bachelor castle. In the midst of a postwar period that seemed to be loosing its coldness, the interior of Hugh Hefner's Mansion would begin to attract unprecedented media attention. From the outside, the Playboy Mansion was indistinguishable from other stately homes on Chicago’s Gold Coast. But behind the conventional nineteenth-century façade hid a revolution– or at least this was what Playboy magazine maintained. Playboy was turning male domesticity into a pharmacopornographic spectacle.

The Mansion could be described, using Charles Jencks’ classification of twentieth century American architecture, as the unexpected combination of two opposite models of architecture production and the encounter of two economic and design programs: From
the point of view of production, the Mansion combined a “mini-capitalist personal style” (such as the boat houses of Sausalito in San Francisco Bay) where the client, the architect and the user is the owner (Hefner claimed to be the interior designer and the architect) with the “monopoly-capitalist architectures,” the “bombastic” offices and hotels of multinational companies created to produce what Jencks called a “consumption community” (such as Disneyland, constructed only four years before Hefner moved into the Mansion), which according to Jencks expressed “the power and concentration of capital, the mercantile function and the exploitation of markets.” From the point of view of program, it served both the values of the “monopoly and big business” building as well as those of what Jencks called “consumer temples and churches of distraction.” From a sociological point of view, the house was part of what in the forties was already called “the American Dream House,” the common style of movie star homes such as Lucille Ball’s house or Jimmy Stewarts’s mansion. The combination of conventionalized signs of economic status of colonial provenance (a layer of manicured verdure, a large garage, the multiplicity of rooms, etc.) with the sings of middle class popular and consumer culture created what Jencks wittily called “the middle class

782 Charles Jencks, 1977, 26, 32.
783 As Charles Jencks notices, movie star house tourism became a “minor mass industry” around the twenties in the United States. See Jencks, 56-7.
fastidious style,” since even if “the movie stars clearly aren’t middle class...their tastes look it and they’ve come from this background.” Although placed within the same genealogy, the Playboy Mansion, neither a movie star home nor an aristocratic house, will be defined nor by its opulent façade but rather by the way porn and media technologies dematerialized the façade to produce the interior itself as spectacle.

The cost of the renovations of the Mansion (3 million dollars) far outstripped the purchase price of the property. The renovations affected mainly the internal structure of the house: the six-car garage located in the basement was rebuilt a swimming pool (even though Hefner could not swim), a “subaquatic bar room,” a human aquarium similar to the one that Hefner had seen in the Chaskin House in Miami. But most of the expenses came from the new technical services clipped on the Tudor style house: piping, ducts, wires, inlets, outlets, hi-fi equipment, antennae, closed-circuit television camera, heater and freezers....

784 Ibid., 57.

Reyner Banham’s question “what is the house doing except concealing its mechanical pudenda from the stares of folks on the sidewalks?” shall find in Playboy an unexpected answer. Here the “pudenda” of the house – but also of the inhabitants- were stripped out by the media and architectonic devices. The techniques that Hefner envisaged for displaying the interior of the house were subtler and more sophisticated than the transparent glass façade that Mies van der Rohe had popularized in the United States and that Donald Jaye’s design for the urban penthouse inherited. Playboy architecture confirmed what Beatriz Colomina already diagnosed in Le Corbusier: it was not so much the glass-and-concrete aesthetic that was specifically “modern,” but the blurring of the privacy/publicity boundary through media technologies: “The way we think about architecture is organized by the way we think about the relationship between inside and outside, private and public. With modernity there is a shift in these relationships, a displacement of the traditional sense of an inside, an enclosed space, established in clear opposition to an outside. All boundaries are now shifting. This shifting becomes manifest everywhere: in the city, of course, but also in all the technologies that define the space of the city: the railroad, newspapers, photography, electricity, advertisements, reinforced concrete, glass, the telephone, film,

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Indeed, *Playboy* media technologies (including the magazine, television programs and films) operated like “multimedia windows” peering into the privacy of the Mansion and transforming the neo-gothic building into a series of interconnected electronic boudoirs able to broadcast information.

**Private Domesticity Inc.**

In *The Birth of the Clinic*, and *Les machines à guérir* Michel Foucault argued that architecture is not just a materialization of power relations, but also a machine for the extraction of knowledge about the body and the populations able to produce biopolitical entities such as “sexual identity,” “disability” or “race”. Architecture is an epistemological system. Thus, within the modern disciplinary regime, the hospital is not just a place for healing, according to Foucault, but also a mega-structure for bodily surveillance and the production of medical representations and scientific knowledge about the human body and national population. The architecture of the hospital and prison, with the integration of confinement and surveillance techniques, where the social body, Foucault claimed, what the dissection table and the microscope were to the anatomical body and to the cell, respectively: instruments that produce specific forms of knowledge and representation. Likewise, imprisonment and inspection are, for Foucault, techniques for extracting knowledge and producing capital. Bringing Foucault into the Cold War years, we can ask, what kind of epistemological and economic

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786 Beatriz Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity*, 12.
machine is the Playboy Mansion, with its specific confinement, surveillance, and entertainment techniques?

Fig. 323, 324. Interior of main room of the Playboy Mansion, Chicago 1960. Photo Caption: “A blend of old and new. The northeast corner in the main room of the Playboy Mansion.” Historic Archives Chicago Tribune. September 30, 1967.

Fig. 325, 326. Left: “Hugh M. Hefner, publisher of Playboy magazine, shown in his Chicago Mansion with gals”. © Bettmann/CORBIS, 1961, Chicago, Illinois; Right: Hugh Hefner and a group of Bunnies. Chicago Playboy Mansion, 1966, Burt Glinn, Magnum.
All the spatial principles (pornognomie) of the utopian late eighteenth century Parthénion described by Restif de la Bretonne and designed by Ledoux (separation, enclosure, surveillance, hygiene, discipline, gender-segregation, spatial distribution of bodies and pleasures, camouflage, peep-show, and reproductive assisted technology) operated at the Mansion, but extended and supplemented by electronic surveillance and communication systems as well as by new hormonal contraceptive techniques.

It is interesting to note that Hefner decided that, unlike Donald Jaye’s “modern” design for the first Playboy Townhouse, the Mansion’s façade would remain untouched, so that from the street it looked identical to the original.\textsuperscript{788} The neo-gothic façade camouflaged the Mansion within the lanscape of Chicago’s Gold Coast. Behind its residential mask, the house was a theatre, a television set, a neo-liberal brothel and a factory. The stage started right at the front door inscribing architecture within storytelling. The Latin words over the large wooden door of the Mansion announced “Si Non Oscillas, Noli Ttintinare” - “If you don’t swing, don’t ring.” Apparently nobody seemed to be excluded; the only requirement for entrance was to be ready to have fun. However, as Foucault had foreseen: “In general, the heterotopic site is not freely accessible like a public space. (...) Other heterotopias, on the contrary, have the appearance of pure and simple openings, although they usually conceal curious exclusions. Anyone can enter one of these heterotopic locations, but, in reality, they are nothing more than an illusion: one thinks one has entered and, by the sole fact of entering, one is excluded.”\textsuperscript{789} As in the deviant

\textsuperscript{788} This might have also been a city requirement.
heterotopia mentioned by Foucault, the possibility of freely entering and inhabiting the seemingly private and secret Mansion, was only a visual illusion. Like the utopian Oïkema, the Mansion functioned as a gender and racial segregating device since only white women could inhabit the house as *playmates*. Like the Parthénon, the Mansion was an “island of discipline and vice” where female/sex workers were payed for inviting male/clients to perform a cautiously staged heterosexual fiction. The Mansion functioned as the first erotic thematic park in which the sexual laws of the American society of the late fifties and early sixties could be represented, challenged and reversed at the same time.

While the set of the future "Playboy’s Penthouse” television show will imitate the interior of the Mansion, the Mansion itself reproduced the technical conditions of production of a television set, down to the last detail. The house had actually been carefully designed and lit like a Hollywood film set, its scenes dramatized and its characters directed according to a script. Room by room, the entire house was under surveillance by closed circuit cameras that scanned every nook and cranny of the house and recorded 24 hours per day. A small closed-circuit-television control room located next to Hefner’s Bedroom at the third floor enabled the magazine to register, store and ultimately broadcast the recorded images. Chicago Tribune described the multimedia room with amazement in 1967: “Electronics room at the Playboy Mansion, Editor-Publisher’s Hugh M. Hefner’s private residence. This elaborate control center permits taping of television programs from all of Chicago’s TV stations. A full-time engineer in

_Gallimard, 1994): 759._
charge of the equipment also oversees the storage of hundreds of video tapes in humidity controlled conditions.”

A guest entering the house may have felt privileged for having been admitted into Hefner’s private fun palace, when in reality he was inhabiting an over-mediated, closely monitored, highly marketable territory. The ultra private haven was in fact an over-exposed land. The price of admission to that unusual place was to become an (almost always) anonymous actor in an erotic film with no beginning and no end. As Jean Baudrillard noticed studying the functioning of Disneyland, the postwar entertainment architectures go further beyond Guy Debord’s society of spectacle: within the Mansion the visitor/client is no longer “alienated as a passive spectator” but rather he is totally absorbed within the virtual space of spectacle, becoming an “interactive extra.”

Playboy and other media constantly printed articles and published images on the events of the house, reporting on the cinema screenings, the Jazz parties, the new girls and the sex games. The most intimate was choreographed, the most private recorded and broadcasted. The logic of reversibility that prevailed in the interior decor, furniture and technical devices (the convertible sofa bed, revolving bookcase-bar, two-way mirrors, and, above all, the cameras) conspired to turn the visitor into an “interactive extra,” to reveal the hidden and, finally, to transform the private into public.

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The dark room

The interior sequence from the front door progressed directly from the hall through a central stair into the party and entertainment areas. On the second floor of the Mansion, a windowless thirty-foot-wide hall with oak-paneled walls adorned with carved frescoes was transformed into a party and screening room. Indeed, it did not need glass walls or transparency in order to be modern. Instead, its walls were lined with filming and multimedia projection devices, the Mansion’s real “openings.” Although located within a private home, the second floor of the Mansion anticipated the “gambling room” of the coming Las Vegas’s resorts. Like the gambling room, the Playboy party and screening room was a psychological space constructed by what Venturi, Scott-Brown and Izenour defined as “antiarchitectural artificial lighting”: “The combination of darkness and enclosure of the gambling room,” they explained, “and its subspaces make for privacy,
protection, concentration, and control. The intricate maze under the low ceiling never connects with outside light or outside space. This disorients the occupant in space and time. Space is limitless, because the artificial light obscures rather than defines the boundaries. Light is not used to define space. Walls and ceilings do not serve as reflective surfaces for light but are made absorbent and dark. Space is enclosed but limitless, because its edges are dark. Like at the gambling room, at the Playboy multimedia room, artificial lighting paradoxically constructed a dark inside. Interrupting the visual conventions of the outside space regulated by social and legal rules, the artificially lit, borderless shadowy space of the party and screening room became a fantasy space that projects and invents fictional representations of sexuality. Porn actor Chuck Traynor recalls: “Hefner probably got the second or third biggest porn collection in the world…[…] He was more of a collector and a researcher about it. Hefner was like an expert in “Porno Trivial Pursuit.” Hefner transformed his private salon into the biggest and most innovate private-public theater in America were porn films (early “nudies” and “cuties” of the time, but also new more explicit movies made by Doris Wishman, Bunny Yeager, Russ Meyer) were projected everyday for a heterosexual, male and female audience, which created a totally new reception space in terms of gender, since during early 1950s the “nudies” films were projected for only “stag” male audiences.

792 Robert Venturi, Denis Scott-Brown and Steven Izenour, Learning from Las Vegas (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1998), 49.
Charles Jencks formula “ancient style and modern plumbing” seems accurate to describe the Playboy media-living-dark-room characterized by the juxtaposition of “modern services – electric candelabra, muzak, surveillance systems, telephone, alarm bell” onto a rather pre-modern scenery. It was in this opaque but ultra-connected room that Hefner held his famous Friday night parties. Whereas in Le Corbusier’s houses, as Colomina notes, the window “is no longer a hole in the wall, it has taken over the wall,” transforming the wall into an image, in the Playboy Mansion, it is the screen that has taken over not only the wall, but also the window. Corbusier, Colomina underlines, described the window as a visual organ enabling the viewing activity of the house. In the Playboy Mansion, we are closer to the technological assisted organism of

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794 Charles Jencks, 1977, 12.
795 Beatriz Colomina, Privacy and Publicity, 6.
John McHale, Buckminster Fuller or Marshall McLuhan:796 the screen-eyes of the house are no longer organs but media prostheses. They no longer inform of the immediate outside but rather of virtual and distant worlds linked to the house by electronic connections. Corbusier’s “walls of light” were being transformed into multimedia “dark rooms.”

The Playboy Mansion multimedia-room, a pharmacopornographic version of the theatrical boudoir of the utopian brothel, was also the model for his “Playboy’s Penthouse” television show, which was first screened on Chicago’s WBKB in October 1959. The studio set carefully simulated the Mansion's interior, the ballroom, the fireplace, the tropical aquarium, and even a revolving bookcase that turned into a drinks’ bar. The broadcast concept was created by two independent producers from Chicago who approached Hefner with the idea of presenting the Playboy lifestyle on television. The setting would be his bachelor pad, “the kind of paradise every guy is looking for, a place of parties, full of pretty girls and show business celebrities.” And the master of ceremonies could be none other than the occupant of the house, Hugh Hefner himself, who would spend a cozy evening with his friends. Although the “evening” could be filmed at any time of the day, and the “close friends” were carefully chosen from the jazz and film stars of the time. “Playboy’s Penthouse” ran for twenty-six weeks, but was never picked up by a national network. Hefner showed no exceptional acting abilities,

796 Let’s not forget that 1959, the year Hefner moved into the Mansion, was also the year the Association of Educational Broadcasters and the U.S. Office of Education granted Marshall McLuhan a research aid that would enabled him to write Understanding Media.
and the presence of African-American singers and musicians, something that was unusual in the audiovisual “apartheid” of the time, would not have helped it gain a national audience. 797 Nevertheless, this first small foray helped to seal Hefner's conviction that television would play an important role in Playboy's future. 798 Between 1969 and 1970, the Playboy salon was back on television with “Playboy After Dark,” a new CBS-produced program based on a very similar format to present the “private” parties that Hefner threw in his Los Angeles bachelor apartment. Although they did not have a long run, the Playboy television programs inspired by life in the Mansion (like “The Girls of the Playboy Mansion” program, but also similar to the future “Big Brother”) were pioneers in the tradition of reality TV, particularly what we could call “domestic confinement shows”: television programs in which a group of famous or anonymous characters are filmed by closed circuit cameras 24 hours a day in a studio that simulates an enclosed domestic space. 799 The post-domestic pornotopia was now on TV.

The interior spaces of the Mansion shown in the magazine’s reportages or at the “Playboy’s Penthouse” and “Playboy After Dark” were not natural places, nor were they

797 Steven Watts, 194.
798 Continuing with these efforts to infiltrate popular culture through audiovisual means, in 1962 Gordon Sheppard make “The Most,” a documentary that presented Hefner as a “sexual activist and a rebel,” for women's liberation, homosexual rights and racial integration in the United States. Hefner would also try—unsuccessfully—to produce a fiction film based on his own life, with Tony Curtis in the role of the Playboy director, but he gave up on the project after running into problems with the direction and content of the project. See Simon Watts, 163-5.
799 About the relationship between colonial exhibitions, theme parks, and real TV see: Oliver Razac, L’Écran et le Zoo. Spectacle et domestication, des expositions coloniales à Loft Story (Paris: Denœl, 2002).
purely symbolic loci. They were media laboratories for strategic spatialization, distribution, communication and capitalization of subjectivity through rigorous techniques of confinement, over-exposure, surveillance, concealment and the production of pleasure. Playboy television program worked as what Michel Foucault called an “inverted mirror,” projecting the post-domestic space of the Playboy House into the domestic space of television viewers. The suburban home briefly contained its inverted mirror image: the urban bachelor pad. The reproductive domestic house contained the contraceptive multimedia brothel. Through their television sets, residents of the same Chicago that praised the family, embraced Prohibition and promoted racial segregation of spaces enjoyed a Bakhtinian carnavalesque pop fantasy featuring female nudity, polygamy, sexual promiscuity and apparent blindness to race.

Sade in popland, Plato in the multimedia cave

The liminal, heterotopic space of the Mansion made it necessary to constantly reproduce and re-inscribe new “private” and over-sexualized areas, apparently reserved for the happy few who had access to them, but always subject to camera surveillance. Located in the living room floor, a trapdoor functioned as a technique for sexual management of

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800 Michel Foucault, “Des espaces autres,” *Dits et écrits*, 752-62.
801 Russell Miller, 10. The matter of the “black guests” was controversial among the members of the program’s production team, even though many of the Afro-Americans invited to entertain the white audience were very well known musicians - like Ray Charles and Sammy Davis Jr. But aside from this, Afro-Americans were not guests on the program, and appeared as waiters. Until 1965 there was not one single Afro-American Playmate. See Grethen Edgren, 88-89. Nevertheless, Playboy was a pioneer in the implementation of egalitarian policies in terms of gender, race and sexuality, both in the company and its multimedia representation activities. We should note, however, the impossibility of the presence of male homosexuality in this pop carnival.
space. The heterotopic and somehow Sadean trapdoor, operating like a vertical peephole, made it possible to set up visual contact between the first floor and the basement. There were no stairs connecting the two spaces. The trap created a sensorial gap between the interior “dark” space of the hall and living room areas and the “natural” artificially lit oasis of the basement: the gap separated visual and audio entertainment (privileged senses within the screening room, living room and hall) from haptic enjoyment. Like in a safe version of the Chatêau de Silling, guests had to literally “let go” and slide down a golden pole that evoked the masculine techniques of the body used within the war heavy armored fighting vehicles and at by fire brigades and at the same time the erotic body techniques used by strippers within night clubs. The basement contained a swimming pool and a cave that simulated a tropical island, with palm trees,
Fig. 331-334. Up: The trap-door from the first floor into the basement in *Inside the Playboy Mansion*. Down: Playboy Mansion Swimming pool, September 30, 1967, Historic Archives Chicago Tribune; Right: Bunnies at the Mansion Swimming pool, *Inside the Playboy Mansion*. 
flowers, and “other horticultural importations,” and water gurgling from a spring; beyond, separated by a large sliding door, was the garage and the back exit.

Placing the Mansion within a larger analogy between architecture and the female sexualized body already at work at the Secret Museum, the abysmal character of the hole through which the guest literally “slipped in” and the interior waterfall that awaited him suggested that the innermost space of the house was its only and real opening, the ultimate peep-hole. As Louis Marin has pointed out in his reading of Thomas More’s *Utopia*, it is characteristic of utopian enclosures to be penetrated right at their center by an empty space, as if the very foundation of the ideal site were precisely a constitutive hole or nurturing and generating non-space. In his political history of globalization, German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk understands modern architecture, paradigmatically represented by John Paxton’s Crystal Palace and continued within the “air conditioned architecture,” as the technical and utopian construction of a “sphere,” an “environmental

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803 The presence of “orientalized” and “primitive” motifs in *Playboy* deserves an analysis of its own. Although the word “harem” is never explicitly mentioned in the magazine, the representation of nude women as members of a tribe or harem, belonging to a “colonial” Hefner, is a constant element in its pages. To understand the close relationship between pornography and colonial representation, it is worth remembering that the first colour photographs of naked breasts were published in *National Geographic*, which could permit itself to publish pictures of nude women (and only very occasionally men) of “primitive tribes” without running the risk of being accused of sexual exploitation or obscenity. Here the distinction between dressed and undressed allows the articulation of the difference between the white and the non-white, the civilized and the primitive, the human and the animal, making privacy and clothing a privilege of Western societies.

804 Another comparable case is Donald Jaye’s design for the townhouse divided by water curtains.
“cage” that reproduces the immunological conditions of heat, protection and nutrition of the uterus.\textsuperscript{805}

The swimming pool in the Playboy Mansion, represented photographically as a cave full of naked women, could be understood as a multimedia womb, an architectural incubator for male inhabitants that were germinated by the female-media body of the house.\textsuperscript{806} But at the pharmacopornographic age, the womb is made for media-reproduction. In fact, the cave was the main stage for the photo-reportage that took place in the house and was probably also used as the setting for erotic movies.\textsuperscript{807} The cave, with its primitive and colonial connotations, suggesting also animal instinct and sexual reproduction, was presented as the ultimate simulacrum of a natural space that was only accessible by the chosen few. A photograph published in \textit{Playboy} magazine shows the less fortunate visitors who remain on the first floor looking through the trap door that leads to the tropical grotto. They appear eager and frightened, as if they feared that the foundations of the house could give way: the pornotopia was ungrounded; it floated over media signs. As they expectantly watched the Playmates in the cave, they seem to be convinced that to fall into that “hole,” to penetrate that opening, was the very condition of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{807} It seems clear that the Playboy Mansion was used as a film set during the sixties and later, and it was the source of inspiration for numerous remakes, such as “Playboy Pajama Parties” (1982, 1996) and “Girl-Next-Door” (1975, 1983, 1997), but it is difficult to know whether they take place in the Mansion or in simulated sets. On the other hand, I’ve been unable to find information explicitly related to this activity.
\end{itemize}
possibility for sexual enjoyment. Meanwhile, in the “underwater room” at the rear of the basement, Hefner contemplated the cave party through a window, as calmly as if he were watching the latest episode of the “Playboy’s Penthouse” TV show: Hefner had become a mass-media Plato in a porn cave.

Fig. 335, 336. Left: “Full-stocked underwater bar at the Playboy Mansion, Editor-Publisher’s Hugh M. Hefner’s private residence on Chicago Gold Coast. Intimate room also features huge glass window (not shown in picture) looking into Tahitian style swimming pool located on the level above” September 30, 1967, Historic Archives Chicago Tribune; Right: Glass window looking into the swimming pool at the Playboy Mansion, 1966, Burt Glinn, Magnum.

**Discipline and excite**

Closer to a multimedia labyrinth than a domestic realm, the Playboy Mansion was not a homogenous space. Alongside permeable borders and flip-flop traps, which could be overcome through merit or status, others were strictly off-limits to guests, and protected some of the most strategic enclaves of the house. In the Mansion, moving vertically
implied moving across changing styles and media. Moving down was descending into
terms of pleasure, walking up was getting into discipline. Moreover, walking up the stairs was
climbing into different regimes of power and representation. While the basement, first
and second floors consisted of large, open spaces for lounging, dancing and swimming,
the third and fourth were zealously closed and rarely opened their doors to male visitors.
Every house – like every woman, as Vikki Dugan showed us – had its back. And it does
not necessarily have to be naked.

The first biopolitical rupture took place on the third floor. The entrance to this floor was
the most radical boundary in terms of gender segregation and it signaled the beginning of
a new threshold of privacy, hygiene and discipline into the building. The third floor of
the Chicago house was rebuilt to contain Hefner's bedroom, closed-circuit-television
control room and Playboy headquarters, with its legendary rotating bed and multimedia
controls that kept the Playboy publisher informed of anything that was going on
anywhere in the house or at the magazine's offices without having to leave his chamber.
Inspired by the Chicago brothels and the early twentieth century French *maisons closes*,
like the Chabanais or the One Two Two,808 and re-enacting the spatial distribution of
Restif's State brothel and Ledoux’s Oïkema, the third floor was also divided into a series
of suites, named according to their main color scheme (blue, red, gold, etc.) that were
thematically decorated, where Hefner's friends and business associates could go and

808 See: Alphonse Boudard and Romi, *L’Age d’Or des Mansions Closes* (Paris: Albin
wind down. This floor also included some studio apartments that Hefner rented to his favorite female employees.

Fig. 337, 338. Bunnies dorm. Inside the Playboy Mansion; Right: Playboy Bunnies in Formation for Costume Approval, photo caption: “A group of Playboy Bunnies line up for inspection by Hugh Hefner, publisher of Playboy magazine, in the main room of Playboy Mansion in Chicago. Hefner is inspecting the new improved fabric for the costumes”.© Bettmann/CORBIS.

As one moved up, the house became an increasingly concealed area. Its hidden wings were located on the fourth floor. The informal feel of the Mansion’s private parties packed with girls, the “domestic” images of Hefner on his bed in pajamas, the exotic illustrated reports on the underwater cave and the tableau vivant of women playing monopoly in front of the fireplace, none of it would have been possible without an efficiently programmed quarter that visitors could neither see nor access: the “Bunny Dorm.” Located on the fourth floor of the Playboy Mansion, right above Hefner's haven, the function of the Bunny Dorm was to deliver, with mathematical precision, the
required number of well-trained Bunnies to the lower floors and, later, to the Playboy Clubs. Echoing Foucault's description of a heterotopia as “capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible,“ the Playboy Mansion brought together, through vertical and horizontal distribution, as well as through multiple apparatuses for technification of the gaze and media-based transmission of information, the bachelor pad, the television studio, the film set, the boarding school for girls, the correctional centre, the exotic island, and the brothel.

While the basement and the first and second floors had been carefully decorated and equipped with high-tech devices and design appliances inspired both by nightclub interior décor and by modern design, the fourth floor consisted of shared dormitories with lines of beds or bunks, communal showers, bathrooms and dinner tables, long corridors with public telephones and small mailboxes labeled with the name of the employees. As Miller notes, “In stark contrast to the push-button extravagance below, the furnishing of the dormitories abruptly takes on the aspect of a rather parsimonious girls’ boarding school – thin cord carpet, bunk beds, wooden lockers and communal washrooms.” The fourth floor was simultaneously a workers' barracks and a strict boarding school, where blue-collar girls-next-door were trained to become Bunnies.

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809 Michel Foucault, “Des espaces autres,” 760. Foucault includes both boarding schools and brothels in his list of heterotopias, in a juxtaposition that anticipates the Playboy space.

810 Russell Miller, 9.
The severe, almost Spartan regime that prevailed on the fourth floor took over from the relaxed atmosphere of the open areas of the house. Its white working-class tenants were recruited through a rigorous selection process run by Keith Hefner, brother of Hugh. Once selected, the future Bunny entered within a contractual relationship with the Mansion, in between the Sadean discipline and Sacher-Masoch’s regime.\(^{811}\) The Bunny signed a contract agreeing to behave with “irreproachable” personal conduct, and, of course, to be constantly available to participate in the events that took place at the Mansion. Trained by a “Bunny Mother,” the future Bunny learnt the secrets of the “Playboy image,” which encompassed everything from hairstyle to tone of voice and the rhythm at which she walked, and studied the rules of conduct set out in the “Bunny Manual.”\(^{812}\) The Bunny’s gender and sexuality were performative codes defined by a contract. As in brothels, there was no clear line between employee and tenant, between working and inhabiting the house. Living within the house implied becoming a Bunny, being architecture a theatrical condition of possibility of sexual performance. Bunnies paid 50 dollars a month for a bed in the dormitory, and for $1.50 they could also have breakfast, lunch and dinner in the shared dining room, making it unnecessary if not impossible for them to leave the house.\(^{813}\)


\(^{813}\) In each dormitory, the most experienced playmate was in charge of maintaining the
The Bunnies were paid a daily stipend for posing, “acting” or working at the club. The rest of their wage came from tips and presents from the customers. What could seem like a “good wage” to a girl-next-door newly arrived from a Midwest town was less than 0.05% of the profits that she generated for Hefner’s business. The profitability of the Playboy Mansion, tentacularly self-reproducing through the media vehicles of the magazine, the television show and the Playboy clubs, surpassed that of Chicago’s most famous brothels. But the Bunnies, crucial elements in the audiovisual consumption that *Playboy* offered, were almost totally excluded from the profits of this economy. In exchange, *Playboy* offered them the chance to become media icons.

While the third floor seemed to cite a brothel and a nightclub economy within a domestic space, the fourth floor residence – both training and boarding school – worked according to radically different rules, those of disciplinary spaces for control and normalization of the body. The first and second floors housed and externalized the spectacular functions of late-night gaming and dance halls, while the fourth floor, totally internalized, was programmed according to spatial rules reminiscent of the asylum, the boarding school and the prison. The multimedia fun palace was not only a boarding sex-school but also a

“quality” of bunnies in the dorm. She was the designated “Bunny Mother,” and acted as a counsellor and confidant to the other girls. She awarded “weekly awards” to “praiseworthy” bunnies for their achievements (like serving a large number of drinks and always looking impeccable), and it was also her job to punish them for bad behaviour (like chewing gum, having messy hair, bad nails, bad make-up, using “profane language,” etc., threatening to expel them from the house. Katherine Leigh Scott, 10-11.
penitentiary where the Bunnies were trained (but also punished) to “subvert” the female gender and sexual norms of post-war America.

Borrowing the expression coined by Deleuze and Guattari to interpret Kafka’s literature, we could define Playboy’s pornotopia as the creation of a “minor” architecture that enabled it to carve “a world within a world.” The Mansion was an enormous, madcap office where the playboy could also live and enjoy himself, a virtual brothel in which a media group had set up its centre of operations, the set of a reality show in which a married man (Hefner married several times) lived in multimedia polygamy with more than thirty women (and men, through the magazine and the TV shows and films), a strict residence for young ladies who were potential Playmates to strip before the eyes of the whole of America, a hermetic bunker filmed by closed circuit TV, with the footage liable to be made public at any moment.

The overlapping and juxtaposition of private and the public, real and virtual spaces created a new type of male domesticity in which, according to Hefner, the new bachelor could enjoy the privileges of public space (by which we should understand gender and representation privileges, as well as the monopolies conferred by multimedia capitalism), without being subject to the laws (family, moral, anti-pornographic, reproductive) and threats (political and nuclear, pertaining to the Cold War) of the outside world.

814 The idea of “minor architectural project” takes up the concept of “minor literature” developed by Deleuze and Guattari to describe Kafka’s capacity to create “a language-within-a-language.” Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Kafka: Pour une littérature mineure (Paris : Minuit, 1975), 29.
Broadcasting interiority

The Playboy Mansion could be understood as a paradigmatic “modern” house, taking Le Corbusier’s transformation of domesticity into a visual commodity over the edge. If, as Beatriz Colomina has pointed out, “seeing, for Le Corbusier, is the primordial activity of the house. The house is a device to see the world, a mechanism of viewing,” the Playboy Mansion is no longer a viewing machine, but rather a device for communicating and producing pleasure and capital through communication. Whereas Le Corbusier’s houses work according to the model of the photographic and cinematic cameras, the Playboy Mansion functions as a broadcasting apparatus, somehow as a compound of the personal telephone, the television set and the sexual vibrator. We could state, following Friedrich Kittler’s analyses of the transformation from the book into the digital era, that the Mansion, a multimedia version of the “reading” and masturbating boudoir, dreamed of working as a “single medium” able to integrate television, film, radio,

“The modern transformation of the house,” explains Beatriz Colomina speaking about Le Corbusier, “produces a space defined by wall of (moving) images. This is a space of media, of publicity. To be “inside” this space is only to see. To be “outside” is to be in the image, to be seen, whether in the press photograph, a magazine, a movie, on television, or at your window. It no longer has so much to do with public space, in the traditional sense of a public forum, a square, or the crowd that gathers around a speaker in such a place, but with the audience that each medium of publication reaches, independent of the place this audience might actually be occupying. But, of course, the fact that (for the most part) this audience is indeed at home is not without consequence. The private is, in this sense, now more public than the public.” Beatriz Colomina, Privacy and Publicity, 7-8.

Beatriz Colomina, Privacy and Publicity, 7.

See the history of the sexual vibrator in Rachel Maines, The Technology of Orgasm, Hysteria, The “Vibrator” and Women’s Sexual Satisfaction (Baltimor, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1999).

Friedrich Kittler, “Gramophone, Film, Typewriter,” in Literature Media Information
telephone…Not only music, images and phone calls were able to reach the individual household but the Mansion itself was able to broadcast a virtual utopia via electronic and fiber cables. Whereas the images of the interior of the Playboy Mansion seemed to convey the intimacy of Hefner’s private house, what was rendered public was a strongly staged and disciplined representation of the interior produced as “private.” The Playboy Mansion was no longer a machine for viewing, but a national (and later global) multimedia-communicating device.

In terms of its vertical distribution, the house’s stairs organized the transition between the restricted space of the Bunny Dorm, which visitors could not access, and the performance of sexual freedom of the floors below, where the Bunnies were required to always be available to be photographed or filmed. In terms of media production and distribution, the house, with its themed spaces (the tropical cave, the colored suites, the multimedia room) produced the flow of images that appeared in Playboy magazine and on the “Playboy’s Penthouse” TV show.  

The process of the “public” construction of the “private” reached its climax with the opening of the first Playboy Club in 1960 a few blocks away from the Mansion. Dozens of “Bunnies” who worked as escorts, actresses or waitresses went back and forth between the two buildings. With its capacity to set in motion a sex-architecture-media-capital production circuit on a global scale, the Playboy multimedia complex consisting

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819 This feedback loop between the house and the magazine was a model for more recent pornographic enterprises such as Larry Flynt’s Hustler.
of the magazine, the Mansion, the Club and the TV programs could no longer be seen as simply “the world’s biggest bachelor pad.” If, leaving moral judgment aside, we re-define pornography as any representation that aims to technically control the sexual response of the observer, the Playboy Mansion could be understood as a multimedia pornographic device that, by the mid-seventies, already encompassed architecture, the press, television and film diffusion. The Mansion and its media extensions effectively functioned as an audiovisual production industry. Playboy had created a singular “pornotopia”: the first multimedia brothel in history.

In biopolitical terms, the Mansion was a pharmacopornographic economic ecology: an organized flow of bodies, labor, resources, information, drugs and capital. The spatial virtue of the house was its capacity to distribute the economic agents that participated in the production, exchange and distribution of information and pleasure. The Mansion was a post-Fordist factory, where highly specialized workers (the Bunnies, photographers, camera men, technical assistants, the magazine writers…) situated at different levels of the Mansion and the Playboy office building would produce the Playboy Magazine and its pornotopic derivates. The third floor of the house was just a hidden warehouse-like facility (the Bunnies room) that provided the living equipment and work force used to run Playboy’s visual and discursive assembly line production. Located within a bio-multimedia-factory, the Bunnies functioned both as living parts and performers. Finally, the Mansion was a socio-technical system where the multimedia room, the cave and Hefner’s bedroom were at the same time engines, workshops, housing, and communication units.
The magazine’s discourse fought with equal force familiar domesticity and the traditional brothel, which had been two key topoi of the disciplinary biopolitical economy of industrial capitalism. As a replacement for both, Hefner invented a pharmacopornographic heterotopia, an exceptional folding-in of public space into interior space, a multimedia brothel, a public house and a new form of pleasure without actual sex: a virtual pleasure produced through the connection of the body to a set of information techniques. Playboy had erotized what McLuhan had described as a new form of modern proximity “created by our electric involvement in one another’s lives.”

The Playboy Mansion and their media extensions were not just renovated stately homes, but could be seen as a mutation of the traditional brothel in the pharmaco-pornographic era. The distribution of public and private spaces in the house, with its curious conflation of work space and living areas, was really not very different from nineteenth- and early-twentieth century brothels. Hefner’s success, however, was to convert the early forms

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821 Chicago was one of the main centres of prostitution in the United States at the start of the twentieth century. Between the late 1920s and the 1950s, the Mafia (headed first by Jim Colismo and later by Al Capone) controlled all spaces of prostitution. Captain Golden recalls this period in a *Playboy* article: “I can remember innumerable such centers...They were very expensively furnished and the ladies wore ball gowns...Beginning in 1890, Chicago experienced a brothel boom unique in the Republic. Hundreds of madams from all over came sashaying into the great cow-killing metropolis, bringing their full staffs with them, including pimps and piano professors. Thousands of venturesome young farmers’ daughters and prairie village maidens came pouring out of the Santa Fe and the La Salle Street stations on their own. A few weeks
of sexual consumption, which used to be confined to brothels, into pure representation and audiovisual consumption, by multiplying the “value” of each and every image of and out of the Mansion.

Following the general thermodynamic law of heteropias described by Michel Foucault, pornotopias are neither created nor totally destroyed. Instead, like space-time bubbles or biopolitical islands in a sea of signs, they pop-up in particular historic contexts, activating different metaphors and economic relationships that vary according to mutating technologies of the body and representation. The Playboy Mansion and its space-media spin-offs were more than just the fruit of Hefner’s libidinal imagination. The media-architecture complex encompassing the magazine, the mansions, hotels, clubs and travel agencies, videos and television channels, could be seen as the latest materialization of the revolutionary sexual utopias in eighteenth century France imagined by Restif de la Bretonne and designed by Nicolas Ledoux transposed to the unexpected context of North American late-capitalism, and developed by mass media technologies and the architecture of the spectacle. In spite of the differences between the

later found them scented and silken-gowned in the Tenderloin havens. Around 1900 Chicago was the Republic’s unchallenged center of bawdry. New Orleans, New York and San Francisco were unhappy runners-up. Vice in those communities was a glittering side-line activity. In Chicago, it was half of the town. Crystal chandeliers blazed in every third parlor on the Near North and the Near Sough Sides. Pimps canvassed the city’s office buildings like crack salesmen. Most of the city’s cafés, theatres and rallying places were barred to respectable females. Only bawds enjoyed the town. On a Saturday night the tune-filled bordellos were as jam-packed as are the city’s beaches today.” *Playboy*, January 1954, 51. See also Vern L. and Bonnie Bullough, *Women and Prostitution* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1987).
state brothel and its “architecture parlante” and the Chicago Mansion, Hefner brought Oïkema to America.

Just as Restif de la Bretonne and Ledoux produced their architectural projects at the critical moment of the uprising of the French revolution when configurations of sexual identity and techniques of the body were subjected to dramatic changes, the Playboy project emerged during the Cold War, a period of intense political and social transformation. Restif de la Bretonne, Sade’s, Ledoux’s and Lequeu’s lifetime was characterized by the shift from sovereign forms of power over the body to disciplinary regimes, with the introduction of new techniques of surveillance and spatialization of pleasure that, as we have already seen, will produce the modern prison and hospital complex, as well as the modern configurations of heterosexuality and homosexuality. Similarly, what we could call the “Playboy period” coincided with the mutation of the disciplinary regime towards pharmacopornographic forms of control and production of subjectivity characterized by the pharmacological design of gender and sexual reproduction and by the electrification and media production of pleasure. As we have already seen, Restif’s and Ledoux’s architectures of pleasure eroticized the forms of diffuse biopower, scopic surveillance, penitentiary confinement and bodily restriction that emerged with revolutionary disciplinary institutions in France. Likewise, Playboy eroticized the very forms of power that characterized late capitalism during the Cold War years, with its techniques of media surveillance and domestic confinement. Restif de la Bretonne and Nicolas Ledoux formulated and revealed the eroticism of the disciplinary
society, exposing the pleasure production mechanisms inherent in its architecture, while Playboy heralds the eroticism of the pharmaco-pornographic society to come.

The Parthénon, Oïkema and the Playboy Mansion show us, that sexuality is less an ‘act,’ singular and deliberate, than “a nexus of power and discourse,”822 to put it in Judith Butler’s terms, of body techniques and architecture. Sexuality is displayed within a theatrical context, and pleasure is always the function of a body technique. At the same time, architecture cannot be an expression of a pre-established sexual and natural order – on the contrary, the sexual grammar is produced performatively through the repetition of architectural conventions: the creation of frameworks of visibility, access denial or permission, spatial distribution, and segmentation of the public and the private. Both Oïkema and the Playboy Mansion eroticize the specific visual techniques and forms of spatialization of power, rather than positioning themselves “outside” of existing forms of domination and control of the body and subjectivity.

The differences between Restif de la Bretonne and Ledoux’s state brothels and Playboy’s twentieth century post-war pornotopia don’t lie in the outward aesthetic difference between the rational architecture of Oïkema and the Chicago gothic revival style, between mirrors and record players, between the “fauteuil d’amour” and the rotating bed. The real difference does not only arise from the different techniques for the production and control of sexual identity that are de-contextualised and erotized in each

case. They arise also from the different economic systems and forms of production of power-pleasure-capital in which they operate: Playboy moved the disciplinary Oïkema into an economy of information transforming disciplinary architecture into a “multimedia architecture,” putting it to work within the liberal and consumer market.

Expressing Oïkema’s tension between reform and revolution, between control and subversion, between disciplinary architecture and heterotopia, the Playboy Mansion simultaneously behaved as a “counter-space” that challenged the traditional models of spatialization of power that enshrine the heterosexual dwelling as the heart of consumption and reproduction in American culture during the fifties and sixties, but also as a spatialization of the body-control regimes of the emerging pharmacopornographic capitalism. Indeed, it was this productive tension that was responsible for its success as a materialized pornotopia and a popular marketable space.
Fig. 339. Hugh Hefner Rotating Bed. Magnum.
7. THE INVENTION OF THE PHARMACOPORNOGRAPHIC BED

“What time is it in pornotopia?
One is tempted to answer, it is always bedtime.”

Steven Marcus

In his history of the evolution of the technology within the American household, Giedion argued that “ways of sitting reveal the profound nature of a historic period.” But in spite of Giedion’s interest in the mechanization of comfort and sitting behaviors, and in the technical production of the horizontal position after the nineteenth century, the relationship between sexuality and comfort, between gender and horizontality, that still had an important place within Norbert Elias' history of the civilizing process in European early modernity, received no attention in Mechanization Takes Command. Sitting remained for Giedion a formal and functional relationship between the body, understood as an anatomical and skeletal universal structure, and the technical artifact as functional object and historical trace. Confronting Giedion with Foucault’s biopolitics and feminist readings of domestic techniques that take into account the sexual and gender dimension of the artifact/user interface, the present chapter tries to understand Playboy’s sitting and lying techniques as a crucial sign of the pharmacopornographic mutation of the techniques of the interior space within the postwar years.

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823 Steven Marcus, The Other Victorians, 269.
The horizontal worker

In January 1958, Playboy published the article, “Hollywood Horizontal: Battle Cry of a Vertical Screenwriter. My Kingdom for a Couch,” which announced a historic mutation brought about by a new way of sitting. In this essay, the journalist Marion Hardgrove disclosed the (supposedly) private (but in fact fictitious) correspondence between William T. Orr, executive producer of Warner Brothers TV in Hollywood, and several Hollywood writers. The ironic quarrel between the voices in favor of and against “verticality” used architectonic and economic criteria to contrast a new type of “horizontal worker,” a successful urban writer and businessman, with his “stiff,” “vertical,” counterpart. Under the command to “take joy in your work,” horizontality was understood as the new anti-Weberian ethic of capitalism, whereby work and sex

![Image of the article and Hugh Hefner working on the floor of the Playboy Offices](image)

Fig. 340, 341. Left: “Hollywood Horizontal,” Playboy, January 1958;

Right: Hugh Hefner working on the floor of the Playboy Offices, Playboy Archives.

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constituted the two main, interchangeable, variables in a single equation of economic and life success in North America’s affluent consumer society following the Second World War. Whereas Giedion praised verticality for being the origin of the architectural experience,\(^{826}\) *Playboy* posited verticality as a subjective pathology and a cultural epidemic, a burden carried over from an obsolete system of production. One of the writers interviewed by *Playboy* explains to William T. Orr: “I have been grievously concerned by recent complaints that my writing is increasingly vertical. In the language of the layman, this means that it goes rigidly down towards the bottom of the page without ever noticeably broadening out. I am stunned by the charge but unhappily unable to refute it. Vertical writing is a serious matter with which we cannot put up. It is a disease that must be treated as soon as it becomes apparent... The bald fact, sir, is this: Horizontal writing cannot be achieved except by being horizontal on a desktop or on cold linoleum. Various secondary officials of our little organization have made conscientious and valiant efforts to stamp out creeping verticality by procuring for the writer that indispensable tool of his trade: the couch.”\(^{827}\)

A horizontal plane larger than the couch had been Hefner’s first writing and design surface for *Playboy*: the floor. In his Hyde Park apartment, the undistinguished floor of the kitchen and living room had served simultaneously as an expanded table, where Hefner spread out his pictures. Hefner maintained, “I used the carpet as a giant desk. When I met artists, designers and writers we used to crawl while we looked at our...


\(^{827}\) *Playboy*, January 1958, 29, 36.
work.”828 When the Playboy offices moved to 11 East Superior Street in late 1954 after the success of the first issues, Hefner chose to keep working on his office floor and rarely sat at his desk, forcing his colleagues, who still wore shirts and ties, to spend their days crawling on hands and knees somehow transporting them from adulthood into infancy, but also from human verticality into an animal walk. This rotation from verticality to horizontality indicated also the rejection of postwar neo-Victorian sexual morals – “the horizontals” became a term of reference for prostitutes in France during the nineteenth century. As Hugh Hefner’s biographer’s Steven Watts explains, “sex in the office was commonplace”829: Hefner approved and even urged his employees to feel relaxed in the office and give free reign to their sexual instincts. At the office, the photography studio, without lights or windows, functioned as a “dark-room” ideal for partner-swapping and parties. This freedom of movement and expression, Hefner believed, improved the quality of articles written for the magazine and the overall performance of staff. The result was a disruption of the Fordist hierarchy in which the horizontal position is linked to leisure and rest, and verticality is a condition of the production of capital. As one of the editors, Ray Russell once cracked, “in most companies you be fired if you fooled around on the job with somebody you worked with. At Playboy, it was grounds for promotion.”830

828 Grethen Edgren, 32.
829 Steven Watts, 98.
830 Steven Watts, 146.
Hefner’s topographic imaginary, his unflagging, almost Kafkian construction of a multimedia burrow, was also intended as a challenge to the modern city’s separation of professional and domestic spaces. After the move to East Superior Street, Hefner, who had begun to disassociate himself from conjugal and family life, virtually lived inside his office. When *Playboy* headquarters moved to Ohio Street in 1957, Hefner envisaged a small apartment built inside the offices: a simple room with a bed, a bathroom and a wardrobe. Hefner could thus get up and start working on the floor of his office every day while still in his pajamas. This was the start of the myth of Hefner in pajamas and slippers, ensconced in a space that is neither all together professional nor strictly domestic. *Playboy*’s claim for horizontality implied also a questioning of the modern hierarchical relationship between private and non-private spaces that now mixed into each other like fluids running around a single plane.

At the office, there was a back-and-forth trail of photographic files linking Hefner’s bedroom to the Magazine’s final layout and production room, without any obvious borders. The pool of publishable photos included images such as Hefner’s girlfriends in bathing suits and Janet Pilgrim, the sales secretary, coming out of the shower. Hefner himself soon appeared among the magazine’s characters. The office had expanded to take over Hefner’s apartment, and at the same time private life infiltrated every area of the office. *Playboy* had invented the “domo-professional” space and a new style of cool worker in designer pajamas.

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831 See Deleuze and Guattari’s digressions on Kafka’s warren: Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, 1975, 56.
832 See: Steven Watts, 99.
The separation between workplace and residence that made the widespread use of the car possible was a dominant feature of urban/suburban life in the United States after the war.\(^{833}\) Questioning this separation meant not only attacking the structure of the American city, but also the production economy of Fordism and its moral understanding of the relationship between work, production and pleasure.\(^{834}\) Rather than understanding Playboy’s plea for horizontality as a radical critique of capitalism related to Paul Lafarge’s late nineteenth century claims for *A Right to be Lazy*,\(^{835}\) we should see Playboy’s undoing of the worker’s verticality as the sign of the transformation of capitalism itself and its ways of production. By introducing the figure of the *horizontal media worker* (who could just as easily be a writer or a sex worker or ideally both) and constructing a new post-domestic, public-private space that blurred the boundaries between leisure and work, Playboy anticipated the late-twentieth century discourses on “flexible workers” and “immaterial labor” as well as the transformation from the Fordist economy to a system of production where information, knowledge, affect and pleasure are the new merchandises.\(^{836}\)

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\(^{834}\) For a study of the Fordist factories in America see the classic: Grant Hildebrand, *Designing for Industry: The Architecture of Albert Kahn* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1974).

\(^{835}\) Paul Lafarge, Marx’s son-in-law, published in 1883 *The Right to be Lazy*, a founding manifesto of the refusal of work movement. Lafarge opposed both liberal and socialist ideals of subject construction through work and production, developing an ethics of “laziness”.

Playboy’s narrowing of the distance between work and leisure, sex and production, operated as a true vector of innovation in the transitions that would eventually lead to pharmacopornographic capitalism. As a result of the critique of the Fordist segregation of spaces of production, by 1969 *The Ladies’ Home Journal* was already publishing “A Home in the Office,” an unexpected defense of the possibility of interpenetration of the domestic and work spaces.

The Playboy Mansion, rebuilt in 1959, was the culmination of this process of infiltration and endless recombination. Within the Mansion, the rotating bed was a quintessential above-floor horizontal surface, the perfect hybrid of floor, bed and office desk, which Hefner used as his living base: he would sit up against the leather back, wearing only his pajamas, talking on the phone and choosing the next “Playmate of the Month” from among the hundreds of slides spread out on sheets. From time to time, and without interrupting his “work,” he was visited by a select group of bunnies who, filmed or photographed on the spot, would become part of his expanding, potentially publishable, erotic video and photographic archive.

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Fig. 342. Hugh Hefner working on his rotating bed. Chicago Playboy Mansion, Burt Glinn/Magnum Photos, 1966.

Hefner’s electronic rotating bed – used as work table, television set, TV couch, photographic and theatre stage, sexual playground, orgy site, sleeping platform and even for family get-togethers – was a new centre of economic and sexual production. It worked as a rotating, about-turning mechanism, transforming vertical into horizontal, up into down, right into left, adult into child, one into many, dressed into nude, work into leisure, and private into public. Functioning as a biopolitical transformer, the rotating bed was also a turbine in the Playboy Mansion’s multimedia factory, which churned out an essentially numeric output: signs (text, photographs, video footage...) capable of being decoded to produce both capital and affects, immaterial commodities and identity.
Designing the Playboy Bed

In *Project for a Glossary of the Twentieth Century*, J. G. Ballard defined furniture as “an external constellation of our skin areas and body postures,” and regretted that the bed, one of the most fundamental of these external constellations, was the “least imaginative of all forms of furniture.”\(^{838}\) Assembling different historical furniture models and integrating external technical functions in a traditional bed, the Playboy bed was bound to become a dramatic turning point in what Ballard thought as an exceptionally monotonous history.

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Fig. 343-345. From left to right: Advertising for O’Brien Paints, stressing the continuity between interior and façade, Nov, 1959, Life Magazine; Advertising for Simmons Double bed and for the Simmons Hide-A-Bed, 1958, Life Magazine.

Installed in the Mansion’s master bedroom in 1959, the Playboy bed was to become Hugh Hefner’s main living quarters. Part of the process of endless transformation of

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privacy into publicity (and vice versa) that characterized the Mansion, Hefner's rotating bed was the pharmacopornographic device par excellence. Moving beyond its furniture status, the Playboy bed aspired to become a total habitat, a sexual theater, and a center for audiovisual production. Measuring 2.6 meters in diameter, Hefner’s bed was equipped with an internal hydraulic motor allowing it to rotate 360 degrees in any direction, and to vibrate (jerkily, according to its visitors) when it was not turning. The rotating platform rested on a fixed board equipped with numerous multimedia controls, behaving as a non-traveling cockpit. The leather headboard did not only provide support, it was also a
control panel connected to a radio, a television, a movie projector, and a telephone for communication within the Mansion and the Playboy offices, but also with what Hefner emphatically called “the external world.” We could see Playboy’s integration of the telephone and the television into the rotating bed as a double move of de-feminization and de-privatization of low-tech domestic appliances that were traditionally represented as domestic and female tools during the postwar period.\(^{839}\) If the bed and the telephone

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were represented as intimate, reproductive, and domestic when they were being used by a female body, the same designs and appliances became public and productive when the occupant of the bed or the telephone user was the heterosexual white male bachelor as if the function of technology could be modified according to the biopolitical status of the body that uses it.

A video camera installed on a tripod and aimed at the bed allowed Hefner to videotape his “private” encounters, both business-related and sexual—a distinction that came undone with the bed and its multiple surveillance and recording devices. The resulting audiovisual record of hundreds of hours of footage was added to the existing records of sexual encounters that Hefner had began to keep in 1952, including a log of the who, how, and when of each encounter as well as “positions” and “specialties,” which were then assigned codes for subsequent classification. The rotating bed had been transformed into a production set for a multimedia archive of its user's sexual life. All the audiovisual material recorded in Hefner’s room and in other rooms equipped with an internal surveillance system could subsequently be viewed and assembled by Hefner himself in an editing suite.

Rejecting the dominant configurations for the spatial distribution of sleeping practices in the 1950s (the conjugal bed—an invention dating from 1840 derived from the Napoleonic institutionalization of marriage—, twin beds and the Murphy or Hide-A-

Hefner opted for a bed that was bigger than a standard double bed radically undoing the married couple sexo-spatial arrangement. The round bed was designed and built according to Hefner's instructions who, once again, reclaimed the position of the architect. The idea was actually based on a precarious structure built by Victor Lownes, Hefner's friend and the executive director of Playboy, for his divorcee-bachelor pad. “Lowness had put together four beds and built what he called a “playpen,” covering it with a huge blanket.” The playpen had been the scene of sexual games and swinging among the group of friends who worked for Playboy, and thus already functioned as a kind of pornotopic enclave.

Fig. 349. Donald Jaye’s design for the Playboy round bed and master bedroom, Playboy, May 1962.

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840 Patented in 1900, the Murphy bed folds right into the wall via a cabinet or closet. The dialectics visibility/invisibility of the Murphy bed and the logic of camouflage (its possible conversion into closet, piano, etc.) are linked to the history of the bed as the most private of all household techniques within the bourgeois home.

841 Steven Watts, 95
The Playboy bed was also an improved and magnified version of the rectangular and semicircular beds that appeared in Donald Jayee's 1956 and 1959 sketches for the Playboy Penthouse. Working like a gearbox between the magazine and the Mansion, the bed was proof of Playboy’s power to inscribe the erotic utopia within a material geography. Nevertheless, the mechanism itself was not a Playboy invention, but another step in a process of mechanization and technification of domestic furniture started during the nineteenth century. The closest referent was the electronic bed ("The Electronic Road to Ritzy Relaxation") that the Daily Express—borrowing Le Corbusier's well-known expression—described as a true machine à vivre, and which had been the main attraction at the 1959 Furniture Exhibition at Earls Court, London.

Although the Ritzy bed was functionally very similar to the Playboy bed (with a radio-television system and a remote control panel that made it possible to open and close the drapes or turn the light on and off), it consisted of a fixed base with chaste twin beds. But the innovation introduced by Playboy was not only the electrification of the bed, but the technification of a non-monogamous pornotopia. In 1949 Buckminster Fuller designed the “autonomous living package” which supplied for a heterosexual family of six, containing a comprehensive set of living facilities. Ten years later, Playboy

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842 See Gretchen Edgren, 2-3. Comparison of different sources does not lead to the deduction that the circular rotating bed was in fact designed by Donald Joye in 1959 and published in Playboy in 1962. Playboy's hagiographies describe Hefner as the bed's "creator" and insist on the confusion between editor and designer and an architect.

produced what could be called the first *pharmacopornographic living package* for the single urban heterosexual man.

Fig. 350, 351. Left: The Electronic Road to Ritzy Relaxation, Earl Court Furniture Exhibition, London, 1959; Right: Two women trying a Murphy bed. Francis Miller/Time & Life Pictures/ Getty Images, Life Magazine, December 1, 1958.

Combining the playpen with the plans imagined for the Playboy townhouse and the multimedia controls of the Ritzy electric bed, the rotating bed became a private amusement park and at the same time a superstructure capable of absorbing practically every telecommunication device available at the end of the 1950s. The bed then reappeared in the magazine's pages in April 1965: the very media channel that had produced it was dematerializing it, turning it back into discourse and visual sign. By then, it had already become “the most famous bed in the United States.”

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844 Hefner's bed was more notorious than Gary Grant's and Tyrone Power's square beds, as well as Lana Turner's heart-shaped bed.
Fig 352-353: From left to right: Comic drawing, Silverstein, published in *Inside the Playboy Mansion*; Bed design for the Penthouse for a Bachelor, *Playboy*, September 1956.

**The bed that never sleeps**

The Playboy bed was constructed as a total architectural system with the capacity to integrate a series of communication and comfort functions. Although in operational terms it was fairly basic, its assemblage in the form of what could be called a *post-domestic megastructure* consisting of a base, a mattress, and telecommunications center already hinted at the nature of the habitat of the forthcoming *pharmacopornographic worker*. Articulated as a single module, the bed and the recording and multimedia station did away with the traditional antithesis between passivity and activity, sleep and wakefulness, rest and work. No longer synonymous with sleep, the bed became a *topos* of never-ending, mediated wakefulness. Likewise, the body lying on the Playboy bed was no longer an inert, passive organism, but an active, ultra-connected conductor.

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845 Hefner, an international sleep choreographer, was also an amateur hypnotist, who would hypnotize guests who attended his parties. Anecdote cited by Delilah Henry in Katherine Leigh Scott, 1998, 66.
producing and experiencing his surrounding environment. Even as the occupant's body slept, the bed and its media connections kept him awake, because the Playboy bed—like the modern metropolis—never sleeps.

Inextricably linked to his technical ecosystem, the Playboy subject cannot inhabit his environment without controlling (or being controlled by) it. Although the bed mechanism is relatively precarious, Playboy magazine describes the transformation of space produced by the rotation of the platform as cutting-edge ambient technology: “One touch to the rotating bed's buttons allows Hef to create four different rooms. When the bed is oriented toward the wall, he faces the Hi-Fi channel and video, in front of a television console made of Philippine mahogany with a double screen that was maneuvered from the bed and a stereo Hi-Fi Clairtone channel, with spherical speakers coated with aluminum... [...] To the North, the bed faces the conversation zone created by Knoll sofa and a coffee table... [...] To the West, the bed faces a fixed headrest, with a private bar and a table to eat at any time. And to the South, the bed is oriented toward the romantic glow that the Italian marble chimney produces... [...]”846 While the circular shape was easily justifiable by the number of bodies involved in the sexual practices that made Hefner famous, there was no explanation for the rudimentary rotating mechanism. “In spite of his heroic efforts” Russell Miller pointed out, “Mr. Hefner has never been able to satisfactorily explain why anybody would want to have a rotating bed. He would usually get trapped in discourses on “the creation of different surroundings,” it was

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enough to press the button to change the show in front of his eyes, but it was hard to understand why he couldn't simply turn his head to obtain the same basic effect."

In his 1948 history of furniture, Siegfried Giedion—our detractor of “Playboy architecture”—provided some clues towards understanding the rotating nature of the future Playboy bed. If as Giedion suggested in *Mechanization Takes Command*, furniture must be seen as phenomenological remains that allow us to get a sense of “the attitude of an era,”

we could ask, reading Giedion with Foucault, what attitude was reflected by the rotating multimedia bed? What could be the biopolitical and cultural meaning of a bed that spins without moving, rotates without changing position? What is the subjectivity produced by the Playboy Bed? Who are the users and abusers constructed by the Playboy Bed?

Giedion reminds us that the French origin of the word “furniture” (*meuble*) referred to “movable, transportable goods.” During the Middle Ages (and therefore within a sovereign power regime in Foucaultian terms), the concept of “furniture” encompassed anything from cutlery and tapestry, to women, children, slaves, and domestic animals. The legal expression “moveable asset” (*bien meuble*) has its roots in this concept that designated anything that did not belong to the house, which was, by opposition, known as “fixed assets” (*biens immeubles*). Until the seventeenth century, “movable” assets followed the sovereign feudal lord everywhere he went (on temporary journeys as well

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847 Russell Miller, 8-9.
as more permanent moves). In his never-ending travels, the lord would only leave behind the castle walls, stone benches, and sculptures. The sovereign medieval man always traveled with his belongings, which functioned as portable extensions of his legal persona. Sovereign masculinity was thus constructed as a function of these movable properties. Although without questioning the gender and sexual implication, Giedion noticed that this “furnished” existence—in the double sense of nomadic and connoted by necessarily movable objects—was the result of the extreme precariousness of life in the Middle Ages. And also of the need to mark the body with external signs of power that show the individual’s social and political status at all times. The austere medieval chair was not an instrument of comfort and bodily rest so much as a semiotic support, an indicator of social function and power.

Fig. 354-356. From left to right: Adolf Loos, Lina’s bedroom, 1903; Max Peintner, “Autobett,” 1969, Collection Pierre Wiss, Paris. Photograph by Philippe Magnon; Playboy round bed at the Big Bunny Jet, 1969.

The Playboy bed can be inscribed within this history of the transformation of furniture and understood as the semiotic support of pharmacopornographic masculinity within the telecommunications age. The rotating bed balances on the opposition between the mobility of the rotating platform, and the stability of the mechanism that keeps it still rooted to the domestic space, connected to its technical extensions. It integrates the pre-modern function of furniture as a portable sign of social status and the modern functions of comfort and a media-constructed environment transforming its occupant into a pop multimedia feudal lord. Like his medieval counterpart, the playboy needs to surround himself with furniture—semiotic-politic supports without which he loses his identity. Like the modern subject, the playboy sheathes them in the hedonistic qualities of comfort and well-being. And finally, like a true pharmacopornographic subject, the playboy technifies his furniture and connects himself to it prosthetically, incorporating it, so that it becomes the media port that allows him to “hallucinate” reality, or in Gilles Deleuze's and Félix Guattari’s reprisal of Huysmans’ words, “voyager sans voyager,” “to travel without going anywhere.” The ultra-connected Playboy bed rotates on its own axis because it no longer needs to move in order to be nomadic. In 1939, Adorno pointed out that the station-switching behavior of the radio listener constituted a sort of

Likewise, Playboy’s bed provided what we could call with Susan Buck-Morss a form of optical, non-ambulatory flanerie. With the rotating bed, Playboy invented “media nomadism,” which would become one of the characteristics of the use of post-domestic space in the twenty-first century. Playboy anticipated this way the transformation of communication into an environment projected by the experimental architectural projects of the 1950s and 1960s. The 360 degree rotation is thus a reflex movement suggesting that the world of information moves along with the bed. In the Mansion or in the Big Bunny DC-9, the round bed drives within communication. In between the total privacy and the sensorial intensity of the animal fur space of Adolf Loos’ bedroom, and the cockpit driving practice of the user of the 1969 Max Peintner furry “bed-car,” Hefner could experience movement while lying down in his bed, just rotating and looking at the screen-walls: speed, like sexual pleasure, was a projection of multimedia and pharmacological technologies.

853 See Peter Cook, Experimental Architecture, 125-127.
The Playboy bed anticipated the 1960’s obsession with “virtual time,” performing as an experimental case of what urban critic Paul Virilio would later call “temporal compression.” ⁸⁵⁴ According to Virilio, two technical space-time experiments marked the 1960’s cultural imaginary: the walkabouts in outer space of American astronaut Edward White leaving his spacecraft in 1965, and the adventure of French speleologist Michel Siffre who in 1962 enclosed himself in a cave in the south of France in order to lose his circadian rhythms (body natural time related to sun light). ⁸⁵⁵

Both a spacecraft and a time-cave, the rotating bed was a micro-planet constantly in motion—not according to the natural space-time coordinates that rule planet Earth, but governed by the non-stop media mise-en-scène orchestrated by its occupant. The writer Tom Wolfe described the room that housed the Playboy bed as a platform suspended outside of time and space: “No Daylight. Within his sealed capsule, Hefner loses all

sense of time and season. He loves the night. By keeping his shades always drawn, he has effectively banished daylight from his life. He eats when he pleases—a kitchen staff is on duty 24 hours a day. But then he subsists largely on Pepsi-Colas, which are stocked in small refrigerators scattered throughout his quarters, including one in the headboard of his bed. Often he doesn't even know what day it is. A friend suggested giving him a set of seven pajamas with the day embroidered on each—in reverse writing so that he would just have to look in the mirror while shaving to see where he was in the week.” In Virilio’s terms, we could say that Hefner’s rotating bed was a capsule of high “dromospheric pressure:” removed out of “natural” time, like Michel Siffre in the glacial cave, the inhabitant of the bed lives according to the augmented time of the technologies of surveillance and communication. Enclosed in the bedroom and connected to the social agora only through technology, the playboy lives, like astronaut Edward White, in a “stero reality.”

Life in the psychedelic bunker

“Drugs resist conceptual arrest. No one has thought to define them in their essence, which is not to say “they” do not exist. On the contrary. Everywhere dispensed, in once form or another, their strength lies in their virtual and fugitive patterns. They do not

857 Paul Virilio and Sylvère Lotringer, 43.
858 Ibid., 41.
close forces with an external enemy (the easy way out) but have a secret communications network with the internalized demon. Something is beaming out signals, calling drugs home”

Avital Ronell

The rotating bed was also a manifesto, an exultant, pop critique of the Fordist segregation of space, of the distance separating workplaces from places of recreation, of the traditional opposition between public and private, professional and domestic spheres. Technological mediations—of which the bed was the most glamorous, if quite unsophisticated, example—were what allowed the playboy to lead a public life without leaving the protection of interior spaces. From 1961, Hefner abandoned the East Ohio Street offices for good and moved his office into his bedroom, or more precisely, into his bed. He would eat chocolate Butterfingers and candy apples, and drink more than a dozen Pepsi-Cola's a day. According to his biographer Steven Watts, “Hefner's physical and emotional withdrawal, in many ways, had a chemical basis.” Hefner had started to use Dexedrine, an amphetamine synthesized from *Ephedra vulgaris* that not

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860 Retort from Hefner's childish protocol, the legendary Friday night parties at the Playboy House ended up turning into Pajama Parties, where guests were required to wear only a tuxedo jacket, a nightgown, and underwear. Gretchen Edgren, 66-77.
861 Steven Watts, 198.
only decreases fatigue and appetite, but is also a strong stimulant. Paradoxically, this was the drug chosen by a man who lived on a bed: an anti-soporific.

Invented during the early 1930s when pharmaceuticals remained legally unregulated in the United States thanks to the 1906 Federal Food and Drug Law, amphetamines (commercialized as Benzedrine) and dextro-amphetamines (under the name of Dexedrine) were produced and distributed freely by pharmaceutical companies in the United States. Amphetamines and dextro-amphetamines were thought during the 1930s as “synthetic hormones,” working as “artificial adrenaline” capable of rising blood pressure. Benzedrine (commonly called “Bennies” or “Benz”) was the first amphetamine to be marketed in 1932 as an over the counter nasal inhaler to treat asthma, to raise low blood pressure, and to treat menstrual pain. But it was their capacity to improve the performance of mental and physical tasks requiring persistence and attentiveness, such as hand-eye psychomotor problem solving, which shall determine the future uses of these pharmaceutical compounds. But both, Benzedrine and Dexedrine were in improved and extended as war pharmaco-technologies, designed to increase alertness in pilots. Like publications with “pornographic” images, amphetamines had been enlisted as “logistic support for the troops” by both sides during World War II. As Nicolas Rasmussen notices: “When the Germans attack Poland in September 1939, they unleashed an entirely new form of warfare on the world called Blitzkrieg, or lighting

war. It was all about speed and shock, about delivering the strongest, quickest blow and then covering lots of ground before the enemy could regroup." For Rasmussen, the *Blitzkrieg* was an entirely new psychotropic experience were the senses of the soldiers, as well as those of the bombarded population, were over-stimulated with light and sound inducing a hypnotic state of euphoria, excitement, terror and psychotropic delusion. The *Blitzkrieg* was the first pharmaco-war where, together with air force and destruction technologies, chemical technologies aimed to produce a modeled soldier. At the high peak of the war, German *Luftware* used 35 million tables of Pervitin, an amphetamine similar to Benzedrine and Dexedrine that had been elaborated by Japanese pharmaceutical companies in the early 1930s for medical and recreational uses. British newspapers of the time described the German and Japanese soldiers as “heavily drugged, fearless and berserk.” Nevertheless, although British and American troops started to include amphetamines as part of the army “equipment” later than the Japanese air force and the *Luftware*, their use increased more rapidly during the last period of the war. American aviators were reported to have started taking Benzedrine on their own initiative to be able to complete long and monotonous transatlantic flights (of more than thirty-six hours) with bombers in order to stay awake. Apart from increasing alertness, Benzedrine gave a feeling of “well-being” that made it the chosen drug for soldiers recommended by the R.H. Winfield, the medical officer from the RAF psychological service of the Bomber Command. Drugs and sexual hormones, including testosterone, were a way of compensating the increasing asymmetry between the soldier and the war.

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864 Nicolas Rasmussen, 53.
865 Quoted by Nicolas Rasmussen. Ibid.
machine. “In the words of Dr. Charles Stephenson, a U.S. naval officer stationed in London as an observer at the time: “the machine has far outstripped the man” in aviation. Just as fighter planes were now capable of acceleration that pushed the pilots beyond consciousness, so the cold and rarified atmosphere in which the newer bombers operated made for exotic medical problems. Bare flesh froze instantly to controls and other metals, and the air was too thin to think straight. Research on better controls, heating, oxygen supply, and (eventually) pressurized cabins would soon occupy many scientists.”

Amphetamines worked as a chemical technology not only to “design” the supplemented soldier’s psychic state in order to be able to cope with the high anxiety of the combat situation, but also to create a situation of psychotropic comfort (like a pharmacological cushion) to compensate the environmental shock of the cockpit space.

Moreover, in the United States, amphetamines were used to treat military war and postwar psychological conditions such as “psychoneurotic breakdown,” combat related anxiety, depression or suicidal tendencies first identified in 1940 by pioneering combat psychiatrist Roy Grinker as “battle exhaustion” and “combat fatigue,” and also called by physician John Spiegel “war neurosis” in 1942 – and included today under the label post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Since the link between physical exhaustion and psychological war neurosis was considered to be hormonal (and linked to the high production of adrenaline during combat), amphetamines were prescribed as a general hormonal regulator artificially inducing the production of adrenaline related hormone.

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866 Nicolas Rasmussen, 62.
867 Ibid., 55-6.
Fig. 379-382. Pharmaceutical advertising for Dexedrine and Benzedrine, both military and “domestic,” 1942-1956.

It was during the postwar period that the use of amphetamines, specifically Benzedrine, Dexedrine (a dextroamphetamine popularly called “Dexi” or “Christmas tree”) and Methedrine (later known simply as “speed”) became widespread and found its way back to the civilian population as treatment for depression, dizziness, hysteria, obesity, and alcoholism as well as “to keep hypnotic or sedative overdosed subjects awake.”\textsuperscript{868} It could now be inhaled to treat nasal congestion, allergies, and the common cold, and also appeared in the form of tablets. Either alone or combined with sedatives, Dexedrine legally entered the suburban home in the fifties to supplement the life of the American housewife, who suffered not from “combat fatigue” but from suburban fatigue and depression and whose high-calorie, high-glucose diet, a sedentary lifestyle and the secondary effects of the high-dose early contraceptive pill pushed towards obesity.

\textsuperscript{868} See: Antonio Escohatado, \textit{Historia general de las drogas} (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 2008), 758.
During more than two decades, “dexy” was the American housewife's best friend, her ally in domestic work, her happy mate, the secret to her slender figure.

Highly extended during the postwar years, the use of amphetamines for housewives had been already scientifically recommended by the theories of Abraham Myerson, a professor of neurology at Tufts Medical School and of clinical psychiatry at Harvard, who had experimented with the barbiturates and excitants within the household environment. Anticipating Betty Friedan’s criticism of female home reclusion, Myerson’s 1920 book *The Nervous Housewife* could be considered as an early feminist pamphlet that for the first time developed the idea according to which the home environment and the housework were causal factors in female neurosis. For Meyerson, although historically represented as the natural place where the social and moral values of “privacy,” and “modesty” dwell, the family domestic household is psychologically unhealthy to the housewife: “The home has been praised as the nucleus of society, its center, its heart….[…] It is the embodiment of family, the soul of the mother, father and children. It is the place where morality and modesty are taught…[+] The privacy of the home is a refuge from excitement and struggle and gives rest and peace to the weary battler with the world. It is a sanctuary where safety is to be sought…[+] It is a reword, a purpose in that men and women dream of their own home and thrilled by the thought. Throughout its quite runs the scarlet thread of its sex life. Home is where love is legitimate and encouraged. Yet the home has great faults. It is no more institution than anything else human is. Without at all detracting from its great, its indispensable virtues,
let us, realists, study its defects." For Meyerson, “the housewife is *par excellence* a sedentary creature. She goes to work when she gets up in the morning, within door. She goes to bed at night, very frequently without having stirred from the home.”

According to his theory, the household was a poorly sensorial environment where the isolated woman felt into boredom or into a restless and unhappy state. The secluded and captive life of the housewife characterized by the “lack of exercise necessary to good muscle tone,” “poor ventilation,” and “sensorial under-stimulation” tended to “lower the vigor of the entire organism”. Female depression, he argued, was neither the result of aging nor of menopause, but the effect of restricting the total living experience of the female body to the monotony of household environment. This situation becomes a nervous chronic condition since women, unlike men (who “use the saloon, the clubroom, the pool room, the street corner, and the lodge meeting as an escape from the un-stimulating atmosphere of wife and family,”) have no escape, “though she needs it more than the husband does.”

Myerson brought together his psycho-political criticism of the home institution and architecture with an unexpected therapeutic solution that promoted drugs as chemical forces inducing women’s liberation. Myerson identified a new depressive symptom complex that the called “*idiopathic anhedonia*” (literally “lack of pleasure”) characterized as a chronic neurosis causing reduction of interest in sleep, sex, pleasure

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870 Ibid., 82-3.
871 Ibid., 79, 83.
872 Ibid., 82.
and levels of energy. Somehow an actualization of the nineteenth neurasthenia within the American context, Myerson saw anhedonia as a modern society epidemic affecting mainly housewives and male “brain workers.” In order to treat anhedonia, he designed a mixed therapy to encourage his patients to a radical “change of life”: the most innovative part of the therapy was not physical exercise (mostly golf, tennis playing and horseback-riding) or pseudo-Freudian analysis but rather the use of sedatives to induce sleep and of stimulants, specially of Benzedrine Sulfate, to gain energy and pleasure production. Amphetamines, for Myerson, produced within the housewife’s sensorial system the intensity and variety that the salon, the clubroom, the pool room and the street corner caused within the middle class well equilibrated male conscious mental activity, and could ultimately induce a rupture of the housewife with the family household life. By the end of the forties, the “Myerson” therapy for housewives did no longer include a criticism of the marriage institution and the family household way of life, but promoted the benefits of always having Benzedrine at home. For early sixties, statistically, the typical amphetamine’s user was a middle class suburban housewife, being the middle class male brain worker (not far from Hefner’s case) the second typical user. Escaping both the family life household environment and using amphetamines to extend his environmental experience, Hefner appeared as a perfect late client of Meyerson’s therapy.

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The American suburban house and the Playboy pad were highly chemically supplemented environments. So it was not amphetamines that set the eccentric Hefner apart from the average American housewife. Amphetamines were a pharmacopornographic biotechnical milieu shared by housewives and business men, by Marilyn Monroe, Jack Kerouac, and President John Kennedy and his wife (whose private doctor even traveled with them to administer amphetamines intravenously).\textsuperscript{875} The difference between Hefner and the housewife was not the substance itself but the dose as well as specific context of ingestion – the conditions of the addiction, the results of “being-on-drugs.” By 1959, Hefner consumed “dexys” nonstop and was totally hooked. A former employee who worked for him at the time remembers Hefner staying up “for three or four days, without sleeping or eating, hardly blinking, working feverishly around the clock with the single-minded intensity of a maniac.”\textsuperscript{876} In the agitated state of the high, the bed had to do more than simply provide a good night's sleep, it also had to be a medium that made a certain emotional state possible. The space of the Playboy bed is not contained within Hefner’s master bedroom, it pops out of the “dexys”: its geography is chemical.

It was this bed itself as undefined chemical geography that that extended to the productive space of the Playboy office transforming the magazine into an addicted


\textsuperscript{876} Steven Watts, 198.
economy. Convinced that a good supply of “orange pills” sped up work in the office and improved performance, Hefner habitually handed them out to his employees. An internal company report mentions Hefner asking Lowness for fuel provisions: “Can we get a new supply of Dexedrine to the fourth floor—our present quantity is running low and, as you know, the whole Playboy operation is now dependent on those little orange pills.”

A hyperactive Hefner dictated endless messages into a tape recorder, which were then transcribed by two secretaries who worked for him, taking turns day and night. Overwhelmed by the flow of information that emerged from Hefner's bedroom, employees complained that they “had to take a dexy just to read those goddamn memos.”

In the early sixties, some Playboy editors left the magazine, exhausted by the drug use and work pressure. This was the period when Hefner became a specter, an invisible being who never left what his collaborators called “the bunker.” The chemical geography of the bed has fold unto itself producing a thick and total narcotic interiority, a psychedelic bunker.

For Colomina, the underground home, “a traditional suburban ranch-style house buried as protection from the new threat of nuclear fallout” presented at the 1964 New York World’s Fair was “a cave in which any image of the outside could be constructed and inhabited, domesticating fear by inhabiting an idealized version to the exterior.”

While American construction companies were designing underground houses, Hefner had

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877 Ibid.
878 Steven Watts, 199.
879 Beatriz Colomina, 2006, 279.
880 Ibid., 283.
found his own intra-domestic variant of an atomic shelter. Hefner’s bunker bedroom shows that what was crucial to the shelter logic was not to be underground but rather, as Colomina foresees, to be a parallel dimension, an heterotopic fiction, a space out of space, where it was possible to play out the blurring of the traditional division between public and private, between outside and inside.

But the bunker was also, as Virilio notes, “a place of death,” “a symbol of the twentieth century concentration and elimination.” Hefner’s executive assistant Dick Rosenzweig saw the bedroom-bunker as prison like more than protecting, closer to the concentration camp than to the shelter, and called Hefner's bedroom a “Dachau” where the Playboy boss, who survived on “dexys, had become “nothing but skin and bones.” Meanwhile, during that same period, Newsweek was referring to Playboy as an empire, a “budding real estate, publishing, and entertainment conglomerate.” Production grew, sales skyrocketed, and Playboy became consolidated as a major world economic power. Pharmacopornographic capitalism had been invented.

**A padded cell for a pharmacopornographic monk**

In his analysis of the relationship between governmental techniques and production of subjectivity in *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault traces back a genealogical tie between the single-body cells used in nineteenth century disciplinary architecture and the medieval cell. According to Foucault, monastic cells were “disciplines of the tiny,” in

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882 Steven Watts, 199.
883 Ibid., 209.
which a new form of power acts through “detail.”\textsuperscript{884} The tradition of solitary confinement goes back to the Benedictine and Cistercian reforms, to Dominican and Jesuit practices of isolation as a form of asceticism. Foucault saw these \textit{disciplinary islands}, which were marginal in medieval times, as \textit{vectors of social innovation} that made the transition from sovereign forms of power to modern techniques of control and surveillance possible. Monastic cells were the small somato-political laboratories on the periphery of medieval feudal institutions in which disciplinary strategies were organized, and from where they began to expand outwards. John Howard extracted his prison architecture of cellular isolation out of the plan of the Roman San Michele asylum, modeled itself out of the monastic cell.\textsuperscript{885} For Foucault, disciplinary architecture was the secularized product of monastic isolation cells, in which the modern individual was for the first time conceptualized as a soul imprisoned within a body. In a context of economic rationalization and a Quaker and Protestant reform, this desacralized isolation cell would then become a penitentiary device.\textsuperscript{886} The cell and the examination of conscience (present in both religious and penitentiary isolation) function as mechanisms of “suture,” as spatial-temporal rituals that allow the transition from sovereign ways of governing the body to disciplinary forms of controlling it.


\textsuperscript{885} John Howard, \textit{The State of the Prisons} [c. 1776] (London and Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1929), 94. Walnut Street prison, built in Pennsylvania in 1790, was one of the first places to implement and spread the disciplinary model of the isolation cell.

\textsuperscript{886} The word “penitentiary” itself comes from the language of Quakers, who use penance and auto-examination as purification techniques. See also: David J. Rothman, \textit{The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic} (Boston: Little Brown, 1971).
Foucault had seen the Medieval monastic cell as a kind of biopolitical incubator—like an eccentric experimental site for testing the techniques of the body and soul that would lead to the invention of the modern individual and the specific knowledge formation and truth production regimes that characterized European development of the “private room” from the Renaissance onwards.\footnote{Gaston Bachelard, one of Foucault’s professors, extended during the 40s and 50s the idea that the medieval aedicule was the originary architectural form, providing a body-centered sense of space and place. Following Bachelard, Wilhelm Reich established a connection between confinement and sexual energy and created the infamous “orgone” accumulator, an operator of a cosmic experience, as a high-tech version of the monastic cell. Jorge Otero-Pailos has argued that the “aedicule” was understood as a capsule to increase not only sexuality but also virility, and has studied its influence on Charles W. Moore and Jean Labatut see: Jorge Otero-Pailos, \textit{Architecture’s Historical Turn, Phenomenology and the Rise of the Postmodern} (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 118 and following.} Similarly, it could be argued that during the Cold War, Hefner’s bedroom and his rotating bed functioned as a transitional space in which the prosthetic, ultra-connected masculine subject was modeled along with the new virtual and mediated pleasures of pharmacopornographic modernity. As Tom Wolfe wrote in 1965 after entering into Hefner’s bedroom, the new multimedia cell was “the loving and cushioned heart of an artichoke-prison,”\footnote{Tom Wolfe, Op.Cit., \textit{The Sunday Herald Tribune}, quoted in \textit{Playboy}, January, 1966, p. 199.} where the director of Playboy was comfortably shut away. The layers of the house surrounding the bed, consisting of curtains, walls, and doors, but also cables, screens, cameras and speakers, folded over each other, so that the bedroom was opaque but entirely connected, impenetrable but virtually expanded. Dürer’s monk had become a multimedia playboy. Between these two
heroic figures of masculinity, images of the white heterosexual family, the suburban house and the captive woman rose up like shadows.

The Playboy bed is to the multimedia habitat of the pharmacopornographic information consumption era what the medieval monastic cell is to the disciplinary architecture and the bourgeois home: a spearhead, the first step in an ongoing mutation. Just like the cell, the Playboy bed was not simple innovation but an accumulation of techniques that were historically linked to other institutions, spaces, and practices. The Playboy bed remixed architectural models for status production, comfort, bodily functions and communication that have their roots in diverse institutional spheres and different periods in history provoking an odd montage of political regimes and social practices.

In spite of Playboy’s defense of modern architecture, Hefner’s bedroom, located in the second floor, folded onto itself and opened to the exterior space only through multimedia connections, anticipated Charles W. Moore aedicule\(^{889}\) and its displacement of modernist conventions. Indeed, Playboy magazine published a photo reportage about Moore’s New Haven residence as an example of playboy pad –what Playboy didn’t reveal is that the ultimate playboy pen was rather a gay haven.\(^{890}\) For Moore, the aedicule evoked the primary architectural and sexual experience based on the act of rubbing against the skin,

\(^{889}\) Charles W. Moore took the idea of the “aedicule” as miniature temples used for ceremonial purposes from John Summerson’s *Heavenly Mansions And other Essays on Architecture*, Norton, New York, 1963.

producing heat and pleasure.\footnote{See Jorge Otero-Pailos, 112-3.} Like in Charles W. Moore’s aedicule, Hefner’s bedroom was “a miniature house within the house.”\footnote{Ibid., 111.} Nevertheless, unlike Moore who saw the aedicule as a spiritual place that increases inner experience and connects, through the vertical columns, the body to the cosmic forces of matter, Hefner’s bedroom was an inverted aedicule which, connected only to cables and media technologies, electrified the body and transformed sexuality into pure data: Moore’s heavenly representation above the bed had definitely been replaced by a camera that registered the inhabitant’s life.
Fig. 383-386. Plans and design for the Master Bedroom suite at the Playboy Mansion West. Dirsmith Group, 1972-3. Playboy Archives, Los Angeles.
Performing power, displaying sexuality

Over the capsular, padded-cell, the Playboy bed superimposed an architecture of power that had its origins in the traditional function fulfilled by the royal bed up until the eighteenth century. In the third volume of the *Dictionnaire de l'Amueblement et de la Décoration* (1887-90), Henry Harvard describes the emergence of the “lit de justice,” as a kind of bed that was used as a public podium by members of royalty. In fourteenth century Central European monarchies, the King would arrive at parliament laying down on a bed elevated upon a platform, surrounded by his subjects. Eventually, the combination of the theatricalization of power and the reclining position led to the so-called “lit de parade,” in which an exceptional social status allowed a body to show itself in public in a horizontal position and receive guests without the need to get out of bed. As Mary Eden and Richard Carrington point out in *The Philosophy of Bed*, the “lit de parade” “conferred a subtle but undeniable prestige, and paradoxically suggested a superiority of status which would often have been far less apparent in the vertical
Oddly enough, the “lit de parade” became a habitual practice among courtesans and prostitutes in eighteenth and nineteenth century France, who received their clients laying down, and en déshabillé. The writer Tom Wolf had sensed the relationship between power and visual pleasure generated by the act of lying on the rotating bed: “Hefner occupies the center of the universe, his repeated image every time the bed rotates, installed in the center of a universe that can be controlled, and where he is the only monarch that no one can expel, always diving in himself... […] After each new rotation, the nirvana, the ambrosia, here, in the center, so that everyone can see him, the Playboy's lighthouse”\textsuperscript{894}. The rotating bed, which was more directly linked to the royal scenification of power and the erotization of the public body than to the verticality of North American masculinity in the 1950’s, became an electrified hybrid of the “lit de justice” and “lit de parade,” which conferred power and at the same time referred back to traditional female sex workers practices of public display of sexuality.

\textsuperscript{893} Mary Eden and Richard Carrington, 73.
\textsuperscript{894} Tom Wolf cited in Russell Miller, 9.
The prosthetic bachelor

In the sixties, the rotating bed provoked fascination among *Playboy* readers and criticism from those who were skeptical of its technology and saw the bed's mechanism as
usurping the sovereignty of the traditional adult male sleeper. Critics no longer saw the bed as a piece of furniture, but as a clinical symptom, an unhealthy monument in the psychic topography of its user. Russell Miller described the rotating bed as the warning sign of what would later be called Peter Pan syndrome: an illness of a regressive and narcissist adult who takes refuge in an artificial childhood: “a man who refuses to grow up, who lives in a house full of toys, who dedicates good part of his energy to playing child games, who falls in and out of love like a teenager, and who gets upset if he finds curds in his sauce.”

Miller considered Hefner's refusal to get out of bed as a pathology, a reflection of a physical handicap and a sexual compulsion that forced him to live in a horizontal position and avoid the real world, “spoiled and safe in his sensualized community.”

Along the same lines, Time magazine saw the bed as having taken away Hefner's capacity to enter into direct contact with the world, not only removing him from natural space-time coordinates but also transforming him into a “complete man of electronics” who “avoids face-to-face contact and gets his information on the outside world from newspapers, magazines and eight television monitors. He rarely watches a TV show when it is on the air, has it taped for later viewing, and also keeps a stock of several hundred taped movies.”

If—as Siegfried Gideon pointed out and Henri Lefebvre bemoaned—social relations are always mediated by objects, Hefner took this mediation, embodied in the rotating bed,

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895 Russell Miller, 1
896 Ibid., 20.
to the extreme. As foreshadowed in the plans for the Playboy penthouse in 1956, in Jayee's never-built 1959 Playboy townhouse, and in the final realization of the bed for the Playboy Mansion, the multimedia bed seems to have developed an electronic consciousness, prefiguring and registering the occupant’s movements and actions as well as his affects and desires. We could say that, strictly speaking, people do not dwell in or visit the Playboy bed, but they embody it or rather are incorporated by it. The rotating bed functioned as a pharmacopornographic multimedia prosthesis to which a body needed to be connected in order to become a playboy. This multimedia connection is what allowed him to stay in contact with the exterior world while remaining basically encapsulated, and at the same time transformed his stillness into sexuality and business, pleasure and work. But instead of diagnosing Hefner's practices as signs of a psychological pathology, it seems more apt to describe American postwar society overall as a progressively prosthetic milieu where the playboy occupied a conspicuous position.

Fig. 391, 392. Mecanical bed for hospitals and closet armchair, designed by Dupont, Paris 1914, BNF, Paris.
Anticipating the future sedentary lifestyle of the digital years, Hefner voluntarily chose to live lying horizontally, embracing what could be considered the condition of a physically disabled person, with the bed (and its pharmacological supplements) serving as a technical extension of his body and (sexual) senses. Although apparently constructing a model of heroic white and heterosexual masculinity, Playboy’s undoing of verticality and the redefinition of the bachelor as a bed depending organism brought the playboy unexpectedly closer to one of the subaltern masculine figures of the postwar period: the disabled veteran. Long before the end of the war, images in the mass media of wounded soldiers convalescing or amputees occupied an important place in news reports and popular entertainments. Among those images, often portrayed in pajamas and lying in bed surrounded by technology, women, food and cigarettes, Hefner displayed a conflicting image of masculinity oscillating between disability and sexual excess, between dependency and mass media frenzy.

Strictly following Giedion’s history of the household technologies, Playboy bed could be understood as a pop and glamorized version of the orthopedic beds that had first emerged in the eighteenth century and, improved by military medicine during the two world wars, were used as hospital instruments to support and control the movement of

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bodies that were ill, amputated or deprived of mobility. According to historian and critic David Serlin, together with the new sexual division of labor that occurred on the civilian home front, and the absence of men from traditional familiar positions, the return of the disabled soldiers to American society after the Second World War created an unprecedented political anxiety about manhood and the integrity of the male body within a growing capitalist production economy. For Serlin, the design and representation of post-war prostheses developed for veterans, combining medical, domestic and industrial design, were aimed at engineering and re-inventing heterosexual American masculinity: “By the mid-50s the development of new materials and technologies for prostheses had become the consummate marriage of industrial engineering and domestic engineering. Prostheses designed and built in the 1940s and 1940s were not merely symbolic or abstract metaphors. For engineers and prosthetists, these artificial parts were biomedical tools designed and used for rehabilitating bodies and social identities. For doctors and patients, prosthetics were powerful anthropomorphic tools that refracted contemporary fantasies about ability and employment, heterosexual masculinity, and American citizenship.”

900 The adjustable Wilson chair was the first to bring the hospital orthopedic chair into the domestic sphere around 1875.
Fig. 393. An example of the transformation of the sleeping room into a media theater for the sick patient that anticipates the becoming multimedia production/reception center in the case of Hefner’s room. *Popular Science*, Oct. 1940, 20.

Fig. 394-396. From left to right: President Roosevelt Wheelchair, 1940. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Hyde Park, New York; Right: Quadruple amputee and cold war celebrity; Jimmy Wilson using telecommunication technologies, Philadelphia, 1951 c. Bettmann/Corbis; The prosthetic myoelectric arm and the telephone as iconic cold war prostheses, 1950.
A paradigmatic example of the alignment of prosthetics and biopolitics was the production of the myoelectric arm (also called “Boston arm” and “Liberty Limb”) in the early 1960s by Norbert Wiener at the MIT in conjunction with the Harvard Medical School. The Liberty Limb worked with a battery-operated amplifier that “could magnify existing nerve impulses in an amputee’s stump, thereby generating enough power to lift and move.” Enabling the body but at the same time marking it as disabled, the myoelectric prosthesis was the visible inscription of the war technologies within the post-war body. Whereas the image of the World War Two amputated body was represented as the sign of emasculation and war defeat, the Liberty Limb was constructed as the triumph of patriotic technology over trauma and the disintegration of the national body. Only supplemented by prosthetic technology the disabled body could become a visual and rhetorical sign of masculine patriotism.

David Serlin notices the astonishing similarity between magazines like *Playboy* and *Esquire* and rehabilitation manuals of the postwar period: prostheses were often feature like “high-tech appliances or multifunction Herman Miller furniture,” new accessories of the post-war masculine identity. Conversely, Jimmy Wilson, a veteran quadruple amputee and mass media icon during the Cold War years, was often portrayed, like a

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902 Ibid., 55.
903 Ibid., 69.
playboy, using the latest telecommunication technologies and surrounded by women. The post-war masculine body (disabled or playboy) becomes able through cultural conventions: being represented according to the gender and sexual performative norms of the postwar period - smoking, dating women or using communication technologies.

The prosthetic limb, like the Playboy bed, was not only an experimental field to test new communication, cybernetic technologies and synthetic materials of the postwar industries (such as Plexiglas, Lucite, polyester, silicone, stainless steel, high-grade plastics, etc.) but also a fictional space for reconstructing a docile heterosexual masculinity “enabling” the veteran to come back home, to integrate within the American production/consumption economy, and have a “normal sex-life” free from the dangers of infirmity and homosexuality. The disabled veteran and the playboy are the two extreme figures of the post-war prosthetic discourse: whereas technologies of body reconstruction and communication are for the disabled veteran the only possibility to become “sexually normal,” the same technologies allow the playboy to transgress normality providing a romantic and utopian sexual fantasy. Whereas the technologies of communication and surveillance enabled the playboy to fingertip control his environment (air-conditioning, lights, heat, door control, telephone, stereo hi-fi, TV, camera, snack) as well as his sexuality (attracting women and recording images), the rotating bed (having the Bunnies dorm as its secret backyard) also served as a sort of libertine prosthesis for preventing marriage and family life.
Hefner, a veteran of the porn battles and a self-constructed supplemented man, shall spend most of his life lying in a bed attached to a short of multimedia sexual prosthesis. As a feedback unpredicted effect, the horizontal position ended up retroactively generating a certain motor disability in Hefner's body. At the age of 82, Hefner admitted to Fox News he was in perfect health, except for endless back problems: “I have some aches and pains and I have had lower back problems since the '80s. Too much time in bed rustling around with friends.” Unable to move and bedridden by choice, Hefner had invented a porn-pop variant of physical disability, showing that future modes of production and consumption would demand prosthetic, ultra-connected forms of immobility.
Like a total prosthesis for masculinity, the Playboy bed was presented as a pharmacopornographic juke-box, a *gadgetecture*\(^\text{905}\) that enabled the occupant to create a media environment that could be fully controlled through the flow of information and the intake of synthetic molecules. Playboy seemed to have gone beyond what in 1934 Lewis Mumford had described as a “mechanical environment” that could function as a “shock-absorber” of the real and create “surrogate excitements.”\(^\text{906}\) The bed was a sign of the postwar transformation of sexual, communication and surveillance technologies into a

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\(^{905}\) I am using here Peter Cook’s expression. See Peter Cook, *Experimental Architectures*, 127.

representational environment and therefore, into elements of interior design. While Mumford was wary of mechanical control, Playboy presented the rotating bed as a utopian pharmacopornographic interface that did away with the ergonomic distinction between furniture and machine, but also the metaphysical distance between body, mind and machine. The opposites were reconciled through the production of pleasure and capital.

**The straight matting pod or the electronic boudoir**

True to the utopias and architectural designs of the time, the rotating bed was promoted as a living capsule for the playboy. Eager to function as a telecommunicating incubator, the Playboy bed was a pop, porn, low-tech version of the capsules that NASA was already developing for its aerospace projects and also it anticipated the prosthetic designs and inflatable shelters that would soon proliferate in the so-called “radical architecture” groups such as the “Living-Pod” (1966) by David Greene and the “Cushicle” (1966) by Michael Webb, both members of the Archigram group, or the...

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907 The term "Radical Architecture" was coined by the Italian art historian and critic Germano Celant, and developed by Franco Raggi, Paola Navone and Bruno Orlandoni’s writings published in the Italian magazine Domus and Casabella in the early 1970s. « Architettura Radicale » was meant to designate a group of architects and architectural collectives who were engaged in Marxist criticism of architecture production practices and in a fundamental rethinking of the function of architecture within society, starting with the Florence based groups Superstudio, Archizoom, UFO, Gruppo 9999, and extending to non-Italian groups and architects such as Archigram, Haus-Rucker-Co, Hans Hollein, Walter Pichler and the American group Ant Farm. In addition to Celant’s writings on the movement, see also Franco Raggi, "Radical Story," in *Casabella* 382 (October 1973): 37-45; and Paola Navone and Bruno Orlandoni. *Architettura Radicale* (Milan: Documenti di Casabella, 1974). See also *Architecture radicale*, (Villeurbanne: Institut d’art contemporain, 2001).
“Yellow Heart” (1968) and “Mind Expander” (1969) by Austrian architects Haus-Rucker-Co.

Fig. 400. Side elevation of empty Cushicle, 1966, Michael Weeb.

Peter Cook describes Michel Webb’s *Cushicle* as a technical extension of the bed’s functions, both as external powered prosthesis and a living package: “The cushicle is fundamentally a return to a biblical gesture, with the idea that one can ‘take up one’s bed and walk.’ Webb extends this to the notion that one can take up one’s whole life support and communications gear and enclosure (and the bed) and walk. The cushicle is a package with a series of armatures which fold out, and pads which inflate, there is a skin around it all, a helmet to put your head in, a microphone and a water supply.”

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Fig. 401, 402. Left: Arthur Quarmby, Pneumatic Paraboloid, 1963; Right: Scene from the Twentieth Century Fox film “The Touchables” shot inside a transparent pneumatic dome, an 80 ft. diameter three-quarter sphere in transparent p.v.c. with nylon net, designed by Arthur Quarmby, 1965.

These architecture projects are not far from the early experiments on Virtual Reality of Ivan E. Sutherland in 1968 (developed well before William Gibson coined the term “cyberspace”) at the University of Utah to create a head-mounted display that connected a user directly to a computer, which were later taken over by U.S. military and the NASA. The difference, nevertheless, is that in the case of the utopian pods and multimedia beds by Archigram, Haus-Rucker-Co and Playboy, the flow of information to which the male body is connected is sexuality itself. As Katherine Hayles has suggested, “nowhere are the problematic effects of Virtual Reality clearer than in the realm of the erotic.”\footnote{N. Katherine Hayles, \textit{How We Became Posthuman, Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics} (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999), 180.} For Hayles, it is the experience of connection to multimedia technology and the dissolution of the body boundaries, the blurring of the traditional
private/public and interior/exterior moral frontiers that comes with it that is inherently
erotic. In fact, the experience of inhabiting or rather incorporating these inflatable and
ultra-connected pods could be described with Howard Rheingold notion of
“teledildonics” where architecture is a hybrid between a total condom (like in overblown
inflatable architectures by Quambry’s, Archigram’s and Haus-Rücker-Co.’s) and a
multimedia vibrator providing the final porn experience:

“The word “dildonics” was coined by visionary computer pontiff Ted Nelson in 1974.
Ted is best known as the inventor of hypertext and designer of the world’s oldest
unfinished software project, appropriately named “Xanadu.” As originally conceived, it
described a machine invented by San Francisco hardware hacker How Wachspress: a
device capable of converting sound into tactile sensations. The erogenic effect depends
upon where you, the consumer, decide to interface your anatomy with the tactile
stimulator… Before you climb into a suitably padded chamber and put on your
headmounter display, you slip into a lightweight bodysuit. It would be something like a
body stocking, but with all the intimate snugness of a condom. Embedded in the inner
surface of the suit, using a technology that does not yet exist, in an array of intelligent
effectors. These effectors are ultra tiny vibrators of varying degrees of hardness,
hundreds of them per square inch, that can receive and transmit a realistic sense of tactile
presence in the same way the visual and audio displays transmit a realistic sense of
visual and auditory presence.”

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Although the influence of popular culture, science-fiction, and commercials on the so-called radical architects of the late 50s and early 60s has often been underlined by critics and architecture historians, the impact of pornography and the postwar representation of sexuality has never been explicitly acknowledged. If it is true that *Playboy* acted as a multimedia support for architecture and design during in America the 1950s and 1960s, it can also be argued that during the following decade, between the 1960s and 1970s, European “radical architecture” projects, in spite of their critical aspirations and the aesthetic disparities, shall embody *Playboy’s* sexual politics and its codes of representation of the gendered body. Although drawing from a Marxist critique of the role of architecture within the production of class differences, and questioning the traditional status-function and fetish-nature of interior design, the radical architecture projects uncritically absorbed the gender and sexual representations embedded within American porn-popular culture that were paradigmatically represented by *Playboy*. Having developed a counter-model to the American postwar ethics of suburban family life, *Playboy’s* pornotopia presented itself as a model of transgression of traditional gender and sexual norms and therefore as a possible sexual organization system for revolutionary architectonic practices.

This unexpected discontinuity between Marxist’s undoing of the capitalist economy and the exuberant display of a white, male-centered and heteronormative representation of gender and sexuality was shared by the *International Situationiste’s* writings, one of the main discursive reference of the radical architecture movements during the 1970s. The feminist and queer turn within Marxism initiated in France by the Front Homosexuel d’Action Revolutionaire and in the United Stated represented by Gayle Rubin’s 1975 essay "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex"\(^{912}\) shall remain unknown to the radical architecture critical practices.

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Product of what could be ironically called the “Playboy-Marxism” collage, the body capsules and package architectures that proliferate within the following decade, between the 1960s and 1970s experimental projects, unlike monastic cells, were, like the Playboy bed, no longer conceived as individual spaces, but as heterosexual containers or matting pads: they were often highly sensual, psychedelic, cushion and skin like sex-pods designed to exploit the heterosexual encounter. These capsules sought to intensify, expand, or distort the experience of the heterosexual body and its senses by connecting them to audiovisual and communication technologies.

Fig. 405, 406. Left: «Comics par réalisation directe» (texte de Raoul Vaneigem, images de Gérard Joannès), Internationale Situationiste, 1967; Right: Klaus Pinter & Haus-Rucker-Co, "Downtown/Megastructures," 1971, Collection Klaus Pinter.

Thus, although the Suitaloon appears at first as a life support for the individual male body, Peter Cooks notes that “it is refined down into a system of pipes worn around the body that heat and protect it, while additional facilities can be clipped on (and the Suitaloon is infinitely more sociable, as the illustration suggests). One person with this
support can team up with another and thus the number of possibilities multiply as do the supporting artifact." The “Living City Survival Kit” that Archigram presented at the London Institute of Contemporary Art in 1963 already showed a Playboy version of the city, in which urban architecture had disappeared and been replaced by a survival kit that included the mass consumer goods of the sixties: jazz records, coca-cola, corn flakes, Nescafé, a gun, sun glasses, cash, and of course, a… *Playboy* magazine.

![Fig. 407. Inflatable Suit-Home, David Greene, Archigram 1968, (suit made by Pat Haines). Suit inflated and being occupied as home. This is a working model of the Suitaloon project by Michael Webb, which was made for the Milan Triennale, 1968.](image)

This was also the case with the Haus-Rücker-Co’s Mind Expander that was planned as an electronic enhanced habitat for two people—of different sexes, judging by the way in which it was usually represented. Designed during the drug experimentation era in the sixties, these technical extensions of the body were intended to function as psychedelic

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913 Peter Cook, 1970, 117.
914 As Rayner Banham points out, the urban survival kit is simply a “device for seeing that the hip young male flaneur” could see the city.
and sexual architectures. Likewise, and although aimed at “changing consciousness,” the pneumatic capsule of the Yellow Heart was in fact a short of visible air-bed made of three rings arriving at a transparent plastic mattress. The Yellow Heart offered just enough space for two people (a heterosexual pair) whose movements once inside were displayed to the public gaze through the transparent air bubble plastic.

From the point of view of the cultural history of design, the futuristic the radical architecture living-pods such as the Mind Expander could be comically understood as the masculinization and high-tech utopian upgrading of one of the most successful female techniques of the post war period: the hair dryer.

Fig. 408-410. From left to right: SilverQueen Hair dryer, 1950s. General Electric Hair Dryer “Instant Hit,” 1956; “Bathamatic,” Speculative proposal for mobile bathing, beauty and entertainments units, Archigram, 1969, Archigram Archival Projet.

The hair dryer was the first domestic electrical appliance to benefit from the use of moulded thermoset phenol and urea plastics, like Bakelite. In the early 1950s, General
Electric, Presto and Phillips launched several models of the portable hair dryer and the professional chair for hair saloons. The Phillips H-4301 was a wear-in hair electric hood-and-hose that was literally connected to the female head while enabling the woman to walk and “even hoover”. The hair dryer itself was invented at the turn of the twentieth century connecting a hose to use the hot air coming out of the vacuum cleaners. In 1890, transforming a vacuum cleaner, a French salon owner named Alexandre Godefoy invented the first electric hair dryer. It consisted of a large, noisy motor and tubes that pointed at your head and blew warm air. Life magazine describes in 1947 the success story of the inventor of the hair dryer chair who manufactured the head cups using the same materials and machines that had been producing bomb casings during the Second World War. The Hair dryer chair design seems astonishingly close to a singleheaded version of the doubleheaded Mind Expander. Other than (utopically) replacing hot air by a psychedelic atmosphere, or (ideally) hooking up brain connections rather than simple hair, the Living-pod is unexpectedly similar to a the Philips portable dryer H-4301 design. We could read this design moves as “female domestic” envy on the side of Playboy and the avant-garde architecture groups or understand it as a collateral-effect of the gender politics of technology: the hair-dryer chair when used by a female body is a gendering device producing the codes and conventions of female domesticated beauty through hair drying and styling. On the contrary, when used by a male body, the hair-dryer chair becomes not only a multimedia Mind Expander, but also a pornotopic device enabling the bachelor to live a Playboy’s sexual life.\textsuperscript{915}

\textsuperscript{915} See: Nell. I. Du Vall, \textit{Domestic Technology: A Chronology of Developments}. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1988; Siegfried Giedion, \textit{Mechanization Takes Command}. 590-592; and
Although they could have opened up the possibility for a denaturalization of the body and sexuality through electronic communication and teledildonics, the Playboy bed, the Yellow Heart, the Mind Expander and the Suitaloon, as well as the sexual ironic and utopian representations by Superstudio ended up functioning, in a time of reconfiguration of the political and social gender and sexuality norms, as retro-fantasies projecting into the future a re-naturalized image of white heterosexual norms. Functioning as heterosexual matting pads, most of the radical pods worked as “apparatus of capture” \(^{916}\) that enabled the single bachelor (critical architect and playboy) to seize

\(^{916}\) Life magazine, April 4, 1947.

Although the expression is the same, I am not using here Deleuze and Guattari’s notion: Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: Minnessota University Press, 1987), 424.
the female partner. The action of capturing is explicitly represented in the section and plan drawings for the Yellow Heart and in the diagram of the unfolding of the Suitaloon. In the Yellow Heart, the dark male figure pushes the female body through the air rings into the inner mattress. In the Suitaloon, the pipes and technoskin connections extend to encapsulate a female naked body until both organisms are fully contained. The disappearance of the female body in the last two stages of the diagram suggests that she has been wholly incorporated into the Suitaloon becoming herself part of the information flow or pure sexual code.

**I am going to start a revolution from my bed**

The decade between the public display of the Playboy bed and the Yellow Heart bed-in-performance of Haus-Rücker and Co. in 1968 could be described as a progressive *pornfication* of the bedroom. By pornfication I understand a process of introversion of media technologies within the bedroom that started during the postwar years and that was paradigmatically exemplified by Hefner’s rotating bed surrounded by phones, radios, screens and cameras, a process of unraveling of the bedroom walls and of de-domestication of the body and sexuality achieved by pornographic, surveillance and media technologies.

This pornfication of the bed was a double edge political process. On one side, it implied a media publication of what had been constructed during modernity as the bourgeois most inner core of the domestic and private space. Staging the bed as the center of a

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*917 John Lennon’s statement during the Bed-in performance at the Dakota Hotel, 1969.*
media performance, modern visual technologies have also intensified the surveillance and control, which Foucault shows already operating in medical and legal discourses during the nineteenth century. From the 1950s on, following *Playboy*, as contemporary artist Julie Scher has noticed, there is no bedroom without screens (televisions, cameras, later internet, jennycams, i-phones…), being the bed itself a constructed representational surface.\(^{918}\) The crossing over of technologies of pleasure and technologies of surveillance problematizes the relationship between exhibitionism and voyeurism, between control and enjoyment.

Beatriz Colomina has sharply underlined the relationship between the postwar domestic interior and the surveillance medical and war technologies.\(^{919}\) The architecture of the Playboy Mansion, its taylorized representation of the sexual body, the use of close-circuit television cameras to register every room and every sexual encounter and the transformation of the bedroom into a television set reveals a process of erotization of the postwar technologies of representation and surveillance. Where is the organization of visibility prevailing in the Playboy bedroom coming from? We could argue that the peep-show, the oldest space of visual consumption of sex within the city arcades and circus, was in fact the architecture out of which the postwar bedroom was modeled. Playboy’s multimedia bunker bedroom, an interior space without windows but full of screens, corresponds to the one-sided vision of the peep-show rooms. Replacing both the

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\(^{918}\) In 2000 artist Julie Scher produces a series of installations called “Surveillance Bed” that explore the increasing visual control over the bedroom represented by the extension of the technologies of mediation of the domestic, from video and television to the Internet.  

\(^{919}\) See: Beatriz Colomina, *Domesticity at War* (Barcelona: Actar, 2006).
blind wall and the double-sided vision of the window, the screen (either the projecting television screen or the recording camera screen) behaves as the one-way glass of the peep-show. Either you see or you are being seen, but you can never be on both sides at the time. Power and pleasure depend on the very asymmetry of this media relationship that is intensified by the screen, which as the tinted glass of the peep-show unites and separates, displays and masks the body that is being looked at and the eye that is watching.

On the other side, the pornification of the bedroom precipitated the recognition of the political status of sexuality. While becoming a visual commodity, the bed-in performance was also entering within the public domain becoming the center of a political bed-debate where gender, class, race and sexuality were being questioned and that would explode in the micropolitical revolutions of the end of the 1960s and the advent of mass-media pornographic films such as Deep Throat or Behind the Green Door to public theaters by 1972 and the transformation of pornography into a pop discourse. The dissolution of the bedroom wall and the “porn-etration”920 of media technologies within the bed transformed the private and naturalized space of sexuality into a public domain, opening it up to political criticism and social transformation.

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920 I use here Dick Hebdige’s notion of porn-etration in "After the fall: from punk to porn-etration to 'let's be Facebook Frendz!!,'” 2010. Personal exchange of unpublished paper with the author.
In 1969, during the Vietnam war, Yoko Ono and John Lennon organized a “Two week long bed-in for peace” in Amsterdam and Montreal. Their Bed-In, responding to the double logic of pornification, was thought both as a public performance of their honeymoon and an anti-war protest. The performance was followed by the international media, and the bed was soon surrounded by hundreds of photo and television cameras. During the second bed-in performance in Montreal, they invited several artists and recorded the song “Give peace a chance” in the hotel room, transforming the bed, as Playboy had already done, into an improvised music studio and television set. Although the press was waiting the couple to have sex, Ono and Lennon limited themselves to lye in bed wearing pajamas with sings over their heads reading “Hair bed” and “Peace Bed”. The multimedia bed was for the first becoming the public stage of social and political
revolution, a place that the street and the institutional buildings (La Bastille, the Parliament, The White House, etc.) had occupied form 1789 to the revolts of 1968.

Fig. 416, 417. Left: Donald Jayee design for the Playboy Rotating Bed, 1956; Right: The contraceptive pill Dialpak, 1964.

Playboy’s intense technification of the bed and the calling into question of its traditional form was not only a critique of the separation between workplace and leisure place, but also an exercise of the de-naturalization of sexuality. The bed, the core of Vitruve’s and Lafitau’s “primitive hut,”921 had been historically represented almost as the pre-architectural locus of the biological functions of the human being: birth, sleep, reproduction, sickness, and death. Introducing rotation and audiovisual recording technologies within the bed structure, Playboy affirmed within the post-war American society that the bed was not a natural place, but a changeable cultural boundary, a surface whose permeability was politically regulated and constructed through

pharmacological and media technologies. Invented exactly at the same time than the contraceptive pill, as we will see in the next chapter, the Playboy bed was the new pad for the non-reproductive sexuality made able by the new birth-control technologies. A contraceptive platform, rather than a reproduction space, the Playboy bed has turned into a rotating pill bed.
8. PLAYBOY SPATIAL PRODUCTS

The Club and the Playboy archipelago as pornscape

In February 1960, Hefner opened the first Playboy Club at 116 East Walton Street in Chicago, just a few blocks away from the Playboy Mansion. The club was built as a “public” remake of the already post-domestic interior of Hefner’s Playboy Mansion. “Each of the four floors was designed as a ‘room’ in the mythical and fabulous bachelor pad – there was a Playroom, a Penthouse, a Library and a Living Room.” The ticket to enter the club was a bunny logo key, similar to the one that appeared in the 1956 Playboy Penthouse article, purchased by visitors for five dollars. As Louis Marin noticed in his 1973 bitter critique of Disneyland as “degenerated utopia,” the client of the American entertainment spaces is not meant to buy anything (yet) but to pay to have access to the experience of inhabiting the space itself. Likewise, at the Playboy pornotopia the client does not buy anything but the experience of inhabiting the Club itself accessing for a period of time the possibility of becoming an insider. Governed by the same laws as the Playboy televisual fantasy, clients could look but never touch the

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922 Art Miner, cited in Russell Miller, 81.
more than thirty bunnies that served each floor of the club. Only privileged clients considered “special guests” rather than mere visitors were given a “Number 1 Key” authorizing them to entertain bunnies at the clubrooms, but always as “friends” and never as sex workers.

In her recent study of the architectural configurations generated by global capitalism, Keller Easterling calls “spatial products” the new hybrid spaces, “real-estate cocktails” that “exist in a reflective political quarantine,”924 at the same time located inside and outside of established legal and moral rules where they are only subject to the laws of the market: tourist complexes, theme parks, technological and industrial campuses, airports, residential golf developments, ski resorts, exhibition fairs, shopping centers... are part of these new enclaves that aspire to becoming “total worlds” and “global regimes.”925 “Spatial products,” Easterling argues, do not behave as commodities, but –following the model that Giorgio Agamben describes in his analysis of the camp– they function as “places of exception,” “dislocated locations,” utopically or dystopically hermetic enclosures capable of defining their own rules and forms of organization within the emerging global neoliberal market.926 For Agamben, a reader of Foucault’s biopolitics, the camp is the “hidden paradigm of the political space of modernity.”927 The physical form of the camp can differ, but its key feature is to establish a border between what

925 Ibid., 2-3.
927 Ibid., 123.
Agamben calls “bare life,” life without political and legal rights, and political existence. As Carolyn Strange and Alison Bashford has noticed, it seems clear that the space of the camp does not have a single political value. The same institution or practice has contradictory meanings for the communities who isolate and the communities that are isolated. The camp “might be protective from the perspective of the government agency, but illegitimately custodial and punitive from the perspective of the government agency.”

Following Easterling, we could say that the Playboy Club - located at the joint of show business industry and tourism, positioned at the very junction of legal trade and the sex industry, somewhere between retail space, secret society and popular media, is Playboy’s first and most genuine “spatial product.” The Playboy Club, a short of camp sex for sale, strategically situated in relation to the American city as an “interior exteriority,” behaves as a biopolitical island, creating a territory for white masculine hetero-patriarchal sovereignty while at the same time avoiding the inconveniences of the biopolitical norm that equated heterosexuality with family and reproduction.

Spreading from Chicago to Los Angeles, Miami or London, the Playboy Club heaves as a “Vatican-like state” of vice located within another state, where it deploys its accessible fantasy of male pleasure and arousal. The Playboy Club is a biopolitical offshore space situated inland: at the very center of the capitalist metropolis. Surpassing the economic, legal and social differences between Las Vegas, Macao, London...

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929 I take the liberty of borrowing the status of “Vatican-like State” that Keller Easterling applies to tourist complexes and extending it to Playboy. Keller Esterling, 14.
whatever its location, the Playboy Club will deliver a homogenous sexual territory characterized by spatial standardization, the production of over-codified visual icons and the modeling of the female workers.

The Club as Domestic Masculinity

Reminder of the patriarchal order and refuge of the heterosexual family life, the Playboy club was not a novel space invented by the erotic enterprise but rather a post-war American version of the most significant space for domestic masculinity within the modern city built in the tradition of the Secret Museum and the male cabinet: the bachelor chamber or the male club.

In The Pursuit of Pleasure, Gender, Space and Architecture in Regency London, the feminist historian of architecture Jane Rendell defines the emergency of modern “clubs” as the opening of spaces of “male public domesticity” within the space of the modern city.\textsuperscript{930} The first European modern clubs were settled during the seventeenth century at coffee houses creating an enfolded space where to develop male private opinion and free speech: “the publicness of coffee houses, arenas for debate, free speech and radical politics during the following political reforms of 1688,” Rendell explains, “suggested both autonomy and independence. Inns and taverns were considered less politicized, more controlled and respectable; whereas alehouses and ginshops were thought of as disorderly and unregulated, of a lower social status. In order to segregate various grades

of customer many houses were subdivided to provide certain clubs with private rooms." Initially clubhouses, like Arthur’s, the first “member’s” British club, established in London in 1811, whether private family homes or new purposed-designed buildings, were always modeled on domestic dwellings. Only in the late nineteenth century, with the augmentation of club members, certain clubs (such as Charles Barry’s Travellers’ Club established in 1819) broke the “domestic” tradition demanding the erection of large free-standing buildings.

According to Rendell: “Club rules codified the social relations between different occupants of the club – members and servants, proprietor and members, strangers and members – in spatial terms.” From a Foucaultian point of view, the club works as a gender production topopolitical device. The club is power, gender and subjectivity distributed in space. Going back to our cartography of spatialization of gender and sexuality in modernity, we could say that the club is socialized male boudoir. It is a white, male, bourgeois semi-domestic island located between the space of heterosexual domesticity and the new “democratic” public space of the city. As an ethnosemiotic object (to borrow an A.J. Greimas’ expression used to talk about festivals and deployed later by French theorist Louis Marin to understand utopian spaces) placed within the modern city, the club comes to solve a biopolitical dilemma. Socially constructed and historically inscribed within a physical contradictory architecture, the space of the club

931 Ibid., 66.
932 Ibid., 69.
can be understood as the dialectical result of the conflicted relationship between
domesticity and masculinity, between publicness and interiority, between virtue and
vice, between social décor and individual pleasure.

Jane Rendell defines the club as a patriarchal family space outside the home, where
power is stratified as a brotherhood with the proprietor/owner/father situated at the
higher position. The social space of the club can be compared to the feudal domestic
household with a strong class, gender and race hierarchical structure distributed into its
spatial organization. Gathering a “group of men who set standards of taste in the arts” the modern club space was also an epistemic and pleasure community close to that of the
secret cabinet. Like the Secret Museum, the club, is not so much defined by what is
inside, but by who is outside: “The clubhouse is a place of civil society, free from
coercive state, public morality, legal constrain, and corporate interest. At the same time,
the club is set aside from emotional pressures and social demands of the private familial
realm. Lying between the political public and the social private, then, the club represents
a domestic side to public patriarchy. By offering a private environment without the
stresses of family life and a public realm without its political responsibilities, occupying
a clubhouse suggests both the comfort and the freedom of being “at home” but in the
public spaces of the city.”

934 Jane Rendell, 67.
935 Ibid., 71.
Nevertheless, the club was not a totally masculine space. In his essay *Steppin’ Out*, Lewis Erenberg examines the social spaces created by the nightlife in American cities during the twentieth century. For Erenberg, the nightclub offered the middle-class a space between the public and the private realms for social and sexual experimentation. Although part of a larger process of transformation of the public space into a commodity and therefore highly related to white middle class economic and political power, the club created a zone of exception, not only for men but also for women and sexual minorities, where to subvert both the norms of the public and the private spheres. Following this tradition of “male domesticity,” the Playboy Club was thought as a reproduction of the Playboy Mansion operating as a surrogate domicile, a sort of post-domestic theme park, “extraordinary” and yet “familiar” where men were not fathers and women were non-reproductive bunnies.

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The club was given the power of a gender performative machine in which space itself could turn any white man into a playboy. Interiority and the space itself were not simply a décor, but rather a strongly ritualized space for producing subjectivity enabling the visitor to perform the role of the ideal bachelor for a few hours. Art Miner, the architect who designed the interior of the Clubs, termed “familiarity” the relationship between domesticity and surprise, between imitation and singularity at work in Playboy spatial standarization: “Nobody has designed as many night clubs as we have and every one of them has to be unique and at the same time a part of the total Playboy Club atmosphere. The feeling we want to create from one Club to another is familiarity rather than similarity....In our building and designing the “feel of the place” is something we always
try to retain while at the same time creating the “Playboy feel.” Familiarity was privacy without heterosexual domestic restrictions, public excitement without danger: the club was a public space negotiated and marketable as male commodity and private property.

The Playboy space product is saturated with over-codified visual icons: every image and every worker is aimed to become a Playboy logo. The cultural dialectics between secrecy and publicity, between intimacy and the market materialized in the tension between the dark smoky interior atmosphere and the light of visual technologies that filled the space, from cinema projections to television sets and Playboy signs. Moreover, dark and light were gender distributed differences: whereas the male client remained anonymous and therefore non-represented, women workers were transformed into visual signs. The bunny’s public body, as much as the club’s space, was an invention and function of Playboy’s entertainment industry. The first bunny uniform was designed for employees of the original Club in Chicago in 1960 as part of the process of spatial standardization that extended to design objects, bodies and subjectivities without distinction. Still showing the mutation from pet male rabbit to female bunny, the outfit started out as a form-fitting, low-cut, one-piece satin bathing suit accessorized with the collar, white cuffs and bow tie typical of a man’s suit, rounded off with the bunny ears and a fluffy bunny tail. Lastly, and just as important as the uniform, was the modeling of bunnies’ behavior. The rules that governed the conduct of bunnies in the Club were

938 The classic uniform was revamped in 2006 by Italian designer Roberto Cavalli for the opening of the Playboy Palms Casino hotel tower and spa in Las Vegas.
set out in the “Bunny Manual” written by Keith Hefner and in a training film that demonstrated how to master the three basic maneuvers: the “Bunny Stance” which showed the waitress how to stand, the “Bunny Dip” for serving drinks, and the “Bunny Perch” for resting while remaining upright and appearing available.\(^\text{939}\) Inseparable from the decor of the clubs, the Bunnies, like a biopolitical incarnation of Debord’s spectacle, were Playboy capital accumulated to the point that it becomes body.\(^\text{940}\)

Between familiarity and libertinage, the Club is a conglomerate of domesticity and vice, a performative fiction of white male sexual power and female submissiveness: in the visual documents from the early sixties, we can always see a group of white middle-class men in suits being served by a series of women infantilized and animalized by pink bunny ears and cotton tails – and sometimes, at the background, non-white male servers and musicians. The performative space of the club is organized around a strongly ritualized gender action. A general structure of theatricality links the members of the club in a ritual system, a parodic organization of space where masculinity and femininity are staged through the actualization of a - heterosexual and yet not monogamous - narrative. As Louis Marin points out, \textit{iterability} is one of the fundamental features of signifying structures organized as social spaces\(^\text{941}\): everything in the club is the repetition of Hefner’s postdomestic space, which was itself the repetition of an early century male club supplemented by media and surveillance technologies. Nevertheless, white

\(^{939}\) Kathryn Leigh Scott, \textit{The Bunny Years}, 26.
\(^{940}\) I’m referring to Guy Debord’s famous definition of “spectacle” as “capital accumulated to the point that it becomes image.” Guy Debord, \textit{The Society of Spectacle}, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1995), 34.
\(^{941}\) Louis Marin, \textit{On Representation}, 41.
masculine power is at the same time performatively enacted within the Club and eroded by the very fact that the client must pay to access the sovereign territory, acknowledging this way that his power is being staged (and somehow designed and owned) by Playboy enterprises. Collapsing power and parody, sovereignty and ridicule, the Club produces and at the same time undoes white masculinity.

Fig. 421. Presentation for Los Angeles Playboy Club, Art Miner, 1960, Playboy Archives, Los Angeles.

The homogenous decor of the different Playboy spaces and the standard use of the Playboy logo on all company accessories and employees, created a similarity between Playboy spatial products and the architecture of the eighteenth century male lodges and brotherhoods promoted by Restif de la Bretonne or Nicolas Ledoux,\(^{942}\) with the

difference that now the spatial products and signs gather no relationship to the State or to religious or metaphysical narratives, but are connected solely to the enterprise and the production of pleasure as capital. Masculinity, detached from transcendental values, becomes the generic code of capitalism. Playboy spatial products create an erotic-consumer brotherhood in the age of pharmacopornographic capitalism where the Mother Lodge or Mansion is a multimedia set, and the logo, supposedly a secret symbol of vice and transgression, is simply a mass market accessory.

**Brothel in “modern” disguise**

What Art Miner called “a revolution in hotel design” – talking about the Playboy Club in 1964 - was simply the superimposition, in a single building, of the programs of the hotel, the performance club, the strip club and the brothel, a combination form that will become characteristic of Las Vegas casino: Playboy clubs had a stage and a dancefloor, gambling, dinning and banqueting rooms and auditoria, and included an amphitheater with several stages, and a series of rooms where the keyholders could spend the night.

Not surprisingly Art Miner considers “security” for the client a major “architectural concern” since issues of health, body integrity and social décor are central, as we learned with Restif de la Bretonne and Alexandre Parent Duchâtelet, to the closed space of masculine consumption of sexuality. Since the club was built for “partyng,” design should find an equilibrium, according to Miner, between “modern aesthetic” and

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“security concerns”. Although represented as a space of transgression, the club was built as a “secure” playground:

“A typical example occurred in the New York Club. Shortly after opening, we became concerned about the modern, unrailed stairway. Though such stairways are widely used in new architecture, we worried about the keyholder who might have one too many and fall overboard. It was a challenging problem for our design department, because we didn’t want to make any compromise aesthetically. As it turned out, our solution – a great conical net surrounding the stairway- took nothing away from the design but actually enhanced it. Most Manhattan keyholders don’t realize the safety factor of the netting, but simply think of it as a dramatic addition to the décor…Our chairs, for example,“ explained Art Miner, “are specially designed with the legs set far in toward the center so that there will be no chance at all for Bunnies or guests catching their heels on a chair leg and tripping.”

Playboy’s obsessive reference to “modern design” could be rather understood in relation to Restif de la Bretonne state brothel’s principle of “camouflage” as a “hygienic” maneuver that sought to uproot the club from its prostutional origins. Playboy’s “modernist” look could even be interpreted as the result of the camouflage techniques for the concealment of the architecture of the brothel into a corporate building.\textsuperscript{945} The supposedly “modern design” of the Playboy Clubs came to veil any connection between Playboy and traditional forms of consumption of sex in the city. The Playboy club was a multimedia brothel in disguise. This camouflage and “cleansing” process was operated by a radical break between the façade and the interior of the club. The contradiction between the outside and the inside at the club was just the opposite than the one

\textsuperscript{945} On camouflage on the work of Labatut see: Jorge Otero-Pailos, 62-63.
identified by Scott-Brown, Venturi and Izenour when describing Las Vegas architecture not even two decades later\textsuperscript{946}: whereas in Las Vegas the façades behave as signs that inflect toward the highway trying to absorb the client inside the casino, the façade of the Playboy Club tried to merge with corporate architecture buildings, visually displaying its difference only inside. Most of the Playboy clubs had a glazed façade and colored panels displaying only the Playboy logo, while the interiors resembled 1950’s hostess bars and strip clubs, being designed according to the famous Gaslight Club that had opened in Chicago in 1953 and inspired the first Playboy Club.\textsuperscript{947}

Fig. 423, 424. Bunnies working, Los Angeles Playboy Club. 1969, Playboy Archives, Los Angeles.

This camouflage and cleansing operation was particularly important when a Playboy Club was located in one of the city’s former brothels, as in New Orleans and San

\textsuperscript{946} Robert Ventury, Denise Scott-Brown and Steven Izenour, \textit{Learning from Las Vegas}, 51-3.

\textsuperscript{947} Playboy magazine had published an article on the Gaslight Club in Chicago. Playboy borrowed the idea of the select members club, the key as a ticket to enter the club and even the style of the Bunnies from the Gaslight. See: Playboy, November 1959, 25-27.
Francisco, since the new club had to fight legal brigades and urban memory alike. This was how *VIP Playboy* Club magazine, described the San Francisco Club:

“A year ago, when wrecking cranes began leveling a vaguely Italian Renaissance-style construction at 736 Montgomery Street in preparation for the building of Playboy Bunnydom by the Bay, a local historian named Bert Lund informed us that the structure we were smashing to bits had been built in 1853, and was referred to in newspapers of the time as the clubhouse on the corner. It survived the 1906 fire and earthquake only to lose its reputation in 1951 when brothels began to flourish in the neighborhood. Today the brothels are gone and the area at the foot of the Telegraphs Hill is the sophisticated center of Golden Gate night life. In a few months the house on the corner will “close” its doors and become San Francisco's most elegant club once more.”

By making this urban clean-up part of Playboy’s mission, Hefner, transferring Restif de la Bretonne’s claim for a urban State Brothel into a neoliberal economic context, pretended that the spread of Playboy archipelago will end up with all prostitution spaces in the city. The author of the article “No Room for Vice,” published in the January 1959 issue of *Playboy*, suggested that the modernization of America during the postwar period must lead to the replacement of the old-fashioned “red-light districts” and “old theatres of vice” with new “bachelor quarters.” Similarly, he opposed the old forms of “prostitution” to the new form of “feminine sexual freedom”:

“There aren’t any prostitutes in Chicago for the same reason that there aren’t any straw hats in the North Pole. They would starve to death, says detective Seitzer. Every fourth

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948 *VIP Playboy*, July 1966, 3.
female over 18 in the city of Chicago is very active sexually, either on a romantic basis or a financial one. Usually on both... In addition, there must be at least a hundred thousand girls living in the bachelor quarters where they are able to entertain their bosses and business associates. I have not, in my time as a police officer, heard of any male Chicagoan complaining about sexual frustration. To the contrary.949

This article, which uses one of the key arguments of pharmacopornographic capitalism, does not argue for the liberalization of the sexual market, as the traditional anti-pornographic feminist criticism of Playboy would have it. Playboy’s aim was not about the “democratization” of sexual services previously offered by a small group of women who were considered prostitutes and extending it to the ensemble of the American female population. Playboy magazine’s promotion of the transformation of work into leisure as the main lifestyle guideline for the new bachelor was coupled with the Playmate’s ability to transform sexual labor into entertainment. No prostitution in the traditional sense is involved, because women were not supposed to be remunerated for sexual services. Playboy’s entrepreneurial aim was to transform heterosexual men as well as women into consumer-clients of the Playboy sexual pornotopia and its spatial products.950 Playboy was, in this sense, one of many symptoms of a mutation from the traditional forms of repression and control of sexuality that had characterized early capitalism and its Protestant ethic, towards new, horizontal, flexible and risqué ways of

950 This objective is now a reality since consumption has been extended to women: By 2000, the majority of consumers of Playboy products (accessories, television programs and videos are now sources of income that surpassed those of the magazine from the 1980s onwards) are women.
controlling subjectivity and the body, replacing the straightjacket with a pair of bunny ears and a fluffy tail and the panopticon by a novel combination of the TV set and the rotating bed, of the male club and the pill.

In a few years, with the aid of the “modern aesthetics” camouflage, Playboy managed to “clean” the image of the company creating new associations between consumption and sexuality, between electronics and flesh, between American capitalism and libertinage. By 1967 Time magazine described Playboy Enterprises this way: “Spectator Sex. To some visitors, the trap door and the glass wall are the real symbols of Hugh Hefner's achievement. Bacchanalia with Pepsi. Orgies with popcorn. And 24 girls—count 'em, 24—living right overhead! Not to mention all those mechanical reassurances, like TV and hifi. It is all so familiar and domestic. Don Juan? Casanova? That was in another country and, besides, the guys are dead. Hugh Hefner is alive, American, modern, trustworthy, clean, respectful, and the country's leading impresario of spectator sex.”

By the mid-sixties, Playboy spatial products embodied a new ideal of hetero-patriarchal territory within the context of global capitalism and mass consumption.

It seems clear today that Playboy’s spatial products as well as its gender and sexual narrative had a significant impact on the radical architecture and critical movements that emerged during the late fifties and sixties influenced by hedonism, psychedelia, popular culture, the radicalization of the political premises of architecture, corporate architecture, and post-modernism. In terms of sexual politics, not feminism but Playboy’s gender

codes and the so-called “Playboy ethics” (white, masculine, middle-class, heteropharmacoporn and anti-family) seems to have modeled some of the programs of the radical architecture projects - both neoliberal and leftist.

The *Fun Palace* (1959-1961) by Cedric Price commissioned by Joan Littlewood, the founder of the Theater Workshop at the Theater Royal, Isle of Dogs, in the East End London could be seen as an extended urban Playboy Club: intended to be "a laboratory of fun," planned as an open steel-gridded structure that could support a flexible program. "Hanging rooms for dancing, music and drama, mobile floors, walls, ceilings, and walkways, and advance temperature system that could disperse and control fog, warm air, and moisture were all intended to promote active fun."952 A few years later, Ettore Sottsass used the *Planet as Festival* series (1972-1973) to depict a quasi-Hefnerian pornotopia where all of humanity would be free from work and social conditioning. In this futurist vision goods are free, abundantly produced and distributed around the globe. "Freed from banks, supermarkets, and subways, individuals can come to know by means of their bodies, their psyche, and their sex, that they are living."953 Breaking the line between architecture and design, Sottsass’s black-and-white studies for hand-colored lithographs transform sexual organs into entertainment building and machines for pleasure production, like the giant dispenser for drugs or laughing gas that could result

952 The Changing of the Avant-Garde, Visionary Architectural Drawings form the Howard Gilman Collection, 44.
from the recombination of Restif de la Bretonne and Nicolas Ledoux’s social temples and Playboy spatial products.

The never-ending club as pornscape

From 1961 to 65, Playboy went global: it constructed 16 Playboy Clubs around the United States, including Chicago, New York, New Orleans, Boston, Miami and San Francisco. The firm opened a Caribbean Playboy resort in Jamaica and started the construction of a $9,000,000 year-round resort near Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. The most remarkable design project was conceived for the Los Angeles Playboy Center Club, with a Penthouse overlooking the entire downtown Los Angeles area, and a VIP Room, with the skyline as its backdrop. The conquest of the interior space promoted by Playboy magazine beginning 1953 was indeed taking place.

Fig. 425, 426. Etoe Sottsass, Planet as Festival, 1972.
Fig. 427. Project for the Los Angeles Playboy Club, Art Miner, 1960, Playboy Archives, Los Angeles.
Fig. 428-433. Palmolive Building, 1965. Interior design by Art Miner. Playboy Archives, Los Angeles.
MINER’S MIRACLES

It takes a heap of designing to make a habitat a Rabbit At, and the man responsible is Art Miner. Here’s how and why he does what he does.

‘Like Dolly, every Playboy Club is “still growin’,”’ says Design Director Art Miner. “We never feel that a Club is finished, that new ways can’t be found to improve each hutch, both from an aesthetic and a practical view. A typical example occurred in the New York Club. Shortly after opening, we became concerned about the modern, unrailed stairway. Though such stairways are widely used in new architecture, we worried about the

Fig. 434. Playboy Clubs architect Art Miner, Playboy Archives, Los Angeles.
Situated only one block from Sunset Boulevard on the west side of Los Angeles sits a peaceful yet extraordinary estate. For more than three decades Hef’s place has been one of the most talked-about and awe-inspiring houses in the world.

Welcome to Playboy Mansion West
More Than Bricks and Mortar

The Playboy Mansion is a destination. It has been featured in everything from Beverly Hills Cop 2 to MTV’s Cribs, HBO’s Entourage and Curb Your Enthusiasm to Sex and the City. It is featured on E!’s highly rated The Girls Next Door and is also the inspiration for a best-selling video game titled Playboy: The Mansion.

On certain nights throughout the year, the Mansion transforms into the place to be for anyone lucky enough to land on the guest list. Hef hosts six large parties each year which regularly attract Hollywood’s hottest celebrities, top professional athletes, luminaries of the literary world, radio and television personalities and beautiful Playboy Playmates.

The events, which prompted Vanity Fair to name the Mansion one of Los Angeles’s best party venues, are New Year’s Eve black-tie lingerie gala, Mardi Gras disco party in February, Hef’s birthday party in April, Fourth of July celebration, Midsummer Night’s Dream lingerie pajama party in August and the amazing Halloween extravaganza.

Along with these celebrations, the Mansion is used for various other corporate activities, including serving as a valuable location for video promotions, magazine photography and online and sales events. The Mansion also hosts successful charity galas including the annual Cedars Sinai tennis tournament and fundraisers for such organizations as the Special Olympics, the Nicole Brown Foundation, Wildlife Way Station, Hispanic Unity and many others.
Fig. 435. Presentation Flyer for visitors for the Playboy Mansion West, 2011.
Fig. 436-438. Playboy Mansion West: Garden, Grotto, and Camera and microphone hidden within a stone at the entrance door. Home Bunch Photos.
Fig. 439-442. Images from the Big Bunny for its inaugural flight from Chicago to Hollywood-Burbank airport Feb. 17, 1970. Interior design with TV system and six by eight ft elliptical bed. Playboy Archives, Los Angeles.
Fig. 443, 444. Images from the Big Bunny for its inaugural flight from Chicago to Hollywood-Burbank airport Feb. 17, 1970. Playboy Archives, Los Angeles.
Fig. 445. Images from the Big Bunny for its inaugural flight from Chicago to Hollywood-Burbank airport Feb. 17, 1970.
The economic and cultural success of Playboy was immediately translated into the cartography of the city of Chicago. In 1965 Hefner acquired an entire skyscraper known as the Palmolive building, “the cornerstone of the Magnificent Mile” at 919 North Michigan Avenue by signing to a check of $2,7000.000. Playboy Chicago offices occupied from 1967 one third of the 37-story building, half a block from the Windy City Playboy Club. “The move to larger quarters” explained Playboy Manager Robert Preuss, “is the reflection of tremendous growth and a solid vote of confidence in Playboy for the future.” 954

By the mid-sixties, The Playboy Clubs and “Hefner's pad on Chicago's North State Parkway had become a considerable tourist attraction, with guided tours available to anyone who has a minimum of pull: only “in the last three months of 1961, more than 132.000 people visited the Chicago Playboy Club making it the busiest night-club in the world.” 955 Playboy spatial products were monuments to a major American business success story. Unlike other Chicago businesses, the enterprise was not founded on steel, grain or transportation, but on a magazine. 956 The Mansion and the Clubs were the expression of a new relationship between architecture, media and capitalism which basic sources of production were sex and communication. Architecture for pharmacopornographic capitalism at its best.

954 VIP Playboy, July, 1966, p. 3.
In the early seventies, Playboy scattered its clubs throughout the world, creating what the design department called the “never-ending Club,” in such a way that Hugh Hefner could go around the world without ever leaving the indoor comfort of the Playboy Mansion. Every city should have its club. As Richard Corliss wrote in *Time* magazine, Playboy’s urbanity was in fact becoming “urbunnity,” a continuous club peopled by identical bunnies and would-be bachelor playboys. Within this Playboy archipelago the urban cartography resembled an inner plan of the Mansion with its traps and rooms extended and reproduced from city to city like a Sadean labyrinth. By the end of the century, an uninterrupted domestic multimedia pornotopia belted the planet.

Postcolonial anthropologist Arjun Appadurai describes neoliberal capitalism as a multiplicity of simultaneous “worlds” constituted by different historical, social and political communities that, through movements of migration, exploitation, exclusion or economic expansion create “disjunction” and “difference” within global homogeneity, giving rise to dissimilar landscapes - that Appadurai calls “mediascapes,” “ethnoscapes,” “technoscapes,” “ideoscapes”… Following Appadurai’s heterogeneous cartography, we could argue that the never-ending Playboy club invented in 1960 constitutes the first global “pornscape.” By “pornscape” I mean the global configuration of pleasure multimedia technologies, both high and law, tectonic and immaterial, textual and informational, that moving across national boundaries construct a generic code for

gender identity and sexual pleasure production for a tele-masturbatory disenfranchised community designed and programmed by Playboy multinational media enterprise. Playboy pornoscape is a pornotopia digitalized, disseminated, and commercialized on a global scale.

Playboy Mansion West: a multimedia follie in Hollywood

In the late sixties, as the country’s economic and production centers drifted towards the West Coast, Playboy Enterprises also began to move away from Chicago. Although reluctant to leave the Mansion, Hefner had been forced to travel to Los Angeles on a regular basis to participate in the television program “Playboy After Dark,” staying in the penthouse at the Playboy Club during his trips. “Live” under the studio lights, Hefner had fallen in love with Barbara Klein, a student who would soon become playmate Barbie Benton and his regular companion. A media hermit who controlled both the magazine and the firm from his bed and who rarely went outside of the Mansion, Hefner devised a way of leaving the house and traveling to the West Coast without stepping out of his habitat: in 1967 he bought a DC9 plane, which he called “Big Bunny” - in keeping with the company's hermetic semiotic code.

If the mansions were fixed incubators, Big Bunny was a flying techno-womb, a transactional space that carried the playboy from one residence to the next without upsetting the environmental balance created by the Mansion. Painted all black, with the Playboy logo on its tail, Big Bunny was given a makeover to resemble a miniature version of the Chicago Mansion. It included an oval bed complete with sound system.
that was reminiscent of Hefner’s famous rotating bed, fitted out with seat belts, a rotating chair, a shower for two, an enormous couch-bar and even a dancefloor. And like all Playboy spatial products, the Big Bunny could not exist without its female workers: a team of air hostesses in black-and-white miniskirt uniforms and knee-high boots. As *Look* magazine put it, Big Bunny was the first “Playboy pad with wings.” 958

Like the rotating bed moving without changing place, the airplane was proof of the genuinely heterotopian character of Playboy’s spatial products, which were not tied to the jurisdiction of any particular country or territory, but created their own mobile borders as they moved from place to place disseminating Hefner’s post-domestic environment outside the Mansion. Inhabiting the Big Bunny kinetic pornotopia, Hefner was thus able to make his first around-the-world tourist trip in 1970. Although they touched down at the world's most emblematic spots (Maxim's restaurant in Paris, the Acropolis in Athens, St Mark's Square in Venice, a Kenyan animal reserve, the beaches at Marbella...), the airplane did not take Hefner out of his Playboy space. On the contrary, the audiovisual documentation generated during the trip allowed Playboy to brand these tourist enclaves, which were then promoted by Playboy Tours travel agency, and published in *Playboy Gourmet* magazine as Playboy spatial products. Mobile logo and stage for Hefner’s tourism adventures, the airplane was a Playboy flying broadcasting station. Apart from the 1970 world trip, Hefner never traveled except to visit his own hotels and clubs, acclimatized islands where he could stay and feel as though he hadn't moved from his own home.

958 Quoted by Steven Watts, 210.
To consolidate Playboy’s colonization of the West, Hug Hefner bought a mansion in Hollywood in 1971, and for the next four years he lived between the two houses. Playboy polygamy turned polydomesticity. The double residence brought with it two women, two economies, and two lifestyles. Chicago and the Playboy Mansion meant Karen Christy, the magazine and traditional ways of doing business, while Los Angeles and Playboy Mansion West meant his new romance with the extremely young Barbie Benton, television, and Playboy's incursions into new forms of economic production based on audiovisual media and on its spatial products, which already far outstripped the profits generated by the magazine.

In 1975, Hefner moved definitively to Playboy Mansion West.\textsuperscript{959} The thirty-room house with six acres of gardens and woodland was located in Holmby Hills and considered the most expensive property in Los Angeles. Originally built in 1927 by the son of Arthur Letts, the founder of Broadway department stores,\textsuperscript{960} it had been used for several years as a hospitality center for visiting dignitaries. Referring to the utopian Himalayan city described by the writer James Hilton in \textit{Lost Horizon}, whose inhabitants enjoy inner peace, happiness and fulfillment, Hefner decided to turn the Mansion West into a “Shangri-La” in the middle of Los Angeles. The job of bringing this vision to life went to Suzanne and Ron Dirsmith of the Dirsmith Group, an architecture, landscaping and

\textsuperscript{959} Hefner then donated the Chicago Mansion to the Chicago Art Institute. Today the building has been turned into seven luxury apartments.

engineering firm headquartered that worked in Highland Park, Illinois since 1971. The Dirsmirth Group had already been working for Playboy for six years: they had been involved in designing the interior of Hefner's DC-9 airplane, as well as in renovating Playboy's corporate offices on Michigan Avenue, in the Palmolive Building. Specialized in water features, extreme landscaping and what they called “classical European architecture,” the Dirtsmithe international studio developed as the passion for outdoors landscape and neo-classical luxury homes, romantic retreats, home spas and “McMansions” took over the United States during the 1980s.961

Ron and Suzanne Dirsmith describe their architecture as being inspired by the project of Professor Ambrose Richardson from the University of Illinois Graduate School of Design who once gave them the assignment “to design a living environment to house a husband, wife and two kids who came from another planet in another universe. The alien beings were here in order to study our world and learn about nature on Earth. According

961 Journalist Lenny Giteck describes the Dirsmith group this way: “Suzanne and Ron Dirsmith have established a distinguished track record of designing imaginative structures and environments that often pay homage to the beauty of nature — particularly the element of water. In the late 1950s, just four years after completing his architecture and engineering studies, Ron became a Fellow in Architecture of the American Academy in Rome, a highly prestigious research and study center for America's most promising artists and scholars. (Only 172 architects have been thus honored in the Academy's 100 year history.) As part of the fellowship, the couple and their two children lived in Rome and traveled some 40,000 miles throughout Europe, camping in a VW van. From Scandinavia to the Greek islands, the Dirsmithe visited and studied European antiquities and classical sites — including many spectacular fountains and other waterfeatures. It was, they now assert, a life-altering experience that greatly influenced their architectural practice.” Lenny Giteck, “Whatershapers from Outer Space. An interview with Ron and Suzanne Dirsmith,” http://www.watershapes.com/articles/landing_page.aspx?article_id=126. Accessed January 21, 2012.
to the assignment, these extraterrestrials didn't look at all like humans, but they did have many of our other characteristics: They loved water, music, sex, wine, great food and so forth. In fact, Hefner’s commission was close to Richardson’s outer space assignment, with just one difference: instead of designing for a husband, wife and two kids (the average American white heterosexual family), Playboy project was intended to house an (almost alien!) erotic community of up 1200 people.

In a recent interview with journalist Lenny Giteck, Ron Dirsmith remembers this way Hefner’s proposal: “I want you to create something that every man would love but few could actually have. This place has to be a dream equal to my dreams for the magazine.” Suzanne and Ron Dirsmith talk about the project of landscaping the Playboy Mansion garden as the creation of a giant outdoors party hall. “Ron: After Hefner went over and saw the place (at Los Angeles Country Club), he came back to Chicago, put together a team of about 30 of his people and flew all of us out on his plane, the Big Bunny. Our instructions were to go through the estate and see if it would be suitable for him. Little did we know that he already had bought the property!....Suzanne: And everybody took notes on what they thought from various points of view: security, how it would work for his personal staff, whether he would be able to hold parties for 1,200 people, where he could show films on Friday evenings, and so forth. These were very important considerations to Hefner, because he'd been

962 Ibid.
throwing these huge parties and fundraisers at his Chicago mansion. The property in L.A. had fewer than half the number of rooms, so he wanted to make sure it would suit his needs.”

The process of reconstructing the Playboy Mansion West was described as an unconventional collective creative process involving not only Dirsmith’s architects and Hefner, but also the workers of the Mansion. “Suzanne: Hefner was asking everyone — his nymphs, his gofers, his security people, his accounting advisers, and so forth — for their thoughts. People were saying things like, "Wouldn't it be great to have a Ferris wheel out here?" "What if we have a Shoot-the-Chutes or a parachute ride?" They came up with all these loopy ideas. Ron: But Hefner was pretty sharp. He listened to all of them, but later it became clear that he pretty much discounted most of what they said. We all assembled on the driveway after the walkthrough, and he instructed everyone to present him with formal reports once they got back to Chicago. When he spoke with us, he made it clear that he wanted to have all the outdoor entertainment amenities befitting a Playboy Mansion.” Part of the representational loop that characterized Playboy multimedia pornotopia, the very process of design and construction of the Mansion West became the object of an erotic film: the Dirsmiths invited Rhodes Patterson, 1950’s well-known designer, cinematographer and photographer to document what they described as “a 120 days ordeal.” Rhodes was allowed to wander around the grounds in addition to
documenting the construction, resulting in a few reels of soft-core pornographic material.\textsuperscript{964}

The restoration of the Mansion Playboy West took two years and involved hundreds of laborers building swimming pools, ponds, fountains, animal habitat, redwood forest, tennis courts, games rooms, a movie theatre, saunas, Jacuzzis... to be built on various parts of the property. As in the bachelor pad and the “kitchenless kitchen,” Hefner was obsessed by “masculinizing” the house and landscape down to the last detail. He wanted to “de-domesticate” and “de-womanize” it in order to create a “manly paradise” accentuated by noble elements (according to Hefner: marble, dark timber, bronze and stone) and technological accessories.\textsuperscript{965} But unlike the prevalence of modern design in the plans for the bachelor penthouse published in \textit{Playboy} magazine, and the soft, white, glazed interiors of the Palmolive Building, Mansion West had no explicitly modern decor aside from the omnipresent audiovisual surveillance and play-back technology in every part of the house, including the pool and aviaries.

The Playboy Mansion West dramatically broke with the Restif de la Bretonne and Parent Duchâtelet’s traditional penitentiary model that prevailed at the Chicago building, moving closer to an early 1970s variation of Ledoux’s model of the natural asylum, the

\textsuperscript{964} Ten reels from his time at the Playboy Mansion can be found today at The Rhodes Patterson Collection at the Chicago Film Archives. Rhodes Patterson (1914-2003) was a designer, cinematographer, photographer and writer. His collection consists of commercial films from Chicago's 1950s design era along side personal home movies & "for-fun" productions, all of which were made from 1937-1978. See the Rhodes Patterson Collection at the Chicago Film Archives.

\textsuperscript{965} Simon Watts, 275.
greenhouse and the Folly. While the Chicago Mansion was essentially a hermetic interior, the Mansion West was a gated park, a private multimedia broadcasting garden that for the first time enabled Hefner to breathe fresh air. As Playboy’s spokesman Bill Farley put it: “the walled back yard is an exceptionally private oasis where Hefner can wander in his silk pajamas. Visitors view the property at the half-dozen charity events each year that the company sponsors there.”966 As opposed to the Chicago urban penthouse, the Mansion West rejected the total urban enclosure establishing new relationships not only with the American landscape but also with European and colonial fantasies of nature. Hefner’s superintendant recalls this way the process of construction and the visual conflict between inside and outside, security and surveillance, freedom and confinement, privacy and publicity, voyeurism and exhibitionism created by the low rocky frontier that separated the Mansion from other properties in Holmby Hills: “The Mansion was built over a mound of dirt in the shape they desired. They put rocks over the top and tied them together with steel and mortar. When it set, they dug out the dirt. The man who put it together had very good visual abilities. Unfortunately, he was very short. The rocks look very good, but he put them a little low.”967 No longer a simple building, the Mansion West complex constructed by the Dirsmiths could be described as a late-capitalist, American-style version of the follies and the fake natural settings that were popular in French and English gardens during the late eighteenth century.

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966 Quoted in « Hef’s Hutch, » Valli Herman, Chicago Tribune, November 29, 1991.
967 Ibid.
As Celeste Olalquiaga’s historical study has shown, in the period between 1770 and 1790 – when the relationship between nature and culture was radically altered by the intervention of the steam engine, the industrialization of forms of production, when social relations between the nobility and the poor classes were been shaken up by the French Revolution and when the representation of sexual difference was being modified by the introduction of the “two sex model”– there was a surge in the number of “follies” with their artificial organisms and fake ruins, in a desperate attempt to solidify a different period, as well as sovereign form of power and representation. The “follies” were constructions that mixed cultural and architectural references from different historic periods, and always included “sham ruins” and “imitations of nature.” Also known as “psychological gardens,” these miniature fantasy worlds sought to transform woods, lakes and caves into mechanically reproducible objects, small cultural icons.\(^\text{968}\) The renovations at the Playboy Mansion West, as in a folly, completely altered almost the entire landscape. Ron Dirsmith recalls: “When Hefner bought it in 1971, it was an incredible piece of property, but there was nothing in the back yard – zero….From a 6-acre lump of clay, workers transformed the grounds into a modern Eden.”\(^\text{969}\) The Dirsmiths designed paths, hills, waterfalls, and inter-connected pools, all using natural stone and vegetation. The Mansion West was not only a hippie-folly, a fake urban garden, but also America’s biggest private zoological backyard: Hefner’s domestic menagerie held 150 animal species and the largest koi collection in California. The Mansion West was not though a collection of animal in cages but was intended to be


following Dirsmith philosophy, an “integrated human-animal environment,” a “total recreation of nature” with lamas, peacocks, flamingos, dogs, geese, cockatoos and chimpanzees wandering among the lawns and trees, bathed in the swimming pools with guests and even sat in front of the fireplace. The Chicago Tribune described Hefner’s “personal pleasure park” as “the only working corporate center with animal habitats, a grotto housing whirlpool baths, sunken tennis courts, underground gym, indoor and outdoor aviaries, saltwater and freshwater aquariums -- all surrounding a rolling yard dappled with white peacocks, pink flamingos, fuzzy ducklings and free-flying pheasants.”

Within the garden, the 100-by-70 foot pool attracted as much attention as the menagerie. Turning air-conditioning into “man-made weather” as its first creator Stuart W. Cramer wanted, the Mansion West created a total hot environment: “using the heat from the air-conditioning system from the house to warm the pool.” As the Mansion superintendent argued: “it saves us $22,000 to $30,000 a year in gas costs. The pool is heated nine months a year.” As part of the water features, the Dirsmiths designed a fake grotto, complete with fish, thermal springs and waterfalls. Unlike the Chicago Mansion’s grotto, which had been a small, Hawaiian-style pool, the grotto at the Mansion West “folly,” connected to the outdoor pools by stone passageways, was the watery centre of the gardens, and the usual setting for the sexual activities of occupants.

and guests. Taking inspiration from the Lascaux caves in France, which were a recurring reference in popular culture during the fifties and sixties, Hefner commissioned glass specialist Bob White to build a huge dome over the fake prehistoric cave, using panels in which mummified insects seemed to be trapped in amber, and which visitors ended calling jokingly “the Jurassic grotto.”

Not only was this hot parodic hypernatural setting the petrified heart of pornotopia, but the grotto itself became the most valuable backdrop for the company’s pictorial erotic productions. As in the classical follies, the “Pompeian decoration” that dominated not only the garden but also the interior of the house was an attempt to artificially reproduce nature and to naturalize the artifice; to solidify the organic and bring architecture to life. The reference to Pompeii was by no means banal. Pompeii was not just the city that had been discovered beneath the volcanic lava of Vesuvius in 1755. As we have already seen, the reconstructed topos of Pompeii had led to the invention of the notion of modern pornography: “pornography” emerged from the controversy provoked by the discovery of the ruins of Pompeii and the disinterment of images, frescoes, mosaics and sculptures that depict bodily and sexual practices, and from the debate around whether or not these images and objects should be displayed publicly. In the best tradition of follies and fake grottos, the Mansion West was an artificial secret garden, a contemporary remake of a Pompeian fiction onto which media-capitalism had tacked on surveillance cameras as well as photographic and cinematic devices.

Like the Mansion West itself, the images that were produced inside the house and published in *Playboy* magazine were nothing more than fake ruins of sex, the naturalization of techniques of the body and of representation, which seemed like genuine sexual “grottos.” But should these spaces be labeled as *kitsch*? Barbara Penner has studied the honeymoon resorts that began to proliferate in the United States after the second world war and that were decorated using similar techniques and creating natural indoors settings. As Barbara Penner questions the use of the notion of “kitsch” (or even “pornokitsch,” Gillo Dorfles’s notion popularized in 1969) as the only critical category to understand these stage-set décors for sex. For Penner, the term “pornokitsch” sets up a misleading hierarchy between the genuine experience of sex and the vulgarity of honeymoon hotels or brothels, as if “emotion can only be experienced authentically in environments of good taste.”

The notion of *kitsch*, which has also been used to describe Playboy’s erotic settings, emerged in Central European culture in the late nineteenth century to name badly executed and fake art works, low-quality objects of little value, hoaxes and imitations. Neither merely descriptive nor simply a value judgment, *kitsch* is a key concept in modern art and architecture history. The notion of kitsch has been instrumental to set up aesthetic and even moral hierarchies between a genuine experience of beauty and the

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secondary or surrogate experiences triggered by imitations.\textsuperscript{975} The article “Avant-Garde and Kitsch” published by the German critic Clement Greenberg in 1939 set up the framework for a long time discussion in art and architectural history. Following Herman Broch and Adolf Loos anti-ornament position, Greenberg saw kitsch as a sign of aesthetic and moral degradation that the market and mechanical reproduction brought about in the artistic object, and extended its critique to consider kitsch “as an evil in the art system” related to political contamination and totalitarism that spread with theatre, and the mechanical reproduction of photography. Kitsch thus quickly went from being an aesthetic concept to a political and even moral category. For Adorno, kitsch named an intrinsically modern form of production that responds to rather than betrays the modes of production and consumption of capitalist mechanization. According to Martin Calinescu, kitsch characterizes the form of aesthetic experience in mass society, derived from a “false aesthetic consciousness”: kitsch operates under the logic of imitation, betrayal, contraband, or aesthetic deception. But while imitations aspire to be taken for the original, kitsch shows and celebrates its condition as fake.

By using the expression “pornokitsch” to refer to erotic settings, Gillo Dorfles simply emphasizes a supposedly negative quality of both concepts: porno and kitsch. Dorfles’s pornokitsch becomes tautological. As though kitsch were the pornography of art, and porno the kitsch of sexuality. Moreover, as Walter Benjamin had earlier argued, the notion of kitsch, historically opposing popular culture to art and mass production

technologies to creation, seems no longer accurate to give account of the complex context of multimedia production and technical representation of sexuality that characterized not only Playboy spatial products but also art and architecture production after the Second World War. In fact, Walter Benjamin was the first to consider the possibility of a critical use of kitsch or even a need for a radical surpassing of the notion of kitsch itself that for him will be embodied by the transformation of cinema into popular art. Having into account the process of conception and construction of the Mansion West and its multimedia reproduction, it seems more accurate to displace with Benjamin the notion of kitsch in order to describe Playboy spatial products as technologically naturalized fictions. Sexuality and architecture are never original, but rather are always the product of representation technologies that sought to present themselves as natural, whether it be these fantastic prehistoric grottos or the chaste marital bedrooms of the suburban home.

At the Mansion West, the garden, the animals and female nakedness were part of this fiction of nature. Nevertheless, nature was not easy to entertain. The constant noise of partying, the constant presence of journalists and television cameras, the inability to keep his wild animals from straying out of his grounds made Hefner an undesirable neighbor in Hollywood. Architect Ron Dirsmith remembers the downfall of the Mansion’s zoo: “Hefner likes people to be free and have their own free choice. He even wanted his squirrel monkeys to be free, but the squirrel monkeys don’t know a property line.

Twenty-one of them got off the property down Charing Cross Road, and there was a family having a wedding in the garden. They had just set the buffet with fruit. The monkeys destroyed it. But Hef’s big kitchen staff replaced all the food for the wedding. Thirty-five people had to go and chase the monkeys. We never told him that until weeks afterward.\textsuperscript{977} The parties ended up being held inside the house, and the monkeys, flamingos and parrots ended up in cages.

\textbf{The Dematerialization of Pornotopia}

During the 1980s, the transformation of traditional forms of consumption of sexuality, the emergence of video and private television channels, and the restrictions on legal casinos in most North American cities, compromised Playboy clubs’ profits. When the Clubs began to be an economic burden for Playboy Enterprises, the company started a territorial withdraw. By 1988, all the Playboy Clubs in the United States had closed down. In 1991, the world’s last Playboy Club, Club Manila in the Philippines, closed its doors, putting an end to the nocturnal enclaves that had characterized the expansion of the Playboy archipelago along a never-ending urban belt. Playboy’s growth shifted from the real-estate colonization of the 1950s to 1970s, to the implementation of video and television spaces. Playboy archipelago started to dematerialize, becoming marketable communications code. In 1980, Playboy launched its own cable television channel,\textsuperscript{978} followed by Playboy TV in 1982, with its own reality shows, self-produced series and


\textsuperscript{978} Although it never showed explicitly sexual activity or close-ups of penetration, the channel was R-rated - banned for under 17s. Considered “an audiovisual product with sex scenes for adults,” it found it difficult to establish itself in America during the Reagan era, a time of toughening of anti-pornography positions.

The process of dematerialization of the pornotopia has been coupled with an extension of the semiotic power of Playboy as retail and architecture. While Playboy Enterprises were closing clubs, Playboy Licensing opened a chain of boutiques selling accessories targeted at the young female heterosexual consumer (teenage girls will progressively become the main consumers of Playboy merchandising) in 150 different countries. When the world’s last and now only American Playboy Club reopened its doors in 2006 at the Fantasy Tower in the Palms complex in Vegas, Nevada, the Club was no longer just a nightclub linked to a hotel. In the context of the architectural language created to satisfy commercial demands that Venturi, Scott-Brown and Izenour identified in Learning from Las Vegas, Playboy’s spatial products joined an experiential multimedia pornscape. The Playboy Club became part of a gigantic resort, a theme park that could

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979 See NBC.com public announcement. In spite of the absence of explicit sexual images in the series, and extending the fight for representation of sexuality within public space from the city into the media, the “Parent Television Council” and the anti-pornography rightwing activist group “Morality in Media” condemned NBC calling it a “blatant attempt to obliterate any remaining standards of broadcast decency” and managed to stop the series.

980 In 2010, only Macao and Cancun clubs, besides Las Veagas resort, are still working. The last Playboy Club has been opened in London in 2011.
create optimum conditions for consumption: a 600-room hotel and a dozen thematic suites, a Club-Casino, bars, cafes, restaurants, gymnasiums, a shopping center... The Club is part of an urban scenography of entertainment, an all-embracing pharmacopornographic environment for arousal and consumption. But sexual transgression is nowhere to be seen: everything has been mass-produced, to be consumed in a space that is under constant surveillance, in optimum conditions of security and control. The semantic shift from crime, vice and gambling to amusement, pleasure and gaming, is a symptom of this transformation. As Robert de Niro's Ace Rothstein said in Martin Scorsese’s Casino, the Club was no longer a place of gangsters and whores, but a multimedia Company oriented to family gaming, where the former mafia style has been replaced by consumer and entertainment managers.  

At the Palms hotel, fantasies rooted in popular culture or the sex industry can coexist through vertical distribution in a single space, even if they sometimes appear irreconcilable: the ultra-masculine “Crib Suite,” which Playboy describes as “living in a hip-hop video;” the all-pink “Barbie Suite” that mixes the Barbie and Playboy logos; and the “Erotic Suite” that reproduces a strip club inside the room, with a stripper’s pole in the shower and mirrors on the ceiling. In the penthouse, the Hugh Hefner Sky Vila, which the hotel’s promotional leaflet describes as “the Las Vegas version of the Playboy Mansion” with room for 250 people, includes a dancefloor, movie theatre and even a reproduction of Hefner’s famous rotating bed. The “H. H. Sky Vila” is a miniature

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museified pastiche of the Mansion for tourists. Taking the multimedia logic behind the Playboy Mansion to the extreme, the Palms Resort is no longer simply a place to be occupied and consumed, but a TV setting and a broadcasting station for hire, which has been the site for numerous television programs such as MTV’s “The Real World,” and Bravo's “Celebrity Poker Showdown,” as well as architecture backdrop for erotic productions.

The Overexposed House

The “Playboy Mansion” (first the Chicago and then the Los Angeles Mansions, but also its Club and reality show avatars) is an overexposed space, in the sense in which the architect and philosopher Paul Virilio uses the term.982 The Playboy Mansion has no stable physical entity, but is continuously reconfigured through information: text, photographic, cinematic, videogame and cybernetic codes. The Mansion was first able to spread throughout North America via the magazine and the television program on the condition of being dematerialized through surveillance and communication technologies, and later rematerialized as an array of simulacra and replicas in the form of the hotels and clubs. The process of “overexposure” thus cuts through the house and constitutes it: the internal space of the Mansion is filled with electronic screens and cameras that either transform its habitat into digits and transmittable information or make decoded information flow within it in the form of images. The virtual “hole” generated by the surveillance closed circuit that channels information in an infinite loop thus joins the

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physical hole created by the grotto at the bottom of the Mansion. Simultaneously anchored in the classic aquatic-zoological utopia (Atlantis and Noah’s Ark) and in traditional information technology utopia, Playboy spatial products exist in-mediation, within networks, dwelling in a place that is no longer simply a physical location. Heterotopia meets hypermedia. The Panopticon meets life-simulation video games.

It is this over-exposure that erodes the classic forms of domesticity, not just in the case of the Mansion but also in the traditional suburban home, which is simply one of its inverted copies as a peripheral media receptor, and not the counter-model and ideological antagonist it is supposedly held up to be. The overexposed status of the Mansion also extends to the body and sexuality, which, beyond naturalness and kitsch, are simultaneously “de-domesticated” and publicized. Produced and represented by visual and communication technologies, the body and sexuality are also converted into digits—information, value and number. Pornotopia meets financial information capitalism.

If the processes that the sociologist John Hanningan and the economist Jeremy Rifkin describe as “Disneyfication”983 and “Macdonalization,”984 respectively, are the result of the effects of the economy of the spectacle on the American city and its consumer habits, we could claim that a process of “Playboyization” affected the forms of organization of

domesticity, interior space and emotional life of American interior spaces during the Cold War. The first expressions of the “fantasy cities” were the architectural-media fictions created by Playboy and Disney in the fifties. Disneyland, opened for the first time in Anaheim, Los Angeles in 1954, became the first children’s theme park. Five years later, the Playboy Mansion managed to combine media in the form of the magazine, property development and the use of audiovisual technologies of surveillance and simulation to create a multimedia theme park based on spectacle that was an adults-only erotic fiction.

We could venture that the pharmacopornographic consumer of theme parks that proliferated in the late twentieth century is a hybrid of the child constructed by Disney and the old-man-teenager imagined by Playboy. Furthermore, the gender segregation and the irregular policy of sex consumption allows us to imagine an odd and complementary (although legally impossible) theme park couple: the female, childish Playboy bunny seems to have escaped from Disneyland to become the object of desire of the male (and not so young) visitor to the Playboy Mansion. It therefore comes as no surprise that in 1983 Disney Channel and Playboy Channel (seemingly opposite poles in the moral and religious debates that pitted sex against the family, freedom of decision over one’s own body against the defense of childhood) joined their television networks. As *Time* magazine explains: “Disney and Playboy are both purveyors of fantasies. Playboy makes real women seem unreal; Disney makes unreal adventures seem real. The Playboy mansion is a sort of Disneyland for adults; Disneyland is the Playboy Mansion for
And his burlesque conclusion: perhaps the success of the two largest entertainment industries in America depends on the secret weapon shared by Mickey Mouse and the bunnies – the big ears.

But, ears apart, Hugh Hefner’s success compared to Disney, is that the Mansion achieved an assemblage of private residence and theme park, creating a topographic post-domestic type that spread through American architecture of spectacle in the late twentieth century. The “Celebrity-Land” complexes are heirs to Playboy’s pharmacopornographic spatial products. First Graceland, which had been built by Elvis Presley in 1957 (two years before Hefner bought the Chicago Mansion) but did not become a media enclave until after his death in 1977. But above all Neverland: the Playboy Mansion inspired Michael Jackson, a regular guest (along with his surgeon) to the Mansion in the eighties, to build Neverland in Santa Barbara, California, in 1988, bringing together under a single room the artist’s home, a private zoo and a theme park and finally uniting the Disney and Playboy heterotopias. Michael Jackson, like the post-human media offspring of a Playboy bunny and a Disney mouse, would become a true pornotopian architect, reclaiming, distorting and extending the pharmacopornographic legacy into the twenty-first century.

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986 Neverland was sold in 2008 to the Sycamore Valley Ranch Company and Colony Capital, although Jackson kept a part of the shares of the complex. However, following the artist’s death there is speculation that Neverland may become in a museum of Michael Jackson’s life.
Mall and club/Gruen and Hefner/Fordism and pharmacoporn biopolitics

We could understand Playboy’s erotically consumed relational spaces, from the magazine to the Mansions, including all the communication platforms, organized around the Club and its membership community, as the counter-part of Victor Gruen’s American shopping mall. In fact, in this pop history of twentieth century architecture, the club and the mall could be considered the two main urban interiors in Cold War America and Hefner and Gruen the most influential pop-architects of American landscape, far beyond Mies van der Rohe or Phillip Johnson. Whereas the mall appears as the key consumer culture space of the postwar years, working in conjunction with the two principal market objects/spaces of Fordist production (the automobile and the suburban house), the club (mainly urban and thought as an alternative to the suburban sexuality and way of life) seems to prefigure the post-Fordist immaterial modes of production and consumption. As opposed to the mall, which exhibits and provides access to the merchandise, the club does not sell commodities but rather experiences, providing access to relationships rather than to objects. As the first director of the Chicago Playboy Club Victor Lownes put it in 1960, the Club was simply “the Playboy lifestyle brought to life.”

Architect Art Miner argued that the Clubs created a “total playboy habitat,” a “Rabbitaat,” in which both space and bunnies were carefully designed to accentuate the “Playboy feel.” Part of the same semiotic and economic flow, the magazine, the Mansion, the clubs and the spatial products created by the magazine formed a

987 Steven Watts, 160.
programming network dedicate to design “feelings.” The magazine and the architecture of the mansion, hotels and clubs work here as a media platform where “experiences” are being administered and designed to produce what French theorist Christian Salmon calls a “storytelling”: a collective narrative fiction able to shape reality.\(^{989}\)

Forerunner of the way-of-life-programming enterprises to come at the beginning of the new century, Playboy modified the aim of the consumer activity (the kernel of the postwar American culture) from “buying” into “living” or even “feeling” displacing the merchandise and making the consumer’s subjectivity the very aim of the economic exchange. If as architecture and design theorist Sanford Kwinter explains Victor Gruen dominated “the American psycho-geographical and economic landscape”\(^{990}\) of the post-war years, we could argue that Hefner’s pornotopia (taking multiple architectural shapes, from the Mansions, to the club, Las Vegas casino and hotel type, and materializing into multiple vernacular architectural forms Miami to Manila) anticipated the post-electronic community-commercial environments to come.

Sanford Kwinter describes the fall of the 1950s shopping mall model during the 1990s and its transformation into “a system of community centers”: “The task of social commerce today is to engineer sustained relationships, and to invent and produce a seductive experience within which these relationships may be at once extended,\(^{1000}\)

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\(^{990}\) Sanford Kwinter, *Requiem for the City of the End of the Millenium* (Barcelone: Actar, 2010), 43.
cultivated, and buried."991 Grounding economic growth on an erotic and social experience, Hefner somehow surpassed Gruen and prefigured the biopolitical production of the end of the century. Determined by the unique quality of the non-merchandise Playboy produced (ontologically speaking sex, desire and pleasure are non-objects) and its legal exclusion from the free-market (legally speaking they cannot be reduced to a merchandise), Playboy spaces behaved already in the late 1950s as the ancestors of the social network internet based enterprises that will emerge during the early 2000s. As Kwinter explains, in order to survive, the new mall -a sort of hybrid of Gruen’s and Hefner’s program- will need to combine: “these mall infrastructures, these anchors of the emerging “social-entertainment-retail complex” with the worldwide web, they propose to create a site where nearly all significant social activity can take place. This is significant not only because it effectively draws public (social) life into a new type of private property, generating both data and wealth (“value”) even when no transactions take place, but also because it ingeniously corrects the common wisdom of just a few years ago – to with, social activity will now take place in real environments enhanced and administered through virtual ones, and not the other way round.”992 Opening a new space between the traditional brothel and the virtual sites for pornographic consumption, between the male club and the arcade, at the same time privatized and public, exclusive and commercialized, Playboy pornotopia built an immaterial bridge between the eighteenth century secret museum and the twenty-first century virtual network. An erotized version of the park, the television network and the domestic urban space of the

991 Ibid., 46-7.
992 Sanford Kwinter, 45-6.
club, Playboy spaces created a social environment for sale at managed to survive the post-Fordist mutations of the city and prefigure the pharmacopornscapes of the twentieth century.
2. THE PILL HOUSE
Pharmacopornographic Domesticity and the Biopolitical Production of Gender, Race, and Sexuality in American Playboy Postwar Culture

Playboy media and economic leadership was established between the end of the Second World War and 1967: One-quarter of all American college men were buying the magazine every month, the company moved to the landmark Palmolive Building in Chicago, and more than ten Playboy Clubs rocked the night city life of America. Meanwhile, a major transformation of the biopolitical production of gender and sexuality was taking place that would also come to modify the understanding of the traditional architectural ideas of the domestic and the division of public and private spaces. Capitalism based on war and production was mutating towards a model based on consumption and information that integrated technology, body, sex, and pleasure. Biological sex, natural reproduction and domestic privacy, which, to echo Marx, had once been solid, began to melt into air.

In April 1967, *Time* magazine dedicated its cover page to the most controversial subject
of the decade: the contraceptive pill. For the picture the photographer Robert S. Crandall assembled most of the available pills of the 1960s into a shape representing the scientific symbol for "female." The cover story entitled “Freedom from Fear,” was written by Peter Bird Marin and Jean Bergerud and traced the history of the oral contraceptive over two decades of trial and error. Described as the “hormonal messenger” that shall eliminate world’s “hunger and ignorance,” the pill was presented not only as an instrument of individual sexual freedom, but also as the major historical accomplishment, and a scientific solution to a planetary danger: overpopulation. The article praised “the pill” as “a miraculous tablet that contains as little as one thirty-thousandth of an ounce of chemical. It costs 11¢ to manufacture; a month's supply now sells for $2.00 retail. It is little more trouble to take on schedule than a daily vitamin. Yet in a mere six years it has changed and liberated the sex and family life of a large and still growing segment of the U.S. population: eventually, it promises to do the same for much of the world.”

Fig. 448, 449. Left: Ron Heron, Enviro-Pill /It is my choice, 1969, Archigram Archival Project; Right: Cesare Casati and Emmanuel Ponzio, Pillola, “Pill lamps,” 1968/1969.

The same year that *Time* magazine aired the Pill,994 Austrian architect Hans Hollein presented a rather strange project called *Architekturpille*, consisting just on a white round pill stick on a piece of paper where we could read “*Einfamilienhaus in ländlicher Umgebung,*” that he described as a “Non-Physical Environmental Control-Kit.” In *Everything is architecture* Hollein explained: “Man creates artificial conditions. This is Architecture. Physically and psychically man repeats, transforms, expands his physical environment. He communicates. Architecture is a medium of communication. […] The purposeful use of chemical and drugs to control temperature and body temperature and body functions as well as to create artificial environments has barely started. Architects have to stop thinking in terms of buildings only.”995 Using labeling and readymade techniques already at work in art practices, Hollein took a series of manufactured objects and elements from the ordinary life usually not considered architecture and placed the message “this is architecture” under each of them. Among those *readymade* architecture-objects, and together with the pill, there was also a photograph of the artists Niki de Saint Phalle and Jean Tinguely out of Saint Phalle’s “Hon-en-Kathedral,” (“She a cathedral” in Swedish) a giant multi-color sculpture of a “Nana” (the French word for “chick”) whose body interior was accessible through a vulva opening between her legs.

A year later, and using the feminist motto “It is my choice,” Archigram produced the collage “Enviro-Pill” where a multiplicity of design-worlds contained within spheres

994 Doctor Pincus, one of its inventors, called the contraceptive pill, “the Pill,” and the name soon became a cultural icon. I have used the generic name “pill” to refer to the contraceptive edible techniques myself in this dissertation.

were linked to the eyes and mouth of a two dimensional female face. The idea, as Warren Chalk explained in a previous article, was to introduce within housing and environmental production “the freedom of personal choice,” making the inhabitant into a “free consumer.” If sexual reproduction, historically associated to the domestic space, could be the object of technical regulation and therefore of individual choice, shouldn’t the domestic space follow the same emancipation? At the same time, the Italian Cesare Casati and Emmanuele Ponzoni transformed the pill into a lamp that Emilio Ambaz defined, probably too fast, as a “kitsch object.” Environmental architecture turned into sexual regulation prosthesis… turned into design. Domesticity and the reproductive female body were being transformed into a public and exhibited architecture.

Fig. 450, 451. Niki de Saint-Phalle, Hon, Installation for the Moderna Musset Stockholm, 1966.

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997 See: Casatin and Ponzoni “pill lamps” were part of the MOMA exhibition dedicated to italian design. See the catalog, Italia: The New Domestic Landscape, Achivements and problems of Italian design, ed. Emilio Ambasz, (New York and Florence: MOMA/Centro Di- Florence, 1972), 20.
The present chapter studies the transformation of domesticity, disciplinary architecture and biopolitical regulations of gender and sexuality derived from the pharmacological revolution of contraception techniques that took place during the Playboy expansion, between 1954 and 1967. The displacement towards a pharmacopornographic regime could be characterized by the mid-twentieth century emergence of two forces affecting the production of sexual subjectivity. First, as we’ve already seen, the introduction of the notion of “gender” as opposed to “sex” opened the possibility for the use of hormonal, chirurgical and discursive techniques to intentionally modify the sexual body. Together with the notion of gender, the post-war medical discourses moved from the nineteenth century categories of heterosexuality/homosexuality towards the new technical notions of “intersexuality” and “transexuality.”

The second vector of pharmacopornographic mutation was the invention of molecular, endocrinological techniques to separate and regulate the relationship between (hetero-)sexuality and reproduction. As a result, the social control techniques of the nineteenth century disciplinary system gradually infiltrate the private and domestic spaces and the individual body. Rather than punishing sexual offences or monitoring and correcting deviations through an external legal code or within disciplinary traditional institutions such the hospital and the prison, biopower turned inwards: domestic spaces and living bodies were taken as platforms and bio-ports

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where to insert molecules, flows of images and signs, transforming the house and the body at the same into the *topoi*, the media and the effects of a larger biopolitical program.

Playboy urban spaces, from the bachelor apartment to the Playboy Mansion, questioned the very political and economic bases of traditional domesticity within Fordism and industrial capitalism: the gender segregation between spaces of production and reproduction.\footnote{A powerful critique of this divide was the object of the post-marxist feminist academic and activist group *Wages for Housework Movement* during the 1970s. See, for instance, Mariarosa Dalla Costa, *The Power of Women and the Subversion of Community* (Bristol: Falling Wall Press, 1975) and Selma James’ classic *Sex, Race and Class* (Bristol: Falling Wall Press, 1975).} *Playboy* no longer understood domestic interiority as a female and reproductive space, but rather as productive and therefore as masculine. The apartment itself conceived as a multimedia psychedelic office was more a communication device, a complex information (and sexual) system, than a traditional reproductive space. Nevertheless, this transformation of domesticity into a productive (and not reproductive) space did not depend upon household appliances and their masculine use but rather upon new practices of publication (and making public) introduced by information and communication technologies, from color photography to the press and television, but also upon new medical and pharmacological techno-sciences, like prosthetic, biochemical and reproductive technologies that developed rapidly after the Second World War and that radically modify the practices of the everyday life and therefore institutional and domestic architectures. In the present chapter, I argue that Playboy pornotopia, and in a larger sense the advent of post-domesticity, could have not taken
place without the most innovative and main pharmacological technique of the Cold War period: the Pill.

With the introduction of the contraceptive pill in 1960, the use of the condom went into a decline. Playboy’s golden years, between the invention of the pill and the spread of AIDS at the beginning of the 1980s, coincide with the displacement from prophylactic and external barrier method of contraception to a pharmacological contraceptive. This move signals the passage from traditional architectural and biopolitical notions of privacy and publicity towards a new definition of inside and outside, where the private is constituted as “public” by new media and pharmacological techniques.

The Playboy penthouse and later the Playboy Mansion, created exactly at the same time that the pill was pharmacologically developed, and separating sexuality and reproduction, constructed a new type of non-reproductive pharmaco-domesticity that could well be called “Pill house” rather than penthouse. With Playboy and the Pill, post-war America invented a form of "pop-control" as opposed to the straight, rigid, disciplinary control of the prison model and Bentham’s Panopticon that Foucault theorized when thinking the nineteenth century mechanism for production of power and subjectivity.

The promotion of “safe sex” through condom use as part of the campaign against AIDS introduced new restrictions within the limits of the private and the public and a “reprivatization” of pornography that parallel the advent of the video as domestic technique. See: Minette Hillyer, “Sex in the Suburban: Porn, Home Movies, and the Live Action Performance of Love in Pam and Tommy Lee; Harcore and Uncensored,” in Porn Studies, ed. Linda Williams, 50-76.
The invention of the contraceptive pill between 1951 and 1956 and its pharmacological commercialization as a domestic, portable and edible technique for hormonal modification in 1957 coincided with the launch and development of *Playboy*, the transformation of nuclear physics into an energy producing technology, the production of the first silicon transplants, the first electric prostheses, but also computers, Formica, and plywood chairs. Meanwhile, new techniques for hormonal and surgical modification of sexual morphology led to the invention of the concept of “gender” in 1947, the laying down of strict treatment protocols for “intersex babies,” and the first sex reassignment operations.⁹⁰¹ Against its common representation, the American Cold fifties are not only

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⁹⁰¹ See: Suzanne J. Kessler, “The Medical Construction of Gender: Case Management of
the years of McCarthyism and the haunt of communists and homosexuals but also the years of Playboy and the Pill, the age of erotic communication, plastics and prosthetic regulation of reproduction.

**Opening the Pill**

The Pill has recently been the object of several in depth historical research projects, but most of them have concentrated on the scientific and pharmacological process of production, the clinical trials and legal aspects of the commercialization, the medical side effects, and its political impact within sexual culture during the 1960s. Meanwhile, almost nothing has been said about the relationship between the hormonal management of reproduction and architecture, between birth control techniques and the invention of the American nation, between gender technologies, technologies of the body and mass produced housing, between the pill and the transformation of the domestic regime after the Second World War.

The Pill emerged from a long time research on sex hormones, but it was made possible, almost accidentally, by the discovery of the anti-arthritic drug cortisone in 1949 and the technological modification of the *Discorea* plant by chemist Russell Marker, a wild yam vine which grows in the mountains of southern Mexico.1002 The study of the economic and technical networks that contributed to the first experimental production of the Pill in

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1951 leads us to two parallel research teams directed by Gregory Pincus\(^{1003}\) (a liberal biologist) at the Searle Laboratories and by John Rock\(^{1004}\) (a catholic obstetrician-gynecologist) at the Brookline’s Reproductive Study Center in Massachusetts. The entire biomedical research that helped the development of the pill was done on non-governmental funds, since the National Science Foundation and Thee World Health Organisation refused to support reproductive research during the Cold War. The fact that the production of one of the most influential techniques of reproduction control was produced and managed without governmental funds, already indicates a movement from the nineteenth century centralized, state biopolitical action towards privatized and corporate-based political management of life. Biopower was being displaced from traditional state-disciplinary institutions towards major corporate companies such as Monsanto, Searle, Alcoa, Disney or Playboy.

Margaret Sanger, a New York nurse and activist, and one the most important figures in the contraceptive battles, shared neo-Malthusian ideas and understood birth control as a way to improve women’s health and to fight against the high rate of maternal mortality. Although working mostly with middle class white women, Sanger understood birth control as a technique to prevent overpopulation and poverty: “I consider,” she stated, “that the world and almost all our civilization for the next twenty-five years is going to depend on a simple, cheap, safe contraceptive to be used in poverty-stricken slums and

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jungles, and among the most ignorant people." Sanger’s argument shows the proximity between contraception understood as a technique of eradication of poverty and its possible use as a colonial eugenicist technique. As historian Lara Marks argues: “Sanger held that it was vital to find a contraceptive technique that would allow women full control over their fertility without cooperation of the male, as necessitated by barrier contraceptive methods.”

Besides, Sanger was asking for a displacement from the external, architectonic and orthopedic measures of birth control (such as the condom) to an internal, prosthetic technique, which, she foresaw, should ideally be taken orally.

Knowing that a hormonal contraceptive was possible on the basis of the experiments with mice and rabbits, Gregory Pincus, working under the political ideas of Margaret Sanger, and with financial support from MIT biologist graduate and feminist suffragette activist Katharine Dexter McCormick, overcame the two mayor problems of synthetic progesterone and oestrogene: the high expense to produce them and the fact that they were ineffective if ingested orally. Independently from the Pincus’ research team, and almost at the same time, John Rock came to the unexpected discovery of a contraceptive molecule in the process of experimental research aimed at helping sterile, catholic white families to procreate – it was during these essays that Rock discovered

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that progestine suppresses ovulation by simulating pregnancy. As opposed to Pincus and Sanger’s research, mostly directed towards non-white and poor women and to colonial and non-American settings, John Rock program, aimed at fertility, fitted within the suburban model of family house of white-America. Nevertheless, both shared similar bio-molecular techniques. Working on the production of cortisone for the treatment of arthritis, Carl Djerassi and Frank Colton discovered accidentally a way of producing norethindrone, a cheap variant of progesterone. The molecule of norethindrone was the key of the success of the project of Pincus and Rock since it could be taken orally. Orality shall become a biopolitical factor determining the relationship between power techniques, bodies and architecture since it will make possible to displace the chemical intake from the hospital into the domestic, radically transforming traditional reproductive and female spaces.

**Endocrinology as Media Theory**

In order to think the production of the techniques of hormonal management of sexual reproduction within twentieth century biopolitics and their relationship with disciplinary architectures and the dematerialization of domesticity during the Cold War period, it is important to understand that the invention of the notion of “hormone” introduced a *media model* within medical discourses and pharmacological techniques.

The invention of the notion of “hormone” itself represented an epistemological break in

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1009 This is the reason why Carl Djerassi claims to be the “Mother” of the Pill.
relation both to the modern model of the mechanical body, but also to the emerging psychological model of the sexual unconscious. This double rupture is to be connected, I shall argue, with the emergency of communication technologies and with the transformation of the modern city and the governamental techniques during the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century.

Fig. 453, 454. Left: Ḥeleḵ rishon mi-Sefer ha-‘Olamot, o, Ma’ašeh Ṭoviyah, Jewish treatise, Italy, Ẓinitsʾi’ah : bi-defus Bragadin, 1707, i.e. 1708, 467. National Library of Medicine; Right: A.G. Sandoz, Der Mensch als Industriepalast, Basel, 1970. History of Medicine Archive.

The pharmacological development of the Pill during the Cold War year is the technical accomplishment of a larger theory of hormones, which appeared within the scientific discourse at the beginning of the twentieth century. William Harvey description of the heart as a four chambered pump that moved blood through arteries and veins radically
modified the representation of the body in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Harvey’s body was a complex system of transportation of fluids, blood being the main circulating fluid that carried substances from one part of the body to a distant part where the substance exerts its effect.\(^\text{1010}\) The body was for the first time described as a mobile interior. During the nineteenth century other internal fluids and secretions, different from blood, such as pancreatin, were identified. Slowly, the idea that metabolism was regulated by the exchange of chemical substances that were transported by blood or other fluids, started to gain scientific value.

Fig. 455, 456. Left: Sections of Cables used by the Direct United States Cable Company, 1904. Right: Cross section of a submarine telegraphic trans-pacific cable, 1903.

In 1855, Claude Bernard, Thomas Addison and Charles Brown-Séquard elaborated an early theory of “internal secretions,” understanding any chemical substance as a piece of

information to be transmitted by tissues into blood up to organs.\textsuperscript{1011} Nevertheless, since biochemistry hardly existed, communication itself remained a puzzling process. Without unveiling the nature of the chemical process of communication, physician Charles Brown-Séquard claimed in 1889 that organs’ extracts could be sent within the blood circuit and founded “organotherapy” treating patients, not always with success, with internal secretions taken mostly from animals.\textsuperscript{1012} Few years later, Edward Schäfer, Professor of Physiology at The London University College, measured for the first time the effects of injection of adrenal, thyroid, pancreas and liver extracts within the blood circuit. Schäfer recorded: “Every part of the body does, in fact, take up materials from the blood, and does transform these into other materials. Having thus transformed them, they are ultimately returned into the circulating fluids and in that sense every tissue and organ of the body furnishes an internal secretion.”\textsuperscript{1013} For Schäfer, the non-mechanical action of extracts within distant organs put into question the traditional representation of the body, up the point that, for the amazement of the scientific community, he tried to illustrate the action of hormones with “the curve of his fingers” or even with “moving lantern slides.”\textsuperscript{1014}

\begin{itemize}
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The modern body, as Foucault suggested in his reading of disciplinary biopower, is no longer a plane surface, a one-dimensional skin where law is inscribed by torture and punishment, but rather a thick interiority where political control (as well as metabolism) take place in the form of exchange, traffic, and communication.\textsuperscript{1015} If power has to go through and into the body (passer à l’intérieur du corps), the space of body must be extended, inflated, opened and magnified. At the end of the nineteenth century, and within a European colonial and industrial capitalist context defined by the new practices of tele-communication, travel, traffic and exchange, a growing interest in fluids and information transmission within the body will end up giving rise to the invention of the notion of “hormone” as “organic communicating discharge.” As historian of medicine John Henderson has noted, “the middle of the nineteenth century finds an awareness of glands that had no ducts, glands that communicated only with blood vessels,”\textsuperscript{1016} being the unsolved question what was to communicate and how communication was possible. In 1904, Maurice Adolphe Limon named “endocrinology” the science of internal secretions defining interiority (“endo”–means within, inside, in Greek) as the space of an intense chemical traffic. At the same time that the body is filled with new organs, fluids and with a dense system of pumps, duct and pipes, the house, as Reyner Banham has noticed, becomes the site for a new mechanical “environmental management,” making place, as the body, to stoves, pipes, pumps, ducts and electric cables.\textsuperscript{1017} Likewise, as Beatriz Colomina has argued, the place of production of architecture moves towards new


mechanical and electronic media such as publications and photography. Architecture and medicine shift from tectonics into environmental media production.

Fig. 457. Commemorative postcard of the laying a cable across the Pacific Ocean from America's west coast, Commercial Pacific Cable Company, 1903. The first section of the cable was made by the India Rubber, Gutta Percha and Telegraph Works Company and was laid in 1902 by the cableship Silvertown from San Francisco to Honolulu.

1905. While Freud publishes his *Three essays on the theory of sexuality*, doctor Ernest Henry Starling, following Schäfer’s experiments, invents the biomedical concept of *hormone*. On one side, Freud describes an invisible geography called “unconsciousness,” a virtual space, subterranean and somehow parallel to the physical body where desires,
affects and sexual identity are formed. On the other, the scientific discourse, the pharmaceutical enterprises and finally the government institutions turn back to molecular understanding of the body to transform sexuality into an object of technical and political administration. While Freud invents sexuality as a psychological realm relatively independent from anatomical sex, physicians Ernest Starling and his bother in law William M. Bayliss, the founders of modern endocrinology, think human reactions as effects of molecular substances that send out messages to different organs of the body. Starling and Bayliss discovered a substance that stimulated pancreatic secretion. They called it “secretine” and modeled from its functioning a theory of “hormones.” For Starling and Bayliss, secretine is “a substance which has to be turned out into the blood at repeated intervals to produce in same distant organ or organs a physiological response proportional to the dose.”

In 1905, Starling was invited to give the Croonian Lectures at the London Royal College of Physicians: his four lectures defined for the first time endocrinology as a science of internal chemical communication understanding the body neither as a mechanical anatomy nor as a psychological field materialized within the nervous system by rather as a complex chemical communication network. The first lecture explained: “These chemical messengers or hormones - from the Greek word “hormein,” to excite, also to rush, to move forward, to drive- as we might call them, have to be carried from the organ

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1019 2005 was considered by the medical community as a 100 years anniversary of the invention of hormones which gave rise to a large amount of articles, colloquia and historical publications.
where they are produced to the organ which they affect by means of the blood stream and the continually recurring physiological needs of the organism must determine their repeated production and circulation throughout the body.”

Starling and Bayliss described hormones as “carriers” and “chemical messages transported by blood from the organ where they are produced to the organ where they must act.”

While Freud imagines the subject as a laminated ground whose hidden unconscious strata must be unearth through a forbearing linguistic digging, Starling and Bayliss draw a new representation of the modern living body: a complex network of highly dense and connected circuits which broadcast, receive and decode biochemical information. In opposition both to the Cartesian and La Mettrie body but also to Freudian archeology of the self, a new hormonal, electrochemical, media and ultra-connected subject was coming to being.

Fig. 458, 459. Left: Nikola Tesla at the Chicago World’s Fair, at the building for

1022 Ibid.
Wireless electrical exhibition, 1893. Right: This promotional calculator: "The Time of Day at Any Place in the World at a Glance" was issued by the Commercial Pacific Cable Company in 1904.

The pharmacological compounds proposed by Pincus and Rock were fabricated according to this media model that understood the contraceptive pill as a “hormonal messenger” sent to regulate the female reproductive system. As the *Time* article explained in 1967: “Females of many animal species are fertile for only a short time at comparatively long intervals. The female human animal is an outstanding exception, with a fertile period of three to six days out of every 28. The cycle begins with the start of menstrual bleeding. For the first four or five days, her uterus sloughs off part of its lining (endometrium). This accomplished, her complex hormonal system sends a messenger chemical to her ovaries, telling them to ripen one of the 50,000 or more potential egg cells with which she was born. Usually, only one ovary responds, and on Day 10 or soon after, a fully formed ovum is released into the Fallopian tube. The ovum takes three or four days to work its way down.”1023 Within this model that represented the female body as a sexual communicating device, the pill will be produced as a well-intended message.

Within a period of global and colonial expansion of technologies of transport and telecommunication, Starling and Bayliss think the body according to an early media theory, understanding hormones as frenzied invisible messengers transmitting coded

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between 1860 and 1905, the years during which the notion of hormone was elaborated, James Maxwell forecasted the existence of radio waves, Heinrich Rudolph Hertz established the existence of electromagnetic waves by building an apparatus to produce and detect VHF and UHF radio waves and Nikola Tesla developed the first theory of “wireless communication.”¹⁰²⁴ According to Tesla and Hertz, not only waves moved at the speed of light, but rather light itself was nothing other than a wave. Meanwhile, the press and the postal exchange become popular phenomena. It is possible to understand the hormonal theory as part of a new representation of the world as a connected whole where the body acts a complex communication system. Endocrinology could be read as a biologization of a theory of broadcasting, circulation and treatment of information within a world that was becoming progressively global. For Starling and Bayliss, the hormone’s main characteristic is its capacity for invisible distant action. This dislocation, the enigmatic distance that separates the place where the hormone is secreted and the place where its action is executed, forced Starling and Bayliss to think the hormone according to Hertz’s model of the transmitting wave. According to this media paradigm, the hormone is defined for its tele-acting capacity, its ability to modify an organ by broadcasting bio-coded information. This early hormone theory works already under the model of tele-transmission, transport, circulation, exportation, domestic communication, outflow, exchange, but also reading, de-codification and translation. Within this larger media landscape, the hormone was thought as a chemical postcard, as a biological phone.

message or a local bio-call. Anticipating Derrida’s deconstructive take on writing as trace and after death message, the early twentieth century hormone is invented as a tele-cinematic biological entity.

The first theory of hormones is a media theory, a theory of communications within a body that is not only understood as the space where information is broadcasted, disseminated and recollected, but also as the material effect of these very semiotic-technical exchanges. We are facing here a new way of understanding space and the body, but also power and subjectivation, that, I shall argue, demands a new theory of architecture and biopolitics that goes beyond the one developed by Michel Foucault in his writings from *Discipline and Punish* to the *History of Sexuality*. In other words, we shall ask what are the specific practices through which power is spatialized according to endocrinological knowledge and techniques? How do these practices differ from the institutional disciplinary architectures of the hospital and the prison that defined, according to Foucault, nineteenth century biopolitics? How does this process of medicalisation of architecture and reproduction transform domesticity?

The emergence of hormones within scientific discourse implied also a specific social and political context where technical experimentation and institutional knowledge determined the conditions of their production. From the beginning of the twentieth century the process of imaging, conceptualisation and technical production of the so-

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called “sexual hormones,” which will give rise to the invention of the first pill in 1951, is conducted with non-human animals, and with subaltern humans recruited within disciplinary public institutions (army, prison, psychiatric hospital, school…) or within colonial settings deprived from biopolitical and economic sovereignty. Hormones are a natural-cultural multispecies affair. They are produced in and with bodies of chickens, bulls, rats, and rabbits, and bodies constructed by scientific discourse as infra-human, such as the “black,” the “crazy,” the “queer,” and the “criminal” bodies. As Donna Haraway has stressed, contemporary gender notions derived from these hormonal models are not only conceptual frameworks, but also chemical materialisations, tecno-living platforms, produced at the crossing between the human and the animal, the normal and the pathological. Moreover, “human” and “animal,” “normal” and “pathological” function as somatic fictions, techno-bio-cultural artifacts produced by these discursive practices of materialization, which at the same time set them apart and bind them. Hormones were “invented” and produced within modern bodies and colonial and capitalist disciplinary architectures - hospital, prison, school and colony. Nevertheless, the theory of hormones as media theory implies the redefinition of these disciplinary architectures as a communicating network, and the transformation of the body itself into a bio-port where governamental techniques will act no longer as ortho-architectonic structures but as micro-prosthetic communication systems. The traditional boundaries of bodies and architectures are being undone.

In 1767, anatomist William Hunter began experimenting with testicular transplantation on castrated rats coming to the conclusion that there was a relationship between testicles and masculinity. A century later, Arnold Adolf Berthold, a physiologist working at the University of Göttingen, developed an experimenting procedure with cocks, removing their testicles and re-transplanting them to a different part of their bodies. Berthold’s endocrinological treatise is one of the first to use a heterosexual discourse where masculine superiority and complementarity of the sexes explain the variation of internal gland secretions. But the most striking element within Berthold’s early treatise is not this scientific heterosexual narrative (with male cocks as “warriors persecuting hens” and castrated chicken as “pacific and flat,”) but rather his early understanding on inner secretions as diffuse information. Berthold states that there must be a chemical, rather than a nervous, transmission of the information stored within the testicles, since their secretions seem to be distributed through blood around the whole body, independently of the place of the body where testicles were implanted. This is the beginning of what could be called a wireless sex model which will give rise to a new theory of inner secretions, and finally to hormones.

Berthold’s key treatise has been the object of several feminist readings, such as the studies by Nelly Oudshoorn and Anne Fausto-Sterling, partly due to the intensity of the gender metaphores at work within his anatomical and physiological understanding of the body. See: Anne Fausto-Sterling, Sexing the Body, Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality (New York: Basic Books, 2000); and Nelly Oudshoorn, Beyond the Natural Body: An Archeology of Sex Hormones (New York: Routledge, 1994). For a detail history of the scientific and technical practices that lead to the invention of hormones as pharmacological artifacts see also: Chandak Sengoopta, The Most Secret Quintessence of Life, Sex, Glands, and Hormones, 1850-1950, (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2006), 33-36.
Fig. 460, 461. Left: The production of adrenaline and insulin still represented according to a mechanical and tectonic model. Gerhard Venzmer, *Regler des Stoffwechsels, Hormone und Innere Sekretion II*, Stuttgart 1933, p. 61; Right: Fritz Kahn, *Images from the History of Medicine*, 1927.

The pharmacopornographic subject emerges within a techno-scientific culture where heterogeneous organic and non-organic elements (bodies and biopolitical architectures) are connected: colonial ships, bourgeois interiors, cotton plantations, textile factories, whale testicles, impotent soldiers, penitentiaries, pregnant slave women, biochemical treatises, and finally and overall, capital. The early twentieth century pharmacological industry, working with an experimental theory according to which sexual hormones are produced and stored only within the gonads must find ways of obtaining huge amounts of ovaries and testicles - both human and animal. This explains, as historian Nelly Oudshoorn notices, why during the first quarter of the twentieth century, the pharmacological labs are settled next to slaughterhouses that “sign contracts with
pharmacological companies to regularly provide them with animal glands.” The physiologist Alan Parkes, trying to end up with the penury of gonadic extracts buys the “ovaries of a blue whale” from the British Museum. When experimenting with human animals, both endocrinologist and pharmacologist await the execution of convicted criminals to retrieve their testicles. Thus, hormones are invented within a colonial network of consistent traffic of organic material between pharmacological factories, hospitals, museums, zoos, pharmacological companies, prisons and slaughterhouses, where living cells are transformed first into injectable substances, later into edible molecules, always into capital. Hormones are the network that materializes these governmental techniques.

In 1929, this intense traffic of fluids, tissues and organs aimed to obtain the primary molecules to fabricate human sexual hormones, leads two German gynecologists to state that high quantities of hormones can be found within urine. This discovery implied profound technical, institutional and spatial changes. On one side, the scientific interest moved from the organs to the fluids, from gonads to urine, from solid into liquid. On the other, the geography of institutional and industrial spaces of recollection and production of hormones was radically displaced. Within the gonad theory, the pharmacological companies had the power to deal with slaughterhouses, prisons and natural museums

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1029 Nelly Oudshoorn, 783.

where to find ovaries and testicles of sacrificed animals and humans. The representation of urine as a reservoir of hormones modified the power relationships between providers and research groups. Gynecologic clinics - the leading places where to obtain urine of pregnant women - , and schools, factories and the army - main places where to obtain male urine - become the centers of a new endocrinological production network.\textsuperscript{1031}

Within the history of endocrinology, for instance, the discovery by the German chemist Adolf Butenandt of “androsterone,” \textsuperscript{1032} a jelly crystalline substance that was first thought to be the main male hormone, was the result of the possibility to collect and have access to a great quantity of liquids containing hormones thanks to an unprecedented connection between the police and the medical and pharmacological centers - Butenandt collected thousands of liters of urine at the Berlin police center during the early 1930s.

\textbf{Biopolitics and American suburban domesticity: from separated spheres to gender and race hypersegregation}

A closer look to the process of isolation and technical production of hormones enables us to draw a cartography of twentieth century sexopolitical disciplinary spaces, and to identify, in Foucaultian terms, different “confinement institutions” and “architectures of control” of femininity and masculinity as knots of technical production of gender.

\textsuperscript{1031} Nelly Oudshoorn, 784.

\textsuperscript{1032} Adolf Butenandt obtained the Nobel Prize in 1939 for his endocrinological research although he will not be able to receive it until the end of the forties. About the relationship between the Nazi regime and the pharmacological industry see: \textit{Gray Zones: Ambiguity and Compromise in the Holocaust and its aftermath}, eds. Jonathan Petropoulos and John K. Roth (New York: Bergham Books, 2006), 339-360.
Synthetic sexual hormones are produced and distributed within a stream of traffic of human and non-human animal fluids between different disciplinary and imprisonment institutions belonging to a common system of production of bodies and capital: gynecological clinics, hospitals, factories, prisons, police centers, scientific laboratories, pharmacological companies, colonial barracks, and suburban houses. Within this circuit, and in order to become marketable hormones, female fluids - unlike male fluids -, shall travel from the domestic disciplinary spaces – both bourgeois and proletarian, that due to their still private condition, are not yet accessible to pharmacological laboratories - to other institutional public spaces (the hospital, the prison, the brothel, the gynecological clinic), where body fluids become manageable.

As I shall later argue, the production of a portable and edible Pill after the Second World War enabled the entrance of synthetic hormones and therefore endocrinological and governmental birth control techniques into the domestic space that became a consumption/production knot within the pharmacological network. This was a part of a larger biopolitical process of medicalization (and pharmacopornographic regulation) of domesticity that was already at work during the twentieth century.

On the other end of the same traffic, moving from the domestic - the kernel of the national political space- to the colony, the most externalized territory of biopolitical control in relation to national space, the endocrinological programs for controlling natality and gender production targeted the racialized body, circulating first within the slavery trade and later within urban segregated spaces, as well as the bodies defined as
“handicapped,” or “sexually deviant.” Most clinical trials with sexual hormones are done in colonial settings, psychiatric institutions (where homosexual, intersexual and transsexual bodies, considered as physical or mentally ill, are submitted to endocrinological and chirurgical procedures), and in penitentiaries and correctional institutions until hormones, produced and designed as health industry products and consumption goods, end up being absorbed within the everyday American heterosexual domestic space.

There is a Pill geography where bodies, fluids, molecules and capital are produced and distributed. It is possible to draw a geopolitical map of colonial relationships and urban political cartography of America according to the intended uses of the contraceptive molecule during the process of clinical elaboration of the Pill in the 1950s. From the very beginning, the study and clinical trials to test its technical effectiveness and effects clearly reveal a race, class and sexual political geography.

The development of the Pill during the 1950s in America and its transformation into a domestic technique of management of reproduction during the 1960s should be understood as part of a larger biopolitical apparatus for gender, sex, and race segregation. The spatial regime of the suburban house that was imposed during the Cold War in the United States was not only the result of policies of decentralization and construction of family residential areas in response to the threat of a possible nuclear attack on major American cities. The suburban biopolitical spatial regime was also an architectural version of the assumptions underlying the redefinition of masculinity,
femininity, and heterosexuality of post-war America, seeking to re-establish the traditional separation of gender spheres.


The “separate spheres” theory that prevailed in bourgeois society since the eighteenth century was based on a strict gender division by which public, “exterior” and political domains were defined as masculine battlefields, understanding the domestic, private and interior spaces as naturally suited for women. In fact, the industrial transformation of the modes of economic production had eroded the productive function of domestic space, which, stripped of power, was characterized as a reproductive space and naturally feminine space, a space of circulation of milk and water. As Tocqueville argued in *Democracy in America* in 1840, the access of women to the democratic public space seemed highly compromised: “As soon as young-middle class white women get

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married, the inexorable opinion of the public carefully circumscribes (her) within the narrow circle of domestic interest and duties and forbids her to step beyond.” The theory of two spheres depended on a biopolitical topology that related spaces and specific bodily functions and bio-products, architectures and forms of economic and sexual production. Spatial segregation worked as a biopolitical technique that retrospectively would enable to produce sexual and gender differences within modern industrial capitalism.

Nevertheless, the Second War World would come to complicate the traditional divisions between “exterior” and “interior,” and their relationship with the gender and sexual categories of “masculinity” and “femininity.” On one hand, the war brought about a restructuring of gender spaces: the family cell was disrupted by the enlistment of men in the army on a massive scale; and women had thrown themselves into public life and productive employment outside of the home. From 1941 to 1945, over 9000 American men and women were diagnosed as “homosexuals” and either forced to undergo psychiatric treatment or considered unfit for military service.\textsuperscript{1034} Senator Joseph McCarthy’s Fight for America campaign was an operation aimed at denouncing and punishing communists, gays and lesbians in government jobs.\textsuperscript{1035}


\textsuperscript{1035} For more on the operation carried out by McCarthy see: David K. Jonhson, \textit{The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).
In a context of medical and scientific discourses, the redefinition of traditional gender
boundaries, and of the limits between private and public, the homecoming of American
soldiers – even though they were escaping the military and nuclear threats of the outside
– was not a simple process of re-domestication, but rather a radical deferral. The
heterosexual soldier, post-traumatically unfit for monogamous family life, stepped back
into the home to become women’s strongest rival, rather than her complimentary partner.
The domestic as reproductive and female space was turning unhomely. The nineteenth
century model of heterosexuality was getting into a Cold War.

This crisis in the traditional institutions and biopolitical techniques that had previously
regulated sexuality and gender differences may have been a determining factor in the
fierce persecution of homosexuals as “enemies of the nation” during the late forties and
fifties. The Cold War had shifted the battlefield from the geographical space of the
Nation-State to the slippery surface of bodies. In a paranoid immunity turn, the state
trained its instruments of espionage, surveillance and torture against its own citizens,
with the individual body, gender and sexuality seen as incarnations of the political body
of the Nation-State. Perceived through the analogies of contamination (“an epidemic
infecting the nation”) and penetration (“a nuclear missile between the United States and
the Soviet Union”), homosexuality was posited as a threat to the integrity of the
American “social body.” The homosexual was a foreigner, the sexual ally of Jews and
communists, at the intersection of all of the “outsiders” (geopolitical and sexual) that

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1036 On the politics of immunity see: Roberto Esposito, *Bios: Biopolitics and Philosophy*
(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2008).
defined American post-war identity. The struggle against homosexuality went hand in hand with the intensification of what feminist theorist Judith Butler has described as the imposition of “performative” gender and race norms.\textsuperscript{1037} The perfect housewife and the breadwinner father became the complementary gender models underpinning the stability of the white heterosexual family.

The 1940s post-war American public and private housing programs could be understood as a national attempt to re-establish the biopolitical architecture of gender, sexuality and race that had prevailed during the nineteenth century and that were put into jeopardy, not only by the war economy, but also and specially by the transformation of the biopolitical techniques of gender production (moving into pharmacological and media domains) and by the emergence of micropolitical sex, gender and race movements of resistance and liberation- the black civil rights, and the feminism, homosexual and transsexual movements.

Gwendolyn Wright’s landmark essay \textit{Building The Dream. A Social History of Housing in America} examines the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) programs of the post-war period in the United States. According to Wright, the FHA practiced “overt policies of ethnic and racial segregation,” and “encouraged the use of restrictive covenants to ensure neighborhood homogeneity and to prevent any future problems of racial violence

\textsuperscript{1037} Judith Butler, 1990.
and declining property values.”

Although these policies were denounced by the Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) for “fostering black ghettos,” the urban red-lining discrimination programs continued throughout the country.

A Foucaultian reading of the histories of American Urbanism done by Dolores Hayden, Mario Gandelsonas or Andrew Wise enable us to re-define American suburbia as a biopolitical regime, being the suburban house itself an architectural device (dispositif architectural) within set of governmental techniques to regulate the growth of the population: “the suburban city” Gandelsonas argues, “was only realized after World

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1039 Mario Gandelsonas, X-urbanism: architecture and the American city (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999); Dolores Hayden, Building Suburbia: Green Fields
War II with the convergence of two factors, one social, the other physical. The first occurred when the employment of veterans and removal of women from the paid labor force became a national priority. But the definitive impetus came from the construction of the interstate highway system, which had an essential role in producing a radical change in the form and speed of the development of suburban communities and the core city.”

The post-war American city that came out of the highway system was structured by social and political oppositions structured along frontiers of gender, class, and race: “this new urban form was defined in oppositional terms: the suburbs (as the positive term), versus the “downtown” or core city (as the negative term); the residential areas versus the workplace; white middle class versus black underclass.”

As Andrew L. Barlow has shown, one of the consequences of the suburban architectural regime was the national development of a pattern of racial segregation. On their study of the relationship between American suburban development and spatialization of race in post-war America, Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton have termed “hypersegregation” the racial zoning of the non-white and African American population that were place in densely inhabited neighborhoods located around the urban core. In spite of the

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Footnotes:

1041 Ibid., 30
1042 Andrew L. Barlow, Between Fear and Hope. Globalization and Race in the United States (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), 84.
economic growth of the African American population after the Second World War, non-white families remained excluded from the “white supremacy” of the green lawn. As Andrew Wiese points out, “the story of the black suburbia suggests the importance of housing as an arena of black politics, linking African American social and political history and the politics through the politics of housing. [...] Their struggle to control it, define it, and reap its advantages were a crucial terrain of black agency, politics, and identity-making throughout the twentieth century.”

As a result of these policies, the suburb/city downtown polarity resulted in gender and racial divisions that were much more extreme than they had been in nineteenth century cities. The suburban spatial arrangement does no longer derive from a theory of naturally separated spheres, but rather it is the result of the production of a new theory of technically separated spheres constructed with the help of prefab walls, glass, combustion, electricity, communication networks and pharmacological molecules. In terms of gender, the suburban regime enabled also the transition from the traditional theory of the separated spheres to gender hypersegregation. White men drove their automobiles to work on the brand new highways, while women and children remained shut away in the suburbs. Inside the single-family heterosexual home, white women became full-time, unpaid workers at the service of consumption and family heterosexual (re)production, while white male bodies were constructed as workers, communicators,

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1044 Andrew Wiese, 162.
1045 Levittown, built between 1947 and 1951 on Long Island, near New York, is the most emblematic North American suburban complex: it included 17,000 standard-built houses. More than 88% of its inhabitants were white families. Only 0.7% were Afro American.
and sperm producers. At the same time, private ownership of a single family suburban home was a privilege that only middle class white heterosexual families could afford, making the landscaped suburban complexes racially, gender and sexually segregated areas: the withdrawal of whites from the downtown areas went hand in hand with a new policy of gender, racial, and sexual surveillance of urban public spaces.

Fig. 467, 468. Left: The advertising slogan “You don’t move every day…we do!” stressed the gender difference in mobility within suburbia, American Red Ball advertising, May 1959, Life Magazine.; right: “Total Electric Living is a clean break with the past”/ and “You Live Better Electrically” advertising, Edison Electric Institute, June 1967, Life Magazine.

The development of suburbia as a utopia for white heterosexual reproduction – what
Rich Benjamin shall later call “whitetopia”1046 - was intertwined with a strong eugenic discourse about the threat of non-white overpopulation in America. Following Gwendolyn Wright’s history of housing in America, we could say that the FHA Cold War policies worked under a gender segregationist, pharmacoporno-hygienist and racial agenda: first, a program to “re-domesticate” women after the war and the encouragement of national reproduction of white heterosexual families; and second, the will to control the growth of the non-white American population.

The spatialization of reproductive policies along race lines lead to racial purification of the suburban family areas, and racial zoning. As Wright has stressed, the ideal of a racial homogeneous space depended on the colonial biopolitical principle according to which the highly gender, class and race segregated areas were easier to govern than the diverse urban centers.1047 For Wright, this is the reason why the post-war suburban white single-family housing boom was supported by a government-financial program that produced a growing standardization not only of suburban areas but also of houses, such as in the Kaiser’s Panorama City, in California, in the American Community Builder’s Park Forest outside Chicago or in Levittown in Long Island. The prefab production process transformed the four-room house – either with a split-level design or a H-shaped plan – with built-in refrigerator, washing machine, hi-fi and radio unit, television set and white picket fence into the hegemonic biopolitical architecture for normalizing gender, race,

class and sexuality in the United States during the post-war years. The suburban house itself worked as a performative device to produce gender difference, separating adults from children, but also masculinity from femininity, production from reproduction. For Wright, “these architectural changes reflected something more than a builder’s larger scale and desire to reduce expenses. Social scientists studied the “average family” in the suburbs, and psychologists published “livability studies” that correlated the domestic environment with statistics on crime and family stability.”

Fig. 469. Reportage on the Newark riots, *Life Magazine*, July 28, 1967.

Never before had the house been designed as a space fully dedicated to biopolitical

1048 Gwendolyn Wright, 253.
reproduction of the American white citizen: in fact, the fertility rate was much higher in suburbs than in cities. As Beatriz Colomina has stressed, for the first time children’s spaces and needs (for play, rest or entertainment) were taken into account and generated specific architectural gestures: the back glass wall facing the so-called “outdoor living room” was designed for the mother to be able to watch her children playing outside; the living room open floor-plan centered around the television set was an indoor theatre and playground. Inside and outside, lawn and carpet were gender-opposed biopolitical territories.\textsuperscript{1049} Reading Wright’s and Colomina’s analyses together with Foucault’s theory of governamentality, we could redefine suburban housing as an \textit{architecturally assisted reproduction technique}, a biopolitical technology for increasing the national reproduction rates but also to produce class, gender, sex, and race normalisation.

\textsuperscript{1049} Beatriz Colomina, \textit{Domesticity at War}, 132-133.

The post-war years can thus be seen as the period of expansion and consolidation of a set of gender and sexual norms that following Adrianne Rich’s analysis of sexual politics could be the *heterosexual architectonic imperative*.\(^{1050}\) Like the single-family home and the automobile, post-war masculinity and femininity were standard assemblages that reflect the very same process of industrialization. The suburban home was a decentralized factory for the production of new performative models of gender, race and sexuality. The white heterosexual family was not just a powerful economic unit of production and consumption – it was, above all, the matrix of the North American nationalist imaginary.

**Inventing the Pill: disciplinary and colonial geographies**

During the experimental process that took to the production of the Pill in the 1950s,

Pincus’ and Rock’s research projects, although conflicting in relation to their vision of the function of white women in society (independent and productive for Margaret Sanger’s team and reproductive and domestic for the catholic project), shared a common understanding of non-white and deviant women as bodies whose reproductive power should be restricted by the State in order to “reduce hunger, poverty, and disease while fostering economic stability.”

In the context of an emerging politization of racial, ethnic and sexual minorities in the United States, the contraceptive molecule was thought as an urban eugenic device and as a method to control the non-white population growth, as well as the population growth of nations that had not entered yet within the postwar liberal capitalist economies. The anti-baby molecule was intended to be a “simple, cheap, safe, contraceptive to be used in poverty stricken slums, jungles, and among the most ignorant people.”

After the success of the preliminary Boston trials for the Pill in 1954 and 1955, John Rock and Gregory Pincus needed a large-scale human group to test the new molecule in order to receive the FDA approval necessary to bring the drug to market. The first contraceptive pill large clinical trials were performed by Searle on several groups of psychiatric female patients at Worcester State Hospital and on male prison inmates in the State of Oregon between 1956 and 1957. The tests intended to measure the effectiveness of using synthetic oral hormones as a method of birth control in women, and also its

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1051 Andrea Tone, 207.
1052 Margaret Sanger’s declarations quoted by Andrea Tone, 207.
effectiveness in controlling and decreasing "homosexual tendencies" in men.\textsuperscript{1053} In fact the relationship between hormonal research and the Worcester State Hospital was crucial for the development of the Pill. Founder and feminist activist McCormick had decided to invest on the Pill research in order to fight the hereditary transmission of mental illness.\textsuperscript{1054} Her husband was diagnosed with schizophrenia, and since schizophrenia at that time was considered hereditary, she tried to look for a safe way of preventing pregnancy. In 1944 the McCormicks helped doctor Hudson Hoagland to found the Worcester Foundation for Experimental Biology dedicated to the study of the influence of hormones within mental conditions, which transformed the Worcester Hospital into a major pharmacological laboratory.

Built in 1833, following the Thomas S. Kirkbride plan also known as the “building-secure” theory, according to which architecture itself was meant to have a therapeutic effect, the Worcester State Hospital in Massachusetts was one of the most prestigious institutions of its time, well-known for having been visited by Freud in 1909 when he travel to America. The Worcester State Hospital was the American version of the modern “machine à guérir.”\textsuperscript{1055} A visual and spatial machinery to produce knowledge about madness and reason, the Worcester Hospital combined the prison architecture with large collective rooms, and numerous workshops for experimental treatment such as saunas, rotating chairs intended to cure the patients. Whereas the architecture and the

\textsuperscript{1053} Andrea Tone, 220.
\textsuperscript{1055} See the first of this dissertation for the discussion on the disciplinary hospital.
treatment derived from the nineteenth century orthopedic and disciplinary biopolitical model for understanding madness and therapy, the hospital introduced within its walls the new media and molecular techniques invented during the Cold War. But the mental and prison institutions where not the ideal setting for testing the pill.

The Worcester and Oregon trials were not sufficient either to obtain the approval from the FDA to commercialize the Pill or to test the ability of ordinary women to assume the regularity of the intakes outside of medical institutions. Since strong anti.birth control laws in Massachusetts and in many other states made impossible for Searle to conduct the large study on humans required by the FDA, they turned to Puerto Rico, which already had a long history of birth control governmental programs. The pseudo-colonial island of Puerto Rico became the most important clinical site for testing the Pill outside of the national disciplinary institutions of the asylum and the prison and functioned as a parallel biopolitical real size pharmacological laboratory and factory during the late fifties and early sixties. During the Cold War, Puerto Rico was going to become U.S.’s biggest pharmacological backyard – the island was the invisible bio-factory behind the Playboy Mansion and the middle class white liberated American housewife.

Fig. 472-474. Worcester State Hospital experimental workshops (saunas, visual and
auditive tests, sleep monitoring, etc.), around 1920s-30s.

In 1955, American doctor Edris Rice-Wray, medical director of the Puerto Rican Family Planning Association who was already working with Searle offered Pincus the possibility of conducting the Pill trials at Rio Piedras, a suburban of San Juan where a new housing project had been set up as part of a slum clearance campaign. In the summer of 1955, Gregory Pincus visited Puerto Rico and immediately considered the Rio Piedras housing as the perfect location for a large population and long-time Pill trial.

The general features of legally enforced pharmacological experimentation and isolation spread from Europe and North America to colonial and postcolonial developments, transforming their penal, medical institutional design and management models.1056 Puerto Rico was a paradigmatic case of transition from the colonial regime to a postcolonial economic and biopolitical control. The Spanish colonial regime left the island at the end of the nineteenth century in extreme poverty and overpopulated. After the end of the anti-colonial war of 1898 the island became a United States’ territory. Already in 1917, the Puerto Rico ruling classes and the American government, inspired

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by Neo-Malthusianism ideas, traced the first population control plan for the island. In 1925 Doctor José A. Lanause Rolón founded at the overpopulated Slum of Ponce, the Ponce Birth Control League based on an educational program. These early birth control programs understood sterilization as the safer means to reduce natality and to “clean” the slums, where reduction of population was a first step, followed by urban modernization and development of employment, to transform the agrarian Puerto Rico society into an industrial economy. In fact, Puerto Rico was not a stranger to forced sterilizations. As early as 1907, the United States had instituted public policy that gave the state the right “to sterilize unwilling and unwitting people.” By 1936 there were more than one hundred birth control clinics operating on the island under Federal laws. As Katherine Krase has argued, the “Eugenics Board,” in order to “catalyze economic growth,” and respond to “depression-era unemployment,” passed the Law 136 in 1937, which signified “the institutionalization of these population control programs and the legalization of the sterilization techniques. Both U.S. government funds and contributions from private individuals supported the initiative.” Laws, similar to Law 136, were passed in 30 states. These policies listed the insane, the “feeble-minded,” the “dependent,” and the “diseased” as incapable of regulating their own reproductive abilities, therefore justifying government-forced sterilizations. Legitimizing sterilization for certain groups led to further exploitation, as group divisions were made along race


and class lines."\textsuperscript{1059}

Fig. 475, 476. Puerto Rican huts and farmers, 1903. Locale based on Detroit, Catalogue P (1906). Detroit Publishing Co. no. 016745. Title transcribed from item. Gift; State Historical Society of Colorado; 1949.

From the beginning of the experimental trials with hormones, the problem was to pass first from animals to confinement institution human subjects, and finally to the general human population. As Katherine McCormick infamously said stressing the relationship between imprisonment and scientific control, as well as the multispecies connection, the key issue was to find a “cage of ovulating females”: “Human females are not easy to investigate as are rabbits in cages,” McCormick stated, “The latter can be intensively controlled all the time, whereas the human females leave town at unexpected times at so cannot be examined at a certain period; and they also forget to take the medicine sometimes – in which case the whole experiment has to begin over again for scientific accuracy must be maintained of the resulting data are worthless.”\textsuperscript{1060} For Pincus, the

\textsuperscript{1059} Idem.
\textsuperscript{1060} Katherine McCormick quoted by Lara Mark in “A “Cage of Ovulating Females.” The
island of Puerto Rico offered the stationary, close and easily monitored pool of human population that McCormick ever wanted: the island itself was already represented as an hermetic cage. Puerto Rican women were supposed to be not only as docile as laboratory animals, but also, considered as poor and uneducated, were thought as an exemplary group to proof that any white American woman could follow the Pill discipline. The island of Puerto Rico itself was treated as an extended non-white female body to which the Pill was administered in terms of what Foucault called “urban therapeutics.”

Fig. 477, 478. Left: Jack Delano, San Juan, Puerto Rico. The slum area known as El Fangitto, 1942. Farm Security Administration, Office of War Information Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.; Right: Jack Delano, Street in slum area known as "El Machuelitto," in Ponce, Puerto Rico, 1941. Farm Security Administration - Office of War Information Collection 11671-25 Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Division Washington, DC.


As historians of medicine Jordan Goodman, Anthony McElligot and Lara Marks have argued, Puerto Rico’s trials are not an exception but rather part of a larger history of colonial and hygienist scientific experimentation with humans during the twentieth century: “doctors and biohygienist became the determinators of a bioracially constituted state; they saw themselves as their gatekeepers and guardians, programmed with the mission to secure a utopian healthy society.” However, after the Second World War, the scandals of the Nazi medicine and the Nuremberg Code, the role of the state in pharmacological and medical experimentation became less clearly visible, moving from state institutions into industrial pharmacological companies. As part of a larger mutation from a disciplinary to a pharmacopornographic regime, “research became “de-centered” as it became more commercialized, and moved beyond the immediate sphere of the state or state-related agencies and transcended national borders, borne on the wings of multinational corporations.” The birth control programs tested on Puerto Rico clearly show the complicity before the Second War World between national eugenic programs and private pharmacological interests, and, after the 1940s, the transition from the colonial and state model to the postcolonial and neoliberal transnational model of drug production and multispecies population control.


1064 *Humans in the Service of Medical Science in the Twentieth Century*, 13.
From the colonial brothel to the pharmacopornographic lab

During the last years, several historical essays have developed a postcolonial reading of the relationship between space, prostitution, gender and race within the Puerto Rico island. Radost Rangelova has argued that in Puerto Rico the relationship between gender and space has been historically and socially contingent upon colonial domination, the legacy of slavery and racial purification of the nation.\(^{1065}\) Eileen Suárez Findlay’s, Vázquez Lazo’s and Laura Briggs’s studies on the history of prostitution in Puerto Rico during the period previous to the Second War World enable us to conclude that from the

early years of colonization the island worked as pornotopic colonial site to later become a post and neo-colonial site of pharmacological development. Although colonially promoted from the time of Carlos I, prostitution entered the realm of legal, medical, and media discourse during the nineteenth century as female slavery turned into domestic and sex labor. Following European theories by William Acton and Parent Duchâtelet, the management of prostitution spaces within the island became a medical as well as colonial task that “enjoined a sharp geographic separation between gente decente and prostitutes,” implementing a double process of what Agamben, following Foucault, calls “inclusionary exclusion” and spatialization of difference as techniques of urban formation.

For Rangelova, the traditional European and North American gender (private/public, domestic/non-domestic) and sexual (family and prostitution places) segregation of spaces was reorganized in Puerto Rico according to a colonial logic that separated reproductive from prostitution spaces in term of race. Black and working-class-poor women, marked by poverty and the legacy of slavery, were often represented as

1067 Laura Briggs, 58.
1068 See the first part of this dissertation.
1069 Laura Briggs, 59.
prostitutes, being excluded from the nineteenth century autonomist narrative of the “Gran Familia Puertorriqueña” that was constructed according to racial, class, gender and sex lines. Outside of the “white” and the “mother” figure, non-white poor women were not understood as bodies for the reproduction of the nation, but rather as “deviants” (“elementos divergentes”) to be medically and legally monitored. Non-white poor women were first constructed and managed as potential sexual workers. The same bodies will later be the object of contraception management and experimentation, enabling the unexpected passage from pornotopie to pharmacological laboratory.

As in the case of the early Restif de la Bretonne’s and Parent Duchâtelet’s theories for the construction of the utopian state-brothel in Europe, Puerto Rican hygenism associated disease, delinquency, and the presence of female sexuality within public space. But in Puerto Rico, the spatial biopolitical configuration of the urban space of the main cities of the island, Ponce and San Juan, was determined by the complex crossing of gender and class categories with colonial constructions of race. Thus, non-white “stray women” were the object of a network of disciplinary institutions: hospitals (where gynecological exams took place twice a week), prisons and brothels (within “zones of tolerance”) created a penal and control close-circuit network aimed to remove the black sexual female body from the public space, as well as to regulate the non-white female reproductive system. According to Rangelova, “space was the main axis along which women’s bodies and the practice of prostitution were regulated, restricted and

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controlled.” Vázquez Lazo provides numerous examples of this spatial control developed by the 1890 “Reglamento de Higiene Pública,” which divided prostitutes in three main topo-political categories, depending on the type of house in which prostitution was practiced. Segregation was meant to be at the same time a preventive, protective and therapeutic technique. According to this segmentation of space, prostitutes’ domicile was not considered “domestic,” since it should not be a site of family and nation reproduction, but rather a “brothel,” meaning a space that the government could inspect, control and govern. This regulation of the sexual spaces dismantled traditional divisions of public and private/domestic space and reconstructed the non-white working class and poor domestic space as a site that will be ready to be absorbed by liberal and pharmacological companies after the Second World War. In Puerto Rico, the colonial and national-state brothel was mutating into a pharmaco-pornographic heterotopie. This previous racial and sexual zoning of spaces was to provide the ideal site for the contraceptive tests.

The pharmacological industrialization of the domestic

During the 1930s, the process of excluding and monitoring non-white female sexuality and reproduction in Puerto Rico went from medical and prison control into several active eugenic programs, such as law 136, that for the first time authorized sterilization for “other than medical reasons.” Between 1933 and 1939, the largest network of “maternal

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1072 Radost A. Rangelova, 255.
1073 “Primera. Las internas que viven en casas de efecto matriculadas como tales. Segunda. Las externas o sueltas que acuden a las casas de recibir, hallándose registrados sus nombres en libro especial de la casa […]. Tercera. Las que ejercen sus tratos en su casa o morada”. “Reglamento,” cited by Vázquez Lazo, 113.
hospital,” sterilization and birth control clinics settled within the island. The liberal eugenic law, the network of birth control clinics, as well as the possibility of combining clinical trials, housing development and inexpensive labor for the American companies and the pharmacological industry, made Puerto Rico the ideal setting for Pill trials, the largest clinical tests ever performed in history.

Fig. 480, 481. Jack Delano, Street in slum area in Ponce, Puerto Rico; and “Centro de Salud”. The land on which the houses stand rented from between eighty cents and a dollar a lot per month. Each person built his own house. They had to pay twenty cents per month for water, 1941. Right: Jack Delano, Farm Security Administration. Office of War Information Photograph Collection (Library of Congress).

In 1948, the U.S. government, with the support of the local government of Luis Muñoz Marín, began the “Operation Boostrap” that aimed to encourage a fast industrialization of the island.\textsuperscript{1074} Puerto Rico offered tax exemptions, low cost labor and differential production, space and labor transformation in Puerto Rico see: Alice Colón Warren, “The Feminization of Poverty among Women in Puerto Rico and Puerto Rican Women in the Middle Atlantic Region of the United States,” \textit{Brown Journal of 784}}
rental rates to promote U.S. industrial facilities to settle on the island. As a result, the island’s economy shifted in a few years from colonial agrarian labor intense industries, such as tobacco and sugar, into pharmaceutical, chemical and electronics industries. In a period of twenty years, Puerto Rico became the biggest biochemical and pharmaceutical U.S. laboratory outside of the U.S. continental territory.

Fig. 482. Jack Delano, The family of Ecequiel Irene, FSA (Farm Security Administration) tenant purchase borrower, in front of their new tenant purchase house. Corozal (vicinity), Puerto Rico, 1941.

The access to contraceptive techniques was in fact designed as part of a larger housing project of urban modernization and industrialization of the island. Reproduction control and modern housing were, according to the American government, the two forces that could guarantee the improvement of standard of living in Puerto Rico. The base of the

first trial, that started in 1955, was a G.D. Searle Company clinic located at El Fanguito, (often written in the US documents as, El Fangitto, "the little mud hole," the “worst slum” of the island just outside San Juan, that was soon razed in order to build a mass-produced planned community with “functionalist, white seven-story housing buildings with running water and sunny balconies.” Low cost mass-produced individual family houses were also built by the Federal Program in Delano and other villages: they were low-priced versions of the white middle-class American suburban houses, closer to the military housing units and to the space and living conditions of the black housing ghettos of “Chicago Black Belt” than to the Levitown model. Nevertheless, as Lara Marks argues: “Many of these families highly prized their new accommodation and were therefore unlikely to move away during the course of the trial. This would make them easy to monitor.” The Pill Trials were a biopolitical program of the “modernization of life” that extended to the transformation of the family house, but also to sexuality and reproduction. Conforming to a strict spatial partitioning, the “modern” house became the site to reproduce the “American way of life,” but also a site of reproductive surveillance and pharmacological production. El Fanguito housing program was the “cage of ovulating females” that McCormick dreamed of and that Searle needed to transform the molecule into a commercialized drug. Part of the same urban development, several American pharmacological companies built factories on the island transforming the same women who were testing the oral contraceptives at home at night into day-time factory workers.

In 1956, when the trials started to be performed at the Island, the Pill selected for the trial was Enovid, Searle’s brand name for a synthetic oral progesterone white Pills that came into a regular glass bottle and that women had to take on regular basis and following a strict timetable: “When taking the medication, the women were expected to swallow tablets every day (about one every six or eight hours) between the fifth and twenty-fifth day of their cycle. A number of women also had to inject themselves with the compound or insert it as a vaginal suppository. Each woman had to take her own basal temperature readings and vaginal smears on a daily basis. All this data had to be marked on a chart. The women also had to collect urine over a forty-eight-hour period on the seventh and eighth postovulatory days for hormone analysis. Often the only way to collect urine over such a period would have confined women to their homes where they were near a toilet.”

Having into account the high rates of illiteracy among women in Rio Piedras, compliance with the instructions and data collecting had to be ensured by the regular visit of social workers who moved daily from house to house in order to collect fluids, record information and encourage women’s cooperation with the pharmacological discipline at home – a practice that forced women to stay at home (when not at the factory) to be easily contacted by the social workers.

The most important difference between the Pill trials conducted at Rio Piedras by Searle and previous clinical pharmacological trials did not depend on the substance but on the space where they were performed: the Pill trials were the first clinical tests to be

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externalized outside of medical and pharmacological institutions and located within the domestic environment. Edris Rice-Wray, medical director in charge of the Searle Pill trials, together with Rock and Pincus, decided to use the housing program of El Fanguito as a home setting for the trial. Taking the Pill at home not only reduced the institutional cost of the trials, but also placed the subject within an ordinary life domestic context, while extending the scope of the trial outside the medical institutions: every private home could potentially become an experimental site. El Fanguito housing complex became an externalized extended domestic pharmaceutical laboratory.

The high doses of progesterone selected by Searle & Co to ensure that no pregnancies occurred during the trial rapidly proved that the hormonal oral contraceptive was extremely reliable. As a result of a large part of the population participating on the trial, by 1958 the total birth rate in Puerto Rico started to decline. In the early 1960s, other pharmacological companies, such as Synthex (and its 10 mg Pill Orthonovum) and Wyeth Pharmaceutical (Norgestrel and Mestranol) settled down in the island and extended the trials. Meanwhile, the Pill trials moved also to other pseudo-colonial locations, such as Haiti, where doctor Rice-Wray opened a new Searle & Co trial program as soon as 1957, and Mexico where Syntex launched a new trial program for Norlutin Pill. In most cases the strategy was the same: using housing modernization as a way of installing a micro-pharmaceutical laboratory within the domestic environment.

As Puerto Rican physician and advocate against eugenics Helen Rodriguez-Trias has shown, a strong social and political reaction against the Pill trials started in the island already in 1964. Apart from the trials and as a result of the application of the 136 Law, by 1969 35 % of the Puerto Rican women were sterilized.
Sometimes, such in Mexico, the trials “had to be conducted on a clandestine basis…[…] and the clinic itself was based on an apartment block so that it would be “less noticeable.”

In this case, it was censorship and state persecution that forced to displace the trials from the clinic to the secrecy of the domestic setting. In every case, the Pill trials created a new scientific and political status for the domestic space that became both a site of pharmacological experimentation and production, and a locus of technical control of sexual reproduction.

Fig. 483. Jack Delano, 1941, A land and utility municipal housing project, Ponce, Puerto Rico. Digital slide, color: 1a34070. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C.

A cross-sectional analysis that includes the racial, sexual and gender implications, as well as the geopolitical and institutional spaces involved in the use of the first molecules of synthetic progesterone and estrogen, allows us to define the Pill not just as a simple

\[1078\] Lara Marks “Parenting the Pill: Early Testing of the Contraceptive Pill,” 158.
way of controlling reproduction, but, above all, as a new *pharmaco-domestic technique* for (re-)producing race, a neo-colonical biotechnological *privatized eugenics* method for controlling the reproduction of the species. In this sense, the Pill functions as a semiotic-material factor (both discourse and molecule, abstract machine and bi-product) that plays a key role in the hegemonic racial and sexual grammar of Western culture, obsessed, as Donna Haraway has argued, with the contamination of lineage, racial purity, the separation of the sexes and gender control.

From the Worcester Hospital and the Puerto Rico’s Trials, the Pill didn't function only as a technique for controlling reproduction, but rather for producing and controlling gender and race. Although it was an effective form of birth control, the American Health Institute rejected the first Pill invented by Pincus and Rock in 1951 and tested at Puerto Rico from 1956 on, because, according to the American scientific committee, it threw doubt on the femininity of American women by suppressing their periods all together. The standards of the American Health Institute led to the production by Searle & Co of a second Pill, to be commercialized in 1959, that was equally effective but could, unlike the first, technically reproduce the rhythms of a natural menstrual cycle inducing bleeding that created the illusion that a natural cycle was taking place, and somehow “mimicking the normal physiological cycle.”

The Pill pushes us to take Judith

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1080 For more on «purity» as the target of technobiopower see Donna Haraway, 1996, 78-82.
1081 Anna Glasier, “Contraception, Past and Future,” (Edinburgh: Lothian Primary Care NHS Trust and University of Edinburgh Department of Reproduction and
Butler’s concept of gender performativity from theatrical imitation and linguistic “performative force” to bio mimicry in order to think the technical imitation of the very materiality of the living being, the pharmacopornographic production of somatic fictions of femininity and masculinity.

The operation of these hormonal intervention techniques, from 1951 Pill to Searle & Co’s commercialized version of Enovid, are based on a paradoxical principle: first they interrupt the natural hormonal cycle; then they technically provoke an artificial cycle that restores the illusion of naturalness. The first is a contraceptive action; the second is aimed at gender production through pharmacopornographic means: the body of twentieth century heterosexual women should appear as the result of immutable, transhistoric and transcultural laws. As Time Magazine explained in the much commented article of 1967, the oral contraceptive rather than being un-natural, enable women to gain nature’s perfection: “the pill regularises a woman's monthly cycle so that she has her "period" every 26 to 28 days, as nature presumably intended. To this extent, the pills are biologically normalizing.”

Arguing that it imitated and perfected nature, during the 1960s doctor Rock asked the Vatican, without success, to approve the Pill. The production of monthly “bleeding” periods that ensures this fiction of natural femininity will be one of the main concerns when packaging the Pill as domestic edible pharmacological technique.

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The feminization processes underlying the way the Pill is produced, distributed and consumed show up hormones as sexual-political fictions, techno-living metaphors that can be swallowed, digested, absorbed and incorporated, pharmacopornographic artifacts capable of creating bodily formations that radically transformed nineteenth century disciplinary political architectures such as domestic spaces or medico-legal institutions, but also meta-architectures, such as postcolonial economies and nation-states and the global networks in which molecules and capital circulate.

The high-dosage, domestic administration of progesterone and estrogen to Western heterosexual women in the postwar years made it possible to produce and reproduce femininity as a performative bio-code. This new micro-prosthetic femininity became a pharmacopornographic technique, which could be patented and sold, installed within the domestic space, transferred or implanted in any living body.\textsuperscript{1083}

PACKAGING DISCIPLINARY ARCHITECTURE

DIALPAK AND THE INVENTION OF THE EDIBLE PANOPTICON

After the Puerto Rico Trial the FDA approved the use of G.D. Searle & Co’s Enovid in 1957 for the treatment of menstrual irregularities and two years later for birth control. Nevertheless, Puerto Rican women’s resistance to follow the instructions made Searle

\textsuperscript{1083} The high doses of estrogen and progesterone administered during this period gradually proved to be carcinogenic and linked to a series of cardiovascular alterations, although these discoveries didn’t affect the pill’s popularity (pill usage has actually increased exponentially since the seventies) and didn’t prompt any changes to the World Health Organization’s recommendations.
think that the commercialization for American women could be difficult without pharmacological control. Although highly efficient, the hormonal Pills intake routine seemed almost impossible to control outside of the pharmacological housing programs: never before a pharmacological product had depended so much on the domestic discipline of the patient. As we will see, the invention of the domestic and portable Pill dispenser in the early 1960s will be an answer to this need for self-surveillance and body discipline.

Fig 484. Enovid first brown bottle for pills, Searle & Co, 1960.

Originally, Enovid was commercialized in two doses, 10 mg and 5mg, and like all Pill prescriptions of the time, it was delivered in a small bottle. The combined oral contraceptive hormones entered the American middle class domestic environment within a brown glass container, but without the pedagogical regime of the Rio Piedras pharmacological-housing complex, any mistake within the intake timetable could cause what Enovid tried to prevent. Instructions for taking the Pill seemed straightforward: the user should take the first tablet on the fifth day after beginning menstruation, continue with one tablet every day for 20 days, and then stop; she would begin menstruating in
two to three days, and on the fifth day of menstruation she was to start another 20-day cycle of tablets. But the brown bottle didn’t enable to memorize and control the intake routine.
In 1962 Illinois engineer David P. Wagner (whose work was developing new fasteners for Illinois Tool Works) created a first prototype Pill dispenser, made of three round plastic plates held by a snap fastener in order to organize his wife’s monthly Pill supply into daily doses. Wagner explained this way the process the production of the dispenser: “With just a ¼” electric drill, a fly cutter to be used in the drill, paper, a saw, a staple, pencil, double-faced transparent tape, several drill bits, a snap fastener that I took off a child’s toy, and several flat, clear sheets of either acrylic or polycarbonate plastic, I fashioned the first Pill box for packaging birth control Pills.” The bottom plate had the day-of-the-week pattern. The middle plate held twenty wooden "Pills" and rotated to match the day Pill taking begins. A single hole in the top plate moved over the Pill to dispense it, revealing the day of the week as a reminder that the Pill was taken.

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1085 Patricia Gossel Peck, 107.

1086 Ibid., 106.
Wagner sent the prototype to Searle and to Ortho Pharmaceutical. Searle & Co rejected Wagner’s project and Ortho Pharmaceutical launched the first Dialpak “memory-aid” dispenser in 1963, designed according to Wagner’s model. Reaching the market few months later, Searle & Co’s Enovid E Con-pac and 1mg-Ovulen Pill dispensers were also closely inspired by Wagner’s distributor. To distinguish itself from Searle’s Con-pac, in 1964 Ortho-Novum advertisement showed for the first time the Dialpak 21

Neither Searle nor Ortho bought Wagner’s patent. Ortho was later legally forced to pay $10,000 to Wagner to compensate for using his prototype.
dispenser for the oral contraceptive, highlighting a watchstrap calendar “to keep key
days always at hand.”

According to historian of medicine Emilia Sanabria, the material aspects of packaging
and pharmaceutical transformation are often overlooked when doing the history of
medical techniques: “In the manipulation pharmacy, liquid, semi-solid and solid
pharmaceutical substances are manufactured – or temporarily stabilized – into
pharmaceutical “objects.” The possibility of effecting this handcrafting is understood to
define the effects that these pharmaceutical objects can have, physiologically-speaking
on their “patients.” Pharmaceuticals have increasingly been analyzed as objects. This
carves out a particular place for pharmaceuticals in the analysis of material things, and of
material things in the analysis of pharmaceuticals. Whilst material culture analyses
provide elements to theorize drugs as « things » it produces problems when these things
are drugs. I argue that the consumable and changeable aspects of these “things” are left
un-theorized. This problem stems from a common assumption in anthropological
analyses of material culture, which tends to take the object for granted. That is to say, the
process of object-making is often eclipsed by the object itself.”1088

1088 Emilia Sanabria “The Medicine, an Evanescent Object : Test on the Manufacture and
the Consumption of the Pharmaceutical Substances,” Techniques & Culture 2-3, 52-53

Insisting on the need to pay attention to the medical and social repercussions of pharmacological marketing, historian Patricia Peck has studied the packaging techniques that took to the commercialization of the Dialpak, the first compliance package of the Pill in 1963. According to Peck, the Pill was not only a political and gender revolution, but also a revolution within drug packaging. The Pill is the first pharmaceutical molecule to be produced as a design object.

Patricia G. Peck understands Wagner’s design of the Pill packaging as a couple “problem solving” process where the husband (and designer) aided his wife to manage a complex intake time schedule, being the bond between husband/wife a model of the

For Peck, the Dialpak “appears to be the first “compliance package” for a prescription drug – “one that intended to help the patient to comply with the doctors orders.” For Patricia Peck, the invention of the Pill dispenser shows the emergence of a new model within pharmaceutical design, which does not rely on the company advertising aims, but rather on the designer-user relationship.

Following Peck’s design history as well as Sanabria’s history of pharmacology, we could argue that the Pill (taking into account the difficulties of the intake schedule) is not only a chemical product (the molecule isolated and marketed as edible capsule) but rather an individual portable pharmaco-mechanism able to discipline the capsules’ intake. The Pill, as a social domestic practice and individual hormonal prosthesis, cannot exist without the dispenser. Whereas a single tablet of an oral contraceptive, if separated from the container, could be recognized only by a pharmacist, the distinctive package of the Pill made it the most readily recognized prescription drug on the market during the 1960s. Reversing the traditional relationship between content and container, the packaging is the Pill.

Wagner’s Dialpak design resulted from two operations: spatialization of time, and camouflage. First, the dispenser tried to spatialize time making the administration dates visible within the circular box. Like the rotary dial telephone, the most popular

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1090 “Doris Wagner bean taking the pill after the fourth child, Jane, was born on November 14, 1961, and the Wagners decided that their family was complete,” Peck explains, as if she needed to justify the Wagner’s decision for birth control. See: Patricia Gossel Peck, “Packaging the Pill,” 105.
1091 Ibid.
communication domestic appliance of the Cold War years, the circular box established abstract relationships between three systems: holes, pills and the dates of the menstrual cycle for the Dialpak as well as holes, numbers and network stations for the phone. The dispenser divided duration into successive segments, each of which indicates a specific time. The spatialization of time produces what Foucault called an “anatomic-chronological scheme of action” that combines architecture, design and body movement transforming the user into an efficient reproducing machine. According to Wagner, and later to the Searle & Co and to Ortho Pharmaceutical advertising campaigns, the dispenser’s main aim was to reduce “forgetfulness,” being presented as prosthesis to women’s lack of memory and responsibility. In this respect, the Dialpak was a technique for packaging not only Pills, but also memory and time, responsibility and trust.

![Images of communication devices]

Fig. 490-492. From left to right: Ortho-Novum Dialpak Pill Dispenser, 1963; American Rotary Dial Phone, Western Electric, Model Princess, 1963; Panel Telephone Concept, Bell System Advertising, "No End to Telephone Progress: A Kitchen phone that can be

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1092 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 156-166.
1093 According to the same logic, the 1DU contraceptive device was described by the *Time* magazine, “memory in plastic.” Cited in “Contraception: Freedom from Fear.”
recessed in a wall or cabinet,” 1962.

The monthly package of Pills, with its imperative of daily administration but also the risk of forgetfulness or incorrect management, with its time-based ritual, it's colorful pop design like the Campbell’s soup cans immortalized by Andy Warhol in 1960, is reminiscent of a chemical calendar, on which every single day is marked by the indispensable presence of a tablet. Its round packaging invites users to follow the passage of time on a clock, with an alarm to announce Pill-time. It functions as a device for domestic self-surveillance of female sexuality, like a molecular, endocrinological, high-tech version of a Mandala, the Book of Hours or the daily self-examination of Loyola's Spiritual Exercises. It is a hormonal domestic micro-prosthesis that regulates ovulation, but it also enables the production of the “soul” of the heterosexual woman as modern sexual reproductive subject.

On the other side, Wagner intended to camouflage a birth control technique into a “female” ordinary use object: he designed the dispenser to be the size and form of a makeup compact, so women could carry it discreetly in their purses – a way of using in the public space a technique that was meant to be only domestic. Although soon shared by millions of American women, the dispenser was meant to be totally “private,” the perfect box to keep a female secret. This domestic and undisclosed character of a birth control technique may explain why most of consumer manuals suggested keeping the dispenser at home, putting it, for example, at the kitchen range or at the night table, or in the bathroom closet. As historian Patricia Peck recalls: “A Philadelphia women’s health
clinic recommended that women take their Pill when they heard the theme music for the 11 o’clock news, at bed time,” trying to transform a national broadcasting media into a technique to regulate the intake. In same cases, “the package of birth control Pills was presented in box with a toothbrush, a small bar of soap, a “Remember Me” sticker for the bathroom mirror and the slogan “Brush your teeth, wash your face, take your Pill…once a day, everyday, at the same time.”

Fig. 493, 494. Left: Max Factor Creme Puff Compack Design, 1959; Right: First advertising campaign for Enovid-E Compack Pill Dispenser, Searle & Co, 1964.

Patricia Gossel Peck, 115. Starter Kit for Forgetful Women Organon, Inc., included helpful suggestions for forgetful pill-takers in the starter kit they distributed in 1993 with their Desogen oral contraceptive. The domestic kit contained a bar of soap, a toothbrush, and a "Remember Me" sticker for the bathroom mirror with the slogan, "Wash your face, brush your teeth, take your pill, once a day, every day, at the same time." The tablets came in a calendar compact with a choice of stickers that enabled the pill-taker to start her cycle of pills any day of the week.

Cited by Patricia Gossel Peck, 116.
By 1964 more than a million women around the world had their hormonal levels and menstrual cycles adjusted by the simplest packaging device. In 1965 Mead Jonson invented the 28-day regime adding placebos and enabling the user to take a Pill every day. *C-Queens Sequential Pill* by Eli Lilly contained two different formulations to be taken in sequence. The package resembled a calendar, with four rows of five tablets. The 28-day regime made the Dialpak calendar format obsolete: the key now was that the Pills were taken in the proper sequence, leaving behind traces when the cycle started. But with the time, the Pill became a female life-regulator: the placebo 28-day regime Parke and Davis Pills included 1mg Norlestrin Fe to “compensate the mineral loss during menstrual bleeding,” and some other designs incorporated a dial to remind the user to self-examine her breast for tumors at the optimum time of her cycle.

The process of camouflage, miniaturization and privatization reached a higher level when in 1964 the Population Council’s Center for Biomedical Research demonstrated that hormones could be released from silicone rubber capsule implanted in the body. The first clinical trials of a six-capsule “silastic (silicone and plastic) drug delivery systems” under the skin of the upper arm were first conducted in 1975, and it was first approved for use in Finland in 1983. “In this case,” as Peck has underlined, “the dosage form and the container have merged.” The implant remained within the body, invisible, as long as the drug was released, during five years, until the implant was chirurgically removed. Norplant prosthetic implant will be followed later by infusion pumps, transdermal

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1096 Gossel Peck thoughtfully notices that by the 1980s the cosmetic compact design was displaced by the “wallet” or the “credit card” look.  
1097 Patricia Gossel Peck, 116.
patches and osmotic systems.

Bringing Sanabria and Peck’s conclusions about pharmaceutical packaging further into a general history of biopolitics, I shall argue the transformation of the oral contraceptive pill into “the Pill” through packaging could be understood not only as a cultural process which implies social and medical effects, but also as the translation of an architectonic model, a disciplinary system of power and knowledge relationships deriving from the Enlightenment architectures of the hospital and the prison, into a domestic, portable (and later bodily and prosthetic) technique.

Aby Warburg’s method of leaving traces through images and texts allows us to detect, not without a shudder, the continuance of Bentham’s model in David Wagner’s first oral contraceptive Pill dispenser that was sold by Searl & Co from the early 1960s on a mass scale. Understood as a biopolitical architecture, the contraceptive Pill is an edible panopticon. Social orthopedics has given way to a sexo-political domestic prosthetic gadget. With the Dialpak, a make up box design and its rotating dispositif was somehow wrapped around a space-time management mechanism and its schedule of body practices introduced by monastic life that had been transformed into scopic and spatially segregated disciplinary architectures during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Dialpak transformed the panopticon into a domestic and portable female hormonal-compact.

We can think the Pill as a lightweight, portable, individualized, affable architecture with the potential to change behavior, program action, regulate sexual activity, control population growth and racial purity and redesign the sexual appearance (by synthetically re-feminizing) of the bodies that self-administer it. The institutional architecture has turned domestic. The surveillance tower has been replaced by the eyes of the (not always) docile Pill user who regulates her own administration without the need for external supervision, following the spatial calendar marked on the circular or rectangular package. The whip has been replaced by a convenient system of oral administration. The prison cell has become the body of the consumer, which is biochemically changed in such a way that once the hormonal compound has been taken, it is no longer possible to
determine its precise effects or their source. Punishments and edifying sermons have been replaced by rewards and promises of freedom and sexual emancipation for women.

The Pill is a miniaturized pharmacopornographic laboratory located within the domestic environment and destined to be inside the body of each consumer, thus fulfilling the demolition of imprisonment institutions predicted by Deleuze and Guattari in their epilogue to *A Thousand Plateaus*. The Pill works according to what Maurizio Lazzarato calls, following Deleuze and Guattari, the logic of “machinic enslavement.” It is no longer necessary to lock up individuals within state institutions in order to subject them to biochemical, pedagogic or penal tests, because experiments on the human soul can now be carried out at home, in the valuable enclave of the individual body, under the watchful, intimate supervision of the multimedia connected individual herself. The biopolitical promise of “governing free bodies” that Foucault identified seems here fully accomplished.

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1099 Machinic enslavement “consists in mobilizing and modulating the pre-individual, pre-cognitive and pre-verbal components of subjectivity, causing affects, perceptions and sensations as yet un-individuated or unassigned to a subject, to function like the cogs and components in a machine. While subjection concerns social selves or global persons, those highly manipulable, molar, subjective representations, machinic enslavement connects infrapersonal, infrasocial elements thanks to a molecular economy of desire which is far more difficult to maintain within stratified social relationships, and these are the elements that mobilize individuated subjects. Machinic enslavement is therefore not the same thing as social subjection. If the latter appeals to the molar, individuated dimension of a subjectivity, the former activates its molecular, pre-individual, pre-verbal, pre-social dimension.” Maurizio Lazzarato, “The Machine,” in Gerald Raunig, *Tausend Maschinen, Eine kleine Philosophie der Maschine als sozialer Bewegung* (Berlin : Verlag Turia + Kant, 2008).
But again there is no disciplinary architecture that doesn’t generate its own heterotopia. Likewise, machinic enslavement opens up also new possibilities for subversion. The Pill – defined by the need for an individual decision to take it and by the time-based calculations of the user – immediately induces accident. It takes accident into account, programs it, sees accident as a *sine qua non* possibility of female sexuality. The heterosexist logic of the Cold War period that dominates the Pill seems to respond to this double, contradictory requirement: every woman must simultaneously be fertile (and be so through heterosexual insemination) and able to reduce the possibility of her own fertility at all times to levels asymptotically close to zero, but without reducing it altogether, so that accidental conception remains possible. But the accident is also the possibility of subversion and re-signification: the fact that the Pill must be managed at home, by the individual user in an autonomous way introduces also the possibility of political agency.
Fig. 497. Advertising for Ovulen 21, by Searle & Co. The sequential oral contraceptive placed 21 oral pills in a race track design to ensure that the Pill were taken in correct order.
Still, the differences between the Panopticon and the Pill are significant. In a period of barely a hundred years, they mark the transition from a disciplinary regime into a pharmacopornographic regime. The first consists of external, political architecture that determines the position of the body in a collectively regulated space, creates specific positions of power (human/animal, guard/observed, patient/doctor, teacher/student, etc.) and allows the generation of knowledge (visual, statistical, demographic) about the individuals being controlled. In the second, we are dealing with a device that has been miniaturized to the point of entering the domestic, becoming a bimolecular technique taken orally by the individual, while still increasing in effectiveness. In the
pharmacopornographic age, biopower dwells at home, sleeps with us, inhabits within. We’re looking at a seemingly democratic, privatized form of control that can be absorbed, inhaled and easily administered, that spreads through the social body with unprecedented speed and undetectability. The dominant representations of the pharmacopornographic age – molecules, prostheses, images, numeric codes– share a common architecture-body-power relationship: the desire for communication, infiltration, spatialization, absorption, total occupation. We could be tempted to represent this relationship in terms of a dialectic model that sees domination/oppression as a one-way transaction in which power – in an external, miniaturized, liquid form – infiltrates the docile bodies of individuals. Biopower doesn't infiltrate from the outside. It dwells already inside.
Fig. 499. Richard Hamilton (and John McHale), *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?* Collage, *This is Tomorrow*, Catalog Exhibit, London, 1956.

Since the fifties, the construction of bio-femininity has involved a pharmacopornographic process, that extending Judith Butler’s performative theory of gender production we could identify as somatopolitical cross-dressing or *bio-drag*. Gender production can’t be reduced to gender impersonation, as postmodern theories
have claimed, but rather always implies cross-dressing and production at a molecular level – a transformation of the structure of life. Breasts, for example, which take on a new aesthetic and medical relevance during the fifties with the invention of the bikini are gradually being transformed into a somatic centre of gender production. They are presented as the enclave of new pathologies like hypomastia (small-breast syndrome) or breast cancer, which emerged at the same time as the techniques of mastectomy (surgical removal of the breast) and breast reconstruction using synthetic implants, with the number of cases growing exponentially during the Cold War period.


New synthetic materials, architectural techniques, collage, and film-editing techniques

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1100 A paradigmatic example of these postmodern theories would be: Jean Baudrillard, De la séduction (Paris: Galilée, 1979).
entered the domain of body transformation.¹¹⁰³ Paraffin became one of the first substances used to make “island flaps” for breast implants and also for testicular implants (specially on soldiers who had lost their testicle/s during the war) and the reconstruction of "syphilitic noses". In the 1920s, paraffin gave way to gum arabic, rubber, cellulose, ivory, different metals... In 1949, Ivalon, a derivative of polyvinyl alcohol, was used for the first subcutaneously injected breast implant. The first recipients of these rudimentary implants were Japanese sex workers in the period immediately after the war, whose bodies underwent a process of standardization that responded to the pin-up model of the US army.¹¹⁰⁴ Body mutations were taking place on a global scale: the bodies that were affected by plutonium radiation as a result of the hydrogen bomb would now be affected by polysiloxan polymers. From 1953, pure silicone became the most widely used material for the production of prosthetic implants. Soon after, the company Down Corring commercially released the first tube of silicone gel for medical use. In spite of its high toxicity, it would continue to be used until the early nineties. Richard Hamilton’s and John McHale’s 1956 famous collage “Just What Is It That Makes Today’s Homes So Different So Appealing” could be understood as the representation of a new form of pharmacopornographic domesticity where plastics, media technologies, sexual hormones, and silicon implants are becoming part of a larger process of mass-production of the domestic environment, the body itself is turning into a domestic

commodity and a multimedia bio-port. The house of tomorrow was a Pill house.
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Documents:

Request to use images from Playboy for the book *Cold War Hot Houses*

Diane Griffin (Playboy’s Enterprises International, Rights and Permissions Records Manager) answer
December 10, 2002

Ms. Marsha Terrones
Playboy Enterprises
690 N. Lake Shore Dr.
Chicago, IL 60611

Dear Ms. Terrones,

The purpose of this letter is twofold. We spoke on the phone a couple of weeks ago and I would now like to formally present you with our requests. My name is AnnMarie Brennan and I am the editor of the publication, Cold War Hot House. I am initially writing to request permission to reprint the enclosed images, which will illustrate the article "Pomotopia" in the book Cold War Hot Houses. The book will be published by Princeton Architectural Press as part of the Princeton University Papers on Architecture series in August of 2003. The 412 page, 6 x 9 inch paperback volume will have a print run of approximately 4000 copies. At the moment the images are planned to be printed in black and white at a size not to exceed 1/2 page. However we are currently seeking funding from various sources to print the images in color. In fact I am sending a letter similar to this one and a copy of the article to Cleo Wilson to see if the Playboy Foundation would be interested in making a contribution to the publication of our book in color.

The second reason for this letter is to present a list and photocopies of the specific images we are requesting to reproduce and ask if we could have a reduced rate (or waived all together) in regard to research fees. Our publication will be used for academic purposes and the authors and editors are not financially compensated for the publication of the articles. For the most part, the enclosed list of 14 images contains the exact bibliographic citation, therefore the research work is minimal. There are a couple images that we have found in the book Inside the Playboy Mansion and cannot find within the pages of Playboy magazine. If possible we would like to use these images or an image that is similar.

We request non-exclusive world rights to use this material in all languages and for all editions. If you are the copyright holder of the material, may we have your permission to reprint it? If you are not, or if you share the copyright with others, would you kindly notify us of the others' names? Unless you request otherwise, we will use the conventional scholarly form of acknowledgement.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please send your response to me at the address below.

Sincerely,

AnnMarie Brennan, PhD. Candidate and editor
Princeton University
School of Architecture
Architecture Building
Princeton, NJ 08540
umbrenna@princeton.edu
609.883.9774
Subject: request to use PB images in the book "Cold War Hot House"

Date: Wed, 08 Jan 2003 15:06:03 -0600

From: "Griffin, Diane" <dianeg@Playboy.com>

To: "ambrenna@princeton.edu" <ambrenna@Princeton.EDU>

re: Your request to reprint 17 Playboy images within the book "Cold War Hot House"

Dear Dr. Brennan:

Company policy in regard to the release of our material to third parties is as follows:

(1) We never align ourselves with the word "pornography." Unless the chapter title "Porntopia" and the references to pornography are removed, we will not release any material.

(2) We only allow up to five images (art/photo/cartoons/text) for use in one volume of work. Note that some of the illustrations you selected feature multiple images--photos, text and art. For example, your illustration numbered 4 features five photos, one illustration and text.

(3) We do not release any photos featuring nudity (your illustrations numbered 3, 5, 13, 16).

Let me know if you want to proceed with this request.

Sincerely,

Diane Griffin
Rights and Permissions Records Manager
Playboy Enterprises International, Inc.
600 North Lake Shore Drive
Chicago IL 60611
telephone: 312-373-2485
fax: 312-751-2019
dianeg@playboy.com