

MURDER ON THE FLOORPLAN

Graphic Investigations, the Plan as Script for
Domestic Performances



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the Plan as Script for Domestic Performances*

Theoretical Statement TPOD EPFL 2024–2025

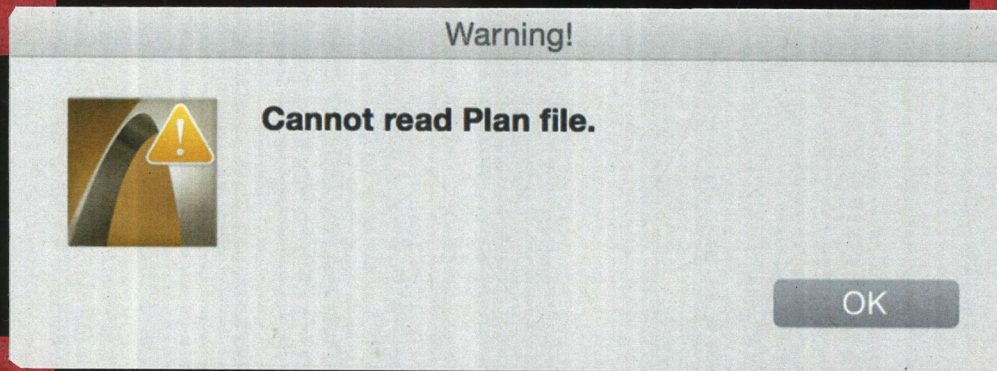
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Introduction	6-9
On Paper Politics	10-11
Part I	
Act 1: Draw(n into) Morpheus Arms <i>Pierre Le Muet's* Manière (1647)</i>	14-17
Act 2: Bienséance First! <i>Jacques-François Blondel's* Cours (1771)</i>	18-21
Act 3: Living Together Apart <i>Robert Kerr's* The Gentleman House (1871)</i>	22-25
Part II	
Act 4: Nomadic Furniture for Unassigned Interiors <i>Moisei Ginzburg's* and Ignaty Milinis'* F-Units (1930)</i>	28-31
Act 5: Dwelling in Blankness <i>Kiyonori Kikutake's* Sky House (1958) and Hiromi Fujii's* E2-Project (1968-71) and Suzuki Apartment (1968-70)</i>	32-37
Act 6: Diagrams for What, Progress for Who? <i>Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky's* Frankfurter Küche (1926)</i> <i>Elizabeth Denby's* and Maxwell Fry's* Kensal House (1937)</i>	38-41
Act 7: Patriarchal Topography <i>Boerinnenbond's* Het Huis onzer Dromen (1954)</i>	42-45
Act 8: Glossy Paper Space <i>Robert Bray's* Playboy Duplex Penthouse (1970)</i>	46-49
Act 9: This Plan is so 'Camp' <i>Eileen Gray's* E.1027 (1926-29)</i>	50-53
Conclusion: On Current Practices Grammar	54-59
Bibliography	60-65
Acknowledgment	66-67



INTRODUCTION

*Warning! Cannot read Plan file.*¹

1. Warning! Cannot read Plan file, ArchiCAD error message

2. Aureli, Pier Vittorio. "Life, Abstracted: Notes on the Floor Plan." *e-flux Architecture*, October 2017. Accessed December 2024

3. Schweizerischer Ingenieur- und Architektenverein (SIA), SIA 400: *Planbearbeitung im Hochbau* (Zurich: SIA, 2000).

4. It is "scrupulously" recommended to follow SIA 400 for symbols, texts and diverse graphic elements in drawings, inducing a codification of floor-plans submitted to building permit, in Canton de Vaud, *Charte graphique DAO*, 15 March 2012, version 4.02

5. Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999, 221 (translation of Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagenwerk*, 1982)

6. Heynen, Hilde "Modernity and domesticity: Tensions and contradictions" in Heynen, Hilde, and Gulsum Baydar. *Negotiating Domesticity: Spatial Productions of Gender in Modern Architecture*. 1st ed. (London ; Routledge, 2005) 24

7. Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, (London: Routledge, 1999)

Beneath this seemingly innocuous message lies the defining essence of an architectural plan—its readability. A plan is crafted to convey spatial intelligence, a coded map of habitation, to clients, builders, architects, or any agents of the building industry. Its coherence relies on a shared abstracted language of dots, lines, and hatches, tracing the projected elements' consistency towards each other.² For instance, darker elements signify cut sections, while lighter ones denote visible features. Such syntax is not merely aesthetic but structural, showcasing a grammatical tension ruling the medium.

Yet, beyond walls and partitions, these subsequent implications exist for other features populating the plan. Drawn furniture often appears in architectural plans. Their inclusion is even codified in the *SIA 400*, where specific symbols are mandated for items like sinks, and standardised representations of beds are provided in model plans.³ The discreet presence of drawn furniture within a legal framework that regulates how architectural plans should be rendered raises questions about their purpose and intent.⁴

Concerning domestic space, furniture mediates between inhabitants and their dwellings. Usually, the first step when moving in is to arrange objects – bed, chairs, posters – first to allow comfort and domestic rituals to happen but also to project into the new home. Walter Benjamin invokes the metaphor of the 'shell' to describe this evolving boundary between person and place allowing spacial appropriation. The 'shell' is a product shaped through time and repetition, as underlined by the transitive nature of the verb 'to dwell,' which requires constant effort.⁵ A materialist reading of Benjamin's 'shell' finds its receptacle in furniture, which enact domestic performances, nurturing the membrane. A bed, for instance, is not merely a drawn object; it abstracts the performance of rest. I appropriate my bedroom by sleeping in my bed. To inhabit, then, is to engage in a choreography of acts that weave the shell's fabric. We live in plans and inhabit through furniture. Just as a line is a structural wall abstraction, a drawn bed marks an abstracted performance.

However, furniture and the performances they enable are never neutral. What makes a master bedroom 'master' is the marital bed it houses and its prominence regarding other bedrooms, while a 'rational' kitchen owes its identity to the designs of efficiency it embodies. Each time, spatial narratives lie under these names and rely on performances as plays of class, gender, race, and ideology. A master bedroom presumes marriage, just as a rational kitchen presupposes the control of a 'professional' housewife.⁶ Judith Butler reminds us that gender is not innate but performed – a sequence of enactments shaped by cultural paradigms.⁷

Returning to Benjamin's concept of the 'shell' – the evolving boundary between self and domestic space – and juxtaposing it with Butler's theory of performativity, structural repetitive schemes appear. Just as drawings are reproduced through printing and screening, social norms are reproduced through domestic acts, which found their abstraction in drawn furniture in plans. The political thickness of the dot, line, and hatch is to be investigated.

This research will have floor plans as its central thread in this underlying semantic and political dimension. This research investigates architectural floor plans not merely as tools for spatial organization but as codified scripts and sites that showcase an intention to regulate and sustain performances of gender, class, and ideology within domestic spaces. The énoncé is organised into 9 Acts, each focusing on a specific floorplan where drawn furniture enacts performative agendas.

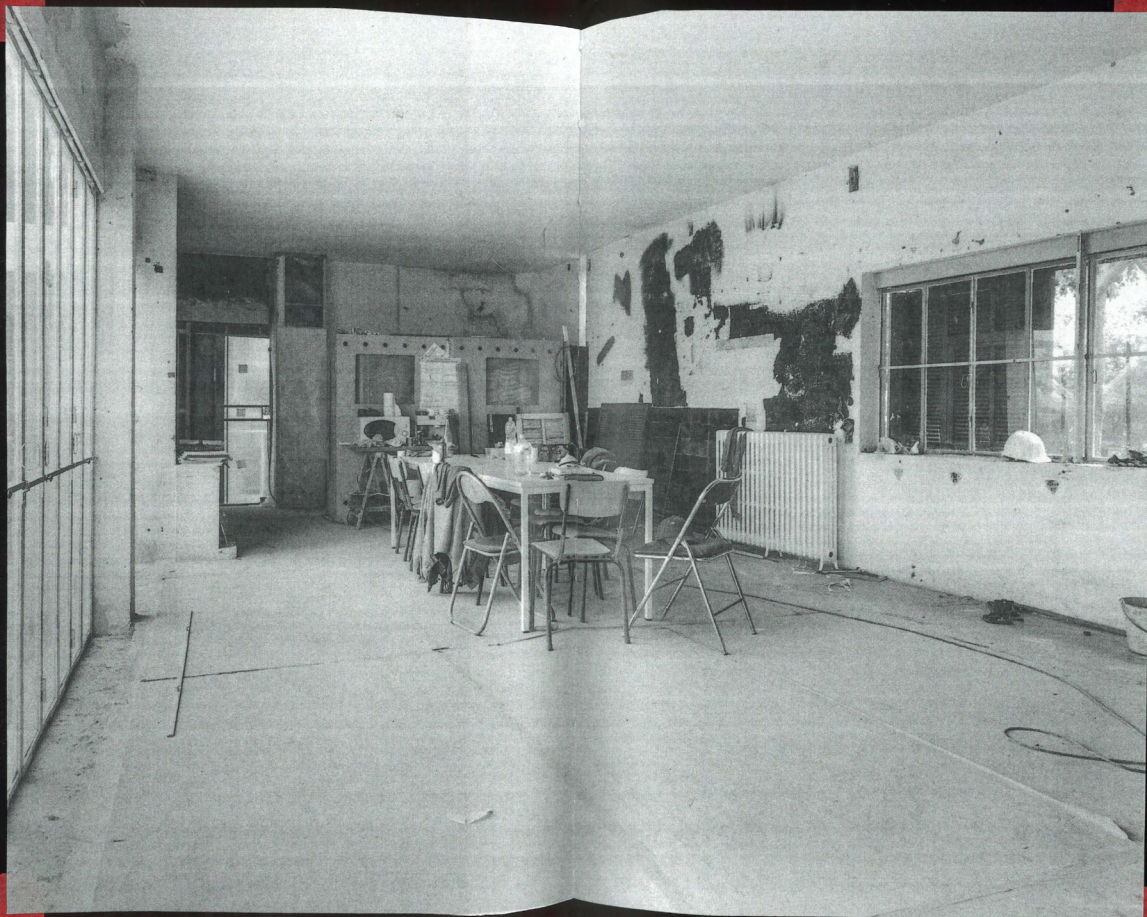
The first part, – Acts 1, 2, and 3 – will delve into floor plan and the emergence of drawn furniture, aligning this analysis with the exploration of domestic space as a site of projection and control. The second part, – Acts 4 through 9 – is formulated around case studies from the twentieth century that seek through paper to *kill, blank, reform, practice, coat, and camp* the established domestic ethos.

Note on the énoncé media structure:

Each Act starts with a scan of the case studies surveyed in act. The scan aims here by action and intent – scanning being a recurrent reproductive procedure in architecture – to produce a common structure in the research. Each time a “note” is written to introduce the plan graphic specificities.

Each Act is paced by redrawn plans from the author, in which line weight traditional hierarchy has been flipped to highlight drawn furniture, being the analytical lens in this research. Drawn [elements](#) serving as lenses to unpack the performative scripts in the analysed plans are written and redrawn in blue in text and drawings.

INTRODUCTION



Eileen Gray's* iconic E.1027 living room, under restoration (2008-2017), Akhøj.
Kasper, Zion. Amy, Otero-Pailos, Jorge, Colomina. Beatriz. *Welcome (to the Teknival):
E-1027*. First edition. (Zurich: b.frank books, 2017) Photograph "11," scanned, printed,
taped, and scanned by the author.

another time,

another inhabitant,

another furniture,

another shell.

On Paper Politics

Before delving into the matter at hand, I would like to pause for a brief interlude to address the documents referenced throughout this énoncé. Regarding authorship, I have chosen to mark each Architect* name with an asterisk – whether they are confirmed or presumed to have produced the drawings discussed. Architectural practices tend to focus on canonical figures rather than production transparency, often privileged by their class, race, and gender. Drawings are frequently attributed to a singular name, veiling the labor of unseen contributors, such as draftsmen and draftswomen.¹ This asterisk* serves as a subtle yet persistent reminder of those effaced by the archival record.

Shifting focus from authorship to archiving, let us examine the history of Eileen Gray's* E.1027 plan, which serves as the Act 9 case study. The drawings and plans of Eileen Gray* – a non-straight, white, bourgeois, cis woman – met a tragic fate during the Second World War, used by the German army as kindling for fire.² Meanwhile, Le Corbusier – a white, heterosexual, cisgender man and one of architecture's most canonical figures – failed to credit Gray* for E.1027, referring to it merely as 'a house in Cap-Martin' in *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* (1948).³ Le Corbusier's* work was spared such erasure; his plans and drawings were not burned but used for projects during the same period.

This candid archival case study underscores the political machinery governing knowledge production, a mechanism Michel Foucault termed the 'politics of truth' shaped by 'regimes of truth.'⁴ Le Corbusier* exemplifies this dynamic and is well-known for meticulously archiving every fragment of his work and life,⁵ thus preemptively curating his legacy. By contrast, Gray,* denied such privilege, could not afford to safeguard her contributions. Her drawings were partially destroyed before her death. While Gray* was subjected to archival erasure, Le Corbusier* emerged as an orchestrator of archival preservation. Your relationship towards archival mechanisms – subjected to or actor of it – depends on which side of social privilege you stand.

Gray's* work was resurrected through the tenacity of feminist scholars who pieced together her fragmented archives and restored rightful interpretations of her work.⁶ This political stance on archiving echoes Preciado's reflections in *Pornotopia*. He highlights his struggle to obtain documents from *Playboy* and the company's blackmail over the use of the word 'pornography,' which should be replaced by 'art,' echoing Derrida's research on the 'archive.'⁷ Derrida traces archive etymology to the Greek word *arkhe*, meaning both 'origin' and 'authority,' thus emphasising that archives not only provide data on 'origins' but also reflect the 'authority' that produced and maintained them.⁸

Such examples resonate deeply with the research process at the heart of the énoncé. The 'politics of truth' not only shape archival practices but also dictate the agendas imposed on research. Investigating marginalized subjects and individuals demands disproportionate time and financial resources. This disparity manifests materially – consider the modest space relegated to gender studies in the *basement* of the Rolex Learning Center versus the expansive area dedicated to Le Corbusier* on the *upper floor*; a stark contrast underscores the pressing need for structural change.

1. As every practice, architecture has tendencies and is not constant. Exceptions such as the recurrent naming of collaborators in "Smithson, Alison, and Alison Smithson. *The Charged Void: Architecture*. (New York: Monacelli Press, 2001)" proves the opposite.

2. Colomina, Beatriz. 'War on Architecture: E.1027'. *Assemblage*, no. 20 (April 1993): 28.

3. Colomina, Beatriz. 'Battle Lines: E.1027'. *Interstices*, 1 December 2019.

4. See chapters "What is Critique?", "Subjectivity and Truth", and "Christianity and Confession" in Foucault, Michel. *The Politics of Truth*. Semiotext(e) Foreign Agents Series. (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotexte, 2007)

5. "Archive" in Colomina, Beatriz. *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media*. First MIT Press paperback edition / 6th printing. (Cambridge (Mass.): The MIT Press, 2001). 1-16

6. Bonnevier, Katarina. 'Behind Straight Curtains: Towards a Queer Feminist Theory of Architecture'. (Axl Books, 2007)

7. "Postscript: Entering the Playboy Archive" in Preciado, Paul B. *Pornotopia: An Essay on Playboy's Architecture and Biopolitics*. (New York: Zone Books, 2014). 225-227

8. Derrida, Jacques. *Mal d'archive: une impression freudienne*. Incises. (Paris: Galilée, 1995). The original terms in the text for "origin" is "commencement" and for "authority" is "commandement," both translated with the help of DeepL



Books listed under “720.6 LEC,” standing for Le Corbusier’s* works and biographies available at the EPFL Library, captured by the author on January 7th, 2025, at 16:25 on the RLC’s *upper floor*.



Books listed under “720.6 GRA,” standing for Eileen Gray’s* works and biographies available at the EPFL Library, captured by the author on January 7th, 2025, at 16:30 on the RLC’s *upper floor*.



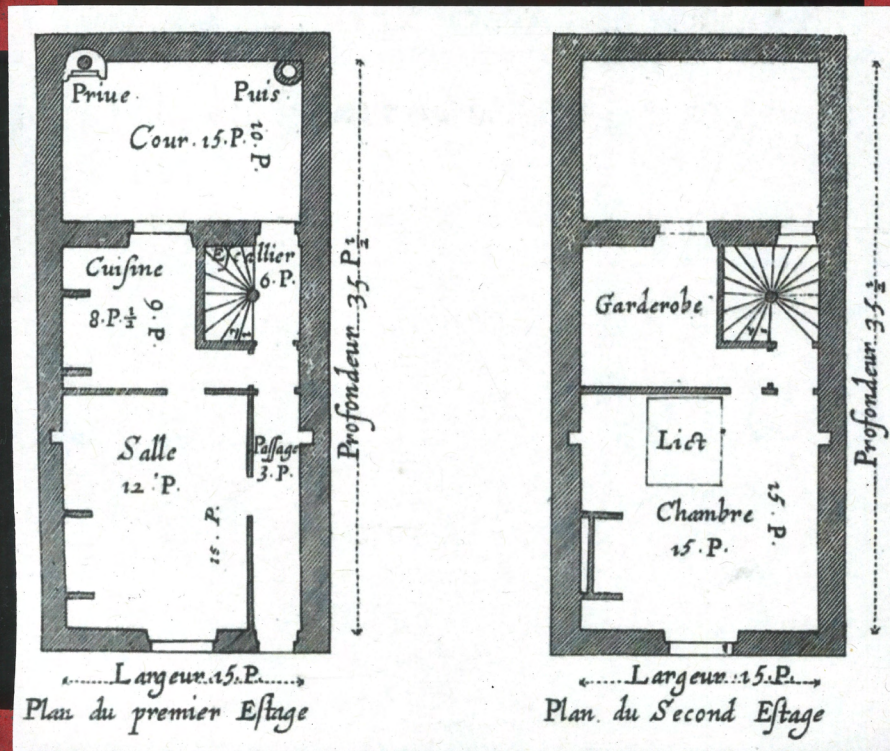
Books listed under “305,” standing for Gender Studies available at the EPFL Library, captured by the author on January 7th, 2025, at 16:35 in the RLC’s *basement*.

These scans only reflect a snapshot of the archival reality at EPFL, neglecting digital archives for instance. Yet, their striking physical differences highlight the structural disparity of archives. Scan by the author.

Part I

From Practice to Theory, Through Academia
How to Formulate the House

Act 1: Draw(n into) Morpheus Arms



Note on Graphics:

The **sectioned walls** are not perfectly straight; they are subtly **crinkled**. Le Muet's* models are virtual yet their graphics resist total abstraction and reveal crooked plots' outlines found in urban conditions. On the other hand, the **bed** appears as a **flawless abstract rectangle**, untroubled by "interferences" that enliven other elements in the plan. This contrast hints at reading the **bed** as an **abstraction of a domestic performance**, beyond being a simple furnishing element.

1. Ballard, J.G. "Project for a Glossary of the Twentieth Century" in Kwinter, Sanford, and Jonathan Knight Crary. *Incorporations*. Zone 6. (New York: Zone, 1992). 275
2. Mignot, Claude. *Pierre Le Muet Ingénieur et architecte du roi (1591-1669)*, (Paris-New York: Le Passage, 2022). 31-32
3. Giudici, Maria Shéhérazade. "Government and the Emergence of architecture d'accompagnement, 1584-1765" in *The City as a Project*, ed. Pier Vittorio Aureli (Berlin: Ruby Press, 2013). 136-165
4. Mignot, *Pierre Le Muet*. 31
5. Ibid. 25
6. The entire western half of the Ile Notre-Dame is built for housing from 1614 to 1623, see: Maurice: Dumolin, *Etudes de topographie parisienne: Volume II*, (Paris: Daupéley-Gouverneur, 1929)
7. King, Preston T. *The Ideology of Order: A Comparative Analysis of Jean Bodin and Thomas Hobbes* (London: Frank Cass, 1999), XVII
8. Ballon, Hilary. *The Paris of Henri IV* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991)
9. The never published manuscript of Serlio *Libro VI* was present in the office of Le Muet's mentor, Salomon de Brosse, see: Mignot, *Pierre Le Muet*. 22. To go further on the filiation from Serlio to Le Muet, look at: Galletti, Sara. "Paired Models : Comparing Domestic Typologies between Italy and France". Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, 2018

"Our furniture constitutes an external constellation of our skin areas and body postures. It's curious that the least imaginative of all forms of furniture has been the bed"¹

To begin this exploration of floor plans and their political entanglements with domestic performances, what better point of departure than the first known drawing of a piece of furniture in a plan? *Manière de bien bastir pour toutes sortes de personnes* (1647) by Pierre Le Muet* – engineer and architect to the king – aims to provide models for the 'good' construction of private townhouses. Beyond its influence on Parisian architecture,² the book emerged at a pivotal moment when architectural practice underwent a profound transformation. As a quintessential example of *architecture d'accompagnement* applied to private construction,³ it offers not just formulas for façades but also intentions for the activities happening behind them.

The book follows a rigorously structured framework, examining thirteen distinct *places* organized by spatial scale – ranging from the most minor plot (27m²) to the largest (over 850m²). Each site is illustrated at the same scale, enabling seamless comparisons. The left page details each location in text, while the right displays meticulous plans, elevations, and sections of urban houses models. Both textual and visual elements share an unembellished clarity, echoing the pragmatic aesthetic of construction estimates from that time. ⁴ It is made to be easy to understand, easy to reproduce.

Commissioned under the patronage of King Louis XIII in 1615, Le Muet* was first approached to devise models of houses and façades for Paris's burgeoning bourgeoisie.⁵ In the early 17th century, Paris witnessed a speculative wave of private investment, transforming parcels of land and gardens into housing developments in mere years.⁶ This surge followed the projects of Place Royale (1605-12) and Place Dauphine (1606-16), launched under Henri IV. These spaces embodied the rhetoric of *architecture d'accompagnement* through uniform façades that formed continuous urban surfaces. Such material homogeneity reflected a decisive shift in Western Europe's urban fabric, particularly in France, during the late 16th and early 17th centuries. The rise of the modern state, in response to religious and political upheavals,⁷ reconfigured the relationship between power and urban design. Paris was recast as a capital that materialized the authority of the state, with architectural planning – expressed through plans, elevations, and sections – serving as the preferred medium to execute this political vision.⁸

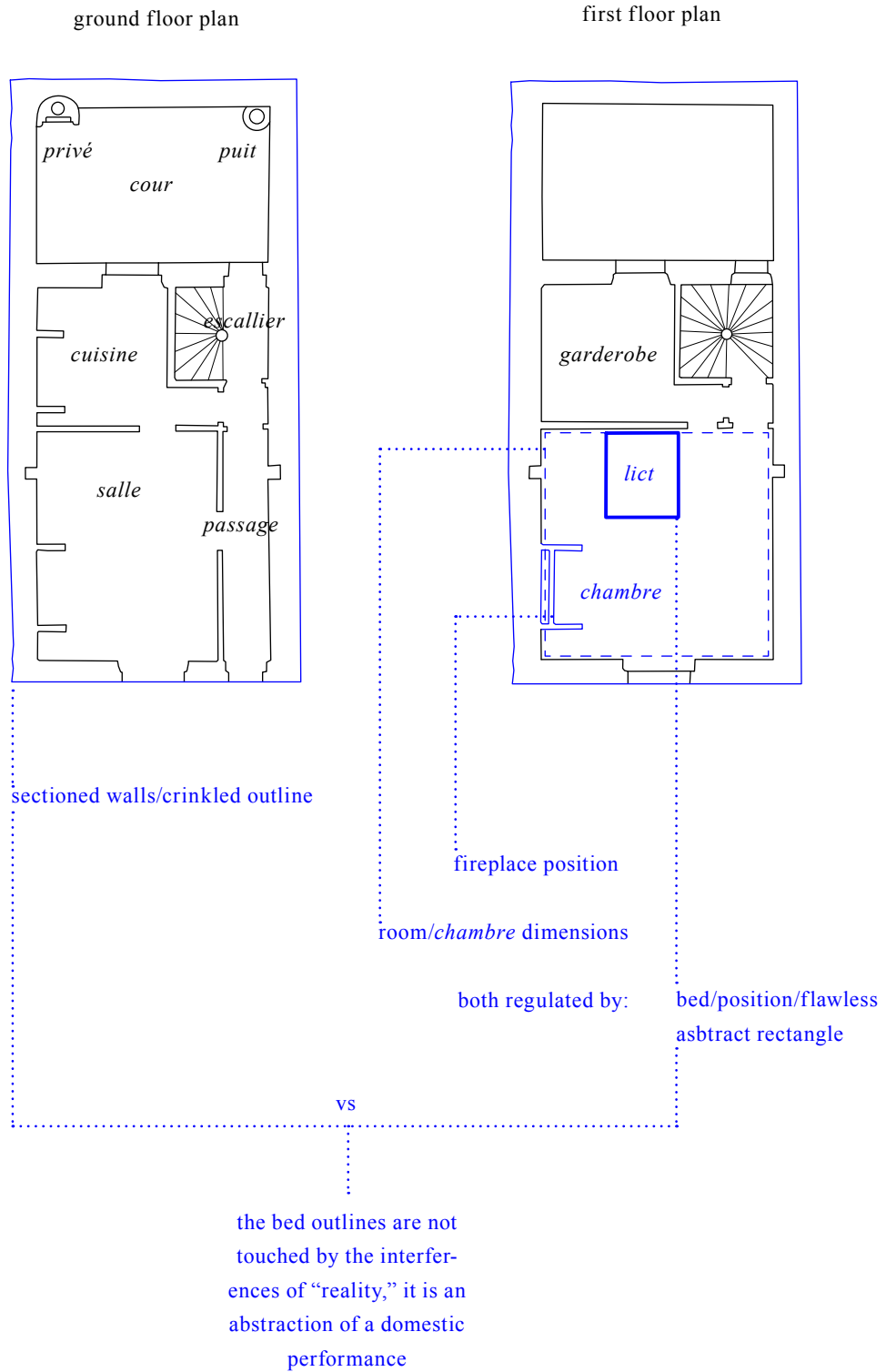
In this context, Le Muet's* *Manière* resonates with its time, functioning as a diagrammatic theorem applicable to any plot that offers a façade model for it. It was not the first text to address housing; Sebastiano Serlio's* *Book VI* manuscript, with model houses ranging from shepherd's huts to royal palaces, influenced Le Muet.⁹ However, what distinguishes Le Muet's* drawings is the systematic inclusion of **beds** in the floor plans. Represented as simple, **abstract rectangles**, these drawn **beds** emphasize function, signaling the domestic performances of the **Chambre** or **Garde-robe** they inhabit.

Le Muet* provides no explicit reason for introducing this new feature of drawn furniture, yet its presence offers a significant insight: the placement of **bed** influences room design. The position of the **fireplace** results from the **bed** position in the same room, and the **room dimensions** must follow the **bed** size.¹⁰

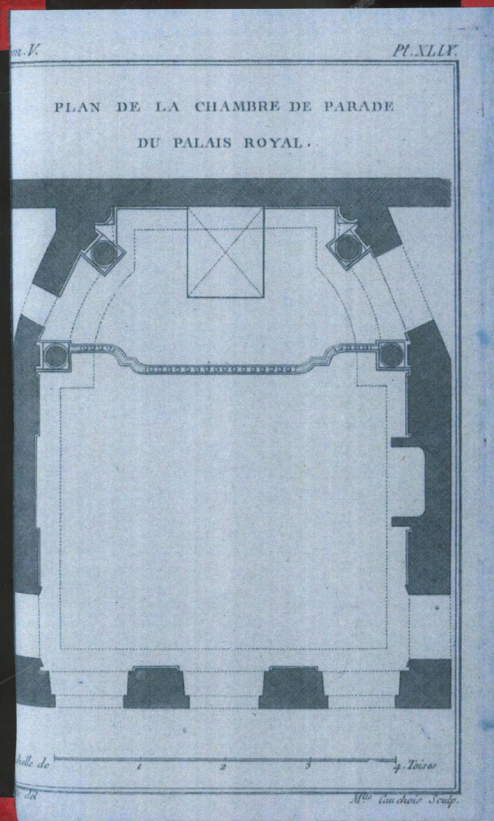
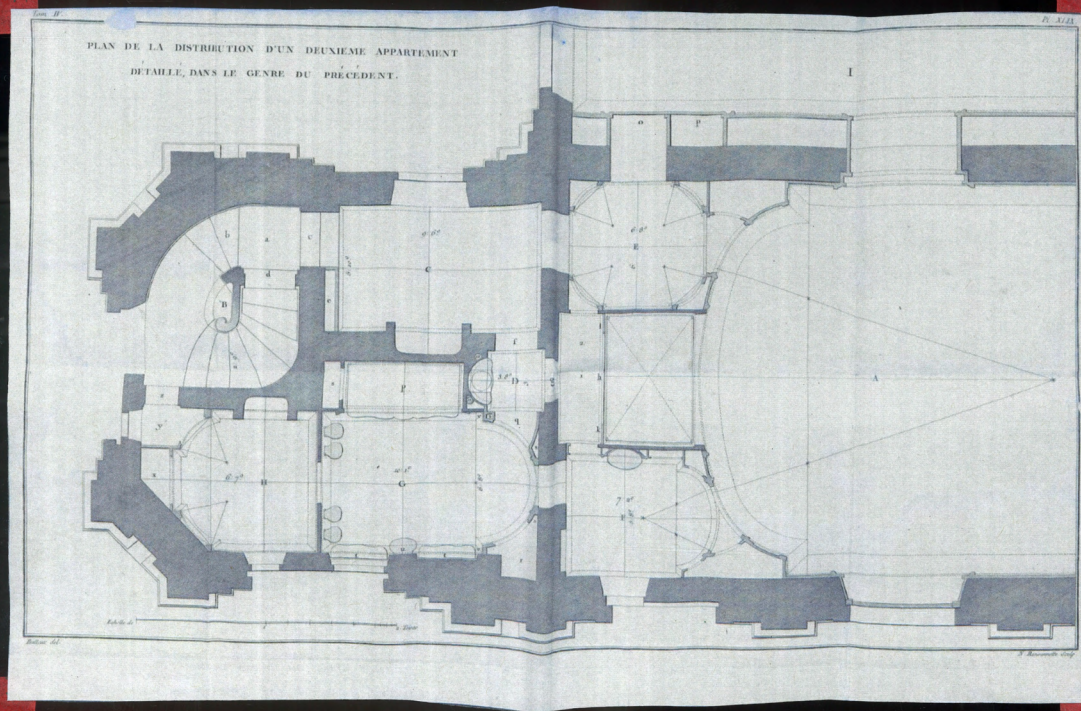
While Le Muet* prioritizes façade composition – highlighting repeatedly in *Manières* that plan design should follow façade composition, and not the reverse – his work aligns with the era’s growing enforcement of state control *polices* regulating private and public urban facade layouts.¹¹ The indistinct boundary between public order and private interests emerges in Le Muet’s* *Note au Lecteur*, where he claims to act in the interest of ‘public utility,’ despite focusing exclusively on private domains throughout the whole book. State control, therefore, extended beyond public spaces into domestic interiors. It is not only the façade that is controlled under *architecture d’accompagnement*, but also the resulting plan. Despite receiving less scholarly attention than contemporaries, Le Muet’s* inclusion of the first drawn piece of furniture in a plan merits recognition. It captures and projects new attitudes in architectural design, as the newly formed state entity desires to be materialised in the urban environment, the domestic realm began to be surveyed and regulated. The drawn **bed** is not there by accident, its abstracted outlines are witnesses of a conscious intervention from Le Muet* – rendering domestic performances visible within the logic of the architectural plan.

10. Le Muet* states that: “In the construction of the rooms, it is necessary to take into account the place of the bed, which is usually six feet in square, [...] and the situation of the chimney, which in this consideration should not be located exactly in the middle, but distant from it of some two feet, in order to give place to the bed,” translated with the help of DeepL, the original is: “En la construction des chambres, il faut avoir esgard à la place du lit, qui est ordinairement de six pieds en quarré, [...] et à la situation de la cheminée, laquelle en cette considération ne doit pas estre située iustement au milieu, mais distante d’iceluy de quelque deux pieds, afin de donner place au lit,” in Pierre Le Muet, “Sommaire discours de ce qui doit estre observe en la construction de tout bastiment”, in *Maniere*. (Paris: Pandora éditions, 1981) 2

11. *Polices* here stand for “programme of government rationality” in Michel Foucault, “Space, Knowledge and Power: Interview Conducted with Paul Rabinow”, in *Rethinking Architecture*, ed. Neil Leach (London: Routledge, 1997). 348-349



Act 2: Bienséance First!



Note on Graphics:

Dotted lines represent what is in the room but not visible in the plan: **cornices** and **ceiling ornamentation**, showcasing an attention to decorum. This attention is also highlighted by the gray hatch used for **non-structural woodwork**, hinting at a domesticity veiled in masks and artifice. Construction lines regulate all dimensions and radiate sometimes from referencing **points**, as to suggest gaze – **lines** and figures – **points**.

“Plan de la distribution d’un deuxième Appartement, détaillé dans le genre du précédent. Planche XLIX,” and “Plan de la Chambre de Parade du Palais Royal. Planche XLIX,” both from Jacques-François Blondel’s* *Cours d’architecture*, Vol 4 & 5, (1771).

Scan by the author.

1. “Amour-Propre” in Voltaire. *Dictionnaire philosophique*. Oeuvres complètes / Voltaire 35-36. (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2011)

2. Christopher C.M Lee, “The Construction of a Common Knowledge in Durand’s Method” in *The City as a Project*. 166-208, 173-180

3. Ibid. 176

4. Durand, Jean-Nicolas-Louis. *Précis des leçons d’architecture données à l’Ecole Royale Polytechnique*. [Faks.der Ausg.] 1817-21. Paris: Rey & Gravier; Treuttel & Wurtz; Fantin 1817-21, 1975

5. “L’enseignement de l’architecture par Jacques François Blondel : [Partie 1],” directed by Julien Borel, featuring Jean-Marc Hofman, Aurélien Davrius, Hélène Rousteau-Chambon, and Philippe Cachau, filmed December 14, 2017, at the Cité de l’architecture et du patrimoine, Paris, video, 1:30:00, published 2018

6. Not to be confused with François Blondel (1618-1686), also Architect of the French King and first director of the Royal Academy.

7. “L’enseignement de l’architecture par Jacques François Blondel : [Partie 1],” directed by Julien Borel.

8. “Programmes” LXXXIV in Blondel, Jacques-François (1705-1774). *Cours d’architecture*. Tome 4 / Par J.-F. Blondel, (et Continué Par M. Patte), 1771

9. Ibid. 189

10. This argument draws on volumes 4 and 5 of Blondel’s *Cours d’architecture*, where he emphasizes aligning architectural refinement with the owner’s social status, a notion later echoed in ‘architecture parlante’ by Blondel’s former students, Boullée and Ledoux.

“Common sense is not so common.”¹

After introducing the formulation of domestic space as a project through the plan, let us now turn to its institutionalisation via academia. This turning point unfolds at the end of the 17th century and gains momentum throughout the 18th century – a period marked by the emergence of academies and schools as instruments of state control over the production of ‘arts’ and ‘sciences.’

The eighteenth-century *Zeitgeist* follows Enlightenment calls for universal truth and is remarkable for its porosity between disciplines, inspired by the experimental methods of the ‘natural’ sciences. For instance, biological classification evolved from a taxonomy based on form and visual aspects to a categorization built on function and behavior.² This intellectual permeability manifests in architectural theory, where the classification of types shifts from prioritizing form to emphasizing function, as exemplified by Palladio’s and Vignola’s orders.³ A striking example is Durand’s theory.⁴ Compiling his lectures from the École Polytechnique in *Précis*, Durand* organized ideal types by program, prioritizing function and space performance.

Yet, one author remains buried in the dusty shelves of libraries despite his profound influence on the formulation of architecture as a taught practice:⁵ Jacques-François Blondel* (1705-1774).⁶ Blondel* was appointed an academicien at the Royal Architecture Academy in 1755, becoming a professor in 1761.⁷ He compiled his lectures into *Cours d’architecture, ou Traité de la décoration, distribution et construction des bâtiments*, a six-volume manual, with the fourth and fifth volumes dedicated to distribution, or the design of domestic spaces.

Blondel* addresses his audience – students – by providing exercises and advice on progressing from initial sketches to finalized floor plans. Notably, elements of contemporary architectural mystique emerge here: the architect must retreat into the “silence of the study” to envision projects properly, embodying the model of the architect-practitioner-theorist-teacher who fuses theory with practice.⁸ Blondel* classifies domestic rooms into three categories: *nécessité*, *commodité*, and *bienséance*.⁹ *Bienséance* crystallizes class hierarchy into architectural design, ensuring compositions reflect the social status of inhabitants.¹⁰

This classist tension is unpacked in two exemplary plates:

Plan de la distribution d’un deuxième Appartement, détaillé dans le genre du précédent. Planche XLIX

and *Plan de la Chambre de Parade du Palais Royal. Planche XLIX*.

In the first example, Blondel’s* plan reveals a network of construction lines superimposed onto the floor plan. This intricate web highlights the control students must exercise in composing their plans and sheds light on the governing principles of design. At the core of this arrangement is a single piece of furniture: the **bed**, treated as a theatrical device. It becomes the centerpiece of the apartment apparatus, unfolding as a suite of interconnected rooms.

Though Blondel* does not explicitly address the concept of gaze, it is striking that **two lines** on the right side of the apartment function as vision lines. Extending the theatrical metaphor, if one assumes the role of actor or actress, they occupy the **bed** – the stage – and deliver a domestic performance. Conversely, if one is a spectator – abstracted by the **point**, presumably of higher social status, their view is limited to the stage – **bed**; they are unable to witness the activities happening in the domestic backstage. Meanwhile, backstage crew members, confined to **servants' quarters**, play supporting roles by preparing the master or mistress for their daily performances.¹¹

Here, gaze follows class.

Judith Butler argues that architecture, as a material set-up, provides the structure for performance to repeat and become institutional, converting performance into performativity.¹² Here, the gaze scenography functions as a hierarchy of domestic performativity, with the drawn **bed** emerging as the focal point. Once inscribed into the plan, it anchors the entire design, serving as the foundation for the apartment's organization and functionality.

The second *Planche* mirrors the first but focuses solely on the proper *chambre* rather than the entire domestic apartment. The staging repeats here, yet its theatrical nature is further emphasized by its name, “Chambre de Parade,” contrasting with “Chambre à Coucher.” The term “parade” transparently evokes the idea of a staged display. Blondel* elaborates on the distinction between these two categories of *chambres*, linking them to the inhabitant's social status. The higher the status, the more performative daily life must be, accompanied by more prestigious furniture.¹³ This emphasis on performance is reflected in the spatial control exercised by the plan. Blondel* specifies that the “Chambre de Parade” design must follow particular steps to achieve harmony. Drawn in dotted lines, **cornices** and their ornamentation align with **columns** and **balustrades**, all composed around a central element: the **bed**.¹⁴

The entire spatial composition in the plan is organized around the **bed**'s performances, adhering to abstract rules of harmony that dictate the *chambre* should be **square**. Notably, Blondel* is explicit on the requirement for **square** dimensions: it begins at the **foot** of the **bed** rather than behind it.¹⁵ It is not the *chambre* that is square in fact, it is the audience created by the **bed**. The **bed** thus functions as the theater's fourth wall, its **foot** marking the boundary between the stage and the audience.

The evolution of domestic space projection, adhering to the *bienséance* principle, positions the **bed** as its focal point – a material translation of its owner within the space. The master's ‘shell’ – following up with Benjamin¹⁶ – emerges here through heavy construction lines that stage domesticity. It is a mask -‘shell’ disguised by decorum, reflecting social significance and hierarchy. This manual distinguishes itself through its reproductive influence. For instance, the *Plan de la Chambre de Parade du Palais Royal* was later published in the *Encyclopédie* as a universal model.¹⁷ Generations of architects drew and redrawn these inherently biased templates for domestic performativity, serving as tools to train compositional skills in academia, persisting, in some cases, into the twentieth century.¹⁸

11. A whole series of domestic performances following the daily rituals of the master/mistress are described, giving key insights into the performative reading of the plan. Blondel, Jacques-François. see *Cours d'architecture. Tome 4.* 386-388

12. Butler, Judith. *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative.* New York: Routledge, 1997. Regarding domestic rehearsing, it is interesting to underline that the most repetitive performance related to the bed, the King and Queen's risings, were structural spectacles for the court.

13. Blondel, Jacques-François. *Cours d'architecture. Tome 5.* 209

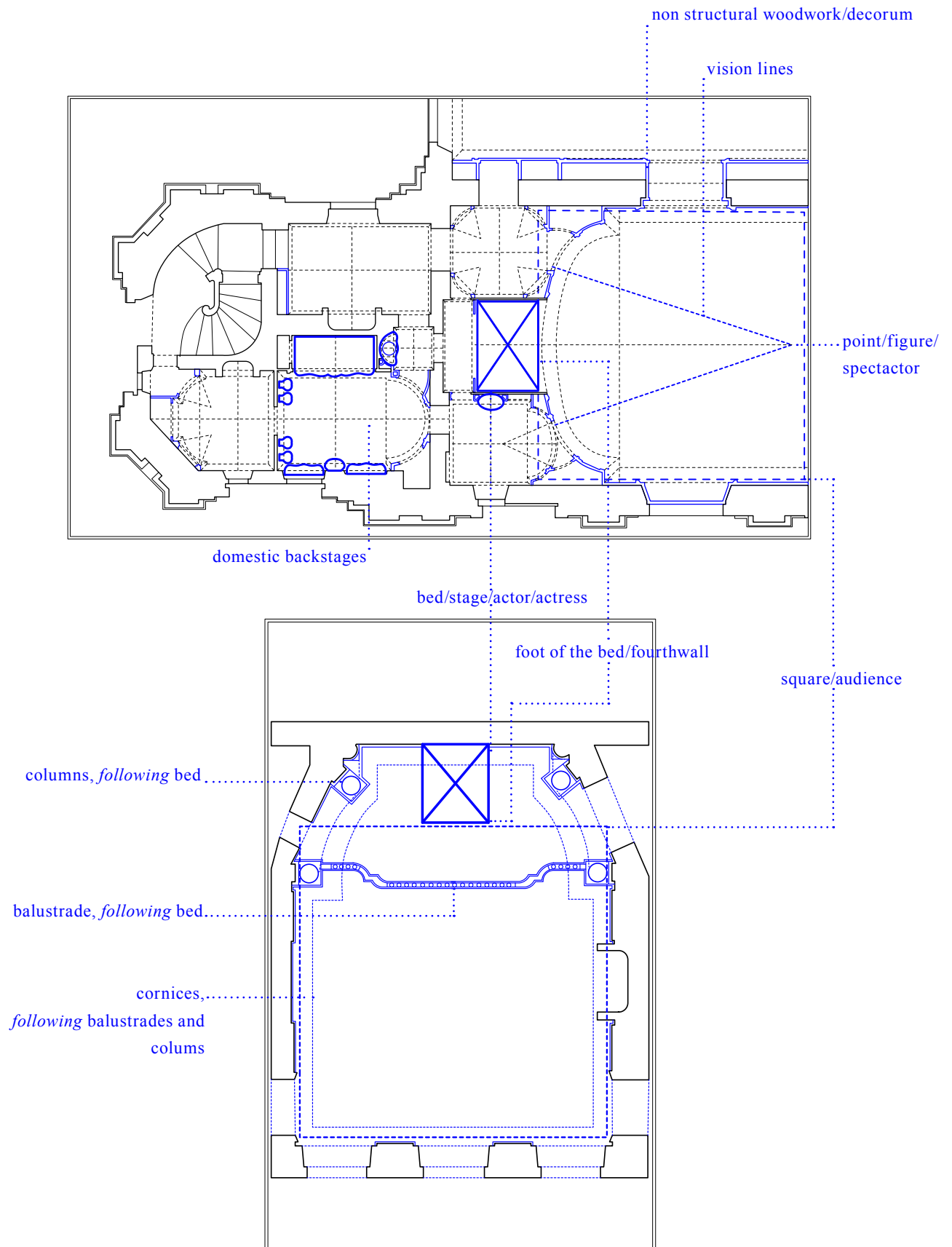
14. Ibid. Blondel* details how the cornices' drawing must follow the balustrades and columns, which themselves should follow the bed position. 107-108

15. Ibid. 105

16. See the development of Benjamin's ‘shell’ in this énoncé's *Introduction* using Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*

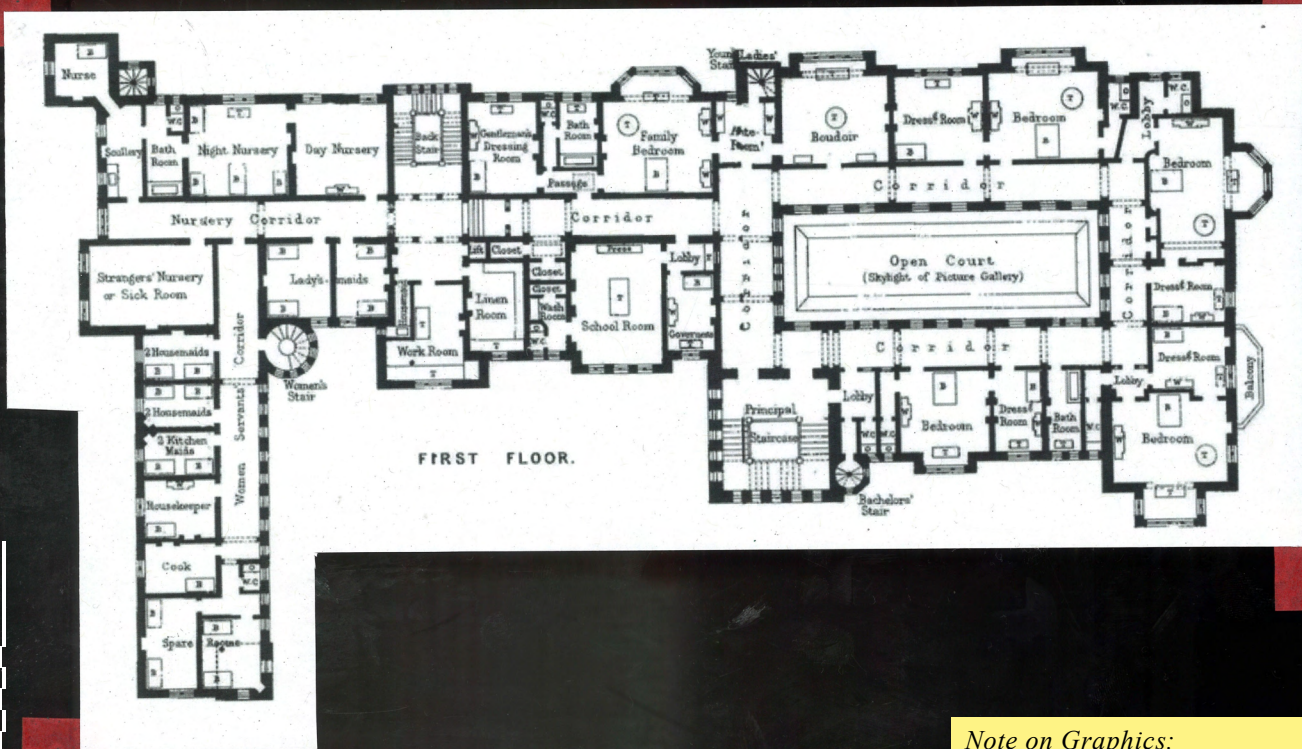
17. Blondel, Jacques-François. *Cours d'architecture. Tome 5.* 108

18. Blondel's* *Cours* were still used for teaching at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris during the 20th century. see “L'enseignement de l'architecture par Jacques François Blondel : [Partie 1],” directed by Julien Borel



“Plan de la distribution d’un deuxième Appartement, détaillé dans le genre du précédent. Planche XLIX,” and “Plan de la Chambre de Parade du Palais Royal. Planche XLIX,” *Cours* (Vol 4 and 5) Blondel* (1771), redrawn by the author, line weight is thicker for furniture.

Act 3: Living Together Apart

*Note on Graphics:*

Room **functions** are labeled directly within the spaces. Furniture is systematically abstracted—'T' denotes a **table**, 'B' represents a **bed**, and 'W' stands for a **wardrobe**. **Beds'** abstraction has two models: a **single bed** and a **double bed** – one allows reproduction, the other does not. **Tables** also have two forms, they can be **round** or **rectangular**. Leisure vs re-production? Ruling binarities emerge from the very first abstracted forms used in plan.

Plan of "The first floor of Bearwood, Berkshire" in the Second edition of Robert Kerr's* *The Gentleman House* (1871), from: Van Slyck, Abigail A. 'The Spatial Practices of Privilege'. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 70, no. 2 (2011):

210–39. Scan by the author.

We now turn to the third act of this Part I. Having unveiled domestic space as a domain of control and architecture as a discipline perpetuated through academic institutions, we examine now the formulation of the house as a moral ideology.

Heynen argues that “Domesticity [...] is a construction of the nineteenth century. The term refers to a whole set of ideas that developed in reaction to the division between work and home.”¹ To reach this conclusion, Heynen draws upon Benjamin’s analysis of the emergence of the “private individual” when, in the early nineteenth century, the home became central to the “private/public dichotomy.” It was designed to shelter the nuclear family, excluding workshops and other productive activities.²

We cross the Channel from France to Victorian England to explore this phenomenon and survey Robert Kerr’s* *The Gentleman’s House: Or, How to Plan English Residences, from the Parsonage to the Palace*, first published in 1864. The book’s Part I exposes a historical analysis of domestic planning from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century. Part II, “Exposition of Plan as Now Practised,” addresses the spatial disposition of rooms in contemporary England, offering insights into the domestic dynamics of the period.

Kerr* introduces a social mapping of domestic space through paper, defining two distinct quarters within the house: one for “THE FAMILY” and another for “THE SERVANTS.”³ These zones enforce boundaries, ensuring each group remains within its prescribed domain. As Kerr* writes, “each class is entitled to shut its door upon the other and be alone.”⁴ *Privacy* emerges as the defining virtue of domestic design, a quality Kerr* believes should be accessible to both classes.⁵ However, the plans appended in his text reveal a different reality.

Though Kerr* refrains from prescribing explicit designs, the second edition of *The Gentleman’s House* (1871) includes plans of his* project, *Bearwood House* (1865-74). The spatial division between family and servants becomes palpable in the plan of the first floor, where privacy intensifies. Family quarters are drawn with a recurring set of furnishings – **table**, **wardrobe**, and **bed** – with each bedroom housing **only one bed**, symbolizing one social body, whether individual or couple. Contrastingly, servants’ rooms often contain **multiple beds**, relegating privacy to a shared and scarce resource.

Still on beds’ semantics, servants’ bedrooms only contain **single beds**, while family’s bedrooms can contain a **single** or a **double bed**. It is not only privacy that is practiced as a benefit, but also intimacy and sexual reproduction. A servant lives in the house but is not to raise a family in it. Privilege is thus etched into the architectural plan, only the family can inhabit the home as a private retreat – the highest quality of domestic space, in Kerr’s* view.⁶ Drawn furniture reinforces this distinction. **Tables** in the family’s rooms are **round** or **positioned near windows** – they invite leisure and paperwork.

1. Heynen, Hilde “Modernity and domesticity Tensions and contradictions,” in *Negotiating Domesticity*. 6-7

2. Ibid. 6-7, and for Benjamin’s creation of the “private individual”, look into Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*. 19

3. Caps are used specifically for these two terms in the original text, highlighting the prevalence given to such division and the family as the house’s bedrock. Kerr, Robert. *The Gentleman’s House: Or, How to Plan English Residences, from the Parsonage to the Palace*. Cambridge Library Collection - British and Irish History, 19th Century. (Cambridge University Press, 2012). 63-64

4. Ibid. 68

5. Ibid. 67, the introduction line of chapter II states “Privacy defined and exemplified.— Requisite for both family and servants.”

6. Ibid. 66 states “However small and compact the house may be, the family must have privacy and the servants commodiousness.”

Meanwhile, [tables](#) in servants' quarters are always outlined [rectangular](#). They are [long](#) and [utilitarian](#), dominating workrooms like the [linen room](#), where they facilitate tasks of production and reproduction. Depending on which side of the border one stands, their furniture gives access to privacy or not and entails a leisure use of domestic space or a re.productive performance.

This binary sequence of leisure versus production is only one among several hierarchies structuring domestic space. Gender, too, is practiced within the plan. Dedicated [staircases](#) separate "[Bachelors](#)" from "[Young Ladies](#)." The very enclosure of the house acts as a gendered boundary: the interior is feminised, and the exterior is masculinised. In the nineteenth century, a woman wandering the streets unaccompanied risks being categorized as a sex worker.⁷ This segregation, rooted in Antiquity through Xenophon's writings and catalyzed under Alberti's pen during the Renaissance, finds its apex in the Victorian era.⁸

Binary hierarchies appear to be the deep structure of Victorian domesticity, bringing forth moral grounds:

Inside vs Outside

Private vs Public

[Double Bed](#) vs [Single Bed](#)

FAMILY vs SERVANTS

[Round Table](#) vs [Rectangular Table](#)

Leisure vs Labor

Young vs Old

Single vs Married

Woman vs Man

Rooms vs Thoroughfares

These structural binaries gave the framework for domesticity to be rehearsed until today, under the reproductive power of the architectural plan. Part II responds to this domestic status quo, in which we still partially live.⁹ These binaries will resurface in the following Acts, each time recorded in plans that aim to kill, blank, reform, practice, coat, and camp the house as a domestic institution.

7. Janet Wolff, "The Invisible Flâneuse: Women and the Literature of Modernity," in Janet Wolff, *Feminine Sentences. Essays on Women and Culture*. (Cambridge: Polity Press. 1990). 34–50

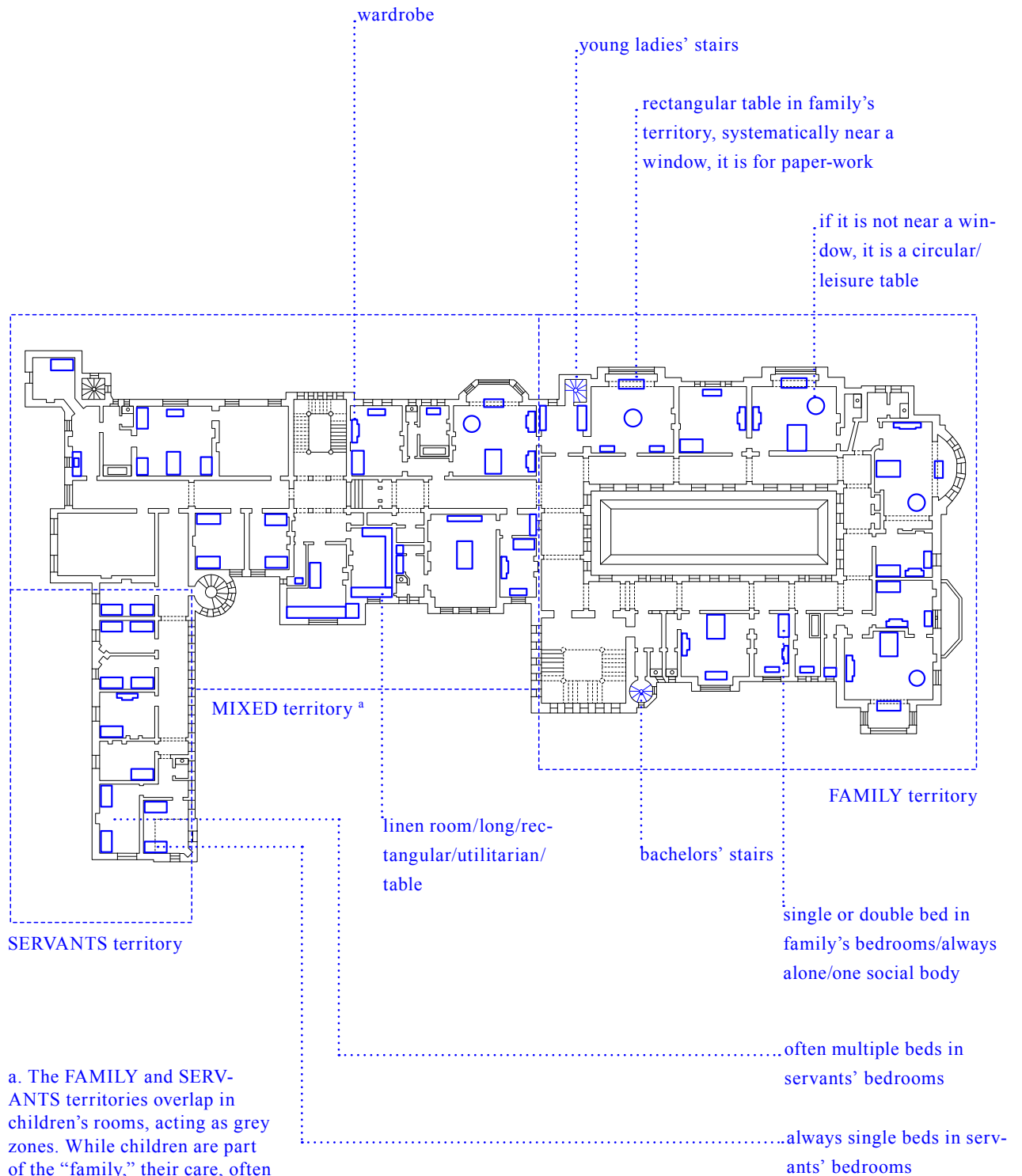
8. Xenophon states that "The gods made provision from the first by shaping, as it seems to me the woman's nature for indoor and the man's for outdoor occupations." in Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, trans. H. G. Dakyns as "The Economist," in *The Works of Xenophon* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1897), vol. J, 229

Alberti argues that "The woman, as she remains locked up at home, should watch over things by staying at her post, by diligent care and watchfulness. The man should guard the woman, the house, and his family and country, but not by sitting still," in Leon Battista Alberti, *Della Famiglia*, trans. Renée Neu Watkins as *The Family in Renaissance Florence* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1969), Book III. 207

Both quoted in Wigley, Mark "Untitled: The Housing of Gender" in Bloomer, Jennifer, Beatriz Colomina, *Sexuality & Space*. Princeton Papers on Architecture 1. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992). 334-335

9. "Figures, Doors, and Passages" in Evans, Robin. *Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays*. AA Documents 2. (London: Architectural Association, 1997). 54-91

LIVING TOGETHER APART



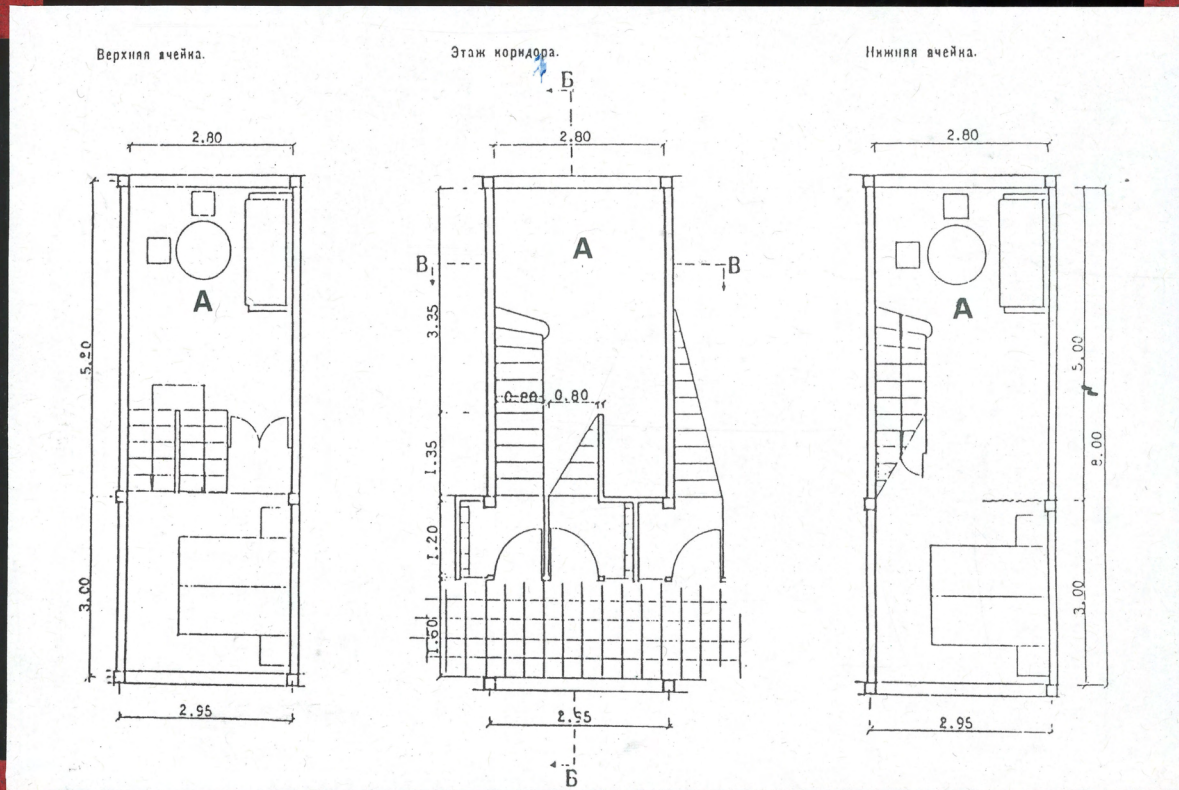
a. The FAMILY and SERVANTS territories overlap in children's rooms, acting as grey zones. While children are part of the "family," their care, often performed by nurses, reflects the Victorian delegation of bodily tasks from the "family." Dirty diapers, were deemed "abject." Van Slyck, Abigail A. 'The Spatial Practices of Privilege'. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 70, no. 2 (2011): 210–39

Plan of "The first floor of Bearwood, Berkshire" in the Second edition of Robert Kerr's* *The Gentleman House* (1871), redrawn by the author, line weight is thicker for furniture.

Part II

From Practice to Market, Through Mass Media
How to Kill
Blank
Reform
Practice
Coat
Camp the House

Act 4: Nomadic Furniture for Unassigned Interiors

*Note on Graphics:*

The structure is not hatched anymore; **lines** are enough to describe the **pillar** structure possible thanks to concrete. The inclusion of **dimensions** makes **reproduction** easier. Furniture is limited to a **bed**, **table**, **chairs**, and **sofa**, each represented by purged geometries: **squares**, **rectangles**, and **circles**.

A graphic event happens in the **bed**: a **line** breaks the **double bed** into two **single beds**. Domestic models are to be challenged here.

Plans of the "F-units" in the *Narkomfin* by Moisei Ginzburg* and Ignaty Milinis*, published in STROIKOM 1930:58, from: Buchli, Victor. *An Archaeology of Socialism*.

70 Scan by the author.

1. Buchli, Victor. *An Archaeology of Socialism*. 1st. Materializing Culture. (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 1999). 24

2. Translation and argument in: Buchli, Victor. *An Archaeology of Socialism*. 23 and 22-24

3. Translation found in: Olga Matich, "Remaking the Bed. Utopia in Daily Life," in John Bowlt and Olga Matich (eds), *Laboratory of Dreams: The Russian Avant-Garde and Cultural Experiment*. (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1996). 59

4. Benjamin, Walter. *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*. (New York: Schocken books, 2007). 106

5. Buchli, Victor. *An Archaeology of Socialism*. 54

6. Benjamin, Walter. "Moscow Diary." *October* 35. (Cambridge Mass: MIT Press, 1986). 26

7. Olga Matich, "Remaking the Bed. Utopia in Daily Life." 77-78

8. Buchli, Victor. *An Archaeology of Socialism*. 63-64

9. Ibid. 26-28 and 67

10. Olga Matich, "Remaking the Bed. Utopia in Daily Life." 77

The aftermath of the USSR's post-revolution era paved the way for an effervescent cultural period in the 1920s, aiming to reshape the entire society of the former Russian Empire. Domestic space was approached as a battleground for instilling communist values, with 'petit-bourgeois' remnants cast as enemies of the people deemed necessary to eradicate.¹ The concept of *byt*, roughly translating to "daily life,"² was to be reframed and transformed into *novyi byt* – "new forms of daily life"³ – a site of domestic experimentation meant to kill bourgeois domesticity. Subjectivities were no longer to be formulated within domestic space but instead defined through public space.⁴

Following the Marxist approach, which positioned material conditions as determinants of consciousness, this exteriorization of workers' daily lives necessitated ending the accumulation of objects and furniture that perpetuated 'petit-bourgeois' values.⁵ Walter Benjamin's visit to Moscow during the winter of 1926-27 illustrates this shift. He observed that material "shells" – unveiled in the introduction, composed of furniture and domestic objects – is the synonym for a life "alienated [...] from domestic existence" and proves to be pointless once people live outside in "the office, the club, the street."⁶ Some testimonies recount experiments with domestic performances: families rearranged furniture weekly to prevent fixed private interiors from anchoring subjectivity, while others challenged familial norms by emulating the 'New Man' and 'New Woman,' who either eschewed children or delegated their care, thereby questioning the nuclear family model.⁷

One offspring of this domestic laboratory was the *Narkomfin* building (1928–1932), designed by Moisei Ginzburg* and Ignaty Milinis* and commissioned by the state building agency STROIKOM.⁸ Among its most radical units were the F-type apartments, which serve as the focus of this Act. Despite their plan's relative inefficiency in conveying the complex volume of the F-units, the intended domestic performances are explicit: the strict minimum furnishings – a [sofa](#), [bed](#), and [table](#) – underscore the ideological rejection of overabundance. Remember when drawing: [white space](#) matters; the absence of a proper [kitchen](#) and [bathrooms](#) in the F-units signifies their relocation to communal areas, socializing and externalizing all reproductive functions traditionally anchored in private domestic space, except for the sexual.⁹

The plan further destabilizes domestic conventions through its graphic elements. The [double bed](#), traditionally emblematic of marital unity and bourgeois reproduction, is divided into two [single beds](#) by a [line](#) in its middle. As Matich notes, the single bed embodied the *novyi byt*: "It was an emblem of the new Soviet person who believed in the end of the family and mechanised, accelerated everyday life."¹⁰ The nucleus couple was no longer the bedrock of domesticity, and its reproductive agenda ceased to transcribe in the marital bed.

However, the importance of the milieu should not be overlooked. The Narkomfin was conceived at a specific ideological moment that soon gave way to Stalinism in the 1930s. Unlike the preceding drive for exteriorization, Stalinist policies sought to domesticate Marxism,¹¹ redirecting the society socialisation inward toward the domestic sphere. The “petit-bourgeois” values fiercely opposed in the 1920s were rehabilitated under Stalin’s totalitarian regime.¹² This ideological reversal is most performatively evident in the reinstatement of the housewife as a model for women, re-domesticating their labor potential without compensation.¹³ As Comrade Monrovia, a Central Council of the Red Cross representative, proclaimed, “Our Soviet woman is not only the housewife of her own hearth: she is the housewife of the entire nation.”¹⁴

This domestic reformulation is rendered through a series of photographs by Buchli in 1992, after the USSR’s collapse.¹⁵ These images capture the erosion of the 1928 plan’s radical vision through the work of Stalinist “homemakers.”¹⁶ Modernist metal furniture and [mobile single beds](#) of the 1920s were replaced by traditional wooden furniture inherited from families. Originally rendered [white](#) in plan, [fibrolit floors](#) (linoleum-like material), designed as continuous, undifferentiated surfaces, gave way to wooden floors – whose warmth can recall the “hearth” – that demarcate specific domestic programs such as cooking and eating,¹⁷ reinforcing reproductive performances. Curtains, textiles, and light partitions were introduced to divide the initial open plans, further reinstating traditional domesticity by sequencing the original unassigned interior.¹⁸

This radical transformation from Narkomfin’s plan to its built form substantiates Giedion’s hypothesis that “human posture” and ways of sitting reveal the intrinsic character of a historical period.¹⁹ Furniture, as portrayed in architectural plans, serves as a phenomenological lens through which to interpret an era. It reminds us that a floor plan is always a relic of its time – an artifact bound to its political framework. Yet, when political winds shift, its authority dissolves, leaving architecture as nothing more than an agent of ideological currents.

11. Buchli, Victor. *An Archaeology of Socialism*. 78

12. For Stalin’s period as an example of totalitarian control over public and private life, see: Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Penguin Classics. (London: Penguin Books, 2017)

13. To delve into the enslavement of women’s bodies in domestic reproduction see: Federici, Silvia. *Caliban et la sorcière: femmes, corps et accumulation primitive*. 2e édition. La rupture. (Genève: Entremonde, 2017); and Teige’s analysis of Marx and Engels in: Teige, Karel. *The Minimum Dwelling*. (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2002)

14. Buchli, Victor. *An Archaeology of Socialism*. 81

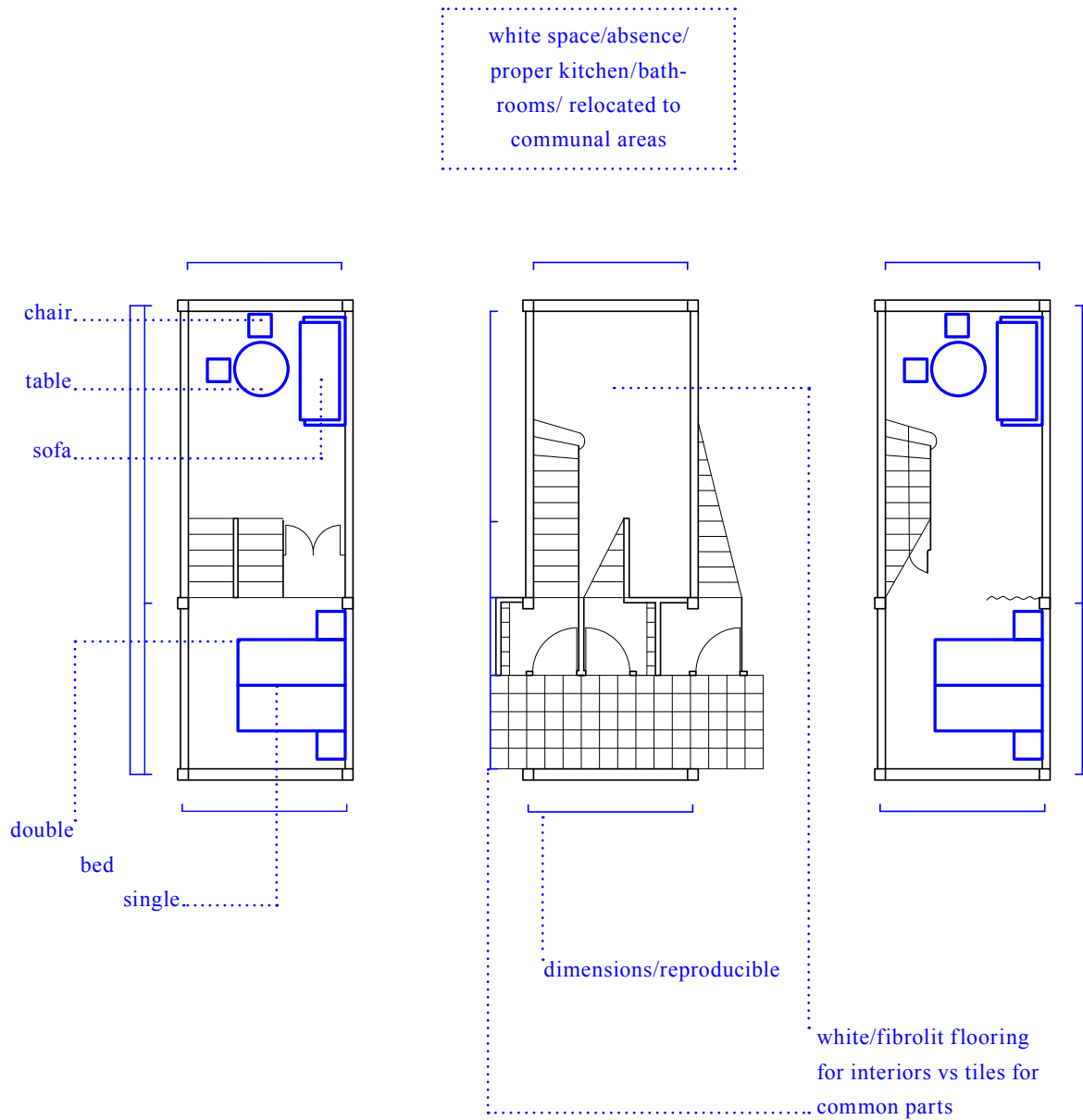
15. All the pictures are displayed in Buchli, Victor. *An Archaeology of Socialism*

16. The expression of stalinist “homemaker” is used throughout: Ibid.

17. Ibid. 128

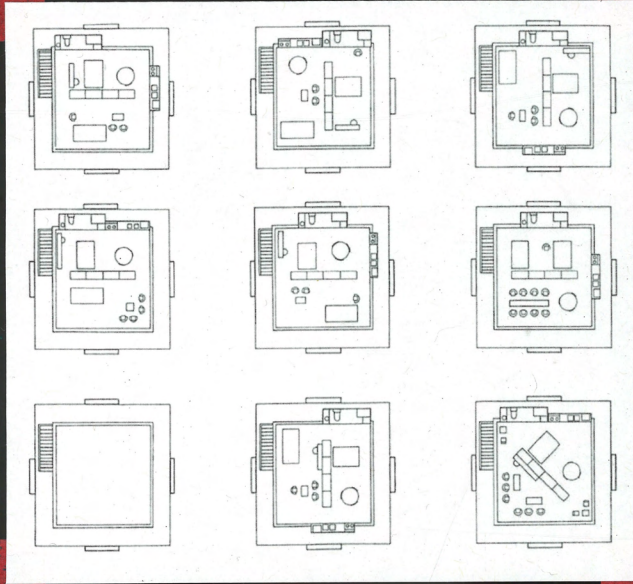
18. All the material changes in F-units are rendered through texts in: Ibid. 126-128 and 165

19. Giedion, Sigfried. *Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948). 7-11



Plans of the “F-units” in the *Narkomfin* by Moisei Ginzbourg* and Ignaty Milinis,*
redrawn by the author, line weight is thicker for furniture.

Act 5: Dwelling in Blankness

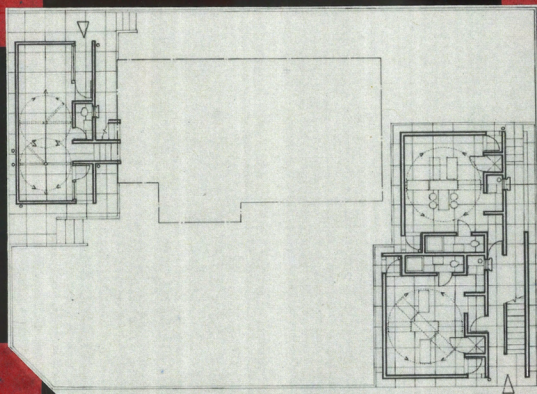
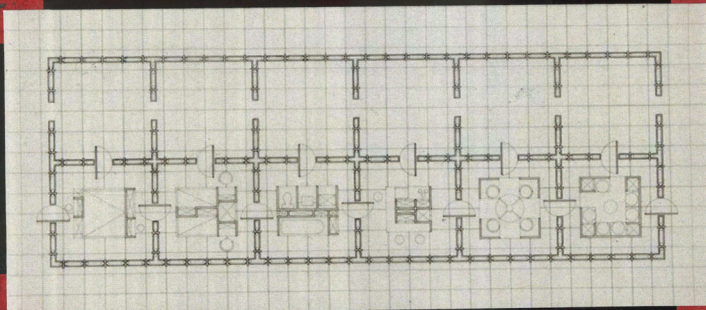


Nine plans of "Sky House" by Kiyonori Kikutake* (1958), from: *archives of Kiyonori Kikutake* in Carlin. *Non-Typological Architecture*

Plan of "E2-Project" by Hiromi Fujii* (1968-71), from: "Fu-Ka Esukisu. Towards Negative Esquisse," *Toshi Jūtaku* 7110 (October 1971): 13 in Carlin. *Non-Typological Architecture*

Plan of "Suzuki house and flats, ground floor" by Hiromi Fujii* (1968-70), from: *Centre Pompidou*. 'Plan de Niveau Maison et Appartements Suzuki, rez-de-chaussée'.

Scan by the author.



Note on Graphics:

Kikutake:* There is no line weight difference between "architectural" elements and furniture. The furniture graphics are minimalist – often only represented by a **circle** or **rectangle** – but the **chairs** are drawn with **armrests**, allowing direction to be read and discerning that such a **rectangle** is a table and that one is a **bed**. Furniture turns into architecture from its graphics, it is not here to "fill" the **page-space** but to orient it.

Fujii:* The **wall lines** do not give any data on their construction. Furniture is drawn with details: the number of **burners** and **tables' structures** are indicated. Graphic grammar highlights an investigation of domestic performativity over bricks and mortar.

1. Carlin, Brendon Nikolas. *Non-Typological Architecture: Deterritorialising Interiors in Contemporary Japan*. Phd, The Open University, 2022. 101 and 113

2. Ibid. 31-43

3. The term “blankspace” is used throughout Carlin’s thesis as the container of “non-typological architecture” defined as “a lack of spatial division, differentiation and composition, and which therefore tend towards the absence of history, lineage and indeed even any ‘plan’ for or idea of future” in “ABSTRACT”, Carlin. *Non-Typological Architecture*. IX

4. Interpretations may vary regarding the purpose of the abstracted forms used as furniture in Kikutake’s* plans. Yet, for the two elements that could be *beds* in dimensions, one is slightly larger than the other. The thinnest one, however, is occasionally paired with a *chair* in some plans, implying it may function more as a table than a bed. Under such analysis, I decided to restrain to only one *double bed* the reading of Kikutake’s* plans furniture. This hypothesis is also supported by Carlin’s choice to only mentioning one *double bed* in the plan, using plans and photographs archives; see: Carlin. *Non-Typological Architecture*. 43 and *Shinkenchiku* (New Architecture), 1957, 24

5. Ibid. 43

6. Ibid. 43

7. Ibid for the data over the couple’s pod. For the influence of Western domestic norms, the concept of “privacy” did not exist before the westernisation of Japanese society post WW2: Sand, Jordan. *House and Home in Modern Japan: Reforming Everyday Life 1880-1930*. 1st pbk. ed. Harvard East Asian Monographs 223. (Cambridge, Massachusetts ; Harvard University Asia Center, 2003) 3

8. Carlin. *Non-Typological Architecture*. 35

After World War II, Japan underwent a neocolonial reconstruction project led by the United States. The aim was to transform the former Japanese Empire into a liberal democracy driven by mass consumption.¹ To enforce Western domestic customs, the Japanese government treated domestic space as a consumerist engine. The pre-industrial Japanese domestic structure was reprogrammed, shifting from an “extended” familial arrangement to a nuclear family configuration.²

Sky House (1958) plans by Kikutake* reveal this transformation. Kikutake* produced nine plans – eight featuring drawn furniture and one left empty and blank. Each plan adopts a different setup, showcasing the flexibility of the *blankspace*.³ The graphic style is minimal; lines are not used to convey technical information. Instead, all lines share the same weight, emphasizing programs, performances, and volumes equally. Paradoxically, the *blankspace*, devoid of architectural hierarchy, reveals itself as performative – guided by drawn furniture that does not simply “fill” the void left by architecture but scripts spatial narratives.

Indeed, even as Kikutake’s* plans advocate for domestic flexibility through varied configurations, domestic *plot-lines* remain strikingly similar across the eight furnished designs. Semantic patterns within the plans expose this redundancy; the furniture sets are nearly identical – a *double bed*,⁴ *tables*, *shelves*, and *chairs*. The *kitchen* and *bathroom* consistently occupy peripheral positions, leaving room for furniture to orient space. This furniture cosmology and its implied performativity center around two bodies, a couple;⁵ a second *bed* for a third inhabitant would break the graphic equilibrium. However, the couple was not alone; they had a son. His presence disrupted the prescribed domestic narrative. Where could the child develop intimacy within such a couple-centric layout?

A plan was drawn shortly after the house’s completion to add a *bed-room* as an outgrowth *pod* appended to the main slab.⁶ Designed specifically for the child, the *pod* followed his dimensions and needs—a niche with a *single bed*, a *closet*, and *access via a ladder*. Symbolically and graphically, the child gravitated around the domestic core: the couple. The planned answer to the dilemma reinforced the normative character of the house. Later, the couple projected their pods into the slab to ensure privacy, reflecting more profound influences of Western domestic norms.⁷

Absence again matters. The *blankness* extends beyond the interior, enveloping the exterior: *Sky House* virtually remains within the *white space* of the paper sheet, never acknowledging its urban environment in Tokyo. This graphic attitude positions the house as a romantic platform – hovering above preexisting grounds, metaphorically extracting itself from rooted Japanese traditions and postwar turmoil.⁸

Carlin interprets this extraction as a case study of “capitalism schizophrénia.”⁹ Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari, capitalism operates through contradiction: it must deterritorialize to dismantle existing social structures and liberate capital flows, only to reterritorialize and control those newly liberated flows.¹⁰ Here, traditional Japanese domestic structures are deterritorialized and reterritorialized, redefining domesticity around the nuclear family. This transformation embraces a Western, consumption-driven lifestyle while exposing the political economy underlying domestic dynamics.

Yet this tendency was not monolithic. Paper *blankspace* invited alternative explorations. In Fujii’s* *E2-project*, six identical rooms are arranged in rows. Furniture is drawn in detail, rendering table structures, chairs’ armrests, and the number of burners (three, in this case). It makes programs legible. “Architecture,” by contrast, remains abstract, reduced to simple lines. Graphics emphasize domestic performativity, attaching normative performances to each setup. Two single beds in a room signify children’s spaces, while a double bed symbolizes the couple’s central role.

However, departing from such normative plots, Fujii* fractures domestic performances by arranging all rooms in an enfilade. The bathroom transforms into a corridor connecting the kitchen, living spaces, and bedrooms. This space, where bodies are naked and morally sterilized, becomes a site of sensual encounters.¹¹ Fujii* uses plans and the implied performances of drawn furniture to heighten sensual frictions, challenging Western domestic models, whose “cumulative effect [...] during the last two centuries has been like that of a general lobotomy performed on society at large,” as Evans describes.¹²

Concluding with Fujii’s* works, the Suzuki apartments’ plans abandon conventional furniture altogether. Instead, the potential of “action furniture” is conveyed through arrows, representing a rotative device at the room’s center. This multifunctional apparatus creates spatial divisions while integrating beds, shelves, and desks.¹³ As the architect’s* primary design intervention, it resists prescribed domestic performances, leaving the room blank and open¹⁴ – a non-domesticable territory for continuous reinterpretation and inhabitation.

9. Ibid. 56

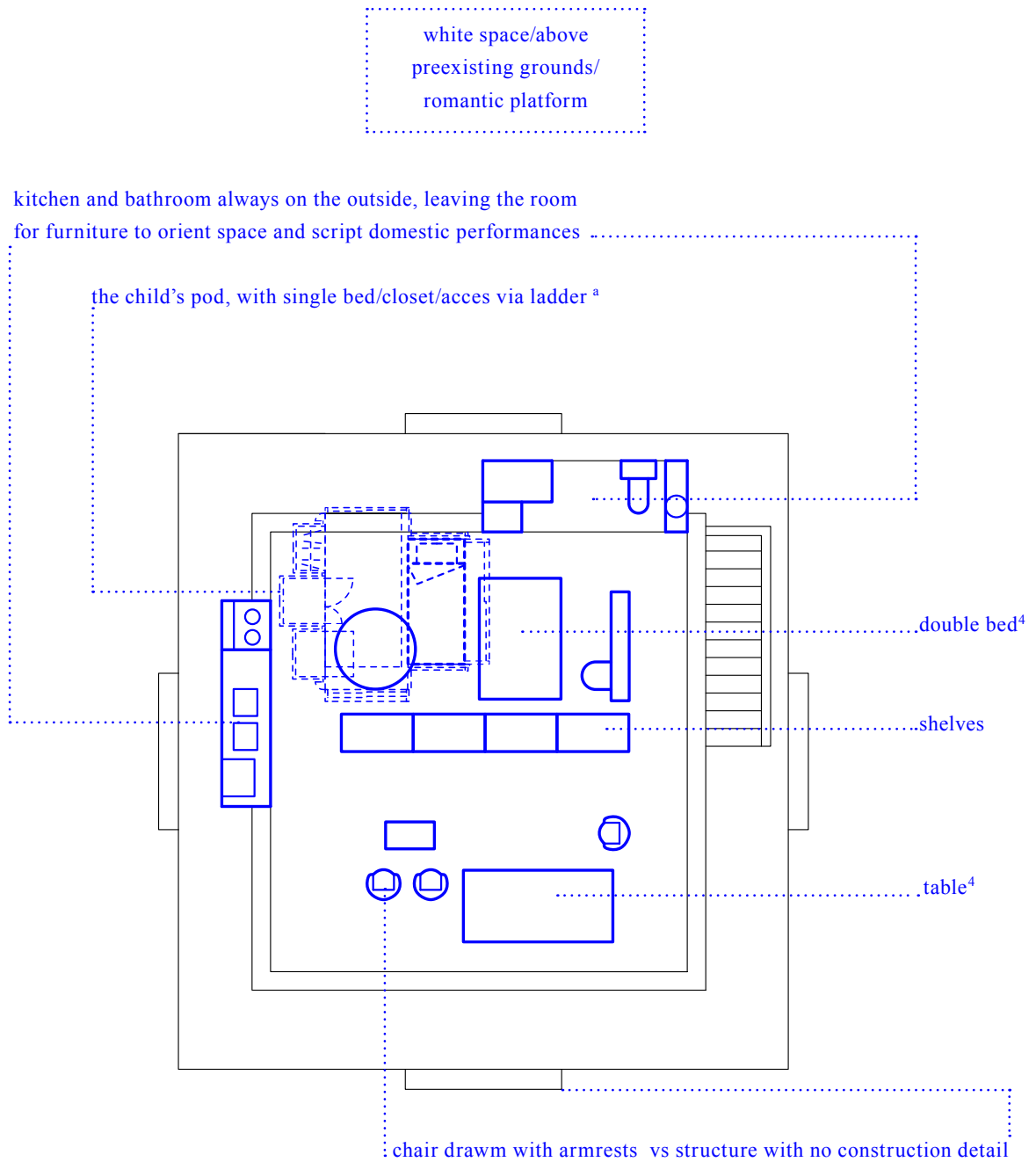
10. Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix. *Anti-Oedipus*. 3rd printing. Capitalism and Schizophrenia Vol. 1. (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1986)

11. Look back into Act 2 “Living Together Apart”; for instance the different locations of bathrooms based on “sex” with the “ladies” bathroom that should be “more retired” than the “gentleman” bathroom which is near the “staircase,” in Kerr. *The Gentleman’s House*. 150-151

12. “Figures, Doors, and Passages” in Evans. *Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays*. 89

13. The complete description of ‘action furniture’ is given in Carlin. *Non-Typological Architecture*. 123-127

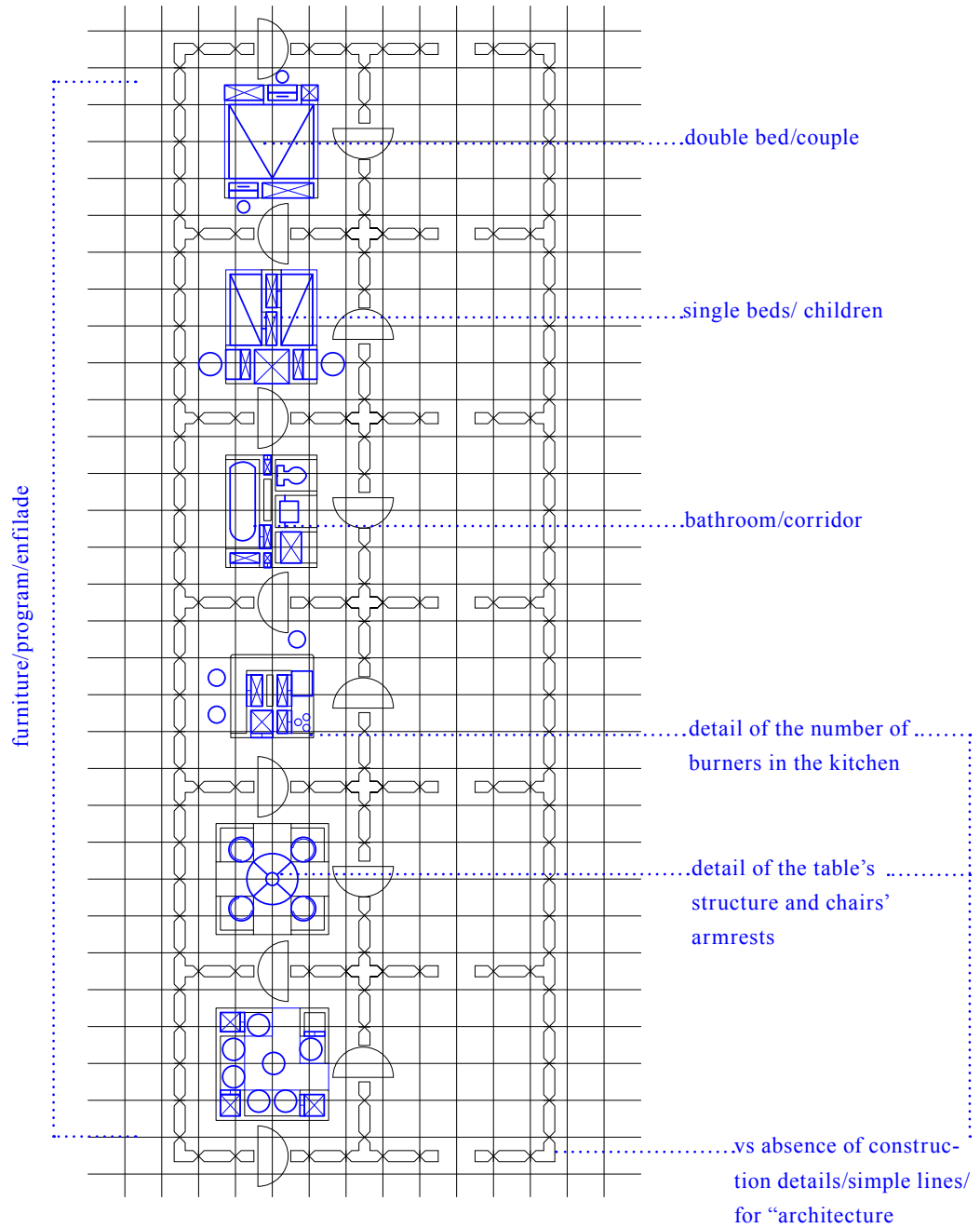
14. On the production of consciousness through material mediation between the self and its furnished domestic environment, see the paragraph on Benjamin’s ‘shell’ and approach to the verb ‘to dwell’ in this énoncé’s *Introduction*. For the intention of avoiding any domestic narrative enforcement see: Carlin. *Non-Typological Architecture*. 123-127



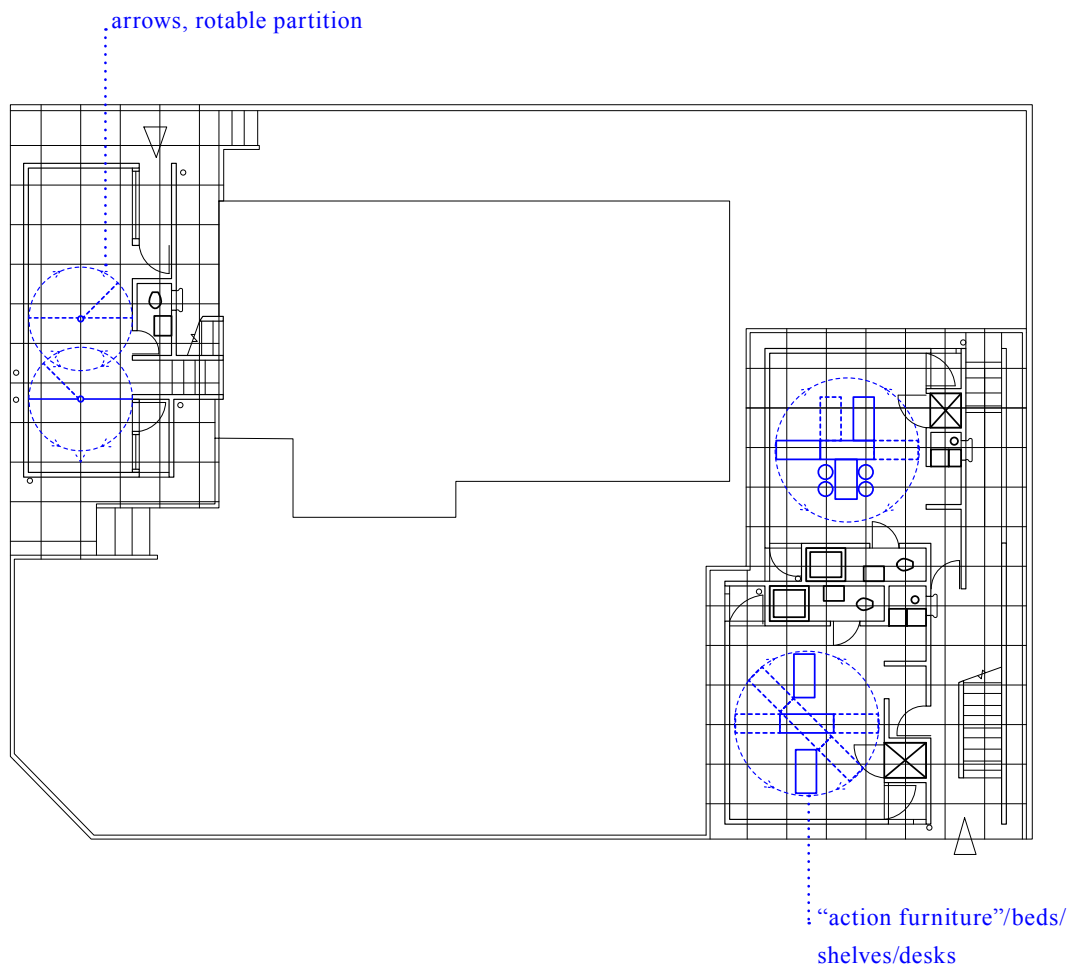
a. The position of the child's pod was estimated by the author with the pictures available on: "Sky House," *Hidden Architecture*, <https://hiddenarchitecture.net/sky-house/>.

"Sky House" by Kiyonori Kikutake* (the plan depicting the built house disposition was chosen to be redrawn, 1958), redrawn by the author, line weight is thicker for furniture.

MURDER ON THE FLOORPLAN

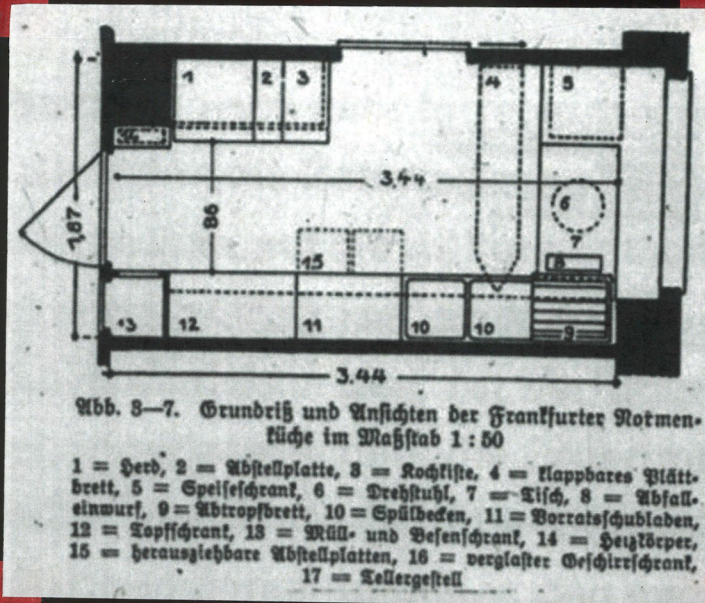


Plan of “E2-Project” by Hiromi Fujii* (1968-71), redrawn by the author, line weight is thicker for furniture.



Plan of “Suzuki house and flats, ground floor” by Hiromi Fujii* (1968-70), redrawn by the author, line weight is thicker for furniture.

Act 6: Diagrams for What, Progress for Who?

*Note on Graphics:*

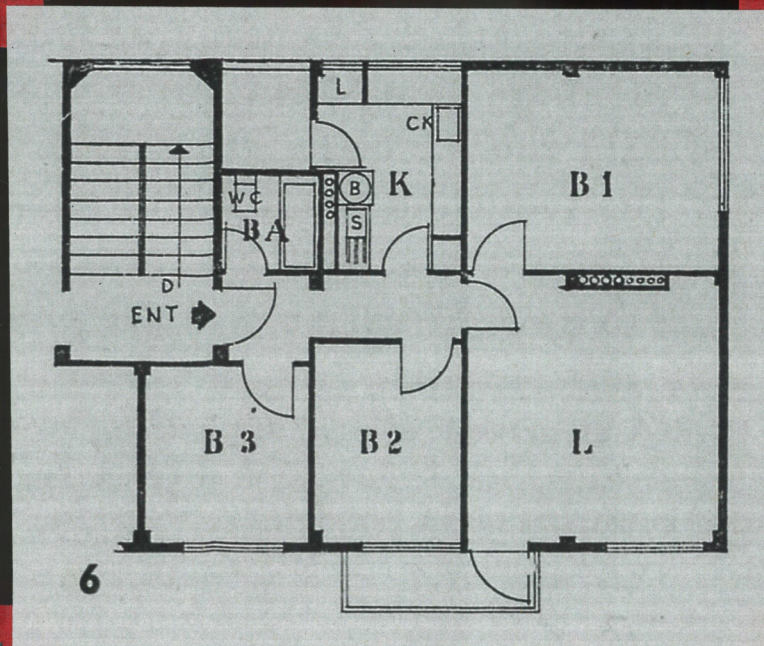
Schütte-Lihotzky.* **Dimensions** reveal **compactness** and **potential reproduction** of the model. All furniture is meticulously detailed through **adjacent text**, as a scientific figure.

Dotted lines expose that some furniture can be folded, as the **ironing board**, it is all about spatial economy.

The kitchen is **decontextualized** from any dwelling, the “heart of the hearth” is transformed into a rational template to be reproduced. Denby* and Fry.* Furniture is only drawn in the **bath-room** and **kitchen**.

Details and **letters** are pinned on furniture in these two rooms – **B** stands for **gas boiler** and **S** for **sink**. Graphics reveal hygienic concerns.

10m



Plan of the “Frankfurter Küche” by Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky* (1926), from “Frankfurt Kitchen,” *Hidden Architecture*, and Plan of “Kensal House Flat” by Elizabeth Denby* and Maxwell Fry* (1937), from: “Kensal House, West London,” *The Twentieth Century Society*. Scan by the author.

1. Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, Translated by Frederick Etchells, (London: J. Rodker, 1931) 95

2. “10 Washing Machine Maintenance Tips,” State Farm, last modified June 12, 2023.

3. Wajcman, Judy. *Feminism Confronts Technology*, (second printing 1996, US Pennsylvania State University Press 1991) 114

4. See for instance: Frederick, Christine. *Efficient Housekeeping: Or, Household Engineering, Scientific Management in the Home*. (Chicago: American school of home economics, 1925)

5. Henderson, Susan R. “Epigraph” in *Building Culture: Ernst May and the New Frankfurt Initiative, 1926-1932*. (New York, Washington DC, Baltimore and Bern: Peter Lang, 2013)

6. Bullock, Nicholas. “First the Kitchen: Then the Facade” in *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 1, No. 3/4 (Oxford University Press, 1988) 177-192

7. Schütte-Lihotzky, Margarete “Die Frankfurter Küche,” in *Die Frankfurter Küche von Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky*, ed. Peter Noever (Berlin: Ernst & Sohn, 1992), 7

8. Henderson, Susan R. *Building Culture*. 102

9. The ‘New Woman’ body was architecturalized as an athletic, gender-ambiguous figure. As argued by Heynen, this contradiction of the ‘New Woman’ body reflected the gendered view upon Modernity, approached as masculine. The domestic sphere, traditionally gendered feminine was thus “masculinised” through the implementation of rational devices. See: Heynen, Hilde “Modernity and domesticity” 11; and Ward, Janet. *Weimar Surfaces. Urban Visual Culture in the 1920s Germany*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001) 87

“The House is a machine to live in”¹

“It may sound silly, but believe it or not, your washing machine needs to be washed”²

At the dawn of the twentieth century, Taylorist systems, first developed for industrial efficiency, were theorized under “scientific management” and applied to domestic chores. In architecture, modernism advocated mechanising the home under the aegis of hygiene, yet Wajcman reminds us that “modernists did not appreciate that machines need constant servicing.”³ The kitchen became a focal point for standardising and optimising reproductive labor, placing the “housewife” under gendered scrutiny as her movements were calibrated and mapped to ensure domestic efficiency.⁴

This movement, originating in the U.S., reached Germany in the post-WWI context. The newly established Weimar Republic sought to implement social reforms to emancipate women while addressing an urgent housing crisis.⁵ In response, innovative housing projects were developed to tackle these challenges and serve as models for applying new “rational” design principles to domestic architecture. Among the most significant experiments was the *Neue Frankfurt* initiative. In this context, Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky* designed the now-iconic *Frankfurt Kitchen* (1926), re-interpreting Frederick’s *Housekeeping Machine* as a blueprint for rational domestic efficiency.⁶

Drawn decontextualized from any household, the *Frankfurt Kitchen* appears as a scientific graph floating on [white paper](#) – a domestic diagram capable of being implanted into any dwelling. The [kitchen](#) is outfitted with technical furniture: a [waste outlet](#), a [swivel chair](#), [folding smoothing board](#), a [draining shelf](#), and a [sink](#). Each component is labeled with [numbers](#) listed below the “diagram,” reinforcing its scientific precision. The graphics emphasize this quest for rational convenience and spatial economy: half of the furniture is represented with [dotted lines](#), suggesting [openable/closable/foldable furniture](#) to ease household performance. Domestic experimentations shaped this spatial proposal. The time required for tasks was meticulously measured, and movements were recorded before being translated onto paper to create a design focused on minimizing distances, effort, and workload.⁷

The inclusion of [dimensions](#) in the plan reveals this rational mapping of reproductive work – compressed into an efficient ‘shell’ measuring just [1.67 x 3.44 meters](#). The measurements betray the gendered dominion of the kitchen, tailored for only one body to perform domestic tasks with mechanized efficiency. The housewife’s body becomes both a parameter and a measuring tool in the design process – her “office” rationalized to maximize output.⁸

Yet, this overexposure of women’s bodies – as projections and projected forms – evolves into an architectural endeavour,⁹ raising a critical question: diagrams for what, progress for who?

A naive, philanthropic answer might suggest that rational standardisation alleviates gendered domestic burdens, granting housewives leisure time. However, even within the socially progressive Weimar Republic, political views on gender roles remained divided. The limited social power gained by women during and after WWI was perceived by conservatives as a threat to patriarchal structures.¹⁰ Thus, the rationalisation of domestic chores was not intended to liberate women socially, but rather to “professionalise” their expected housework – for free¹¹ – and settle them into reproductive territories.

Still, this naive hope was partially realized in *Kensal House*, London (1933–37), designed by Elisabeth Denby* and Maxwell Fry*. Examining the plans of *Kensal House* reveals the *Frankfurt Kitchen* almost copy-pasted. Graphic details render the sink, gas boiler, and cooking station to promote the introduction of modern appliances into social housing.¹² Strikingly, these appliances are the only drawn furniture, while other rooms remain blank, highlighting the hygienist’s focus on kitchens and bathrooms. *Kensal House* drew heavily on the Weimar *Siedlungen*’s emphasis on hygiene, domestic rationalisation, and standardisation.¹³ However, as argued by Darling, the 1930’s UK political context was “untouched by extreme politics.”¹⁴ Both architects* and policymakers rationalised domestic rituals to ensure that women’s gained leisure time would allow them to become “citizens as well as housewives.”¹⁵ Even if this “democratic” emancipation was still filtered through patriarchal practices – the *Kensal House* social club rehearsed gendered roles, offering sewing classes for women and furniture-making workshops for men.¹⁶ Nevertheless, Schütte-Lihotzky’s vision found partial fulfillment in this alternate political landscape.

Note: Unceasing debates persist regarding whether the *Frankfurt Kitchen* is “good” or “bad” in its gendered scripting. Features such as the kitchen’s separation from the living room can be read as either invisibilising reproductive labor by isolating the housewife or as emancipating her by allowing complete rest once outside her “office.” This Act aims not to resolve this debate nor to blame Schütte-Lihotzky* for how her* designs were later appropriated. Instead, it seeks to unpack the rationality embedded in these plans and examine how political powers manipulated such features to serve their own ends.

10. Henderson, Susan R. ‘Housing the Single Woman: The Frankfurt Experiment’. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 68, no. 3 (2009): 358–77.

11. Ibid, and on the enslavement of women working capital for free to ensure capitalist reproduction see: Federici, Silvia. *Caliban et la sorcière*. And Fortunati, Leopoldina. *The Arcane of Reproduction: Housework, Prostitution, Labor and Capital*. (Brooklyn, N.Y: Autonomedia, 1995)

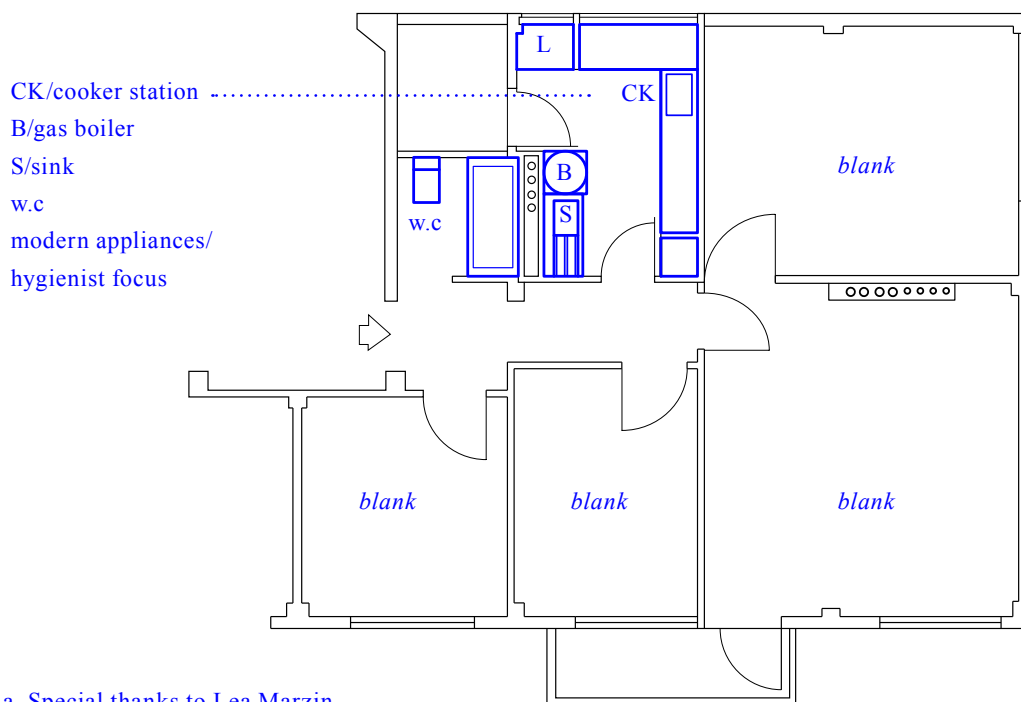
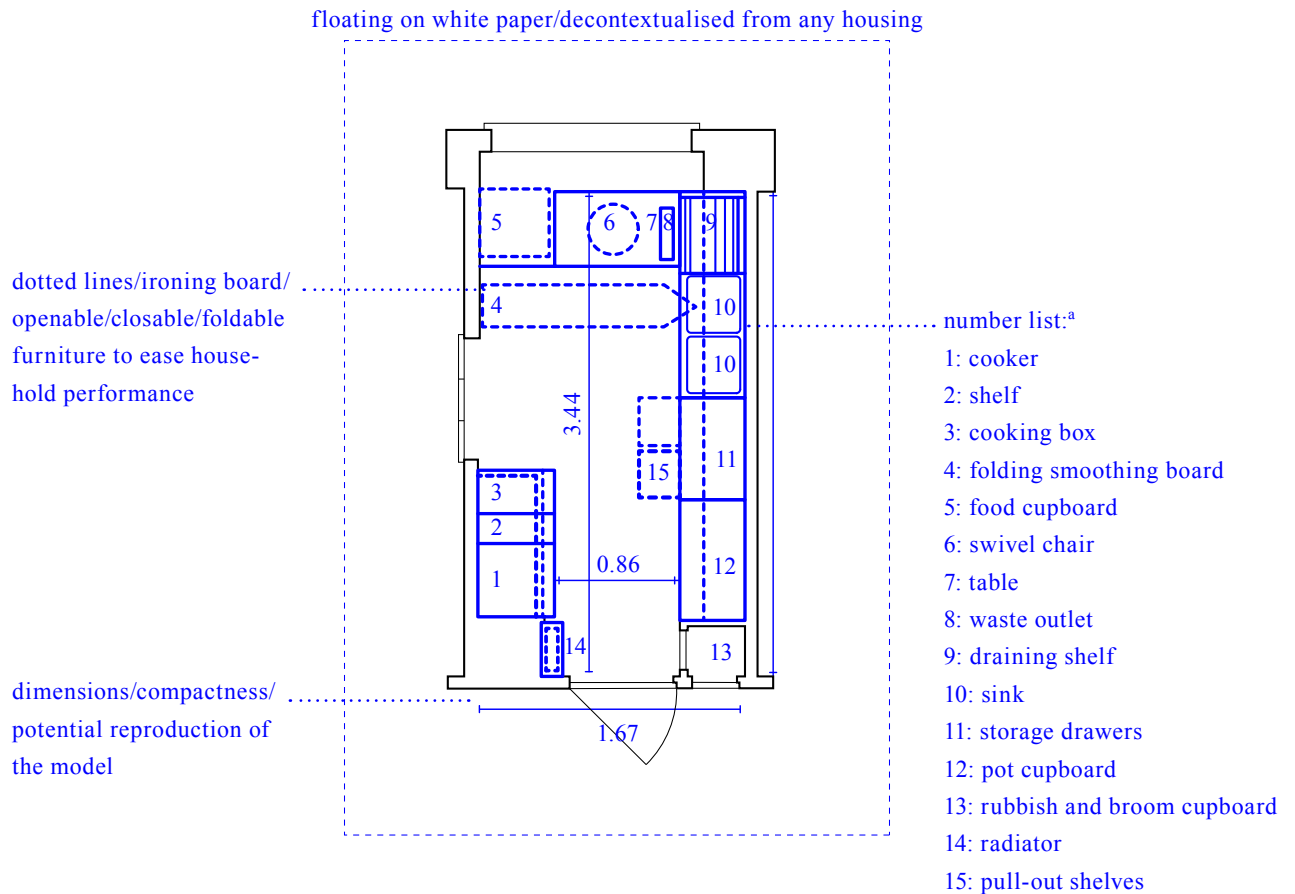
12. Darling, Elizabeth, “A citizen as well as a housewife: New spaces for domesticity in 1930s London” in *Negotiating Domesticity*. 49-64

13. Ibid. 58

14. Ibid. 54

15. Ibid. 53

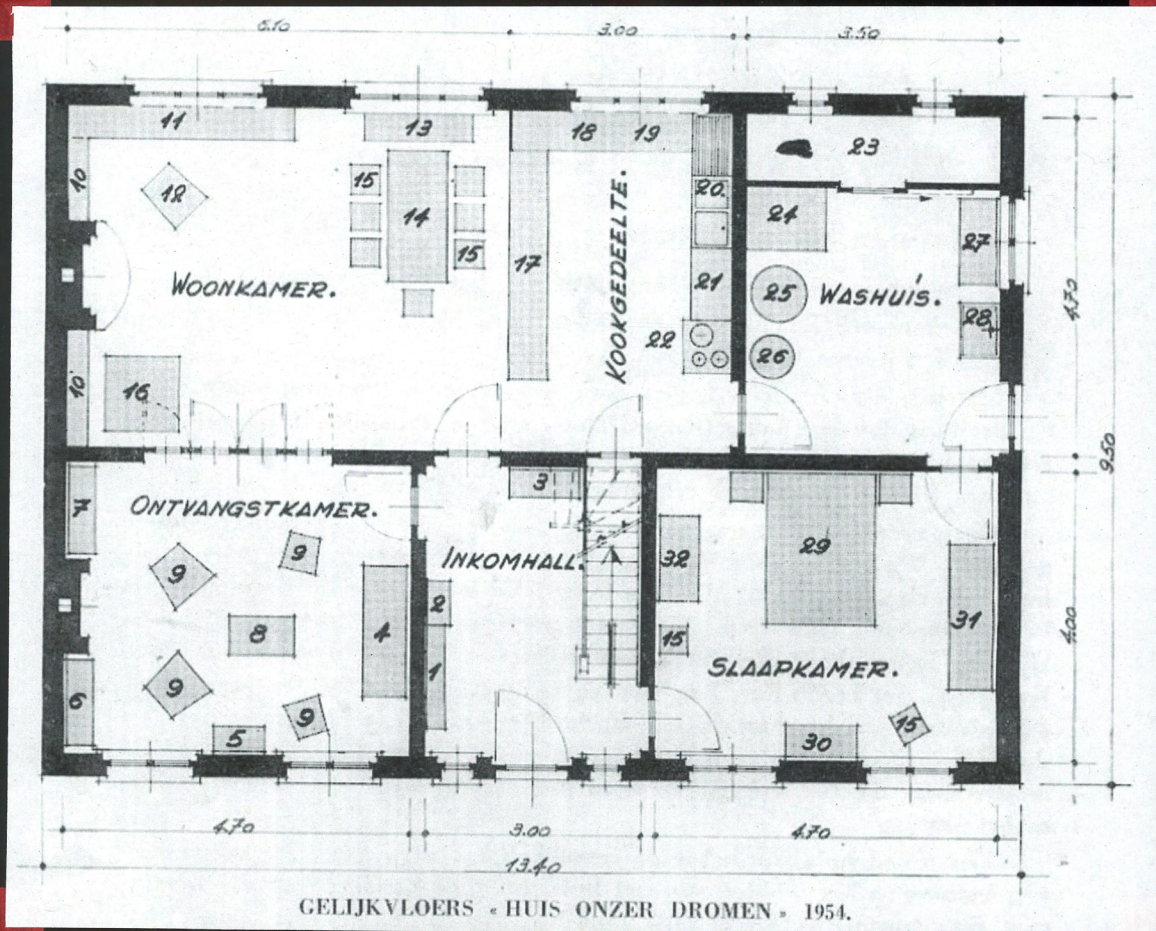
16. Ibid. 61



a. Special thanks to Lea Marzin-
zik for help in transcribing the
gothic characters/translating

Plan of the “Frankfurter Küche” by Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky*(1926), and plan of
“Kensal House Flat” by Elizabeth Denby* and Maxwell Fry* (1937), redrawn by the
author, line weight is thicker for furniture.

Act 7: Patriarchal Topography

*Note on Graphics:*

“Architecture” is reduced to black hatched contours, with chimneys and double-wing window frames referencing tradition. Each room is “packed” with furniture, whose outlines and arrangement directly script the room’s function. Furniture appears as gray hatched surfaces, except for kitchen appliances, where lines and circles reveal an aluminum sink or modern cooker, reflecting rational planning.

Numbers on furniture: the list was not found. Hypothesis on them: were they inscribed to give description? to sell the pieces? It translates anyway a precise intention for each of them and a well-controlled domestic scenography.

Plan of “Het Huis onze Dromen” by Boerinnenbond* (1954), from: *Grondplan van het ‘Huis Onze Dromen’*. Designed by Boerinnenbond. 1954–1958. Object number B00003374. Centrum Agrarische Geschiedenis. Scan by the author.

1. Transcribed and translated from Dutch to English with otter.ai, enunciated by the voice over in *Het Huis onzer Dromen*. Belgium: Filmdienst van de Belgische Boerenbond, 1953.

2. Floré, Fredie "Promoting Catholic family values and modern domesticity in postwar Belgium" in *Negotiating Domesticity*. 84-85

3. Floré, Fredie. 'Lessons in Modern Living: Home Design Exhibitions in Belgium 1945–1958'. *The Journal of Architecture* 9, no. 4 (December 2004): 445–62. 448

4. Floré "Promoting Catholic family values" 83-94

5. Floré. 'Lessons in Modern Living' 446

6. *Grondplan van het 'Huis Onzer Dromen'*. Designed by Boerinnenbond. 1954–1958. Object number B00003374. Centrum Agrarische Geschiedenis. Accessed December 5, 2024.

7. The dutch naming in the plan is "[Slaapkamer](#)," translated from Dutch to English with DeepL. All the names that follow were also translated from the plan thanks to DeepL.

8. Floré 'Promoting Catholic family values' 89-90

9. *Het Huis onzer Dromen*. Belgium: Filmdienst van de Belgische Boerenbond, 1953

10. The dutch naming in the plan is "[Kookgedeelte](#)." In Dutch, the word typically used for "kitchen" is "Keuken." Yet, the term "[Kookgedeelte](#)" shifts the focus toward the act of cooking rather than the symbolic significance of the space, highlighting a re-definition of the kitchen through modern appliances introduction.

11. Floré 'Promoting Catholic family values.' 92

"A handcrafted sign with the Lord in this house adds an elegant touch to the home."¹

In post-World War II Belgium, socialist movements did not dominate the political landscape as elsewhere in Europe. Instead, the working class aligned extensively with Christian labor groups, encompassing 30 to 55% of working-class families in early 1950s Flanders.² These movements saw the rise of modernism – and its flexible approach to domestic space – as a threat to the traditional hearth, defined by the nuclear family. To counter this perceived "degeneration," a domestic crusade was launched. A key example is the implementation of the 1948 "De Thaeys Act," which prioritized the construction of private row houses over collective housing for social dwellings.³

With a legal framework in place, the next step was propaganda. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, the "Christelijke Arbeidersbeweging" (Christian Workers' Movement, CWM) orchestrated an extensive program employing various media and strategies to infuse its domestic model. "Good taste" was promoted through self-published magazines and booklets featuring plans of ideal houses, appropriate furniture, and advice on how to run a "good" home.⁴ Exhibitions with 1:1 furnished rooms and houses were displayed in socio-cultural centers, museums, department stores, and trade fairs. These "cardboard" rooms and houses acted as ideological vessels, perpetually promoting a projected ideal lifestyle to elevate society to a higher moral and cultural standard.⁵

One of the most documented cases is *Het Huis onzer Dromen* (The House of the Dream), a replica of a suburban home exhibited four times between 1953 and 1958. A version of the "Dream House" plan was published in the 1954 exhibition booklet and serves as this Act case study.⁶ This traditional home unfolds into stereotyped rooms, each furnished according to conventional family layouts – a [double bed](#) in the "[bedroom](#),"⁷ a [nuclear-family-sized dining table](#) in the "[living room](#)," and so on. However, details betray deeper intentions. The [dining table](#) pushed against the [wall](#), ensures space for family bonding activities, as suggested in periodicals published by the CWM,⁸ subtly reinforcing traditionalist performativity. These features also appear in the 1953 film *Het Huis onzer Dromen*, which follows a housewife enacting daily life in the "Dream House" over ten minutes.⁹

Yet, specific details quietly disrupt traditional domesticity – for instance, the kitchen is rebranded as the "[cooking section](#)."¹⁰ This semantic shift is echoed in the plan's visual language, where [lines](#) and [circles](#) delicately trace the outlines of modern appliances: a [metal sink](#), a [serving shelf](#) bridging the "[living room](#)" and "[cooking section](#)," and a [compact gas stove](#). The modern infiltration and partial abandonment of the kitchen as the home's core might appear contradictory from the CWM, yet it reveals a calculated strategy. Time saved by rationalizing tasks in the "[cooking section](#)" and "[washing room](#)" was not intended for leisure or work outside the home but instead redirected toward family care and the "good" arrangement of her hearth with a "personal touch."¹¹

This “personal touch” underscores the CWM’s emphasis on curating interiors with objects of familial and religious significance – such as a “grandfather chair” or the annual CWM calendar featuring replicas of Flemish religious paintings.¹² Objects in the 1953 film pattern all the [shelves](#) and [tables](#) pinned under [numbers](#) in the plan. A [book](#) titled *Nursing Care for Mother and Child* is casually retrieved from a [shelf](#). Oh! And a *bible* was candidly left on the [entrance cupboard](#), it must be quickly put back into its dedicated drawer. Crucifixes in almost every room are described in the film’s voiceover as adding “an elegant touch to the home.”¹³ It is not enough to have modern appliances; it is about intention and practice: furniture is here acting as a sentient shelter for patriarchal reproductive objects in a permanent scenography composed and rehearsed by the housewife. It becomes her mental burden and duty to transform the house into a home for the family’s “good.”

The emphasis on femininity as a social construction highlights its prescriptive and oppressive nature in Western culture, yet masculinity is equally built.¹⁴ Men, too, were assigned roles through gendered scripts. In the column “*Peter in his Spare Time*,” published in the men’s monthly CWM magazine, men were encouraged to build “modest” DIY furniture, actively participating in homemaking.¹⁵ One piece of furniture, grey-hatched in the plan, must have been built by the man of the family and subsequently arranged under the guiding hand of the housewife. As Baydar and Heynen remind us, “by also discussing men’s roles – as grooms, fathers, or DIY-adepts – they underscore that it is not just feminine subjectivities that are molded through domestic spaces, but also masculine ones.”¹⁶ Both genders – since there are only two here, binarity is the rule – are folded into specific domestic performances to ensure the “good” reproduction of the traditional family.

The CWM’s plan can be read as a compromise, safeguarding traditional domesticity while accommodating contemporary rationalization. However, this embrace of modern furniture is not only ideological but also economic. The CWM frequently collaborated with furniture firms, such as *Van Den Berghe Pauvers*, to promote their pieces in exhibitions and booklets.¹⁷ Here, the commodification of furniture and domestic habit emerges as a central feature.

The home thus becomes a projected meta-space – an ideal to be mimicked. Its function as a matrix for reproducing gendered subjectivities turns it into what Foucault calls a “biopolitical” project.¹⁸ The CWM’s adaptation of modern strategies extends beyond reproducing bodies and behaviors through furniture; it also replicates modern operating schemes through media. As Colomina argues, “what makes modern architecture modern is not its functionalism or use of materials, but its engagement with media.”¹⁹ The CWM’s mass production of multimedia content, from booklets to films, enabled the large-scale reproduction of patriarchal domestic narratives.

12. Ibid. 93

13. Transcribed and translated from Dutch to English with otter.ai, *Het Huis onzer Dromen*. Belgium: Filmdienst van de Belgische Boerenbond, 1953.

14. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*

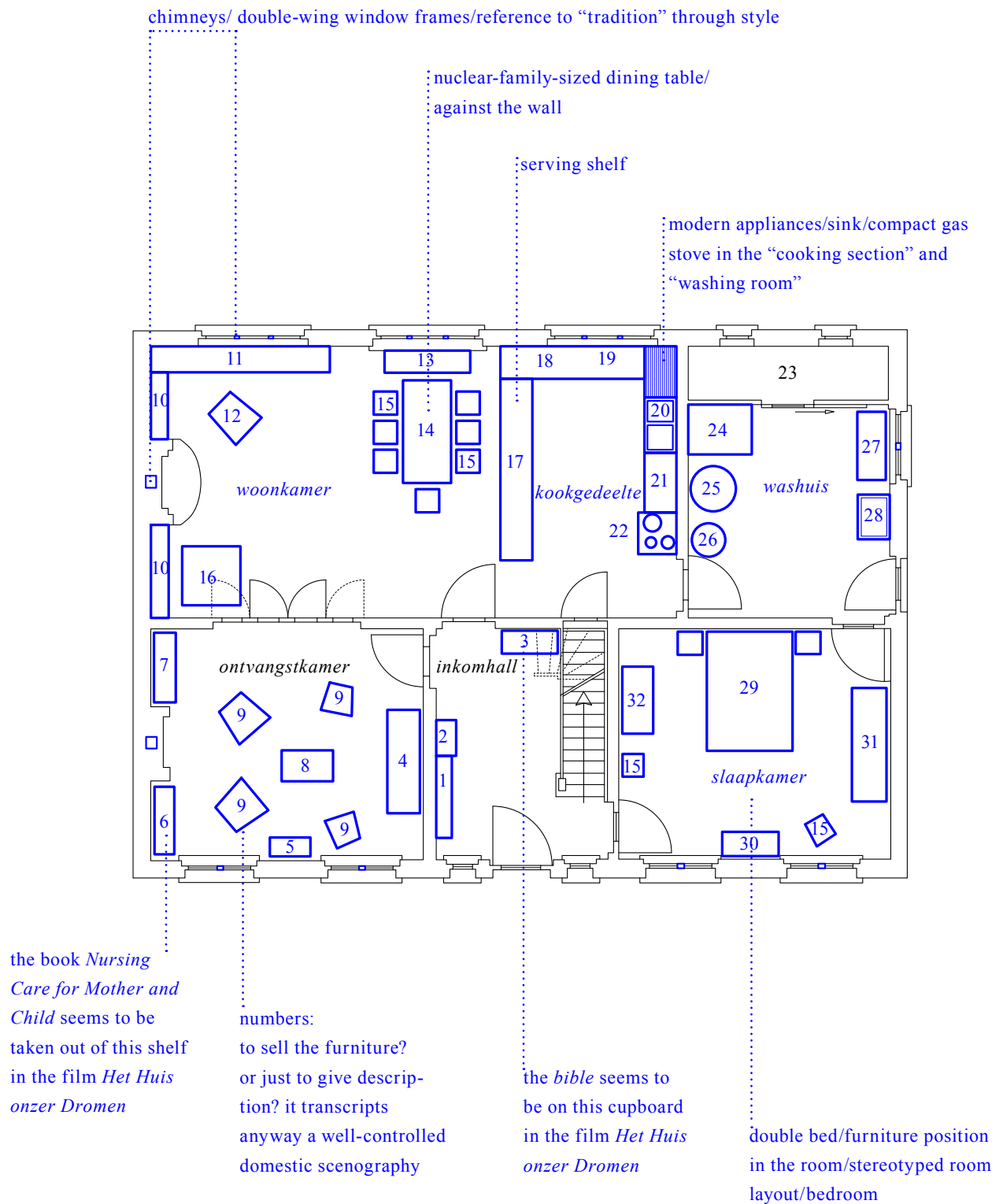
15. Floré ‘Promoting Catholic family values.’ 95

16. Heynen, Hilde, and Gulsum Baydar “Gendered Subject” in *Negotiating Domesticity*. 47

17. Floré. ‘Lessons in Modern Living.’ 445-462

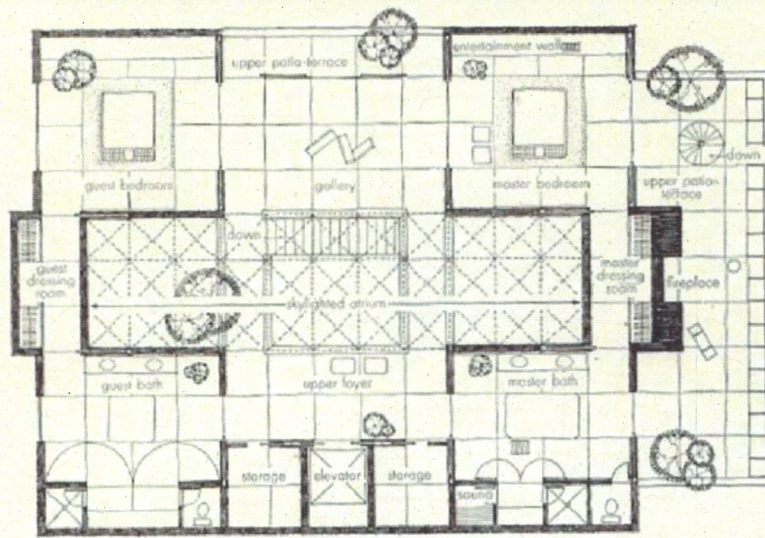
18. The notion of “biopolitics” is particularly developed in the last chapter “Le droit de mort et le pouvoir sur la vie”. In Foucault, Michel. *Histoire de la sexualité (Tome 1). La volonté de savoir*. Gallimard, 2014.

19. Colomina, Beatriz. *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media*

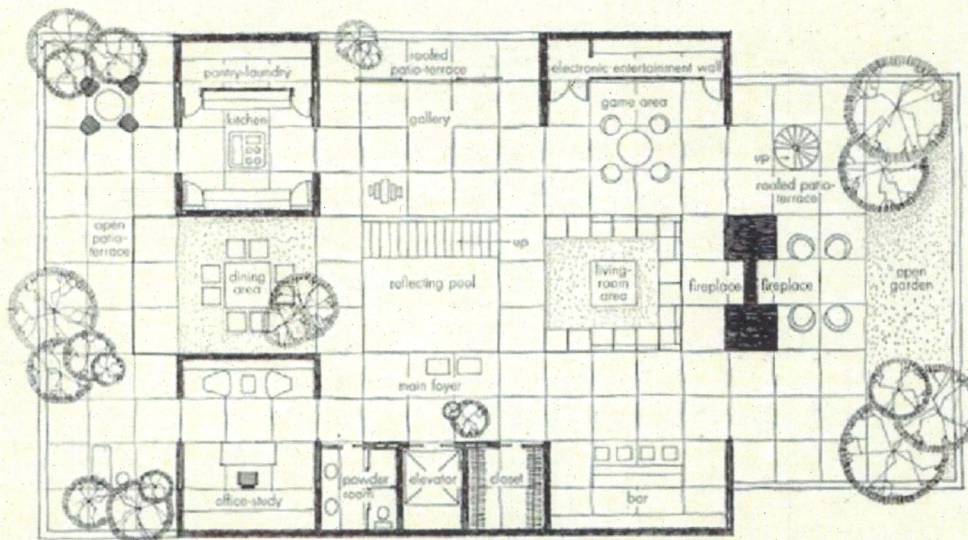


Plan of “Het Huis onzer Dromen” by Boerinnenbond* (1954), redrawn by the author,
line weight is thicker for furniture.

Act 8: Glossy Paper Space



PLAYBOY'S DUPLEX PENTHOUSE—SECOND LEVEL



PLAYBOY'S DUPLEX PENTHOUSE—FIRST LEVEL

Note on Graphics:

The cut partitions and structure is rendered in a “sketchy” black hatch, giving no detail on construction. The duplex itself is not meant to be sold or reproduced. On the other hand, **furniture** is detailed, **pillows** on the **beds** are **hatched**, **chairs** have **curved outlines** revealing the **hand of a designer**,* they are meant to be consumed. Names such as “**electronic entertainment wall**” or “**sau-na**” reveal programs as an interplay of technology and sensuality.

Plan of the “*Playboy’s* Duplex Penthouse” by Robert Bray* for *Playboy* (1970). From: Sewell, Jessica. ‘Power, Sex, and Furniture: Masculinity and the Bachelor Pad in 1950s-60s America’, n.d. Scan by the author.

1. To delve in suburbia as a political tool of control in the cold-war period, see: Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981)

2. On the enslavement of women working capital for free to ensure capitalist reproduction see: Federici. *Caliban et la sorcière* And Fortunati. *The Arcane of Reproduction*

3. *Bride & Home*, Winter 1960. 71

4. Wright, *Building the Dream*. 245–246

5. Barbara. Penner, “Rehearsing Domesticity: Postwar Pocono Honeymoon Resorts” in *Negotiating Domesticity*. 103-120

6. Osgerby, Bill. ‘The Bachelor Pad as Cultural Icon: Masculinity, Consumption and Interior Design in American Men’s Magazines, 1930–65’. *Journal of Design History* 18, no. 1 (2005): 99–113

7. Drawing Matter. “Robert Bray: Six Designs for a Playboy Penthouse Pad.” *Drawing Matter*. Accessed January 9, 2025

8. According to Preciado the “marital bed” was invented in 1840 as a result of the Napoleonic institutionalization of marriage in Preciado, Paul B., and Serge Mestre. *Pornotopie: ‘Playboy’ et l’invention de la sexualité multimédia*. Nouvelle éd. avec postface inédite de l’auteur. (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2022). 139

After World War II, suburban life in the United States emerged as a self-evident mode of existence. Fueled by the expansion and affordability of cars and oil, the holy trinity of green lawns, white fences, and balloon-frame houses became the quintessential image of American life in mass culture. However, suburbanization did not merely shape the land—it transformed the “domesticscape” as well.

American suburbia reinforced the heterosexual couple as the bedrock of domestic space,¹ with the husband performing productive labor outside the home, in the city, far removed from the manicured green-lawn retreat. The latter was entrusted to the housewife, whose role in reproductive labor – again for free² – anchored the suburban ideal. Yet, it is not because the housewife operated gratis that she was denied buying power. On the contrary, she cared for domestic expenditures, opening a new frontier for mass consumption. Domestic appliances were marketed directly to her, exemplified by a *Hamilton Beach* ad for kitchen appliances in *Bride & Home*: “Because your wedding is for always... make Hamilton Beach part of your wonderful start!”³

The duality of “bride” and “home” exposes how marriage was the societal norm tethered to suburban housing: owning a house was contingent on marriage. This interplay between the housing market and patriarchal norms was underscored by *U.S. Steel’s* “Bride’s House,” launched at the National Homebuilders Convention in 1955,⁴ and the proliferation of newlywed-only resorts in the 1950s, such as those in the Poconos, where couples rehearsed married life in suburban bungalow replicas during their honeymoons.⁵

The imposed social straitjacket generated resistance. With its manifesto *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac (1957), the Beatnik movement championed nomadism and sexual liberation in direct opposition to suburban domesticity. However, a lesser-explored domestic response came from *Playboy* magazine. Billing itself as “entertainment for men,” *Playboy* oscillated between pornography and lifestyle content, presenting an alternative domesticity: the bachelor’s apartment. Through plans and furniture designs, it constructed a fantasy of masculine autonomy.⁶

The January 1970 issue featured plans for the “Playboy’s Duplex Penthouse” by Robert Bray,* with **double beds** drawn in the center of the **guest** and **master bedrooms**. The isolated position of the **beds** from **walls** emphasises sexual potential over familial reproduction, transforming the **bedrooms** into a bachelor’s playground with interchangeable partners. This sensual theater is amplified by an “electric circus of colors,” where hidden spotlights embedded in the “**entertainment wall**” can be controlled from a monitoring panel between the **headrests**⁷ – both explicitly hatched in the plan. The **double bed** abandons its reproductive function prescribed by the marital institution⁸ and metamorphoses into a multimedia platform, operating as the bachelor’s domestic prosthesis.

Near the [fireplace](#), three abstract [blocks](#) in plan are revealed to be a mobile Castiglioni Brionvega “Radiofonografo” AM/FM unit⁹ in Bray’s* gouaches. This discreet inclusion of market-available furniture hints at *Playboy*’s underlying political economy: its fantasies are fueled by mass consumption. Just as gendered desires lead housewives to purchase kitchen appliances, the white heterosexual man who dreams of being a *Playboy* bachelor will buy the latest Borsani’s* *D70* “flip-flop couch” or Saarinen’s* “womb chair” – both featured in other issues with explicit price tags¹⁰ – to furnish his ‘real’ suburban pavilion.

This narrative extends into the [kitchen](#), drawn as a central island punctuated by [dots](#) and [squares](#)—a technical hub showcasing the latest technologies, including a screen for rear-projected recipes.¹¹ While rationalization once aimed to alleviate the housewife’s domestic burden, high-tech features liberate the bachelor from the housewife’s reproductive dependency. This colonization of domestic space¹² — historically gendered as feminine – by the bachelor thanks to technology parallels capitalism’s schizophrenic logic, as outlined in Act 5. Following Deleuze and Guattari’s reasoning,¹³ from “housewife” to “girl next door,” the woman’s body becomes a resource deterritorialized from the “hearth” and reterritorialized at the [doorstep](#) in the *Playboy*’s duplex penthouse, fueling the *Playboy* bachelor’s consumption model.

At the heart of this fantasy lies not the kitchen – like in the hearth – but the “[reflecting pool](#),” a modern reinterpretation of the Narcissus myth. Here, new consumer masculinity is explored outside of marriage and patriarchal frameworks and whose eroticism is unleashed, giving a glimpse of what Preciado calls the “pharmacopornographic” era to come – in which late capitalism evolves into a new biopolitical regime of sexual subjectivities production.¹⁴

In the end, *Playboy* formulates a post-domestic “pornotopia,” turning the suburban pavilion’s biopolitical controls into eros.¹⁵ Nobody ever lived in a *Playboy* penthouse, but many inhabited it through glossy magazine’s plans. Extending Colomina’s idea of modern architecture as an “architecture of media,”¹⁶ the *Playboy* fantasy operates as a virtual space; coated through gloss, the entailed domestic performances are reproduced through mass-consumed fragments – furniture and objects integrated into physical domesticity.

Note: The semantics of plans evolved too: at Pierre Le Muet’s* time, a simple rectangle sufficed to signify a bed. Here, the same [bed](#) is hatched to mark a control panel between its [headrests](#). Even in representation, the bed has become a capitalized commodity – explicitly adorned with price tags – like the rest of the furniture. Its increasingly precise contours in plans are designed not just for function but to evoke desire and drive consumption.

9. *Playboy Magazine*, January 1970 quoted in “Robert Bray: Six Designs for a Playboy Penthouse Pad.” *Drawing Matter*. and “Radiofonografo.” Brionvega, n.d.

10. The *D70* “flip-flop couch” designed by Osvaldo Borsani* (which obtained the first prize at the 10th triennale in Milan 1954) is advertised for its aptitude to mechanise seduction and Saarinen’s* “womb chair” was praised for its mobility allowing the working space to be easily transformed into a seduction one. Found in Sanders. Joel Stud: *Architectures of Masculinity*. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996). 58-59, Preciado. *Pornotopie: ‘Playboy.’* 84, and ‘100 Masterpieces from the Vitra Design Museum Collection’. *American Craft*. (New York: American Craft Council, 1997). 38-39

11. *Playboy Magazine*, January 1970 quoted in “Robert Bray: Six Designs for a Playboy Penthouse Pad.” *Drawing Matter*

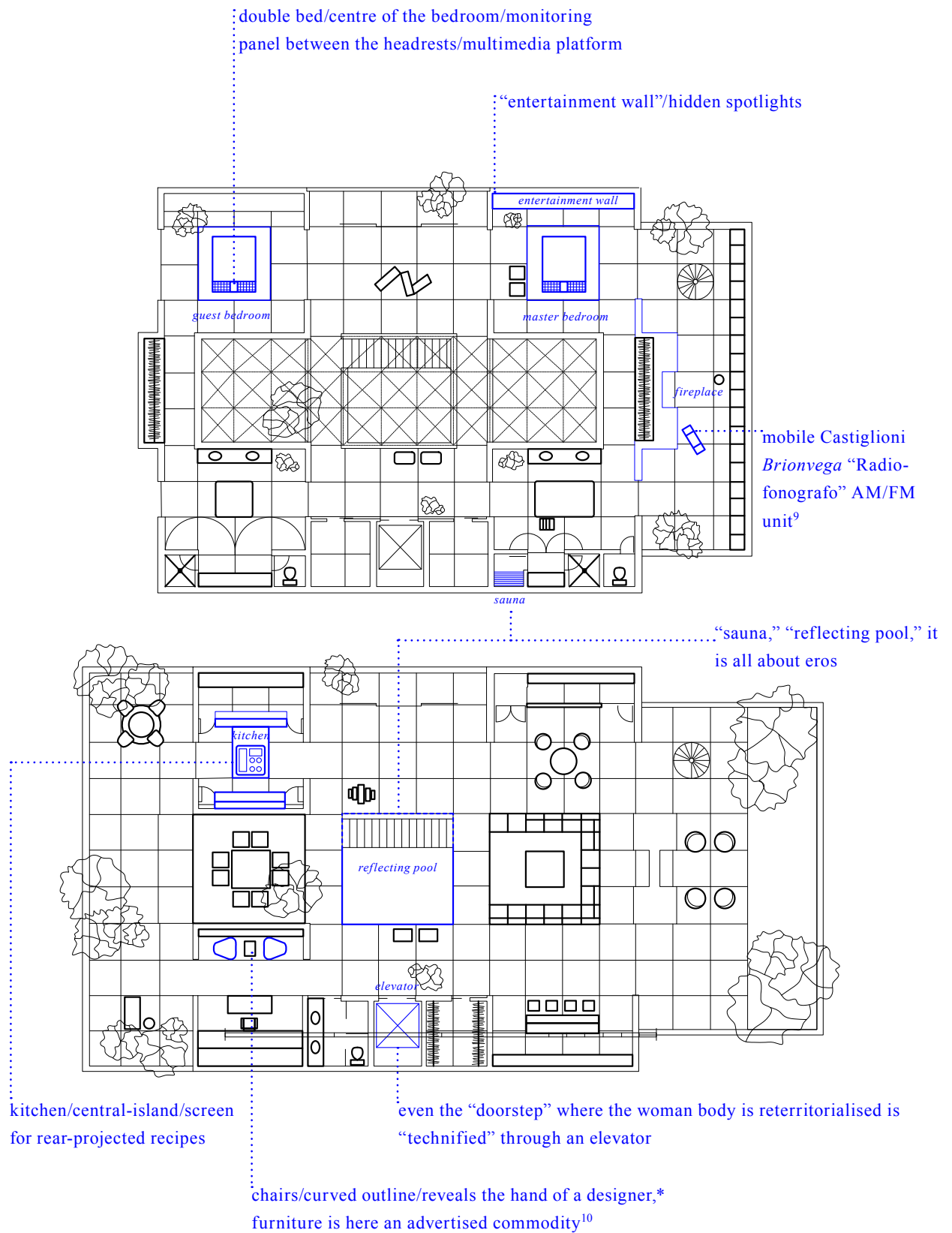
12. Preciado. *Pornotopie: ‘Playboy.’* 32-33

13. Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix. *Anti-Oedipus*

14. To delve into the conceptual formation of the “pharmacopornographic” era, see: Preciado, Paul B. *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*. (New York, NY: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2013)

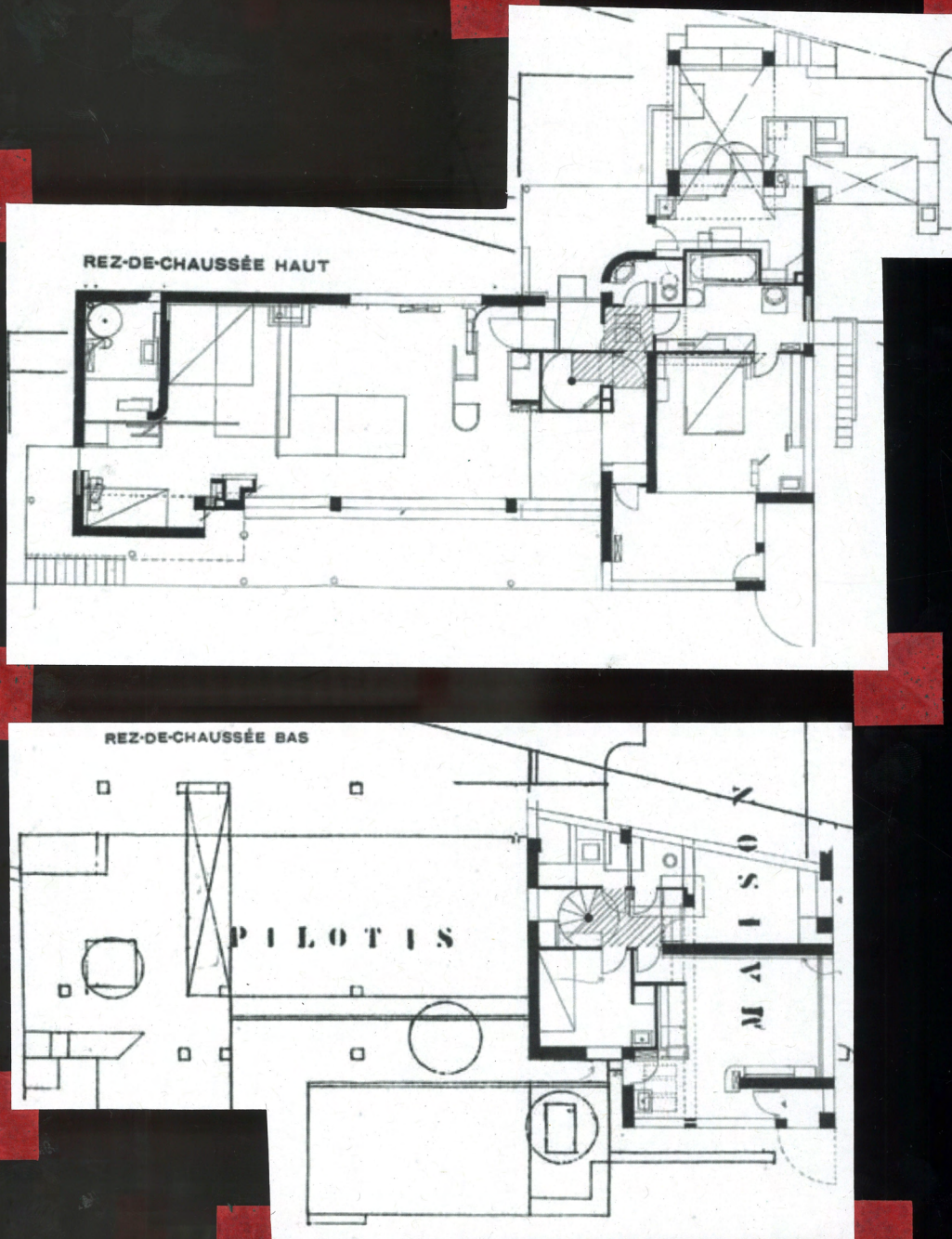
15. Preciado’s use of “pornotopia,” originally described the pornographic undercurrents of Victorian morality, as first formulated by Steven Marcus. *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth Century England*. Bantam Book Q3471. (New York: Bantam Books, 1967)

16. Colomina, Beatriz. *Privacy and Publicity*



Plan of the “*Playboy’s Duplex Penthouse*” by Robert Bray* for *Playboy* (1970), redrawn by the author, line weight is thicker for furniture.

Act 9: This Plan is so “Camp”



Note on Graphics:

All non-structural sectioned elements, visible features, and furniture – inside – adopt the same line weight. They often prove to be both: partitions and furniture at the same time. Lines even overlap, as for the bed and the flooring in the living room. Fluid semantics rule here.

Plan of E.1027 by Eileen Gray* (1926-29), from: Bonnevier, Katarina. *'Behind Straight Curtains: Towards a Queer Feminist Theory of Architecture'*. (Axl Books, 2007). Scan by the author.

1. In “Note 10” Sontag, Susan. *Notes on ‘Camp’*. Penguin Classics. (London: Penguin Books, 2018) 9

2. Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*. 95

3. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Tendencies*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1993. 11. Quoted in Bonnevier, Katarina. ‘*Behind Straight Curtains*’

4. Sontag has been criticized for her depoliticized approach of camp, turning it “straight” according to Cleto in Fabio Cleto, “Introduction: Queering the Camp” and “Notes on Camp” Fabio Cleto, ed., *Camp. Queer aesthetics and the Performing Subject: A Reader* (1999), (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002). 1-42 and 53-65

5. Sontag. *Notes on ‘Camp.’* 9

6. “Lecture One: Living-Room” in Bonnevier, Katarina. “*Behind Straight Curtains.*” 48

7. To delve in the historical link between homosexuality/queerness and the closet metaphor – the expressions “being in the closet” and “coming-out” both are linked with this semantic relationship – see: Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *The Epistemology of the Closet*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990)

8. Gray was not straight and participated to the Parisian lesbian scene of the 1920s, attending regularly Natalie Barney’s 20 rue Jacob salon. Bonnevier. “A queer analysis of Eileen Gray’s E.1027,” in *Negotiating Domesticity*. 174

9. Adam, Peter. *Eileen Gray, sa vie, son oeuvre*. (Londres: Thames & Hudson, 2019). 178

“Camp sees everything in quotation marks. It’s not a lamp but a ‘lamp’; not a woman but a ‘woman’”¹

The final Act delves into the intricate floor plan of Eileen Gray’s villa E.1027, constructed between 1926 and 1929 for her friend Jean Badovici in Roquebrune-Cap Martin, in southern France. Engaging with E.1027 through the lens of Le Corbusier’s dictum – “The house is a machine to live in”² – reveals operations that diverge from regular domestic scripts.

Instructions left by Gray* in the plan are somewhat unclear. The drawing employs only two **line weights**: a heavier one for structural and cut elements and a lighter one for the “rest” – **floorings, partition walls, rugs, and furniture**. This deliberate ambiguity creates a graphic continuity, initially perplexing to the eye. This fluid syntax, which grants equal importance to a **carpet** and a **wall**, signals Gray’s* care for furniture and domestic performances. From this attentiveness to performativity, Bonnevier proposes a queer reading of E.1027, invoking Sedgwick’s definition of queer performativity as “what critical writing can effect (promising? smuggling?).”³ It is a discourse of concealment and revelation, reaction, and play.

Expanding on this queer reading, I would like to argue that Gray’s* deliberate subversion of the technical plan’s primary quality – readability – manifests as “camp.” The notion of “camp,” as articulated by Sontag in *Notes on Camp* – though later critiqued by some scholars for its institutionalization⁴ – emerges as an aesthetic sensibility that, whether conscious or not, subverts norms by exposing their absurdity. It employs irony, artifice, and a deliberate rejection of seriousness. To perceive camp in objects and individuals, Sontag suggests, is to grasp “Being-as-Playing-a-Role.”⁵ Though not explicitly defined as such, camp often aligns with queerness, rooted in its celebration of theatricality and performativity.

The first “camp” interference that we will survey in plan is the **staircase’s door**. It is an event. Or a furniture? Let us see. As with the Duchamp’s door, it is never open or closed; it is always both at the same time. When closed on the staircase, the **door** disguises itself as a **closet door**: it has no frame or decor; it is a blank mask.⁶ It restricts access to the lower floor but makes the upper floor distribution more fluid, allowing two passages from the living room to the bedroom. Once open, the door reveals the staircase, but close one of the two passages. It fakes a **partition wall**. The door creates the illusion of furniture or a piece of architecture depending on domestic performances. Moreover, one of the two mask taken by the door is a closet, a piece of furniture whose semantics is linked with queerness;⁷ a wink of an eye from Gray*⁸

Gray* proposes a domestic script between privacy/public, seen/unseen, open/closed, and architecture/furniture in E.1027’s blueprint. It resists immediate comprehension – neither on paper nor at first glance. Through play, mask, and humour, domestic performance here must be enacted before it can be understood, echoing camp and queer subversive strategies – coincidentally, Gray* called her* furniture under the name “le style ‘camping.’”⁹

Other unorthodox spatial arrangements amplify this performative play. In the plan, a [bathroom](#) set within the living room and a [double bed](#) replacing the sofa highlight E. 1027's rejection of normative domesticity. The double bed, in particular, destabilizes meaning. Drawn in the living room, it ceases to function as a reproductive marital bed and instead transforms into a [polyvalent platform](#) – it is not a place for sitting, as would be a sofa, but rather an arena for lounging, whispering, laughing, and intimacy. It evokes fluid behaviors, evading fixed roles. Is it a [drag sofa](#) or a [drag bed](#)? Only performance defines it. Even the vibrant bed linens were intentionally chosen so that “the mess is not visible when the bed is unmade.”¹⁰ Designed to embrace disorder, it enacts a deliberate “camp” strategy – meticulously staged chaos aligned with queer subversion. Within E.1027, these disruptions unsettle gendered norms, replacing them with choreographed reversals, which are experienced upon reading the plan–script and entering the space–stage.

However, one axis remains ambiguous: social class. Gray, a bourgeois woman, cohabited with her maid, Louise Dany. Dany's spartan [lower floor room](#), a cell with a [single bed](#) – a maid's reproductive script does not entail sexual potential¹¹ – contrasts starkly with the villa's refinement and underscores class boundaries. The unreadable in plan extravagant [inside/outside kitchen](#) was impracticable in real life, according to Dany,¹² highlighting Gray's detachment from domestic labor, her privilege enabling liberation from gendered reproductive constraints.

Gray's* understanding of furniture performativity and intent to play with architectural media's semantics is why she ends this énoncé and breaks the historical “enfilade” that was engaged until Act 8. Her plan dismantles the biopolitical “home,” reimagining it as a “house” where gender and sexualities remain in perpetual question. This focus on performance over object recalls Eribon's analysis of the “insult” as a “performative statement.”¹³ Building on Butler's theories of performativity,¹⁴ Eribon reveals how insults assert power from dominant (white, heterosexual, wealthy, man) to dominated (black, jew, sex-worker, queer). However, when appropriated by the dominated body, insults lose their referential force and nullify the domination script.¹⁵ Gray* mirrors this dynamic by targeting the [bed](#)'s performativity rather than its form. Placing the double bed in the living room nullifies its reproductive narrative – this bed is not a married couple's vessel. It transforms it into an open invitation to expand the semantic territory of “domesticity.”

Note: Le Corbusier's masculinist murals, violently imposed over E. 1027's walls in 1938,¹⁶ remind the constant struggle for subversive bodies to merely project and live otherwise.

10. The original sentence is “de sorte que le désordre ne s'aperçoive pas quand le lit est défait,” translated with the help of DeepL, Adam. *Eileen Gray*. 173

11. As disclosed in Act 3, bourgeois domesticity did not entitle the same performative privilege to the servants, despite their –almost – constant presence.

12. Adam. *Eileen Gray*. 181

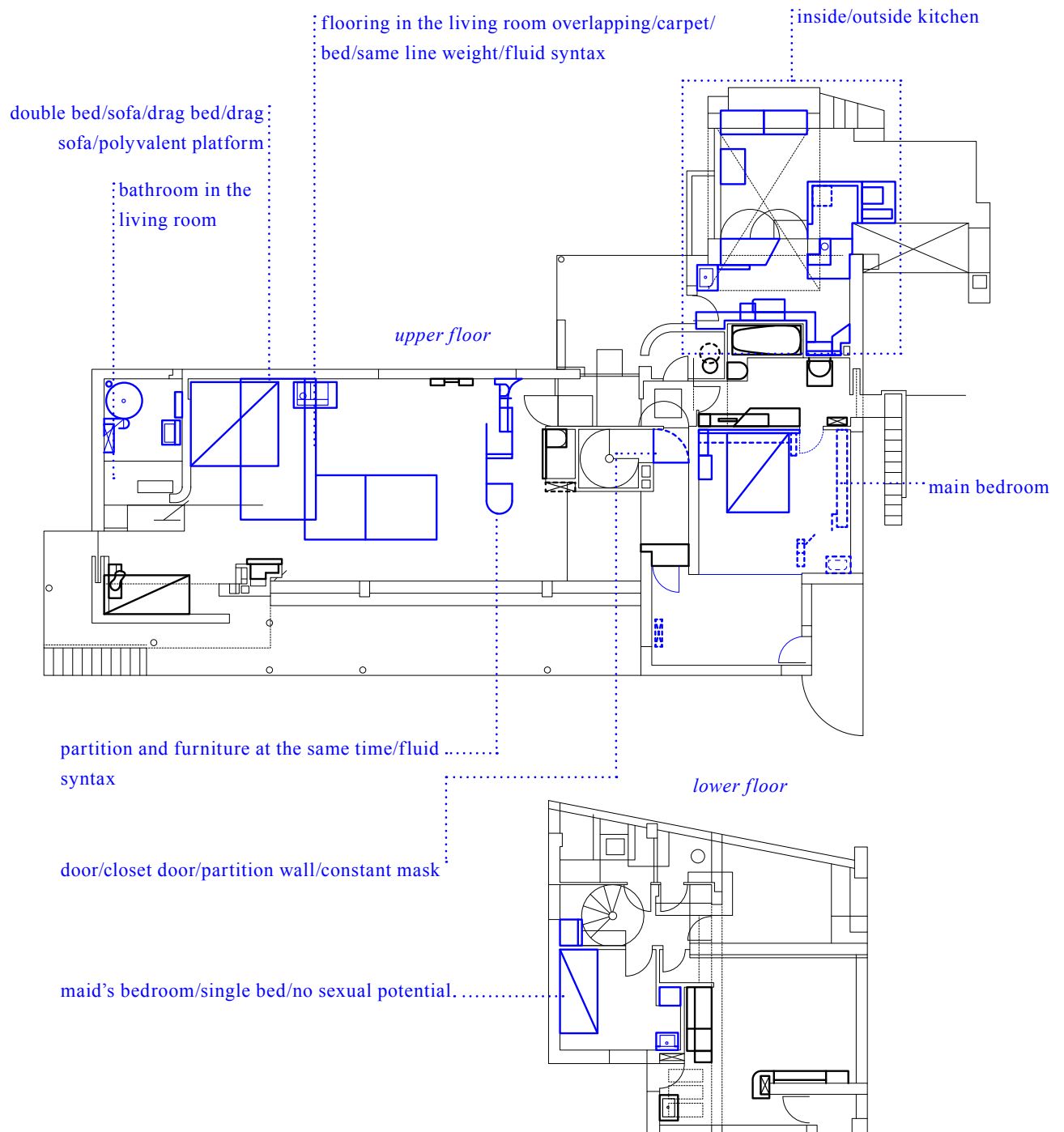
13. “L'interpellation hétérosexuelle” in Eribon. Didier, *Réflexions sur la question gay*. Nouvelle édition revue et corrigée. Champs 1063. Essais. (Paris: Flammarion, 2012). 90-100. The original terms in the text are “injure” for “insult” and “énoncé performatif” for “performative statement,” translated by the author.

14. Butler, Judith. *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*

15. Eribon. *Réflexions sur la question gay*. 90-100

16. To delve in further details on the violent Le Corbusier's frescos in E.1027 which were qualified as a “rape” by Peter Adam see Colomina, Beatriz. “Battle Lines: E.1027”

THIS PLAN IS SO “CAMP”



Plan of E.1027 by Eileen Gray* (1926-29), redrawn by the author, line weight is thicker for furniture.

Conclusion
On Current Practices Grammar

“Gonna burn this goddamn house right down.”¹

1. Sophie Ellis-Bextor, *Murder on the Dancefloor*, recorded 2001, track 2 on Read My Lips, Polydor Records, CD, thanks to Émilie Hamel for giving me this reference that inspired the title

2. “Introduction” in Aureli, Pier Vittorio. *Architecture and Abstraction*. First edition. Writing Architecture Series. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2023)

In each case study, blueprints emerge as instruments of power. From Pierre Le Muet’s* early abstractions of furniture in seventeenth-century plans to the mechanized rationality of Lihotzky’s* *Frankfurt kitchen* and the patriarchal topography of *Het Huis onzer Dromen*, architecture reveals itself as a political agent encoded in its core medium: the plan. Layer by layer, the performative scripts that choreograph domestic life, codify norms, and inscribe hierarchies into the very fabric of living spaces are exposed. We live in plans, inhabit through furniture, and project through biases. These investigations unveil how dots, lines, and hatches transcend mere representation. Social narratives – gender, class, power – are embedded and mass-reproduced within architectural media; neutrality is but a myth.

The plan is an artefact of the environment in which it was produced, and furniture acts as a prescriptive agent on paper offering a lens through which reproductive schemes are spotlighted. It exposes the structural dichotomies underpinning domesticity:

public/private
outside/inside
man/woman
above/under
master/servant
production/reproduction
and so on

Most of these binaries, as revealed in Act 3, trace their origins to the bourgeois formulation of domestic space during the nineteenth century and persist today.

Reinforced by academia, practice, and market forces, the reproductive schemes encoded in domesticity by architects cater to their clients – be it the King of France, *Playboy*, or a Belgian Christian Working Association. This reminiscence of the client as an assertive figure raises critical questions about the current state of architectural practice. As highlighted at the end of Act 8, the commodification of furniture in modern times mirrors the commodification of projects and housing under finance capitalism.² The historical enfilade that this research adopts unfolds as a refinement toward a time of commodity-driven architecture. The timeline halts at the glossy paper plans of the 1970s used to sell architectural content – but what of today’s reality under the reign of computer-aided design (CAD)?

As Arantes underscores in *The Rent of Form: Architecture and Labor in the Digital Age*, the building industry's relentless pursuit of profit has profoundly shaped contemporary practice.³ The efficiency of digital tools transformed architects into "CAD monkeys," whose primary task is to instruct machines.⁴ The never-ending mouse-clicking noise in architectural offices has become one of the phenomenological symptoms of the architects' "proletarianization."⁵ Yet, this phenomenon is not new. The classic picture of a twentieth-century office – an open space lined with drafting tables and populated by workers in white blouses – had their own "paper monkeys." Exploitive labor predates the digital age, even if technological breakthroughs have intensified it.

This "proletarianization" demands yield at every level, shaping even the media of design. CAD blocks – predefined object groups in CAD software, often used for furniture – now dictate floor plan formulations. These ready-made layouts for kitchens and living rooms streamline design processes, enabling architects to meet market-imposed deadlines while keeping costs in check. Who can afford not to use CAD blocks today? It would mean facing potential elimination in competition, loss of time, and loss of money. To step out of the pace imposed by the market requires privilege. However, this efficiency comes at a price. CAD blocks perpetuate the same social narratives unpacked throughout this research. A CAD block kitchen today often follows the same rationalised principles as the *Frankfurt Kitchen*. Who is responsible for the blocks? The meta-agenda drifts in a cloud – perhaps stored in a sun-scorched, air-conditioned server farm in California – more challenging to grasp than in the case studies of Part II.

Today, the relationship of individuals outside the building industry with architectural plans contrasts sharply with Act 7's mailed booklets containing ideal plans, sent to Belgian households in the 1950s to nurture a "good home." Plans are often only encountered when a passer-by looks through a real-estate agency's vitrine to check the price evolution in the neighbourhood. Plans in mass culture have turned into a selling device. The fluid commodification of the plan, introduced in Act 8 via *Playboy*, has intensified: the plan is now a marketable asset.

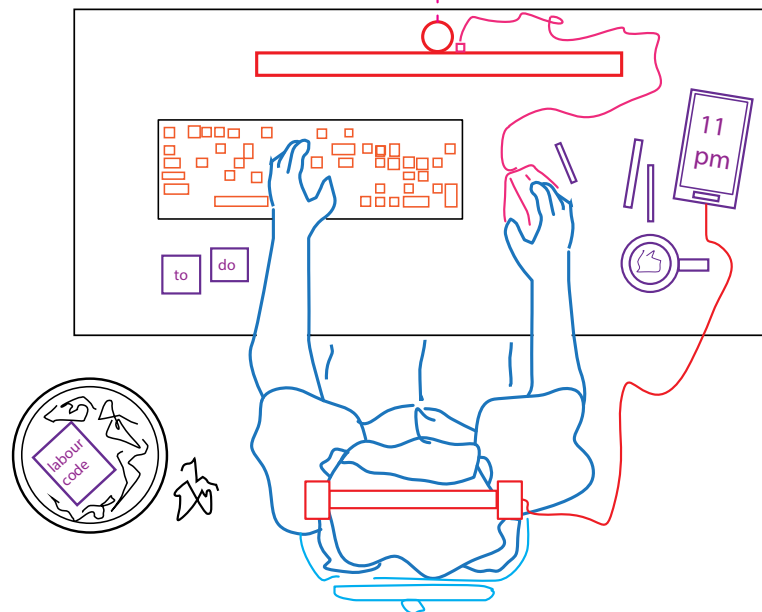
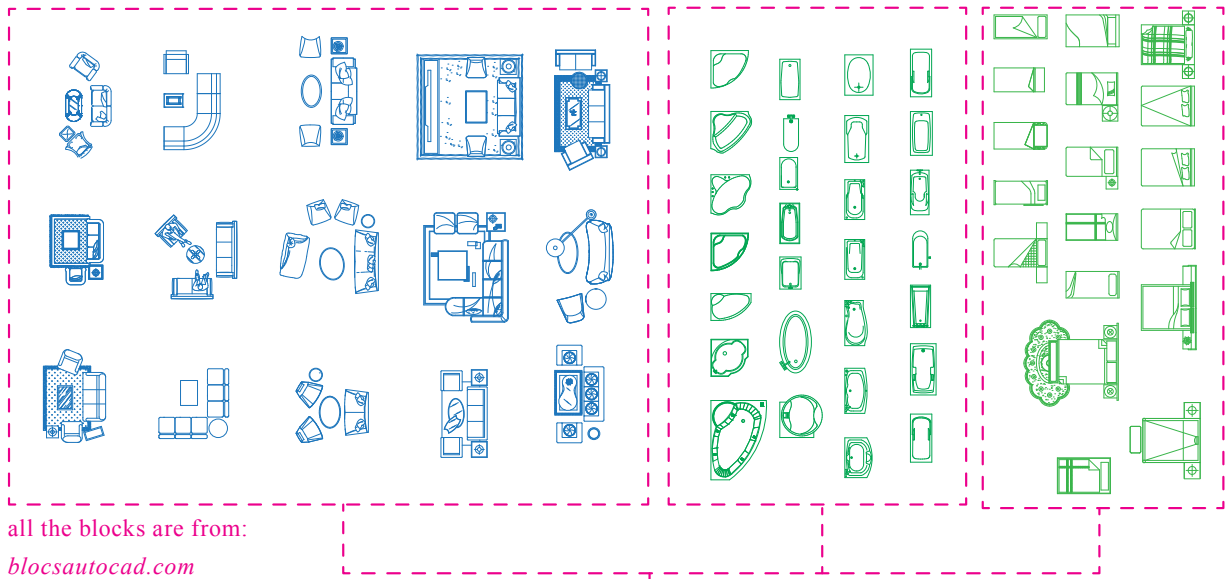
Curiously, furniture often vanishes from these contemporary plans or appears sparsely. This absence is striking given the gained intensity furniture has in plan through time, as seen in this research. If we live in late capitalism, where every element becomes an asset, why has furniture disappeared from plans? It is no longer needed. Just as Vignola and Palladio did not always annotate ratios in their plans, CAD blocks have normalized dimensions to the point where outlines alone suggest function. Domestic performativity is now implicit; a room outline already gives enough data to be named. CAD blocks regulate silently – mouse clicks – the spaces we live in thanks to their efficiency and thus yield – mouse clicks – they are the new golden ratio.

Form follows market.

3. Arantes, Pedro Fiori. *The Rent of Form: Architecture and Labor in the Digital Age*. Buell Center Books in the History and Theory of American Architecture. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2019). Thanks to Carolina Pichler and Lalie Porteret for hinting me towards this reference.

4. "The digital drawing board and the click of the mouse," in Arantes. *The Rent of Form: Architecture and Labor in the Digital Age*. 91-100

5. The argument here follows the definition given to "Capital Accumulation" by Marx, following the increasing dimension of architecture as a commodity, and the accumulation of capital on the back of underpaid architects, or not paid at all. In Marx words "Accumulation of capital is, therefore, increase of the proletariat." Marx, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Volume I. Translated by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling. Edited by Frederick Engels. (London: Swan Sonnenschein, Lowrey, & Co., 1887) Chapter 25, "The General Law of Capitalist Accumulation." Thanks to Carolina Pichler for hinting me towards this chapter.



We live in a CAD Monkeys' world.
Drawing by the author

Still, case studies in Acts 4, 5, 6, and 9 reveal attitudes challenging their environment and tools. Gray's* camp appropriation of technical drawing, Fujii's* non-domesticable plans, and Ginzburg* and Milinis'* nomadic interiors present spatial alternatives that unsettle normative grammar. While rooted in specific contexts to which they are only relevant, these examples invite analysis to extract elements of resistance and adapt them to contemporary conditions. By honing our senses, breaches in the system can be identified and nurtured.

This énoncé invites architects – and any building industry agent, under sufficient privilege – to act otherwise. Recent works like *Terra Forma* propose rethinking mapping's grammar to “discover another Earth,”⁶ crafting new narratives while exposing the colonial undertones of existing tools. Such provocations urge reconsideration of architectural media. How can plans foster invitation rather than imposition over the people they are designed for? Which tools deserve preservation, rejection, or subversive “camping”? Like Gray*, should we retain tools but reimagine their use, privileging performativity over objecthood? Or does Lorde's dictum – “The Master's Tools will never dismantle the Master's House” – demand outright negation of these relics?⁷ What grammar remains to be reinvented? What breaches can be seized in architecture's late-capitalist framework?

History will tell – but it is worth trying.

6. Translated from french to English by the author, the original sentence is “découvrir une autre Terre” in Aït-Touati, Frédérique, Alexandra Arènes, and Axelle Grégoire. *Terra forma: manuel de cartographies potentielles*. Deuxième édition. (Montreuil: Editions B42, 2023) 3

7. On the use of “Lorde's much cited dictum” Bonnevier proposes that “Perhaps what you can do with them is to take apart that old mansion, using some of its pieces to put up a far better one where there is room for all of us” quoting Jennifer Bloomer, *Architecture and the Text: The (S)crypts of Joyce and Piranesi*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993) 166. in Bonnevier, Katarina. ‘Behind Straight Curtains.’ 21-22

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