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# **Gender, Design and Education: The Politics of Voice**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to investigate a series of issues around the primary theme of value constructions and the ways that these influence the construction of interior spaces and impact on its occupants. The ways in which knowledge is disseminated currently in our society and the noticeable absence of the female voice in that knowledge construction is perpetuated in social relations. Spatial designs create an envelope that formalizes these relations and create symbols of status, hierarchy and power at the expense of voices of collaboration and experience. Secondary issues about the absence of female voice in the underlying values that shape space are also studied, as they have evolved historically and as these exist in today's social and economic climate. Theoretical themes are woven around examples of situations in pedagogy and the practice of interior design and architecture.

## **RÉSUMÉ**

**Cette étude a pour but de développer une série de théories, concernant le thème principal c'est à dire la construction ou la composition des valeurs et de l'effet qu'elles ont sur les espaces et leurs occupants. Les manières actuelles de dispersion de connaissances dans notre société, le manque d'implication de la femme dans la construction de cette connaissance, produisent des conséquences durant nos relations sociales.**

**Le design des espaces crée une enveloppe qui régularise ces relations ainsi qu'un statut symbolique, un statut de pouvoir et un statut hiérarchique en négligeant l'expression de la collaboration et l'expérience.**

**Les théories secondaires, au sujet du manque d'expression des idées féminine dans les valeurs moins signifiantes qui forment l'espace sont également étudiées, autant lors de leur évolution dans le passé que dans l'état que nous les trouvons aujourd'hui dans notre climat social et économique.**

**Les thèmes théoriques sont démontrés ou façonnés avec des exemples de situations dans l'enseignement pédagogique et dans la pratique du design intérieur et de l'architecture.**

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## PROLOGUE

I would like to tell a story. This story will have a theme, a thread, if you will, to guide you through the ideas that I will present. This story is about interior designers and the spaces that they design for people. It is also about men and women and our experience of the spatial environment.

This story is a circular one. In it I will present ideas that will weave around several concepts. The interior designer designs a space with voices. This story is about these voices: whose voices we express, what these voices say, and the politics that underpin what voices are represented. Whose values do we express when we design spaces, as we educate designers and as we create spaces?

Interior design is about people and their relationship with other people in spatial environments. Interior designers create solutions for problems of interior space: how people live, work and function in various types of interior spaces. But interior design is not a static entity. According to Joy Malnar and Frank Vodvarka (1992) in *The interior dimension*, "Much of the problem lies in the complexity of the human subject; that is, the human organism is always in a state of learning about the environment, and altering consequent interaction accordingly." (Malnar and Vodvarka, 1992, p. 290).

Interior design is a complex process. Although finishes and furnishings play a part in the final solution, there is a lot more. Spatial design, the manipulation of two- and three-dimensional images, and the development of technical solutions involving electrical, mechanical, structural and environmental systems are all part of the interior designers' responsibility. But most important is the role of the client and end user. Their motive, their reason, and their desire for a particular

aesthetic solution governs part of the approach; the motives, desires and ideas that the designer creates need to respect the client in a reciprocal manner.

Interior design is about education. In this realm the concern is two-fold. First, the interior design field trains and educates students to become professionals who represent their clients in the design and production of three-dimensional ideas into real spaces for personal use, commerce and/or trade. This process is a difficult one to grasp, as designers know when they try to explain it to their clients. The process involves research, two-dimensional and three-dimensional imagery, aesthetic considerations and fiscal considerations. Secondly, within interior design education, there are underlying values that are reinforced through the curriculum consciously and unconsciously. The question arises as to how these values become social constructions that form part of the design process?

Interior design is about gender. Both genders design, but there are differences in how females and males design space. What is the voice of females in design? What happens to female designers in school, upon graduation from design schools, and in the workplace? Is there a gender difference in how we think as designers? How do gender differences affect interior designers, their perception of space, and their way of working? How do social constructions affect the performance and success of female designers in the workplace?

Gender influences interior design and gender influenced designs of spaces affect our society. How do designs of interiors affect gender relations, power relationships between males and females, through the use of space? Few studies consider the interrelationship of gender and space (Spain, 1992; Malnar & Vodvarka, 1992), yet it is in our interiors that we form many of our

social relations. Gender, design and education is about the politics of voice. This story is about this relationship.



## **INTRODUCTION**

### **GENDER, DESIGN AND EDUCATION: THE POLITICS OF VOICE**

I am both a professor and a student of the interior design of space. I have worked for the past seventeen years as an interior designer and, as such, situate myself on a constant learning curve in my practice. As a professor of design since 1987 and as chairperson of Dawson College's Interior Design Program, I see students entering Dawson College with values that have been nurtured since birth in the home, at school, and for some, in the work environment. In her book, *Gendered spaces*, Daphne Spain (1992) states that

"Until the classrooms in which the most socially valued information is taught are degendered, women's acquisition of knowledge will be less than men's....once the design professionals responsible for the built environment become more aware of the power of spatial arrangements for gender differences in status, degendering spaces in homes, schools and workplaces may become easier to accomplish." (Spain, 1992, p. 237).

Although Spain speaks of architecture specifically, she studies interior space and evolves the relationship between the gendering of spaces and power relationships. As Spain mentions, it is in the classrooms that values are created, and it is in practice that these values translate into "gendered spaces." As a professor, I also often wonder about what we teach and how students design spaces: What are these fundamental values that we live by, what values do we teach as designers and ultimately, whose values and social constructions create the spaces in which we live, work and play?

From the moment of birth, spaces shape who we are and how we function as males and females. The social constructions of space and place, at least in part, create the social roles and relations that govern how we live, work and play. I believe that there is a relationship between gender and space, and that social constructions affect this relationship.

As Daphne Spain (1992) states:

**"Spatial arrangements between the sexes are socially created, and when they provide access to valued knowledge for men while reducing access to that knowledge for women, the organization of the space may perpetuate status difference...To quote geographer Doreen Massey, "It is not just that the spatial is socially constructed; the social is spatially constructed too". " (Spain, 1992, 3-4)**

Spaces impact on us as humans, and create the social constructions that govern social and power relations between men and women. Not only do these value constructions influence how we see space and how designers create spaces for people, they also contribute to the reproductions of the values through the spaces that vehicle them.

I love to teach design studio. As a design teacher, I find that the climate and dynamic created by students and teacher affects how the students learn. A vignette of my experience as a teacher illustrates the issues that I will explore throughout my thesis. I teach a design studio on Fridays with a colleague; I teach three hours of studio in the morning, and she continues the class in the afternoon. Each one of us teaches very differently, and the students tell me that they have to "switch gears" each time they see one of us. I have also noticed, in our discussions about pedagogy and course content, that she has very different ideas structurally regarding conduct, studio dynamics and curriculum dissemination. I use our example as a means to present the various ideas that I will present. I will use our story to weave the themes that I will explore throughout the thesis.

Fundamental values that we accept and live by in society are at the core of understanding issues of gender. Values are embedded in both how we see space and how we are affected by it as men and women. As teachers, our experiences affect the interrelationships of gender and space and how we teach the design of space; the way we live, the values that we take for granted and the implications for interior design education.

## **0.1 THE INTERRELATIONSHIP OF VALUE, SPACE, GENDER AND EDUCATION**

As an interior designer, I am concerned with the underlying values that shape the way in which design is viewed and taught. Values that we take for granted are not apparent, nor are they always indicative of the true nature of the needs required for a particular environment. The underlying values that we, as interior designers, are taught, systematically not only shape who we are as designers, but determine how we succeed in the field. Quite often in the case of women, these values consciously (and unconsciously) not only undermine who we are as designers, but they undermine our ability to equally access power and knowledge relationships, when these relationships become entrenched in spatial designs.

## **0.2 THE THESIS QUESTION**

There are two questions that I will evolve in this thesis. The fundamental question has to do with issues revolving around value constructions, and the ways that they influence space and its occupants. How are ways of knowing perpetuated in social relations, and how does spatial design entwines social relations created in society and reinforced at home?

The secondary question I will evolve is what is the impact of the lack of female voice in the formation of underlying values that shape space? As Daphne Spain (1992) states:

The spatial structure of buildings embodies knowledge of social relations, or the taken for granted rules that govern relations of individuals to each other, and to society...Thus, dwellings reflect ideals and realities about relationships between women and men within the family and in society. The space outside the home becomes the arena in which social relations are produced, while the space inside the home becomes that in which social relations are reproduced. (Spain, 1992, p. 7)

I would go one step further. I believe that social relations that are produced at home are reinforced in society as well. Secondary issues that affect us include why spaces impact on us, and the ways in which the teaching of design impacts on how we design.

### **0.3 METHODOLOGY**

In evolving these questions, I will engage in a theoretical examination of the issues. I will also draw on my personal experiences.

I will evolve the thesis questions using a theoretical grounding of four primary ideas: values, the female voice and feminist constructs in art history, various interpretations in society of physical and perceptual spaces, and social constructions of space as they relate to gender. I define these terms in the literature review in Chapters 1 and 2, where I formulate a theoretical grounding of the issues. In Chapter 3, I will explore the social constructions of school and the ways that education transmits and perpetuates society's values. In Chapter 4, I will look at feminist epistemology and how art history as influences the values an interior designer learns in design school. In Chapter 5, I will present three examples that draw together the theoretical discussions. I will use experiences and examples found in daily life: the home, the school, and the designer's tool: the design process. Finally, I draw implications from each aspect of my study in formulating possible approaches for future research.

I will also draw on my personal experience. I will use examples of my experiences as a student, a practicing designer, a professor and an administrator, to provide further insight and situate the discussion. I will, when possible, present the theory in the context of the issues explored, with visual and verbal examples that I will draw from my own personal observations as a teacher and from the field of interior design.

As such, in this thesis, I will evolve the arguments through the additional tool of qualitative analysis, which, as Nancy Jackson (1991) states, is "... (a) basic recognition of the socially constructed nature of knowledge..." (Jackson, 1991, p. 131). This method of study questions the idea of "fact" as a socially accepted mode of constructing events such as art, science or history. In

his paper, *Science: The Very Idea* (1988), Steven Woolgar illustrates that even in science, the concept of the "subject" as removed and the scientist as "objective" is questionable. He states that science could be seen as a social activity and as such "...involves teamwork...all scientific facts are imbued in pre-selection." (Woolgar, 1988, p. 89). Not only is the researcher a subject not separate from the object, but the object of study is also "subject". For example, Bronwyn Davies (1982) studies children qualitatively, including her own children, and her own observations in the analysis of her data. She states that she studied "how the world looked to children..." (Davies, 1982, p. 15). The essence of her research was to immerse herself in the childrens' social world, and she started with a theory: a preconceived idea. As she observed the children, she found new possibilities and redefined her original theory, "stood back" and created a new way to consider the events.

When I design I am always trying to interpret what my client means, and also how I react to that meaning both objectively and subjectively. If I cannot interpret the meanings and values behind what my client is saying then I cannot begin to legitimately solve the problem.

I will discuss these issues in the context of my experiences as a student in a degree program, as a practicing professional, as an educator and as an administrator of an interior design program. Most of my professional experience is based in Quebec, so it will be primarily from the Quebec perspective that I draw my own experiences. However, to support my experience I will draw from sources in design, in architecture and in parallel fields where indicated, both within Canada and internationally.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **DEFINITIONS: VALUES AND THE FEMALE VOICE**

#### **1.1 VALUES**

To begin a theoretical discussion of values, gender and space, I will first address the fundamental values that we learn as instrumental in forming that which we are and, consequently, how spaces impact on how we design as males and females. As I suggest that fundamental values underline how we see space, and thus design interiors, I feel that a discussion of the definitions of values is necessary in order to ground the ideas that I will present subsequently.

##### **1.1.1 What is a value?**

As I mentioned earlier, values are at the root of discussions about gendered space, as we live with values and value systems in our everyday lives. But what are values? As an interior designer, before I can even begin to design a space, I must evaluate the “problem”. To an interior designer, to solve the problem is in part to establish the underlying values that create a need for a solution, and in part it is to answer to criteria provided to solve the problem.<sup>1</sup>

Historians, philosophers and academics have long debated the definition of “value”. An aesthetic value is one attached to an object (Kant, 1991; Frondizi, 1963; Peperzak, 1986; Plato 1980) whereas we as a society collectively believe in “values” such as “truth” or “beauty” (Plato, 1980; Socrates, 1991; Kant, 1991; Locke, Hume, 1961). Defining value as an entity is difficult; history has shown us that philosophers vary greatly on what value is.

Nevertheless, as a society we believe in “values” and these have governed our social,

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix B and Chapter 5 for further explanation of the design process.

religious, political and economic institutions for centuries. But again, what are these "values"? The dictionary defines value as simply "...worth, desirability, utility, qualities on which these depend..." (Concise Oxford dictionary of current English, 1983, pp. 1186-1187). Philosophically, value is complex concept, and values are seen by some as properties that can be isolated: as values of and for objects and ideas (Frondizi, 1963), or as value as attached to awareness, objectivity and subjectivity of value (Peperzak, 1986). For example, Frondizi eradicates the previously held philosophical idea of value "...as an isolatable idea, and that an idea...as...being from value...." (Frondizi, 1963, p.1). According to Frondizi, until the latter part of the twentieth century, values were considered inherent in "themes" such as beauty, justice, goodness and holiness (Frondizi, 1963, p. 1) and that:

...each value, rather, was studied in isolated fashion. Beauty, for example, was of interest in and of itself, and not as representative of a larger category. While interest in the study of beauty has not been lost altogether, beauty as such appears today as one of the manifestations of a peculiar manner of looking out upon the world, a manner called value. (Frondizi, 1963, p. 1)

Thus, values are the underlying notions that are attached to concepts, such as the value of beauty as an aesthetic thing, a moral issue, an ethical issue, and so on. According to Frondizi, Western philosophers based their value assumptions on the existence of three worlds. He describes Western philosophers and how they "...began 26 centuries ago with a concern for the external world...what was the principle reality, they understood reality to mean nature...'ideal' world...and 'psycho-spiritual world'..." (Frondizi, 1963, p. 3). Thus, Frondizi sees Western philosophical thought as based on three separate entities, arguing that value is, in Western thought, that which is attached to an object or thing of this "external" world (Frondizi, 1963, pp. 3-5).

Fronzizi also presents Husserl's view of value. He states that:

...values belong to that class of objects which Husserl calls "not independent, that is, they do not possess substantiveness". ...value is a quality.....before becoming embodied within their respective carriers, values are but mere "possibilities"....One should not confuse values with what Husserl calls "ideal objects"—essences, relations, concepts, mathematical entities; the difference lies in the fact that the latter are ideal, while values are unreal. The difference can best be seen if one compares beauty, which is a value, with the idea of beauty, which is an "ideal" object. We capture beauty, primarily via the emotions, while the idea of beauty is apprehended intellectually. A work dealing with aesthetics does not call forth emotion within us, since it is made up of concepts and propositions which are intellectual in their sense and meaning. (Fronzizi, 1963, p. 8)

This is a fundamental value assumption in Western art and culture. Beauty is seen as separated from the viewer, and as a separate "entity" and as something to be "evaluated". In feminist epistemology, Griselda Pollock (1992) and Luce Irigaray (1994) question these assumptions; I will consider the feminist viewpoint later on, as a predecessor to the propositions made about space and gender.

Fronzizi uses the example of poetry, which can be a parallel to art, music, and interior design. Poetry is subjective in nature, but to say that the "study of poetry" can be "objective" is questionable. Fronzizi states that the study of poetry also becomes subjective. Why? Because the interpreter's values, ideals and modes of thought and perception impact on how he/she reads the poem and interprets it. In this way, the person or "knower" studying the "idea of poetry" cannot remove themselves completely. They use separate aspects of the human being for their endeavour, as they attempt to remove emotions and to "be objective". However, according to Plato, and his philosophical counterparts, it is through the "removal" of emotion (a "substandard" human emotion), that "one" therefore is able to seek "absolute truth". According to Adriaan Peperzak (1986), in his article *Values: Objective - subjective* (1986):

The world of modern science is the triumph of the belief that the subject-object-scheme is the fundamental structure of reality. This may explain why modern science is not capable of saying anything adequate about typically human features, inter-subjectivity, history,



religion, morality, art,...Indeed, the evaluation, but also the "perception" of a human face, a speech...an emotion, a thought, cannot be described as a simple opposition between a subject and an objectifiable and graspable entity...self-knowledge, too, has another structure than the relationship of a subject faced with an object... (Peperzak, 1986, pp. 76-77)

The subject can be male or female and neither is able to "objectify an object". Alternative structures of knowledge exist and the possibility that the subject is part of the object (the "knower" is part of the "known") exists (Code, 1991; Field Belenky, McVicker Clinchy, Rule Goldberger and Mattuck Tarule, 1997).<sup>2</sup>

### **1.1.2 Perception as impacting on value assumptions**

According to Peperzak, there are several ways to define value, and its very definition is grounded in perception; on whether or not, for example, the outlook is social or philosophical in nature (Peperzak, 1986, p. 71). He states that:

Certain things, such as money... "have value" or are valuable". It would be wrong—or at least very misleading—to call a concrete thing a value. Values belong to certain things.... "human values",... Values are certainly not restricted to the narrow sense of the word "things", because ideals, trends, events, customs, characters, attitudes, properties, etc., can all be appraised as valuable.... it is natural to ask whether the concept of value has or has not the same extension as the concept of being: Are all realities valuable?..... A theoretical approach regards value as the property of something that exists actually or possibly and is this or that.... But do values manifest themselves, do they open themselves and give what they are to an approach that is oriented to capture the presence of some being..... Feelings seem to be more subjective than perceptions, observations, concepts and theoretical predications. This impression is, however, an illusion.... The "subjectivity" of values and their appraisal through feelings does not oppose their being as "objective" as the objects of perceptions, concepts and propositions which are equally "subjective" as feelings and affectivity. (Peperzak, 1986, pp. 71-72)

Thus, according to Peperzak, concepts of subjectivity or objectivity of values is a circular or cyclical entity, in that values that are based on feelings and emotions can be as "objective" as are

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<sup>2</sup> In Chapter 4, I evolve further these notions of object and subject as detrimental to females as artists and tracing how historically this has been viewed by feminist epistemology. I will suggest that not only do traditional notions about value negate female thought, but also that to a large extent female thought has been equated with "emotion", not "rational" thought, and that this is compounded by other absolute truths at the expense of art and, in the twentieth century, with interior design.

so-called "objective" values. These ideas imply, however, that there is somehow a hierarchy of values, that some values in society are considered more equal than other values.

### **1.1.3 Objective value as hierarchical - Frondizi and the idea of hierarchical values**

As I have stated, in Western philosophical thought there are ideals and values whose goal philosophically becomes the search for "absolute truth". Peperzak (1986) and Frondizi (1963) not only define values but also explore the "hierarchical" nature of values. Frondizi maintains that there is a "standard" to which preferences and differences are measured; this is done in "a table of values". For example, Frondizi states that:

Values are arranged hierarchically...there are inferior and superior values...the existence of a hierarchical order is a perennial stimulus to creative action and moral elevation...Individual man, as well as communities and specific cultural groups guide themselves according to a standard. It is certain that such standards are not fixed....yet it cannot be denied that our behaviour towards our fellow man...our esthetic preferences are adjacent to a table of values....nevertheless, he will be unable to determine critically a table of values – without first examining the validity of the criteria to be used in the formulation. (Frondizi, 1963, p. 10)

Other examples include Rokeach's (1973) tabulation of values in a hierarchy of importance, or Rath, Harrain & Simon's model of "7 requirements...in order for a value to result" (source unknown). Another universally known example of a "table of values" is the Bible's Ten Commandments. They have been the criteria for what constitutes a "good Christian" for centuries. However, in our society, there are underlying values that govern those "table of values" which, on the surface seem quite clear. For example, how do these commandments remain consistent with the concept of war or of capital punishment, which seem to be in contradiction to the commandment "Thou shall not kill"? What Frondizi observes is that in Western philosophical thought there is a "standard" to which preferences are measured. But he also questions the criteria formulating the values that in turn create these hierarchies and "tables".

In a similar way, the hierarchy of values tables can be paralleled in interior design. For example, in the preliminary design stages, we make a great effort to teach students the importance of research and understanding the client's needs. Students are taught to analyze all the parameters of a project and write a report tabulating all the various needs and requirements. However, when the students reach the design stage, many of them abandon this research. They have made impressive lists and charts, but are not able to translate the data into the problem that they are solving. Students are encouraged to record the full range of requirements that an interior designer would be concerned with in the field, but we rarely look at values in the context of the actual problem.

This example demonstrates one of the problems of current pedagogical approaches in design. Frondizi's (1963) questioning of the criteria used to determine whose values are of more worth is one root question that does not always get asked. This is also part of the question that I wish to tackle, as I believe that there are voices missing from interior design education. It is, in part, in the fundamental ways that we teach design that have created an industry questioning its own values.

#### **1.1.4 Contextualizing values**

We are in an era of exciting change and progress. In North America we approach the twenty-first century with both excitement and trepidation. In the interior design field, we are also in a state of change: in the nature of our profession, in the nature of our curriculum, and in how we practice design on a daily basis.

According to A. Montuori and I. Conti (1993), in their book *From Power to Partnership*, this change is fuelled in part by global changes brought on by rapid communication and a complex, changing global reality. They state that "...the twentieth century has seen some of the most

dramatic changes in history...this massive outburst of human creativity...is so overwhelming...

there is a massive paradigm shift..." (Montuori & Conti, 1993, pp. 5-7). They define paradigm with reference to Kuhn:

...the term paradigm...to describe a set of assumptions about reality. These assumptions are so pervasive we don't even know that they're just hypotheses. They form an invisible web of beliefs about the world, beliefs that we take to be reality, and they function as a compass that guides our lives at an unconscious level. (Montuori & Conti, 1993, pp. 8-9)

Fundamental beliefs govern our lives daily. Our values determine who we are, what our belief systems are, and ultimately underpin the "realities" we create for ourselves in our daily lives. In this way, values affect how we see and consequently design space.

Paradigm shifts, according to Montuori and Conti (1993) and others (Foucault, 1994; Frondizi, 1963; Dent, 1998) have existed throughout history, and cause value systems to change. For example, Montuori and Conti state that "...the emergence of the Industrial era didn't affect only the economy. It ended up changing just about everything, from the family to housing to the way people think about themselves." (Montuori & Conti, 1993, p. 9). This change was embodied in socialism and developmental psychology, among other disciplines.

Today Western society is in this similar state of change. World globalization is accelerating at a faster pace than our society is able to cope with. As we are in the midst of this change, we will only be able to judge its impact in the next millenium. We see the effects of these changes almost daily as interiors designers: ecology impacts in how we select materials, the emergence of AutoCAD as a primary tool for communication, and the miniaturization of lighting systems and other products with which we solve design problems. These are just a few of the ways that I see the impact of global societal changes on the design world. Notwithstanding, In our profession there is debate about our role as designers, and how we are educating our students to tackle new and unforeseen problems.

### **1.1.5 The changing face of interior design - An issue of values**

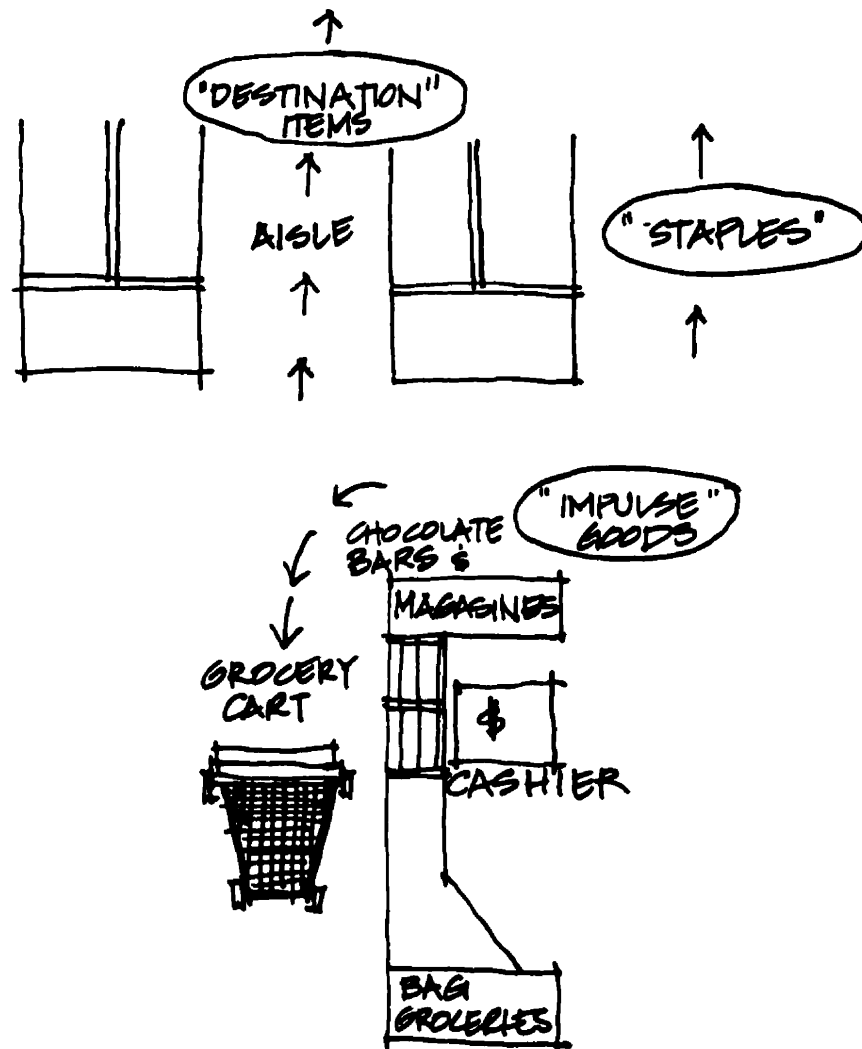
In October of 1998, the Interior Designers of Canada held their second Education Forum in Toronto on the future of interior design.<sup>3</sup> Concerns were raised about several issues: the growing emphasis on technology in the schools, and the growing disappearance of the arts in curricula of interior design and in secondary and post secondary education. Concerns were raised about what we do as designers, and how we are educating interior designers in school. Why are interior designers still battling public perception about what they do? Why should this be of concern in a discussion of gender, design and education? I sat at the sessions and felt that an underlying question emerged: What values govern who we are as designers and thus what we do when we create space?

### **1.1.6 Examples of values in design**

As mentioned earlier, spaces impact on us on several levels. We experience space by its three-dimensional impact, yet we are also unconsciously led through a space by the designers' manipulation of that space for a purpose. Nevertheless, we as humans experience the space and react to it positively or negatively. One example would be retail interior design, where a common design aspect is to place "impulse" goods, goods that one would not normally need, near a cash counter to entice the buyer to buy. An example that we experience daily is the checkout counter at the local grocery store. As shown in Figure 1.1, magazines and chocolates are usually on display at the checkout counter. When the store is busy and customers wait in line, they have nothing to do so they may look at a magazine or at the small items on display. They may purchase a magazine, even though they had originally come into the store to buy milk and

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<sup>3</sup> The Education Forum was a two day forum on global and current issues affecting the education of interior designers across Canada. Educators, practitioners and students from Canada and the United States conducted seminars and discussions about issues ranging from global warming, accreditation and professional needs to values. I presented a building block about how gender impacts on design through education.



**Figure 1.1**

**Typical line-up at a grocery store checkout counter**

The merchandise in most stores is laid out to entice the shopper. A good example is the local supermarket. As you enter the store, fruits and vegetables are near the entrance and dairy and meat products are usually at the rear of the store. Merchandise is laid out in terms of "impulse" goods, located near the checkout counter. You aren't there to buy them but while you wait you might "impulsively" pick them up. Dairy and meats are considered "destination" items and as such are necessities that are the farthest from the exit. This forces the consumer to walk through the store and to see all the goods for sale, perhaps picking up one or two more items that he/she may not otherwise have intended to buy.

bread. This type of "enticement" is called "impulse-buying." These types of merchandising techniques are taught regularly as part of many design curriculums. In my experience, however, the question of whether or not this is ethical or subliminal, or what it does to the consumer is rarely pointed out. And if the shopper decides that she or he does not want those items, then the intent is wasted and the goods sit on the counter. Underlying these "design principles" or concepts of impulse buying are values - we are taught as interior designers that there are psychological factors that influence impulse buying, and that this type of placement will induce shoppers to buy. Yet I would suggest that we also must deal with the values of the user and what values govern their reaction to the spatial surroundings. The question remains : Whose values are behind these principles?

#### **1.1.7 Value as knowledge and power**

Values create social constructions, and social constructions govern the way in which we do things. These social constructions are of space and place and are related to gender, and ultimately to power relationships and access to knowledge. In other words, we create spatial relationships that reinforce the power relationships that help to provide access to power for one gender at the expense of another. According to Daphne Spain (1992) in her work *Gendered spaces*:

Spatial arrangements between the sexes are socially created, and when they provide access to valued knowledge for men while reducing access to that knowledge for women, the organization of space may perpetuate status difference...To quote geographer Doreen Massey, "It is not just that the spatial is socially constructed; the social is spatially constructed too". (Spain, 1992, pp. 3-4)

Spain and others (Malnar & Vodvarka, 1992; Hansen & Pratt, 1995; Thomas, 1986) maintain that social segregation of space segregates access to knowledge and thus to power through institutions such as the family, school and the workplace (Spain, 1992).

### **1.1.8 Values in design education**

In interior design schools in North America, the goal is to foster an education that trains interior designers to problem-solve and to create interior design solutions for various spaces. Schools measure their “professionalism” through an organization by the name of F.I.D.E.R.—The Foundation for Interior Design Education Research. At Dawson College, F.I.D.E.R.’s guidelines are followed rigorously in the attainment of student learning.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, the question remains as to what pedagogical methods direct the teaching of these standards? In my vignette, my colleague and I teach the same studio in very different ways. Questions about the nature of the student being trained, the nature of the pedagogy used, the nature of the values that are imparted are left unanswered.

### **1.1.9 Pedagogies in design**

There are many teaching styles possible within the various design educational institutions. My colleague and I are examples of two methods used. Different methods are presented by Bennett de Marais and LeCompte (1995) in their book *The way schools work: A sociological analysis of education*. In my vignette that I presented earlier, my colleague and I use two different pedagogical methods. She uses what I call a “traditional” pedagogical method. This method is reflective of the theoretical framework of functionalism (Bennett de Marais & LeCompte, 1995, p.5). This method states that there is one way to do design and my colleague’s manner in teaching “the design process” reflects this pedagogy. In the traditional pedagogical method, the teacher is the all-knowledgeable “being” imparting knowledge to the student, who can only learn to be a creative designer through a complete understanding of the teacher’s version of the design process. Design is taught as a linear step-by-step process; if you follow the steps, you will produce a design that

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<sup>4</sup> Appendix A provides the specific F.I.D.E.R. standards.



answers a predetermined set of criteria approved by the teacher. This method is controlled, and designs are produced in an orderly and quiet classroom environment.

I advocate a different pedagogy; that encourages cooperative learning, where experience is as valid as knowledge. The teacher allows the student to provide relevant data to support or refute the teacher's own data, creating an exchange of ideas that allows the student to formulate alternative solutions. The classroom organization is somewhat less formal, and as such is a livelier environment as opposed to the "traditional" model. This method draws on two theories that Bennett de Marais and LeCompte evolve: interpretive theory and critical theory. Interpretive theory states that pedagogy is formed by "...the social construction of meaning in social relations." (Bennett de Marais & LeCompte, 1995, p.19). Critical theory advocates "...involvement by participants as human agency and believe that despite the influence of oppressive reproductive forces, hope for transformation is maintained..." (Bennett de Marais & LeCompte, 1995, p. 25).

In the vignette example, I was teaching recently in the design studio class. In an effort to maximize student involvement in the production of their work and keep the mood more relaxed, I decided to allow the students to see me on a "first-come, first-serve" basis for their critique. I felt that in this way those students who were ready to see me would, and those who weren't could buy a little more time and see me when they were ready. When my colleague came to take over the class for the afternoon, I explained my class process to her. She said that she would not teach this way, and that her "lesson" would be set up on her schedule, not at the "control of the student". She quite seriously stated that she needed to control the class, to maintain order over how the class is conducted. She assumed that my way would be chaotic, and she did not want, in her words, "to lose control of the classroom". In a very small way, we each were imparting differing values about how we dealt with the student as learner, how we saw ourselves as educators, and the type of

pedagogy we felt "best suited the student". The two style differences reflected two fundamentally different ways of teaching and students felt confused as to what to expect from each of us.<sup>5</sup>

#### **1.1.10 The context of interior design as a profession and the role of education**

Why is this an issue? I believe that pedagogy is a reflection of the ways that graduates function in the workplace. Our differing teaching styles are a small mirror image of the state of change occurring in the interior design field. Interior designers are fighting for their legitimacy on many levels, and are questioning "accepted" ways of doing things. Public perception of who we are, the professional responsibility that we incur, and the changing global technologically-driven economy are all reasons for us to question ourselves as designers.

In interior design schools in Canada and the United States, the majority of students that we train to become interior designers are females; however, in the practice, there are vast discrepancies in income earned, power relations and success of women versus men, to the detriment of the women interior designers. In interior design, few studies have been done on this subject, so "hard data" supporting my observations is scarce. Some examples do exist, such as one recent study by the University of Cincinnati's School of Architecture and Interior Design. The study concludes that 89% of interior design graduates are women, as opposed to 31% in architecture. The study also states that there is a discrepancy in salaries of female interior designers to both male designers and architects, and that "...the gender gap in compensation...in architecture is narrower than in interior design..." (Black & Harfmann, 1997).

A parallel example of discrepancies in gender is in architecture. Statistics on females in architecture are as follows: "According to the Quebec Order of Architects, 6.43% of architects are women. (Yet at McGill ) 44% of the students enrolled in the school's two degree programs are

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<sup>5</sup> I will evolve the pedagogical implications of each style when I discuss education in Chapter 3.

women." (source unknown). In an article in *P/A Progressive architecture* in 1995 titled "Women in Architecture: Leveling the Playing Field," "Old practices" include exclusion and "tradition" at the expense of female talent in the field. Ironically, in interior design, there is a popular expectation that women would and should flourish, and yet as a whole, they do not.

## **1.2 WAYS OF KNOWING**

### **1.2.1 Definitions based in epistemology**

What are feminine ways of knowing and do they differ between males and females? How does this impact on the ways we teach design to students? The female voice in design is affected by gender and politics, in terms of feminism and in terms of social relations. What does this mean? Gender is socially defined and reinforced through social systems such as the family, school and the workplace. The physical spaces we design reinforce social and cultural behaviours that have at their basis fundamental beliefs about the nature of knowledge, whose it is, and the power it wields. Daphne Spain (1992), in her book *Gendered spaces*, states that "Until the classrooms in which the most socially valued information is taught are degendered, women's acquisition of knowledge will be less than men's." (Spain, 1992, p. xv). What are feminine ways of knowing and do they differ between males and females? How does this impact on the ways we teach design to students? What are these so-called "socially valued" knowledges? How are they gendered? How are these values perpetuated through institutions?

### **1.2.2 Epistemological constructs: Knowledge, truth and power**

Institutions such as schools presently reinforce values at whose core lie epistemological constructs regarding knowledge, truth and power entrenched in historic precedent. Whose knowledge do we live by and whose knowledge is taught in schools and is perpetuated in the workplace? In the book, *What can she know?* (1991), Lorraine Code questions the legitimacy of

knowledge in epistemological terms. She evaluates the historical hold on knowledge by a dominant male elite at the expense of the female voice. According to Code, the dominant male elite not only controls access to knowledge but by extension defines cultural values and social structures, controlling female access to positions of knowledge and power. She states that, "In this book I engage critically with the epistemology made by professional philosophers of the mainstream....It is the artifact,...upheld as a source of 'absolute truth' about how the world should be known and represented." (Code, 1991, p. ix).

In the book *Women's ways of knowing* (1997), Field Belenky et al. provide a compelling documentation of women's experience, which the authors use as the basis for defining the female voice: a structure of new ways of experiencing knowledge. According to the authors, women's ways of cultivating knowledge have been ignored, and once observed, are markedly different from men's.<sup>6</sup>

### 1.2.3 Objective versus subjective ways of knowing

Both of the above-cited authors have as their premise that human relationships for women are different from those of men. Historically assumed truths about knowledge as objective have not taken into account other so-called "subjective" or intuitive ways of knowing. Each book explores the nature of knowledge, and its relationship to the female voice. I ask myself these questions as I will present their ideas: What values are we teaching in design education? Do we include gender? Whose ways of knowing are at the core of design pedagogy? I propose that the epistemological foundations of knowledge are gender-biased. These biases affect women's access to powerful positions in the workplace, hampering their equal access to education and the workplace. As Spain

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<sup>6</sup> In Chapter 4, I will discuss feminist epistemology and situate the ways in which women's knowledge has been overlooked in art and aesthetic inquiry. In Chapter 5, I will discuss the "female" collaboration of a client with the architect Gerrit Rietveld during the Modernist era of the 1920's and 1930's. Not only were there such collaborations but, as a student, I never learned about them.

(1992) argues: "Many types of knowledges exist, only some of which is highly valued. Masculine knowledge is almost universally more prestigious than feminine knowledge." (Spain, 1992, p.16). Understanding knowledge, and its effect on values taught in schools, affects the teaching of the interior design of spaces, as well as the ways in which interior design reinforces accepted ways of knowing.

#### **1.2.4 The nature of truth and knowledge as valued in Western society: The epistemological significance of gender**

The nature of knowledge is at the core of any discussion about gender. Field Belenky et al. (1997) support Frondizi's (1963) view of the origins of values when they state that "... the nature of truth and origins of knowledge...shape the way we see the world and ourselves as participants in it." (Field Belenky et al., 1997, p. 3). Given that this is possible, it is vital that we as humans have a clear understanding of how we seek truth and knowledge. However, as Code (1991) and Field Belenky et al. argue, our very assumptions about the nature of human relationships, truth and knowledge are grounded in constructs that are fundamentally different to women's ways of knowing.

#### **1.2.5 Knowledge as absolute truth - Existing epistemologies in Western society**

Much knowledge is seen as pure, absolute or "objective" male knowledge, as opposed to intuitive, "subjective" female knowledge. Historically, this "absolute truth" is not only "objective" but is also diametrically opposed to the subjective, and specifically women's knowledge. (Code, 1991; Ardener, 1969; Pollock, 1992; Rudduck, 1994; and Jackson, 1991). As I noted earlier, fundamental values that we live with are presently grounded in Western philosophical thought governed by the values and ideals of Plato, Socrates, Aristotle and subsequent philosophers. Art and notions of beauty are seen by such philosophers as emotional in nature and subsequently of less worth (Code, 1991).

Code argues (the feminist view) that Plato and Socrates assume two things: that art is emotional and that women are emotional beings. She quotes Aristotle (in his support of Plato and Socrates' assumptions) when she argues that these assumptions are made in terms of women and their social position. Code refers to a "...woman's lack of rational authority: a lack that, for Aristotle, likewise justifies women's inferior social position." (Code, 1991, p. 21). Women are seen by many philosophers as subjective, "sensual" or "aesthetic," the opposite to the "rational, objective male." (Code, 1991). An example of how this is perpetuated was published in the *Harvard Educational Review* in the "Carnegie Report on Women's Access to Higher Education" in 1974. Women were cited as having inferior access (as compared with men) to higher education and subsequent higher earnings. This was due, among other things, to marriage interfering with a woman's mobility; "...as secondary earners women have less need to strive for salary increases..." (Westervelt, 1970, p.309). Another example in the same review is the inference that women have less access due to the "fact" that "...motherhood and academic achievement cannot normally coexist." (Westervelt, 1974, p. 310). As Code states, these assumptions come from embedded attitudes about the nature of emotion as a sign of weakness, and this, in direct contrast to male knowledge, although perhaps not absolute nor "better" has nevertheless dominated all epistemological inquiry (Code, 1991).

I maintain that there is a stratification of valued knowledge and that this is at the expense of female knowledge. Nevertheless, concepts of absolute truth are premised on the "objectivity of the knower" and by being emotional, women cannot be at the same time rational, and thus, "objective".

#### **1.2.6 Objectivity versus subjectivity of the knower**

One of the fundamental assumptions of the notion of absolute truth is the premise that this

truth is "scientific," and as such it is "objective", applying to all regardless of sex, rendering sex of the knower epistemologically insignificant. By contrast, Code proposes that:

...the sex of the knower is epistemologically significant, claiming" ... that the scope of epistemological inquiry has been too narrowly defined...questions about how credibility is established, about connections between knowledge and power, about the place of knowledge in ethical and aesthetic judgments, and about political agendas and the responsibilities of the knowers. (Code, 1991, p. 7)

Code suggests that the underlying assumptions about the basis of philosophical notions of truth and objectivity are flawed, are gender-biased, and are subjective. She also maintains that these notions of "truth" are in part driven by political motivations.

An example of the nature of knowledge is the notion of "objectivity". Earlier, I described Frondizi (1963) and Peperzak's (1986) view of the objectivity and subjectivity of values; they argue that the context of values as they are created is in part what creates them, and that in fact, there is no such thing as a totally "objective knower". In Western philosophical thought "objectivity" occurs when the "knower" is separate from the subject. Then only through a lack of emotion and attachment can true "objectivity" exist. Recall that when speaking of value, for example, Peperzak evolves the argument that this is not possible, that "...all statements about value rely on evaluations, i.e., on "feelings" through which values become manifest for an evaluating subject." (Peperzak, 1986, pp. 73-74). Code describes, yet rejects, the opposite: "objectivity...the assumption of value - neutrality...objects of value are separate from knowers...its alleged derivation from detached, pure thought permits it to claim superiority over modes of thought infected with emotional thought and feeling." (Code, 1991, p. 35). However, as both Woolgar (1988) and Peperzak counter, there is no possibility of thought without some form of evaluation and/or judgement.

Yet this presumed notion of “absolute truth” has governed to a large extent the power of science and is perceived as superior over art, appearing to be a more objective knowledge. In my experience, this notion is very much entrenched in our school system; currently Dawson College is implementing new admission requirements for art students as requiring physical sciences and math in order to be admitted. This new rule is now denying access to students who in years past would have been admitted with their creative talent but who would not meet the math or science requirements.<sup>7</sup>

### **1.2.7 Separation of subjectivity and objectivity**

Another assumption made in our society is that knowledge can only be subjective or objective, not both. This “objectivity” depends upon the point of view of the knower. Code evolves the argument that other people can be knowers, and that knowledge is a changing, developing and constantly evolving qualitative analysis. Many of the “objective” facts of the knower are grounded in the point of view of the knower. As Code states, “Facts mean different things to different people, affect some people profoundly and others not at all; hence they are both subjective and objective.” (Code, 1991, pp. 45-46). Effectively, both objectivity and subjectivity are possible; Bronwyn Davies’ (1982) example of her qualitative study uses both forms of knowledge.

### **1.2.8 The nature of absolute power and the knower**

When the fundamental basis of knowledge as absolute, as constructed through so-called “objective” ways of knowing is challenged, the nature of power as absolute and in the hands of the “knower” is also challenged. In traditional epistemology, “the knower” becomes the source of knowledge and consequently all other sources are diminished. The knower is also in the public domain; the rest are subjugated to the private domain. Thus power is accorded to the public, the

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<sup>7</sup> Thomas’ (1986) and Ruddocks’ (1990) studies on gender and education support these ideas.



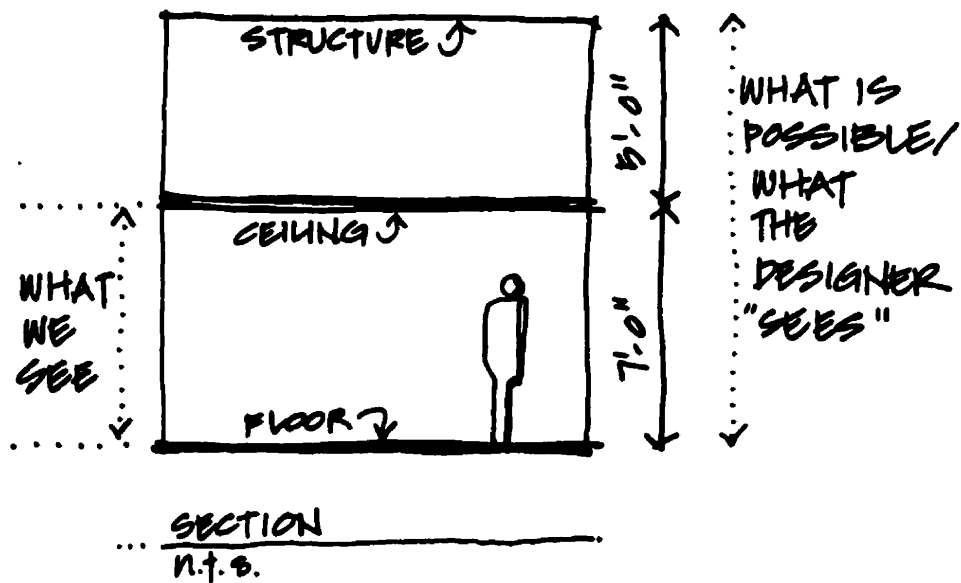
seen, the knower. As Code contends, however, there are many "knowers" and no one "absolute" truth can cover them all.<sup>8</sup>

### **1.2.9 Implications**

For knowledge, values and the competing epistemologies to become gender aware, both subjectivity and objectivity must form part of the equation in mainstream thought. A key argument proposed by Code (1991), Frondizi (1963) and Peperzak (1986) is that "Knowledge is neither value - free nor value - neutral; the processes that produce it are themselves value-laden; and these values are open to evaluation." (Code, 1991, p. 69). Indeed, interior design as a subject is a combination of subjective and objective knowledge. Designs must meet practical criteria such as building code requirements or spatial limitations of height (objective). Design is also based on the psychological and perceived needs and desires of the user as interpreted by the designer (subjective). These often take the form of highly subjective notions that the designer must extrapolate and interpret alongside the physical requirements. But even the "objective" requirements are open to interpretation. Figure 1.2 on the next page illustrates this point. For example, if I assume that a ceiling is 7'-00" high and that this is my limit, I limit myself to that reality. If I investigate, however, what lies above that ceiling, I may find something up there. If I do not investigate, I may negate another reality - that above that 7'-00" is a void of 5'-00" that I could explore for the design - a whole other "reality" makes itself available to me. It is the combining of the objective/subjective by the designer that leads to the creation of the design solution, and, as such, the designer as "knower" is part of the equation.

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<sup>8</sup> In Chapter 4, I look at how the "public" and the "knower" are linked concepts and how power is used by these constructs in my discussion about the art of Morisot and Pollock's study.



**Figure 1.2**

**Two versions of a ceiling**

The diagram above demonstrates a person standing in a room with a ceiling seven feet high. The designer can accept the ceiling as the limit, and in doing so limits his/her capacity to explore further. There may exist, as is shown, five more feet above the "ceiling"; this is space that is available to the designer above the false ceiling to the underside of the roof.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW: THE FEMALE VOICE AND SPACE

#### 2.1 FEMALE WAYS OF KNOWING

##### 2.1.1 POINTS OF VIEW

I will investigate here, in more depth, two points of view on female ways of knowing: Code (1991) tackles the epistemological viewpoint whereas Field Belenky et al. (1997) evolve a more phenomenological and socially constructed view.

In the book *What can she know?* (1991), Code systematically develops female ways of knowing and analyses various constructs, both from mainstream as well as feminist viewpoints. Code evolves a highly detailed breakdown of the roots of knowledge. She studies the role of the subjective "knower", and makes it clear that current epistemological theory is very one-sided. It does not take into account women's ways of constructing knowledge, and in fact sends confusing messages where women are concerned. Code dissects the relationship of reason, knowledge and the link with male dominance. For example, in discussing reason, she states that:

Throughout the history of western philosophy there is a demonstrable alignment between the ideals of autonomous reason and ideals of masculinity. That alignment suppresses and even denigrates values and attributes long associated with the 'feminine' at the same time and in the same way as it devalues epistemic dependence in the name of cognitive self-reliance. Both philosophical discourse and the everyday ideology that bears its mark take universal, essential... concepts of masculinity and femininity for granted... Yet the ideals of masculinity that align with ideals of reason derive... from the experiences of the men that who construct the dominant theories of both... It is a commonplace of western philosophy ...that women are irrational creatures...utterly lacking in reason. (Code, 1991, p. 117)

She cites numerous instances of this alignment and the problems for women when such masculine reason is seen as truth and when these ideas are put into practice in society.<sup>9</sup>

The alternative that feminists tend to see is a separate epistemology for women extending into disciplines presently dominated by men. As Code sees it, this becomes problematic; for example, if there were to be a separate "feminine" way of doing science, that this would only serve to reinforce the duality inherent in current theory. She cites Keller as cautioning that "...the suggestion that women will do a different kind of science simultaneously invokes the duality of sex...." (Code, 1991, p. 155). She responds to critics who advocate staying inside current epistemological boundaries. She suggests that "Many feminists, by contrast, respond by calling for a more generous, more honest epistemology that takes into account the range of capacities, discursive positions, attitudes, and interests that contribute to the construction of knowledge." (Code, 1991, p. 158). This involves transforming current epistemological theory to include voices of not only women but of others excluded from the dominant ideology.

### **2.1.2 Ways of knowing - Voices of experience**

An alternative account is proposed in *Women's ways of knowing* (1997), a study of women and the ways in which they experience everyday life. Field Belenky et al. (1997) construct five "ways of knowing" that they attribute to women. They look at how women find their "voice" through the construction of these five forms of knowledge, each different and each potentially building on the previous knowledge.

The first form of knowledge is silence. These women's experiences are based on a lack of control, of feeling "deaf and dumb", of possessing no sense of themselves. The second type of knowledge is received knowledge, a listening to the voices of others. Listening becomes the way of

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<sup>9</sup> I will look at this issue in Chapters 3 and 4.

knowing, including the voices of "authorities" that tell the women what is right or wrong. The third type of knowledge is subjective knowledge, the inner voice and intuitive "gut" feeling that guide many women through life, in making decisions. Power here is seen as male and thus inaccessible, yet "...the discovery that first hand experience is a valuable source of knowledge emerges again and again..." (Field Belenky et al., 1997, p. 61).

The fourth type of knowledge is procedural knowledge, where separate and connected ways of knowing together cause dilemmas to the "knowers". Using the example of Naomi, the authors explore the conflict of the inner voice and the outside "authorities" voice - whose voice is truth? In her art history class, "Naomi was struggling to hear her own inner voice, but the authorities seemed to be saying, "Listen not to yourself but to us, the experts, who know about the painting. Forget your so-called knowledge and memorize ours."" (Field Belenky et al., 1997, p. 89).

This is a dilemma that we often encounter in design pedagogy. When is it appropriate to teach "knowledge" (for example, in lecture) and when is it important to let the student experience it (for example, during studio time). What is the pedagogical method used - is it the "authority" Naomi struggled with or a teacher as guide, as facilitator of knowledge? In the example of my vignette, my studio teaching style was quite different from that of my colleague. Does this create uncertainty for the students or does this enhance their ability to see different points of view and to learn to make their own judgement? In dealing primarily with the studio classroom, are we negating the subjective intuition when we teach them the "authoritative" lecture that Field Belenky et al. (1997) describe? Since I believe that the answer to this question is, at least in part, "yes", in my classes, I try not to "lecture". I have a conversation with the students and use examples of their experience to make a point. For example, in teaching boutique design, I ask students to relay to me what they feel about

store designs for women. Through an exchange, I bring up social issues and students relay their own experiences, whereby knowledge is exchanged.

### **2.1.3 Constructed knowledge - The knower as part of the known**

The fifth type of knowledge evolved by Field Belenky et al. (1997) is constructed knowledge, which brings the two dualities Naomi struggled with together. Constructed knowledge is the "...voice of integration...a place for reason and intuition and the expertise of others." (Field Belenky et al., 1997, p. 133). Epistemologically, the notion of the knower as separate and "objective" is replaced by the knower as part of the known. This integration refutes the notion of knowledge as separate or absolute. As the authors state, "It is in the process of sorting pieces of the self and of searching for a unique and authentic voice that women come to the basic insights of constructivist thought....all knowledge is a construction and that truth is a matter of the context in which it is embedded...greatly expand(s) the possibilities about how to think about anything..." (Field Belenky et al., 1997, pp. 137-138).

These five knowledges are not separate, nor are they cast in stone; the authors weave experiences of many of the women as they evolve through one or more types of knowledge. For example, women who are silent are often abused or mistreated in some way and choose to be quiet in the interests of survival. When they break through their silence and become self aware, initiating change, they use subjective knowledge to understand their experience; but this is acquired in some and inherent in others. Their compelling stories and experiences fundamentally question the idea of "voice", voice of the woman as knower, through their personal experience and of the knower as part of the known.

#### **2.1.4 Implications for women and interior design education**

These ideas pose several implications for women in interior design education. How do educators of interior design education deal with female ways of knowing? First, if epistemologically art and intuition are demeaned in favor of science and "knowledge as absolute," education in schools not only separates art as intuitive but also relegates it to lower status. We see the debates in schools concerning the diminishing of art in the school system; at Toronto's Education Forum this fear was expressed by many educators. Yet as Howard Gardner (1982) and others maintain, art and music are vital components to the development of creativity. The philosopher Gene Blocker and art educator Michael Parsons (1993) describe the interrelationship between art, emotions and the creative process as paralleling female ways of knowing. They suggest that:

Art expresses emotion more in the way words express meaning than in the way cider expresses juice....Creation requires careful scrutiny of the work as it develops, scrupulous awareness of how one feels when contemplating what one has so far accomplished , sensitive adjustment of the work to fit one's intuitive experience, until one feels that one has grasped something one didn't grasp before. (Parsons and Blocker, 1993, p. 110)

I see the nature of the design process in a similar fashion: as a self-analytical "push and pull" emotion-laden evolution between subjective and objective needs.

A second implication is the emergence of questions about what we are designing in interior design and based on whose knowledge? Spaces impact on us in the construction of our identities by reinforcing the values with which we erect social relations within the family, home, school or workplace. As Code (1991) argues, our systems perpetuate a dominant point of view at the expense of "others". Then whose views of society are we replicating when we teach how we design spaces in which we work and live?

Third and finally, there are major pedagogical implications in the above, for example, how do we teach design, what do we teach, and who do we teach? Often I have noted that we teach at

the college level to predominantly female students and yet, in practice, most of the larger contracts and high profile firms are male-dominated. There seems to be a discrepancy in women's education and their subsequent career success. At this point it is premature to draw conclusions; nevertheless, this apparent tendency may bring into question the philosophical underpinnings of interior design pedagogy in the college education system.

The subjective and objective nature of design is a difficult process to teach, creating pedagogical variances among teachers. At Dawson College, for example, teachers have very different pedagogical methods for teaching design: from lecture to studio, from text to personal experience, from modes of "control" to so-called "relaxed" techniques. Very rarely are pedagogical methods questioned. However, as I demonstrate later on, even pedagogical methods affect the values and ideas that generate the design process in classrooms (and perpetuate ideologies that may have a negative impact on females, particularly in terms of their future success in the field).

## **2.2 THE EXPANDING DISCOURSE: FEMINISM AND THE QUESTIONING OF THE TRADITIONAL ART CANON**

I will include issues of feminism and art history in my discussion of female ways of knowing, as I believe that values imparted in art history impact on how design students learn about space. As such, I will define feminism and its constructs as they affect concepts studied in art history. I would like to ground the point of view of art history that I will be evaluating by first briefly reviewing the traditional art canon as understood in Western culture. Earlier in my introduction, I developed the theoretical discussion of the values inherent in our society. These values, as embedded in educational, social and political systems, are known as Eurocentrism. Eurocentrism is a core value attitude of Eurocentric thinking, which is defined by feminists as "...a single paradigmatic perspective in which Europe is seen as the unique source of meaning, as ontological



'reality' to the rest of the world's shadow...seeing the world from a single privileged point, attributing to the West an almost Provincial sense of historical destiny..." (Stam and Shohat, 1994, p. 296). In looking at the feminist view of aesthetics and art, a broader issue becomes traditional art as a Eurocentrically structured phenomena that excludes women systematically from its "center". Understanding how this occurs will contribute to understanding the various tensions inherent in design.

### **2.2.1 Feminism defined**

Feminism in art evolved an "anti-aesthetic" stance in the 1980's as a reaction against the values that underpin the art of that era. I will situate feminism, the traditional art canon, aesthetics and Postmodernism/anti-aesthetics definitions that ground the discussion of the values. Given the limited scope of this thesis, a development of each in any great detail is impossible. However, I will attempt to summarize ideas in each as they relate to one another, and given the context of the issues of the female voice.

### **2.2.2 Subjectivity and identity**

First, "feminism" has two defining features that are at the root of all discourse: subjectivity and identity. Feminism states that women have been denied a sense of self and that they have been oppressed economically, socially, politically and sexually for centuries. There appear to be two main points of contention as to what constitutes "true feminism". In her article, "The significance of the feminist movement," bell hooks describes how the feminist movement began first as a militant reaction against "Sexist injustice...ideology and practice of male domination." (hooks, 1984, p. 33). According to hooks, fighting against sexual injustice is valid but does not necessarily eliminate sexual oppression. The feminist movement in the United States in the 1970's was primarily a white upper-class movement. It was "...generally reactionary... (feminists) argued

that all men are the enemies of all women...proposed a utopian woman nation...did not strengthen public understanding of the significance of authentic feminist movement..." (hooks, 1984, p. 33).

hooks saw the issue not as much a focus on men; rather as a question of sexual oppression of either gender, but primarily of women. hooks believes that the "authentic" feminist movement establishes sexual oppression as the basis of all other oppression. It is interesting that hooks suggests that all forms of oppression are interrelated, be they racial, social or sexual. Sexual oppression does not allow woman as subject or identity to exist. Woman as gender is relegated to second place or virtually non-existent as self. In *Unequal relations*, Elliott & Fleras state that "Just as racism is a belief in racial superiority, sexism is a belief in gender superiority..." (Elliott & Fleras, 1992, p. 102).

hooks also describes race and gender as interrelated concepts. Both involve oppression of whole cultures or people due to gender or skin colour: both involve perceived superiority. According to hooks, feminists "...often ignore issues of sexist oppression...Feminist movement should be of primary significance for all groups and individuals who desire....to end oppression" (hooks, 1984, p. 39). However, gender identification is a core aspect of one's personality according to Elliott and Fleras (1992), whether this identity is manifested through biological, economical, social or political means. Denying gender identification denies access to those means of identification and power. Elliot and Fleras support Code (1991) and Field Belenky's et al. (1997) theoretical constructs, in which they evolve female ways of knowing as a gender-based means of identity.

### **2.2.3 Defining aesthetics and the traditional art canon: The concept of beauty**

Traditional art history has been canonized; that is, it firmly holds that there is an ideal to which art aspires, and an accepted body of work that accepts that ideal. This ideal is manifest in

numerous ways, one of which is the male concept of beauty. Within art discourse there have been many philosophical theories regarding this issue. However, the traditional art canon and the ideology that is the basis for its understanding tend to center around two critical thoughts. The first is "...the masculine (which) has been passed off as universal, neutral." (Ross, 1994, p. 565). Certain philosophers debate that "... Aesthetic values are essential and universal and thus self-evidently reflected in a broad and stable canon of great works of art" (Cooper, 1992, p. 59). Other philosophers contend that "... aesthetic values arise out of modes of formal and structural complexity peculiar to works of high art and one of which of these modes is form - beauty is the supreme idealization of form." (Cooper, 1992, p. 58). In both cases, the traditional art canon idealizes form and formal structures of which beauty is considered to be one of the highest forms. Indeed, these issues have been debated for centuries. Western aesthetic values traditionally have been linked to this idealization, and by extension, to those of high art. In her paper, "Speculum of the other woman," Luce Irigaray theorizes that this idealization of beauty by man creates a "...disappearance of woman as subject..." (Irigaray in Ross, 1994, p. 578). She states that "Any theory of the subject has always been appropriated by the 'Masculine.'" (Irigaray in Ross, 1994, p. 578). How? Man has historically "centered" himself in art, creating the ideal separate from the self. In doing so, man creates the ideal concept of beauty outside of himself and thus makes it possible for beauty to be possessed as an object. In high art, women have traditionally been viewed as objects of beauty, and, as such, become an idealized object. According to Irigaray, ultimately this means that woman's "subjective self" is denied as she disappears into what Irigaray calls an "imaginary idealization". Later on in my study of Pollock's example of Impressionism, we can see how this subject/object value is evolved.

#### **2.2.4 Feminism and the Postmodern movement**

In the past twenty years and notably with the Postmodern movement, feminism has come to reject the traditional art canon. To the credit of the Postmodern movement, it has brought out very real injustices concerning the teaching of "traditional art". There has not only been a lack of female representation in art, but also a lack of emphasis on any art form in which females or other cultures have a strong representation. An obvious example of this is the textbook used in most art history classes, Janson's *The History of Art* (1978). Female artists' representation in this book was virtually non-existent until very recently.

Feminists such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty reject traditional aesthetics altogether, rejecting any aesthetic hierarchy as valid. In her paper, "Feminist encounters," Mohanty (1992) states that "...Feminism defines itself as a political instance, not merely a sexual politics but a politics of everyday life, which later enters the public sphere of expression and creative practice, displacing aesthetic hierarchies..." (Mohanty, 1992, p. 77). Feminists such as Mohanty support movements such as Anti-Aesthetics, which advocates a total rejection of aesthetic encounter.

In my view, Mohanty's statement is problematic. She presupposes that aesthetic hierarchies are an expression of formal elements alone. If that is true, is aesthetics limited to the definition formal elements, or can aesthetic thought not also encompass personal feelings, context and meaning? Art and the creative process promote "voice" - art is a primary vehicle for expression of self. When we reject art and the creative process, do we reject voice? Anti-Aesthetics is a new voice for feminism and minorities, but the problem with it is that it rejects the voice of art in one extreme (as in the traditional canon) in favour of another extreme. By rejecting aesthetic encounter outright, feminists such as Mohanty reject all categories of aesthetic encounter, including expression, creativity, and formal elements that are vital to understanding art in various contexts.

An example of a parallel to this dilemma may be found in earlier feminist theory, which rejects the family. bell hooks (1984) realizes that to reject the family as a social structure for some women is a rejection of the very place where they actually have a sense of identity, identity being one of the crucial elements of feminist self-realization.

Why is Mohanty's position significant? Perhaps because she sends a message, common to more militant feminists, that rejection of what is past is how to create the future. As we saw with hooks' argument, it is important to understand the societal structures that exist, how to challenge them and work to change them. hooks states that "...since all forms of oppression are linked in our society because they are supported by similar institutional and societal structures, one system cannot be eradicated while the others remain intact...challenging sexual oppression is a crucial step in the struggle to eliminate all sexist oppression." (hooks, 1984, pp. 35-36). Although hooks' focus is on sexual oppression, she affirms the need to understand structures in order to initiate change.

A clearer understanding of the polarization on the one hand of feminists, with the traditional art canon on the other, may be found in Parsons' and Blocker's discussion of feminism and Postmodernism in their book *Aesthetics and education* (1993). The problem, according to Parsons and Blocker, is that feminists reject art without really analyzing the question of who and what is being rejected. The rejection is often made for political rather than aesthetic reasons. They state that "...For post-modernists the choice between art histories is a political and not an aesthetic choice...the traditional art canon symbolizes values of a Eurocentric male elite...we could get rid of ...masterpieces altogether. This is the revolutionary side of Postmodernism." (Parsons and Blocker, 1993, pp. 56-57). They suggest that although an important role for Postmodernism is to include plurality, this weakens the traditional canon. Postmodernism presupposes that aesthetic decisions

are not as worthwhile as political ones. The problem Parsons and Blocker see is that "...from a revisionist point of view, it is demeaning to suggest that the inclusion of works from marginal groups is wholly a political decision and not an aesthetic one. It implies that their artworks will be studied for political reasons, no matter what the quality..." (Parsons & Blocker, 1993, p. 57). This is a reasonable argument, as all groups want an equal share of power, be it political or otherwise. However, all peoples also want recognition for the value of their artworks on the same level of high art. Parsons and Blocker see the need to "...Recognize biases in history of art...be it Eurocentric or male bias..." Parsons & Blocker do concede the necessity of Postmodernism as a vehicle to "...help us to be more aware of power & political relations than we were..." (Parsons & Blocker, 1993, p.65).

### **2.2.5 Exploring alternatives**

The dilemma with these views and definitions is that feminism and aesthetics are seen ultimately as polarized concepts. The traditional canon embraces formality at the expense of inclusion. Conversely feminists are included in Postmodern art at the expense of traditional aesthetic values. Is there an alternative? The key issue is to analyze ways in which female voice and identity can be included in art. In her analysis of feminist art criticism, Joanna Frueh (1992) offers three stages of female art criticism that support goals of the feminist movement. The first stage is "...a resurrection of lost or ignored women artists...(which) has led to new bodies of knowledge." (cited in Cooper, 1992, pp. 150-151). The second stage "...posits a woman's art distinct from patriarchal culture..." (cited in Cooper, 1992, p. 151). These two stages introduce the acceptance of crafts and craft-like art into the sphere of "art-making", those traditions in which women have been recognized. They also bring the female perspective into the art-world, but at the expense of what has come before. The second stage manifests itself in Postmodernism.

The third stage Frueh describes is one that begins an alternative dialogue. Frueh states that the third female aesthetic "... (is) more theoretical and centers on gender analysis of the art of both women and men, and interconnections between an artwork and its historical context..." (cited in Cooper, 1992, pp. 150-151). This third stage offers the alternative of allowing feminism to support the traditional art canon. The possibility that both gender and experience define roles in art creates avenues for art and aesthetics to expand. This allows the female voice to be heard, as evolved in Code's (1991) concept of female epistemology and the voices of constructed experience evolved by Field Belenky et al. (1997).

In their book, *The expanding discourse: Feminism and art history*, Broude and Garrard (1992) challenge the "...instrumental role played by art and art history both in preserving masculine power and in constructing and consolidating gender difference." (Broude & Garrard, 1992, pp. 2-3). Not only does traditional art history exclude women, but the power imposed by the traditional ideas such as absolute truth imply that there is only one truth and that is the one universally held. These (among many other) beliefs perpetuate social behaviours both of men and women, usually to the inferiority and separation of women from positions of power or authority in society. Broude and Garrard cite Griselda Pollock and Rodzika Parker as suggesting that "To discover the history of women and art is in part to account for the way art history is written. To expose its underlying values, its assumptions, its silences and its prejudices is also to understand that the way women artists are recorded is crucial to art and the artist in our society." (Broude & Garrard, 1992, pp. 2-3). The way in which women are portrayed in traditional art history reflects, in part, the way in which women were controlled at a particular time in history, both physically and intellectually.

### **2.2.6 Art of the feminine as compared with art of the masculine**

Feminist art history looks at both the existence of female artists and at the way in which how the art that women created tells a different story altogether from the art created by men. Griselda Pollock's account of art history, in particular her analysis of Berthe Morisot and Mary Cassatt, reveal a different perspective of the artist during the Impressionist era. Interestingly, when I think back to my own art history classes and the Impressionists, Cassatt and Morisot did not exist at all in the legion of artists I studied at the time. Pollock not only introduces me to female artists I did not know; more crucially, as you will see later in my discussion, she opens my eyes to several social and phenomenological issues surrounding these artists and their work, none of which fits into the model of the traditional art canon.

### **2.2.7 Fundamental concepts of female**

Broude and Garrard cite several ways in which females have been portrayed in art that undermines women. They summarize three major "critical categories" that govern the ways that females have been portrayed in art traditionally, that supports Irigaray's theory(1994).

The first is the idea of the female body and the "Male Gaze", where the male is the "subject" watching or observing and the female is the "object" of his gaze. In art history this subject/object value construct has been perpetuated in the idea of the male concept of beauty. In their example of the "male gaze" Broude and Garrard refer to the fifteenth century and the images painted: "...more pervasive are images that reinforce the power of the male - as beholder, patron and subjectivity agent within the work of art." (Broude & Garrard, 1992, p. 10). This becomes entrenched with the centuries, and reinforced in the era of Modernism, as Broude and Garrard cite that era as perpetuating the image of female as being allied with "nature, the primitive, the irrational..." (Broude & Garrard, 1992, p. 11).



Secondly, Broude and Garrard cite the idea of the female as a product of social constructs. They cite feminists such as Pollock and Parker, who look at the feminine as "...marked by characteristics drawn from social stereotypes about women, or the...cultural production and exaggeration of gender characteristics..." (Broude & Garrard, 1992, p. 13). They cite Anne Higonnet, who points out the dualistic nature of women's art; on the one hand sensitive to women's issues, yet on the other hand trivialized by the established male critics, and thus, by extension, the underlying values are trivialized as well (Broude & Garrard, 1992). As I discussed earlier with regards to female ways of knowing, fundamental differences between men and women lie in value constructions. What underscores these value constructions in society are the entrenched social values ascribed to concepts of femininity (weak) or masculinity (strong), and in concepts such as subject legitimacy. Higonnet points out both the trivialization of the women's art and the demeaning way in which women's art is dismissed by the dominant elite. As we will also see later in the discussion of Morisot, that same elite criticizes her art because, in her subject matter, she brings the private out into the public. Morisot stirs the accepted conventions of the socially constructed view of female in the 'private' domain and male in the 'public' domain. Pollock elaborates this idea further, as we will see later on.

Finally, Broude and Garrard touch on two developments at the turn of the century that "legitimize" traditional art and the social values it transmits: the commercialization of the female and France's "L'Art Feminin." (Broude & Garrard, 1992, p. 13). First, they suggest that fashion exploited women and their ideas of themselves, by associating the female with beauty through fashion and entrenching the two with commerce. Secondly, the idea of feminine became even more entrenched with the:

...critical category known as L'art feminin...the professional woman artist came to represent a type of naturally 'womanly' woman,.....demonstrating the culturally assigned, "feminine"

characteristics of imitative skill, capacity for feeling (but not for rigorous thinking), and so on. Clearly, these are restrictive categories, especially when pitted against their more prestigious opposites allotted to males - originality, reason, and so on. (Broude & Garrard, 1992, p. 13)

These values became entrenched in many areas of life, and are transformed and transmitted through the traditional art canon, both in Europe and in North America.

## **2.3 GENDERED SPACE**

Notions of space have been extensively studied as social phenomena, cultural, phenomenological, anthropological or geographical phenomena (Hall, 1969; Ardener, 1981; Wright, 1981; Blair, 1981). Ideas shaping concepts of space are fundamental to grounding an understanding of the voice of the female in design. I will define space in terms of social relations and spatial perceptions, interweaving them and revolving them around issues of gender.

Space is defined in many ways to many disciplines. As an interior designer, I define space in terms of a two- or three-dimensional entity that has a form that I can envision as a concept before it becomes a reality.

In her book *Women and space* (1981), Shirley Ardener brings together different points of view concerning space and women. Mostly anthropological and sociological in nature, her insights nevertheless refer to women and their role in shaping spatial organization in society (Ardener, 1981, p. 11). Space is referred to as an institution such as home, school or workplace (Spain, 1992), as a geographical location (Hanson & Pratt, 1995) or as a psychological, physical and/or mental states of being (Colomina, Bloomer, Ponte, White, 1992). In attempting to define the concept of space I will analyze the societal impact of spaces on us as males and females. I believe that spaces impact on us as human beings, and that space is not value-free. Space and its design are value-laden concepts, and the interrelationship of physical space is fundamental to shaping

social roles or reinforcing social and cultural behaviours. Therefore, how we teach interior design and the shaping of spaces impacts on how designers subsequently shape social constructions.

### **2.3.1 Social boundaries and communication codes**

Before examining theories of gender and space, I'd like to briefly outline differing definitions of space. For example, Shirley Ardener describes space as a social boundary:

...the categories that we make in order to codify and confront the worlds we create and how we cope with some of the problems that arise from the existence of these boundaries...a restricted area, like a club...has a set of rules to determine how its boundary shall be crossed and who shall occupy that space....The notion (boundary) has been seized and applied to the meaning of concepts, and to the classification into groups... (Ardener, 1981, p. 11)

Ardener sees space as "keeping in" certain groups and keeping others "out". She further argues that "...social life is given shape, and that when dimension or location are introduced we assert a correspondence between the so-called "physical world" and its "social reality."... The appreciation of the physical world is in turn dependant on social perceptions of it." (Ardener, 1981, p. 11).

Ardener evolves the argument that social maps for women differ from those of men. She quotes Edwin Ardener who sees linking space as one of the symbolic codes of communication and that these are mutually dependant: "We might visualize a semiotic system that depended, in the absence of speech,...the relevant position of each participant to another in a gathering, and to items in a fixed environment...space defines the people in it." (Ardener, 1981, p. 12). These notions of space as interdependent with social behaviour are circular, or mutually interdependent. Ardener's case studies reveal that women have little access to power, but that they do influence the allocations of space (Ardener, 1981, p. 17).

Thus for the purpose of this thesis, definitions of space include definitions about the social roles of both genders in determining power relations; these two concepts are interdependent.

### **2.3.2 Psychological and anthropological factors**

In their book *The interior dimension* (1992), Joy Malnar and Frank Vodvarka evolve a complex series of definitions of space, of which one notion explored is that of "territoriality". They point to Edward T. Hall and his book *The hidden dimension*, where he evolves an anthropological study of man and space and his notion of "...behaviour by which an organism characteristically lays claim to an area and defends it against members of its own species." (Hall, 1969, p. 6). They also refer to Albert Mehrabian and his book *Public places and private spaces*, who goes further in defining the emotional reaction of humans to space: "Albert Mehrabian identifies three dimensions of emotion that subsume all feelings that we have terms for;....our confrontation with the environment produces in us....an emotional reaction that is a distinctive, measurable combination of arousal, pleasure, and dominance." (cited in Malnar & Vodvarka, 1992, p. 222). He studies this phenomena in American society and the drive towards ownership of "privacy" as a means to control and self preservation in, for example, urban life (cited in Malnar & Vodvarka, 1992, pp. 222-223).

Therefore, humans are affected in their spatial awareness or, more specifically, relationships to space, by psychological factors and by their biological makeup. If this is true, are the patterns of emotion described here the same for both genders? If we refer back to Code's and Field Belenky's arguments about female voices, this would not seem to be the case. Women are not necessarily interested in the ownership and territorial behaviours that Hall and Malnar and Vodvarka have noted.

### **2.3.3 Proxemics and spatial organization - The dichotomy and inter-relatedness of the physiological and psychological**

In his book *The hidden dimension*, Hall (1969) evolves a concept known as "Proxemics." "Proxemics is...the interrelated observations and theories of man's use of space as a specialized elaboration of culture." (Hall, 1969, p. 1). Hall develops theories of space revolving around the five senses and "man's" interrelationship with society and space from a cultural context. Although the focus of the book is heavily anthropological and gender-biased, it nevertheless has had a big impact on the teaching of interior design, heavily influential, as it is in both design and architectural circles.

Hall refers to a biological "visual field" and a perceptual "visual world" that work together to create the environment experienced (Hall, 1969, p. 66). Humans have a combination of physiological and psychological cues that they use to interpret space. I draw on this argument often when I teach courses such as lighting. I balance a teaching of theory of the eye from a physiological perspective with material that emphasizes how we see, with the subjective interpretations that we make as individuals. Interior designers are taught to study these theoretical factors as a means to learn to manipulate responses of the user. In the example of the grocery store described earlier, the goal was to sell merchandise. Malnar and Vodvarka cite Hall and another theorist, Sumner, as they summarize effectively how these traits evolve the human use of space. Malnar and Vodvarka define three types of spaces:

...proxemics is divided into three spatial types: fixed-feature, semi-fixed-feature, and informal. Fixed-feature is...the most fundamental...it ..includes both physical manifestations and the hidden, internalized designs that govern human behaviour...Western societies are particularly insistent about such spatial definitions, with specific functions assigned to specific rooms. Definitions of internal spaces have evolved historically, and differ from culture to culture. (Malnar & Vodvarka, 1992, p. 225)

They explain the difficulty of integrating the role of past experience, and, for example, how cultural understanding is difficult to integrate if designing for a foreign culture (Malnar & Vodvarka, 1992, p. 225). However, more and more designers work internationally as the globalization of the world is increasing rapidly, and the designer must learn to understand many voices. I notice myself, in my teaching, the insistence of students in defining the functions of "rooms" rather than spaces, when they do their research for a particular problem. It takes all my efforts to challenge this presupposition, and to have them instead understand function, need, and space (rather than "room" per se).<sup>10</sup>

The second term, "semi-fixed feature space", is what Malnar & Vodvarka define as "...space regulated by temporary (and adjustable) features like furniture." (Malnar & Vodvarka, 1992, p. 226). The third term "informal space" is defined as "...space that exists barely on a conscious level between people." (Malnar & Vodvarka, 1992, p. 226).

I do believe that we interact in various ways with spaces, but I find the direct anthropological correlation that Hall makes to be somewhat simplistic. Malnar and Vodvarka provide excellent perspective on this point, presenting David Canter as also questioning Hall's ideas. I agree with Canter's statement that human use of space is not purely functional, and that "...there is a reciprocal relationship between spaces and the people that occupy it....the user is an active force who is seeking to optimize the balance between received and projected spatial relationships." (cited in Malnar & Vodvarka, 1992, p. 226). Therefore, to place in perspective my earlier example of the grocery store, if people are enticed into a space by "impulse items", they nevertheless still have the need or capacity of decision-making to determine if they want to respond to the spatial cues. As Malnar and Vodvarka conclude, "...it forces the designer to more

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<sup>10</sup> I will evolve this later in Chapter 5 under "Design Process".

carefully consider the people who will eventually use the building" (Malnar & Vodvarka, 1992, pp. 226-227). The implications here are that the design process, involving the factors described, is a complex one, and that larger social constructions impact on us in these different formal and informal spaces.

## **2.4 SOCIOLOGICAL DEFINITIONS OF SPACE**

From a sociological perspective, Daphne Spain (1992) explores the relationship of space to status. She looks at gender differences in status and in relation to the home, school and work. She investigates this status across many cultures historically and culturally. She views status as constructed from gender differences; the ways of thinking in men and women which have been developed through history. She also looks at how spatial arrangements define the status of both men and women. As mentioned earlier, she grounds her analysis in feminist theory, particularly in the "...ongoing feminist concern with "private" and "public" spheres." (Spain, 1992, p. xv). She argues that "...there is a link between the spaces we live in and the power relationships and stratification of roles between men and women...spatial institutions as matching social institutions of the family, education and the labor force..." (Spain, 1992). In her hypothesis, she states "...that initial status differences between women and men create certain types of gendered spaces and that institutionalized spatial segregation then reinforces prevailing male advantages." (Spain, 1992, p. 6).

### **2.4.1 The socially constructed nature of space**

More specifically, Spain analyzes the socially constructed nature of space in terms of, for example, how the design of buildings segregates women from men, and thereby reduces access to knowledge by women. Joy Malnar and Frank Vodvarka also describe the historic relationship of spatial design to women's lack of power:

In her intriguing study, *The grand domestic revolution: A history of feminist designs for American homes*, Dolores Hayden argues that...from 1865 to 1930...a number of women (who) cited '...the economic exploitation of women's domestic labour by men as the most basic cause of women's inequality'. (Malnar & Vodvarka, 1992, p. 218)

Like Malnar and Vodvarka, Spain cites geographers who advocate the interrelationship of these "spatial and social processes, that space is constructed by social behaviour at a given time."

(Spain, 1992, p. 6). She studies the interrelationship of institutions and the space/place correlation, establishing a correlation of family to dwelling, education to school and labor force to workplace (she sees space as both the socially defined and the physical). She looks at how "...the spatial structure of buildings embodies knowledge of social relations, or the taken-for-granted rules that govern of individuals to each other and to society..." (Spain, 1992, p. 7). Spain looks at the impact of "architectural" space as she discusses Hiller and Hanson's idea:

The spatial structure of buildings embodies knowledge of social relations, or the taken-for-granted rules that govern relations of individuals to each other and to society.....Thus , dwellings reflect ideals and realities about relationships between women and men within the family and in society. The space outside the home becomes the arena in which social relations are produced, while the space inside the home becomes that in which social relations are reproduced. (Spain, 1992, p. 7)

If what Spain says is valid, then the spaces of home and school/work are intertwined in the reproduction of social relations. This has major implications for designers of spaces, as it directly influences the interplay of these relations.

Spain also describes men's spaces such as the workplace as having been traditionally accorded higher status than women's space, such as the home. She expresses frustration at "...how space is often taken for granted or ignored...those who benefit from this arrangement are particularly prone to this blind spot." (Spain, 1992, p. 26). Like Ardener (1981), Spain traces the historical evolution of spatial institutions of non-Industrial and Industrial societies and examines how these create divisions of labour which are spatially enhanced in three ways: in the home, the



school and in the workplace. First, she traces the historical and cultural development of spatial institutions in non-Industrial societies. She uses the example of ceremonial men's huts, which are exclusively for men and do not include women. They are separate havens of knowledge, which she compares to industrial-era all-male clubs, which, until recently, have been exclusively male. These clubs are traditional "...centers of knowledge at the exclusion of women..." (Spain, 1992, p. 67). The example of clubs is also explored by Rodgers (1981), in the book *Women and space*, where she draws similar conclusions.

#### **2.4.2 Space as enhancing social segregation - The example of home and family**

Spain then traces examples of how tasks are spatially reinforced. She theorizes that not only are tasks spatially enhanced, but they are also geographically and locationally segregated along gender lines. Task and gender relations are explored in the non-industrial societies first, where tasks were divided spatially. This leads to divisions of power. For example, She describes the Wodaabe tribe. In their tribal customs, ownership determines power; ownership is only possible with herding; herding is the domain of men only. (Spain, 1992, pp. 89-91). Thus gender differences in tasks becomes an obstacle for power and a vicious circle excluding women.

Finally, Spain shifts her study to encompass the status and gender roles of the Industrial era using the United States as her model. Home, education and workplace each segregate women from access to power and knowledge in different ways. For example, Spain traces house designs from the Industrial era to the present as slowly changing from separate, segregated designs defining men's and women's spaces to the contemporary "spaces" without these gender divisions that were apparent in the "parlor" rooms and "smoking" rooms of the Victorian era. Homes in the last thirty years have become "... reflective of being shaped by ideas, shapes and norms..." designs

for living..." (Spain, 1992, p. 111) rather than the structured emphasis on order in layout and the "ideal family social structure" of Loos' and Victorian houses (Colomina, 1992).<sup>11</sup>

#### **2.4.3 Geographical implications of the spatial construction of gender - Study in Massachusetts**

The gap in female and male access to work as influenced by space is another interesting theoretical aspect of defining space. Women's access to power and knowledge via work and as influenced by geography and social standing, are studied by Spain (1992) and Hanson and Pratt (1995). Spain studies the earnings gap and how "...women work closer to home than men and those journey-to-work patterns are associated with lower earnings..." (Spain, 1992, p. 226). In fact, theorists are beginning to document how females and males perform in terms of geographical distances to the workplace.

In their book, *Gender, space and work* (1995), Susan Hanson and Geraldine Pratt develop a thorough analysis on the nature of women and their work. Through an exhaustive quantitative and qualitative analysis, Hanson and Pratt forward two primary theses. First, they determine that women's access to work is spatially and socially constructed, depending upon their social status. Women tend to work in female-dominated occupations and do part-time work if they are married and bear children. These tendencies are reinforced by the nature and proximity of work offered to them, as well as the nature of that work as being segregated from men's work geographically. They trace this segregation of location in their thesis study of Worcester, Massachusetts as an average American community.

Second, Hanson and Pratt argue that there are stark gender divisions in nature of work in the sectors they studied. They explore theories of feminism and spatial containment, especially in

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<sup>11</sup> In Chapters 4 and 5, I look at Loos' and Modernist era house designs as a reflection of cultural "ideals" of

the occupational segregation of women both locationally and historically since the last century. They also look at the theories of public and private spheres, of space as territory (Hanson & Pratt, 1995, p. 21) and of feminine subjectivity in terms of proximity and enclosure, as explored by Griselda Pollock (Hanson & Pratt, 1995, p. 16). They find that, in general, women tend to be segregated "...into female-dominated lines of work and ...men into male-dominated jobs." (Hanson & Pratt, 1995, p. 58). This is a parallel to Spain's defining of tasks as gender specific "...work suitable for women." (Spain, 1992).

Hanson and Pratt then carry out a quantitative and qualitative study of four urban communities in and around Worcester. They argue that women tend to be segregated through distance and gender and that their opportunities for work thus become more limited (Hanson & Pratt, 1995, pp. 93-95). They discuss the theoretical relationships of gender - "the public" and the "private" as segregating women, both in terms of the urban versus suburban and in terms of the male versus female position at work and in relation to it geographically.

Pratt and Hanson seem impatient with the feminist view of the public/private segregation of gender in favor of men. However, as Daphne Spain (1992) points out in *Gendered spaces*, the public/private separation of gender is historically, socially and culturally constructed in the family and influenced by the spatial designs of homes, schools and offices in both non-Industrial and Industrial societies. Yet, although Pratt and Hanson criticize these feminist ideas, they recognize that "...if they are 'embedded in these cultures' then these ideas of public/private cannot be ignored nor should they be accepted as the truth." (Hanson & Pratt, 1995, pp. 94-95).

Finally, like Spain, Hanson and Pratt place a heavy emphasis on the "locational" influences of gender work choices, and their studies indicate that women "...tend to choose jobs that are significantly closer to home than are the jobs that men choose." (Hanson & Pratt, 1995, pp. 96-97).

For Hanson and Pratt, researching Worcester was a valid exercise. The authors uncovered many limitations in their study, however, and their frustration is evident. Notwithstanding, location was important as a determinant of women's choice, supporting the reality that women tend to work closer to home, and thus are limited to work that is determined by location rather than an education.

## **2.5 IMPLICATIONS**

Female and male ways of knowing, social constructions of knowledge, and definitions of space both within and around notions of gender, all impact on how we see and interpret the values that we live by. As importantly, the inverse also applies. If this is true, then what students learn and how they learn it are based on value constructions that are not "objective" and that have hidden agendas about how students will succeed in society. Space becomes a major influence in shaping how we interact in public and in private. In the next chapter, I will explore the role of education and the social constructions that reinforce values in school.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE ROLE OF SCHOOL AND THE POLITICS OF EDUCATION**

The female voice is affected by the structures inherent in the current education system. The female voice has its foundations in social institutions such as the family, the education system, and the workplace. Gender issues are avoided in the teaching of design and in art in general, and yet design contributes to shaping the way in which we create social relationships and hierarchical modes of behaviour in the workplace. Political structures such as educational institutions, as will be shown here, serve as one way in which society transmits values to students.

What is the role of school and institutions in reinforcing social structures such as family? What role does school play in the formation of the values that students have before they enter design school? What values do design educators attempt to instill in students of design? What impact (if any) do these values have on success in the interior design field? Prior to exploring the implications of these ideas in the teaching of interior design students, I will evolve a theoretical study of the role of school and its role in shaping values, exploring its impact on both females and males in society.

#### **3.1 THE NATURE OF LEARNING**

Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron (1990) in their book *Reproduction in education, society and culture* question the very essence of the nature of learning. Their thesis looks at the theoretical, social and political structures that create the school system. They maintain that these structures teach certain values that are reinforced by the culture that receives these structures. According to Bourdieu and Passeron, subliminal control of the "dominated class" is carried out on two levels. First, they state that:

In any given social formation, the pedagogic through which the dominant PA (pedagogic authority) is carried on always has a function of keeping order, i.e., of reproducing the structure of the power relations between the groups or classes, inasmuch as, by inculcation or exclusion, it tends to impose recognition of the legitimacy of the dominant culture on the members of the dominated groups or classes... (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, pp. 40-41)

What is it that we are taught in school? Who decides what we are taught and how? Whose values are at the heart of the content and pedagogy of learning at all levels of education? Bourdieu and Passeron maintain that we are taught values and modes of behaviour that are not necessarily of our own choosing; they are those of a minority dominant elite.

Secondly, Bourdieu and Passeron state that "...the PW (pedagogic work)...tends to impose recognition of the legitimacy of the dominant classes....it tends at the same time to impose on them, by inculcation or exclusion, the illegitimacy of their own cultural arbitrary." (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 41). Not only is there a dominant class creating the agenda of what is learned in schools; there is also a systematic legitimizing of the dominant culture at the expense of the dominated, and often (unwittingly) with their help. According to Bourdieu and Passeron, this is accomplished through many vehicles and means within the school system, and reinforced in society and its culture.

Bourdieu and Passeron's work leads me to the question: Are we conscious of the effect we have in shaping our students in terms of their social relations, gender, and sense of selves? Many instructors in design, for example, regard pedagogy as gender-free. Yet certain pedagogical methods and environments reinforce negative female gender associations, while perpetuating dominant male power. Ultimately, I am concerned with design education: what are methods of teaching for design that work, and what are the appropriate settings in which designers learn. In light of the work of Bourdieu and Passeron, I am concerned with masculine and feminine "ways of

knowing." As such, I will consider three common threads in Bourdieu's theories: the theory of dominant culture, the notion of pedagogic work, and the legitimacy of what is taught in schools.

### **3.2 THE THEORY OF DOMINANT CULTURE**

#### **3.2.1 Functionalist and interpretive theories about the structure of school**

Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) contend that exists a strong interrelationship between what society believes it values and the control of these meanings by powerful groups which they refer to as the "dominant class". Bourdieu states that:

The selection of meanings which objectively defines a group's or a class's culture as a symbolic system is arbitrary insofar as ....(it) cannot be deduced from any universal principle....In any given social formation the cultural arbitrary which the power relations between the groups or classes making up that social formation put into the dominant position...is the one which most fully, though always indirectly, expresses the...interests (material and symbolic) of the dominant groups or classes. (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, pp. 8-9)

In other words, Bourdieu and Passeron argue that the dominant "culture" (or class) controls the values within institutions and this culture is legitimized. As I mentioned in describing my vignette earlier, Bennett de Marais and Lecompte, in their book *The way schools work* (1995), outline different theories of systems that affect social behaviour and structures such as the school system. Bourdieu's dominant culture is manifested in what Bennett de Marais and Le Compte call functionalism, as was my colleague's teaching style. They argue that functionalism operates on both macro and micro levels. The functionalist view of how schools work is a theory that is widely adopted in North America. On a macro level, functionalism looks at:

...human systems...(which) have underlying ...coherence...based upon formal rules...functionalists view educational systems as one of the structures which carry out the function of transmission of attitudes, values, skills, and norms from one generation to another...education systems perpetuate the accepted culture. (Bennett de Marais & LeCompte, 1995, pp. 6-7)

In this type of system, values and "accepted" patterns of behaviour, as well as social norms and cultural icons, are reinforced (as Bourdieu also maintains) through a systematic pedagogy of rules and control. The way things are taught thus become more important than what is taught.

But who should determine what is taught? In his book, *Conflict of interest* (1993), Joel Spring states in laymen's terms what Bourdieu outlines in theory: that whose knowledge is to be taught is as important as how it is to be taught. He states that

A central question in the politics of education is, who should decide what knowledge is of most worth...In contemporary times, the dissemination of knowledge is linked to giving individuals credentials for entry into the labour market...the major conflicts of education are caused by competition among groups and individuals to influence the ideas disseminated to all students...overlaying these conflicts are the interests of professors in enhancing their status...and struggles among professional educators for power and money... (Spring, 1993, p. 217)

Thus school is not just a center for learning: school becomes a place where certain interest groups try to impose the values they wish to perpetuate.

### **3.2.2 The theory of pedagogic authority**

Bourdieu also theorizes that "The different pedagogic authorities ...tend to reproduce the system of cultural arbitraries characteristic of that social formation, thereby contributing to the reproduction of the power relations which put that cultural arbitrary into the dominant position." (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 10). Therefore, school academic administrators and teachers, as "pedagogic authorities", through the dissemination of the school's values and pedagogic ideas, contribute to the dissemination of political and social values that are imposed on them. A good example of this is at Dawson College, where number grades are used. The college system requires a number grade to be assessed for work that, in interior design, is highly subjective, and where perhaps a different grading system might be more suitable. As chairperson, I receive many complaints about number grades that are based on subjective judgements, which, if graded in a



different manner, would perhaps include the subjective component more equitably. Yet the grades are numerical and reflect Bourdieu and Passeron's discussion about societal values.

### **3.2.3 Interpretive theories - Resituating John Dewey**

I contrasted my colleague's teaching style earlier with my own, which reflects a combination of what Bennett de Marrais and Lecompte (1995) call interpretive theory and critical theory. Interpretations of social and/or constructed reality will vary with the individual and cannot be sanctioned by an authoritative body such as school, nor can it be "standardized". John Dewey's (1916) model of "democracy" in education is an example of this type of theory. Dewey sees "democracy" as "...A society which makes provision for participation in its good of all its members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of social life..." (Dewey, 1916, p. 99). Schooling is thus seen as central to shaping the construction of meaning and knowledge through personal interaction. This model is not commonly in use, due to failed attempts to implement John Dewey's ideas within functionalist frameworks, in schools in the 1960's and 1970's.

Even if the interpretive theory offers a more personal and interactive relationship, Bourdieu sees the dominant classes as having a great deal at stake, should they accept it. Therefore, they are determined to maintain the status quo (functionalist-based education) at almost any cost, as "...the law of the market ...fixes the economic and symbolic value..." (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 10). As long as market forces are controlled by a dominant class, there will be a similar control in education by that same class.

The repercussions of Bourdieu's statements are apparent in school systems today in Quebec. The college system, for example, fragments students in forcing them to take as many as ten subjects at a time, professing to give the students a "well-rounded" education. There is an

enormous amount of pressure on students, who are burdened by both a heavy workload imposed by their respective discipline and by general education subjects such as English, French, humanities and physical education. Although in theory this may be a good idea, it is a reflection of what Bourdieu and Passeron idea of perpetuating the culture through the structure of school.

A fundamental conflict between the goals of functionalist theory and interpretive theory is in their respective values. The functionalists are macro-oriented, meaning that they deal with large-scale social implications and emphasize the functional administration of schools "...schooling serves to reinforce the existing social and political order." (Bennett de Marrais and LeCompte, 1995, p. 7). Interpretive theory looks alternatively at the individual as central to the construction of meaning, on a micro-level.

I see this conflict playing out in my own position as Chairperson of the Interior Design program at Dawson College. For example, in the fall of 1997, we were asked by the College to form a "program committee" made up of representatives and ourselves from each of the "core" areas of study. Students must take courses in design, fine arts, English, French, humanities and physical education as part of their overall course load. Until the first committee meeting, each sector had been totally autonomous and independent, in terms of content and teaching method. At our first meeting, a very lively discussion polarized the group into two camps: those who preferred an integral core and curriculum where the student as active learner and designer (as an integral topic) were part of the process. Others diametrically opposed this "weakening" of curriculum, favoring maintaining separation, and teacher as lecturer as the pedagogical mode. I wondered what the administration's motive was for calling this committee together; was it really to better integrate the core and career programs, or was it to alienate them and antagonize them so that change ultimately would not occur.

Finally, interior design is a discipline that places a heavier emphasis on interpretive pedagogical methods, whereas Dawson College, as a typical CEGEP institution funded by the government, maintains a structure that is functionalist. The two are almost diametrically opposed to one another. The interesting thing is that interior design is placed under the umbrella of a "technical program", yet my discussions with many of the administrative personnel reveal that most of these have no idea of what interior designers really do, or think of interior design as decoration.

### **3.3 BOURDIEU'S THEORIES OF PEDAGOGIC WORK**

The Dawson College example brings me to the next aspect of Bourdieu's theories. I have suggested that Bourdieu's argument centers around what he refers to as "pedagogic work". The ideologies and values of the dominant culture are validated at the expense of the dominated culture. The values of the dominant culture become the "legitimate dominant authority" and this is validated and manifested through what Bourdieu calls "pedagogic work". Pedagogic work refers to the actual ways in which ideas are disseminated to the dominated culture. Pedagogic work is manifested in three ways.

First, pedagogic work, according to Bourdieu, "...confirm(s) and consecrate(s) pedagogic authority...by masking more and more completely, through the success of the inculcation of the arbitrary, the arbitrariness of the inculcation and of the culture inculcated." (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, pp. 36-37). In other words, pedagogical methods replicate and legitimize those points of view and attitudes that reinforce the validity of the structures in power. Bourdieu uses the example of the baptism and confirmation, where in baptism the child is unwittingly indoctrinated and then committed to an education of faith leading to the "confirming" of that faith at a later age.

However, pedagogic work need not be "controlled" in this manner. As Bourdieu then states, "Only the concept of pedagogic work can break the circle in which one is trapped when one

forgets that a 'cultural need' is a "cultivated need", i.e., when one severs it from the social conditions of its production." (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 38). An example of this latter type of pedagogic work is in the curriculum of most interior design programs. The curriculum in first year is heavily theoretical and grounded in fine arts and abstract concepts. Students only begin to design spaces in the last stages of the first year, after student preconceived notions of "design" or "decoration" have been broken down systematically. They are taught to look, to see the world around them, to question and to see design as part of their everyday existence, their value systems, and as part of their "culture". These techniques fly in the face of traditional pedagogic methods, and may indirectly explain the usual lack of support in design programs for the traditional education systems! They are, however, a clear example of critical theory as defined by Bennett de Marrais and LeCompte (1995).

### **3.3.1 Teacher as all-knower / Pedagogic authority**

Secondly, the teacher of the dominant pedagogy is the "all-knower" and the language is authoritative; the teacher is the transmitter, the all-knowledgeable; possessing an excellence that the student "receives" as knowledge. Bourdieu theorizes that the "...social definition of excellence always tends to make reference to 'naturalness'..." (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, pp. 38-39). The teacher as "all-knower" is at the heart of most functionalist pedagogy (Spring, 1993; Bourdieu, 1990). Bourdieu elaborates on the language of the professor (pp. 109-123) as extremely "convoluted", so that "...his status (as) authority is not contested..." (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, p. 111). He implies that, not only is the language confusing; it also seeks to further exclude those who are not of the "dominant class" and create a "separateness" to justify the existence of the pedagogic work.

Bourdieu uses the spatial example of the auditorium as conveying the spatial support of this separateness; a typical school auditorium layout used in many institutions that I have sketched here illustrated this point (see Figures 3.1 and 3.2). As you can see, the podium is lit, far away from the audience who sits in the dark, formally separated and spatially reinforcing separateness of lecturer and student.

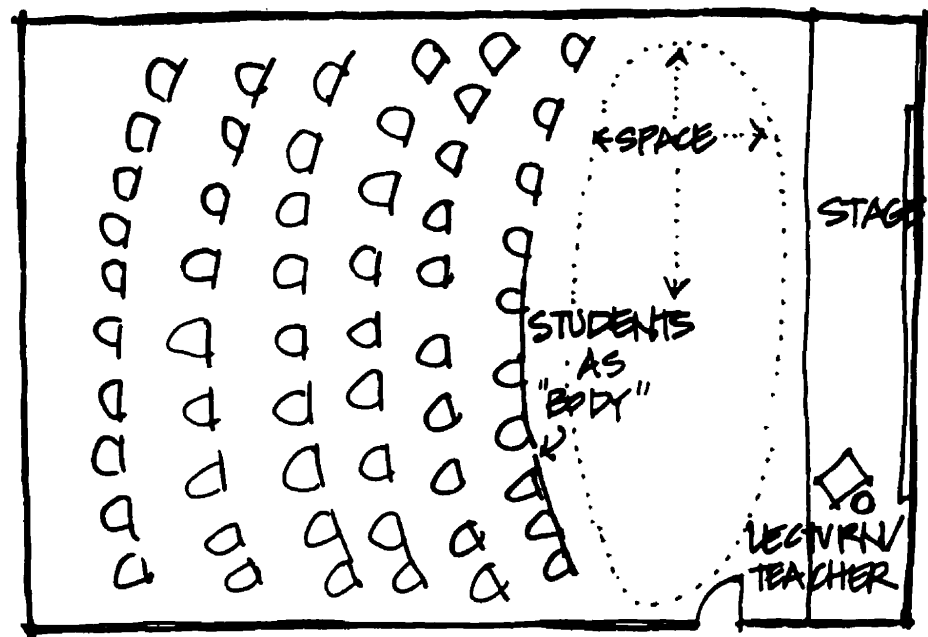
### **3.4 PEDAGOGIC WORK AND GENDER LEGITIMACY**

Bourdieu and Passeron believe that "...the pedagogic work through which the dominant PA (pedagogic authority) is carried on always has a function of keeping order ...of reproducing the structure of the power relations...the main thrust of the imposition of recognition of the dominant culture as legitimate culture...comes from exclusion..." (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, pp. 40-41).

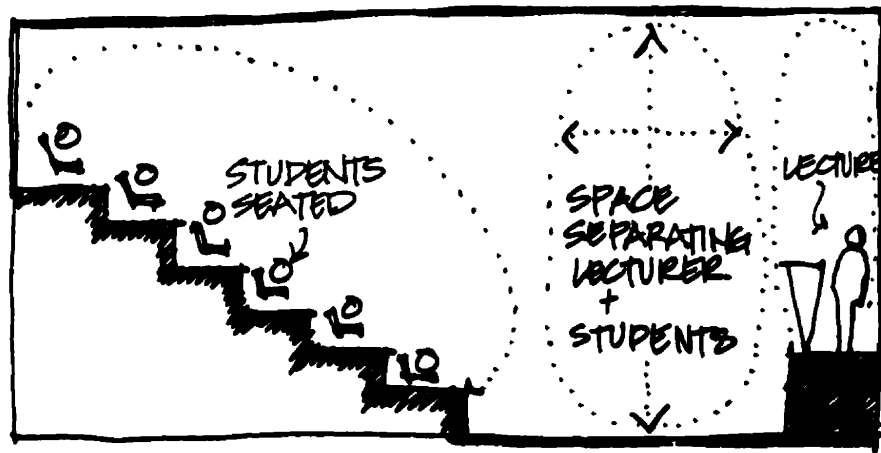
This brings me to the third component of Bourdieu's theory of pedagogic work: gender legitimacy. This aspect of Bourdieu's theory is crucial in that it not only has implications for pedagogy, but specifically for pedagogy relating to gender and also to the arts. How? There are three ways in which Bourdieu's theory of gender legitimacy affects pedagogy: in terms of gender legitimacy itself, in terms of pedagogical methods used in teaching the arts, and in terms of subject preference (math and sciences over arts).

#### **3.4.1 Gender legitimacy**

The idea of gender legitimacy is not new; numerous studies have shown that educational systems systematically favor the development of boys over girls. This stems from fundamental attitudes imposed in how boys and girls are raised from early childhood.



PLAN

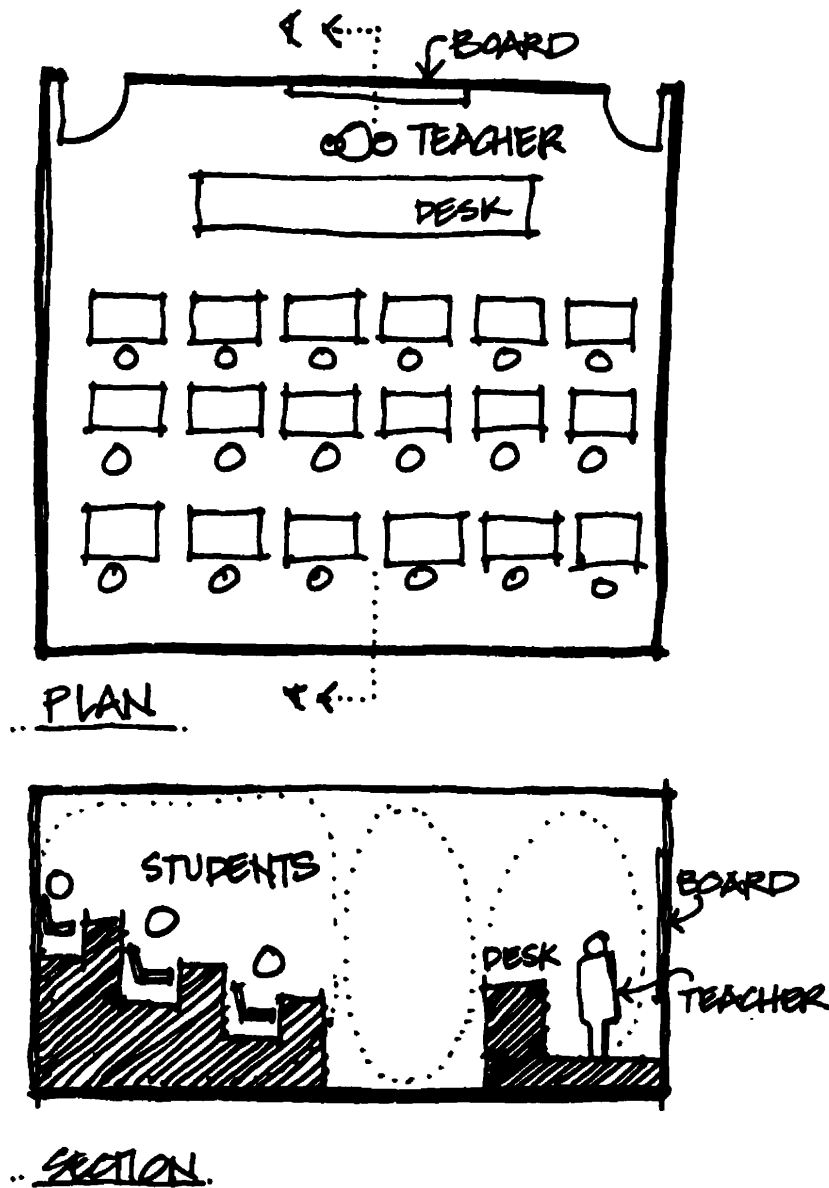


SECTION

Figure 3.1

Auditorium as lecture space

An auditorium is a common place for holding a lecture and is a design that is relatively inflexible. Students sit in fixed seats and are in the dark (as a mass); the lecturer is in the "light" and well removed from the student. This example supports Bourdieu's spatial link to separateness of teacher (as all-knower) to student.



**Figure 3.2**

**Lecture lab at a typical school**

The drawing at the top is a plan showing a series of desks where students sit and a long table and "podium" where the teacher lectures. The "separateness" Bourdieu expresses is partly reinforced in the design of the space. The dotted circles indicated barriers and "territories" of "teacher" and "student"; both remain separate due to the space between and the physical barrier of the long table and raised platform elevating and separating the teacher from the students.

According to Aveson and Kunkel:

In our society, as in most others, boys are raised differently than girls....even when parents make deliberate efforts to treat a daughter and son in the same way, the chances are that relatives, schools and the larger community will socialize one to meet the culture of "woman" and the other to fulfill the roles of "man". In the latter years of high school the gap between girls and boys becomes most noticeable, with boys having the advantage, both intellectually and physically. (Aveson & Kunkel, 1991, p. 57)

Other studies and examples support these findings (Association of University Women Educational Foundation, 1995; Matthews, 1986; Garratt, 1986; Rudduck, 1994; Thomas, 1990).

### **3.4.2 Gender legitimacy and perceptions of space - A study**

Several studies have been carried out tracing gender ability through high school. An example of such a study was done by M.H. Matthews (1986) in Great Britain. Matthews studied the development of girls and boys as they move through school, specifically looking at how they achieve in the study of geography. She develops the argument that innate biological/psychological traits in males and females seem to be enhanced by socialization. She notes that there are few women in the field, and her study traces the development of both genders in this subject from early grades through high school and into post-secondary education. Matthews starts by stating that "... (there are) substantive gender-related differences...in the aptitudes of young girls and boys...from an early age girls excel in verbal activity and creativity...conversely, in respect to analytic and mathematical reasoning young boys forge ahead and often maintain this advantage...." (Matthews, 1986, pp. 259-260). Matthews states that socialization begins at an early age in the home. It is there that innate differences are encouraged, and then reinforced at school, in society and by the media.

Through her long-term study, Matthews found that girls and boys at a very young age are given, through cultural influences and family habits, very different boundaries of play: boys are



allowed to explore and girls are kept closer to the home. This led to a marked difference in the ways in which girls were able to represent space. The implications are that "In general, girls show less awareness of the places around them: their mental maps are narrower in dimension than those of boys...but (that) girls have the same potential to represent space as boys provided they experience the same experience of place." (Matthews, 1986, p. 269). She concludes that the male domination of geography has more to do with the fact that by the time girls reach adolescence, they have less space awareness and less "environmental" capability (Matthews, 1986, p. 269). They are not as able to tackle the mapping problems expected in school projects and tests as they have not developed the same experience of space and place. Their perceptions are less "open" and have been perpetuated throughout their schooling in this manner, leading to fewer successful pursuits of geography at higher education levels.

### **3.5 PEDAGOGICAL METHODS USED TO TEACH INTERIOR DESIGN**

Earlier I mentioned the functionalist and interpretive theories of the structure of school and how these parallel my colleague's teaching methods and those of my own. Throughout my career I have experienced interior design as a somewhat interactive process. If this is true, then, by extension, teaching design should be an interactive process. This means not only teaching the design process as it is practiced, but also in an environment conducive to this type of learning. This does not negate hierarchical or functionalist methods, but does mean that they should not be the method of choice or imposed in situations such as teaching the design process.

#### **3.5.1 The spatial setting as reinforcing hierarchical values of society**

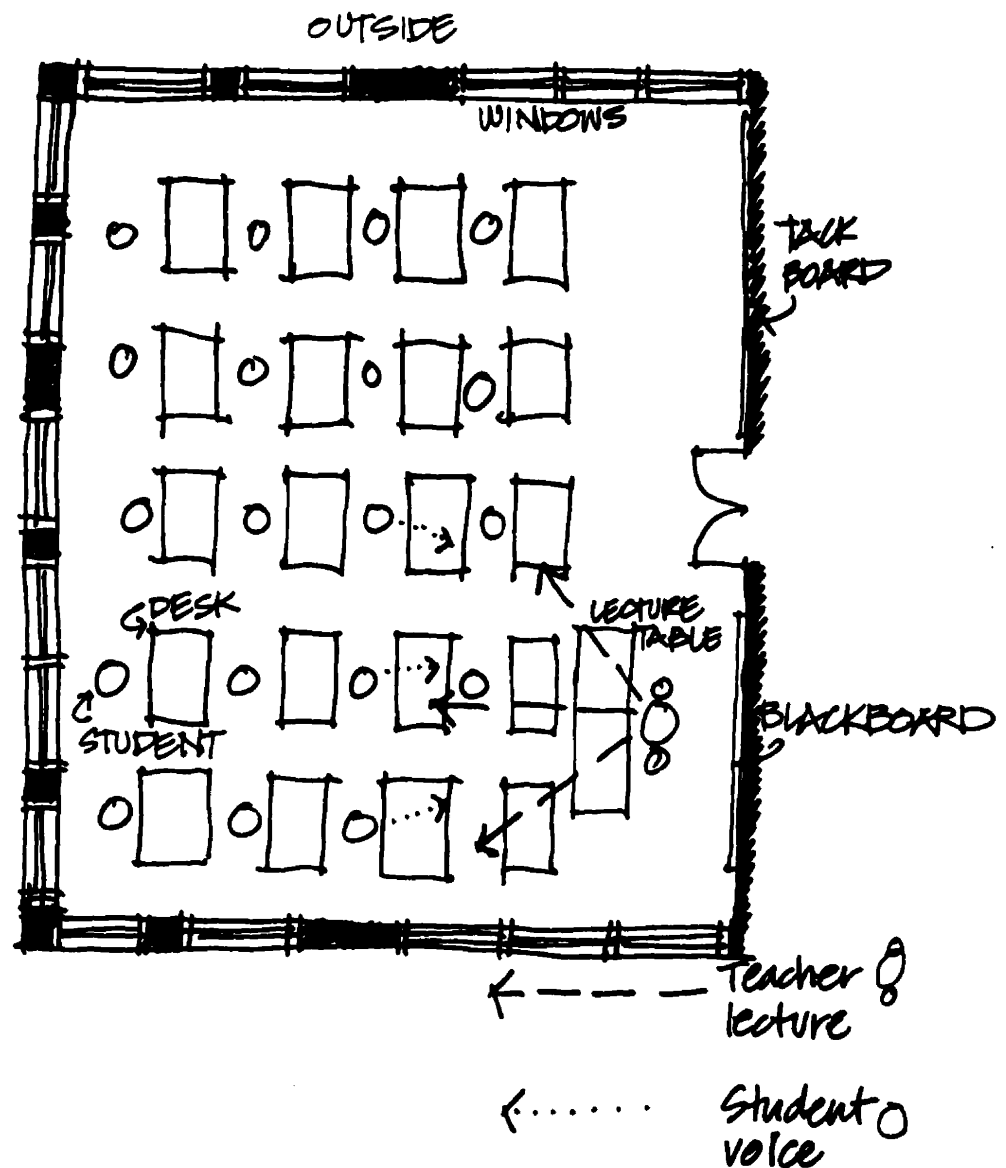
I demonstrated in Figures 3.1 and 3.2, Bourdieu links the spatial school setting to the reinforcement of the separateness of the teacher from the students. Bourdieu realizes that traditional school settings reinforce the separateness desired by the dominant class:

The lecturer finds in the particularities of the space which the traditional institution arranges for him (the platform, the professorial chair...) the material and symbolic conditions which enable him to keep the students at a respectable distance...Elevated and enclosed in the space which crowns him orator, separated from his audience...by a few empty rows which materially mark the distance...(Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 109)

The space thus defines the relationship between the student and teacher as one of separation, and as earlier discussed, formalizes the "teacher as all-knower" and student as "ignorant sponge" dichotomy. At Dawson College, the design studio configuration is often a reflection of the teacher's mode of instruction. For example, the studios are supposedly "multifunctional" classrooms that contain both lecture and studio areas. Even so, the blackboard is placed at the front of the room, dictating a hierarchical stance for the teacher. As you see in Figure 3.3, the studio is set up with a lecture table in front of the blackboard, and all the drafting tables lined up in rows facing the blackboard. I often arrive at the teaching studio only to find it in this standard room layout. Bourdieu's point is well made: a long table separates the lecturer from the students. When I enter, I am always shifting the desks back to the level of the first row of students or to the side of the room, as indicated in Figure 3.4. I use one of the students' tables as my place to deposit my lecture material. This allows me the freedom to move to the middle of the group of students when I speak. They frequently seem alarmed, as they are used to the teacher remain stationary at the front, and with the first two rows of tables empty! Here again we see the implication of space, not only in perpetuating the teaching method but also in formulating the social relations of the "authority" and the "learner".

### **3.5.2 Attitudes of pedagogy as reflected in the workplace of design**

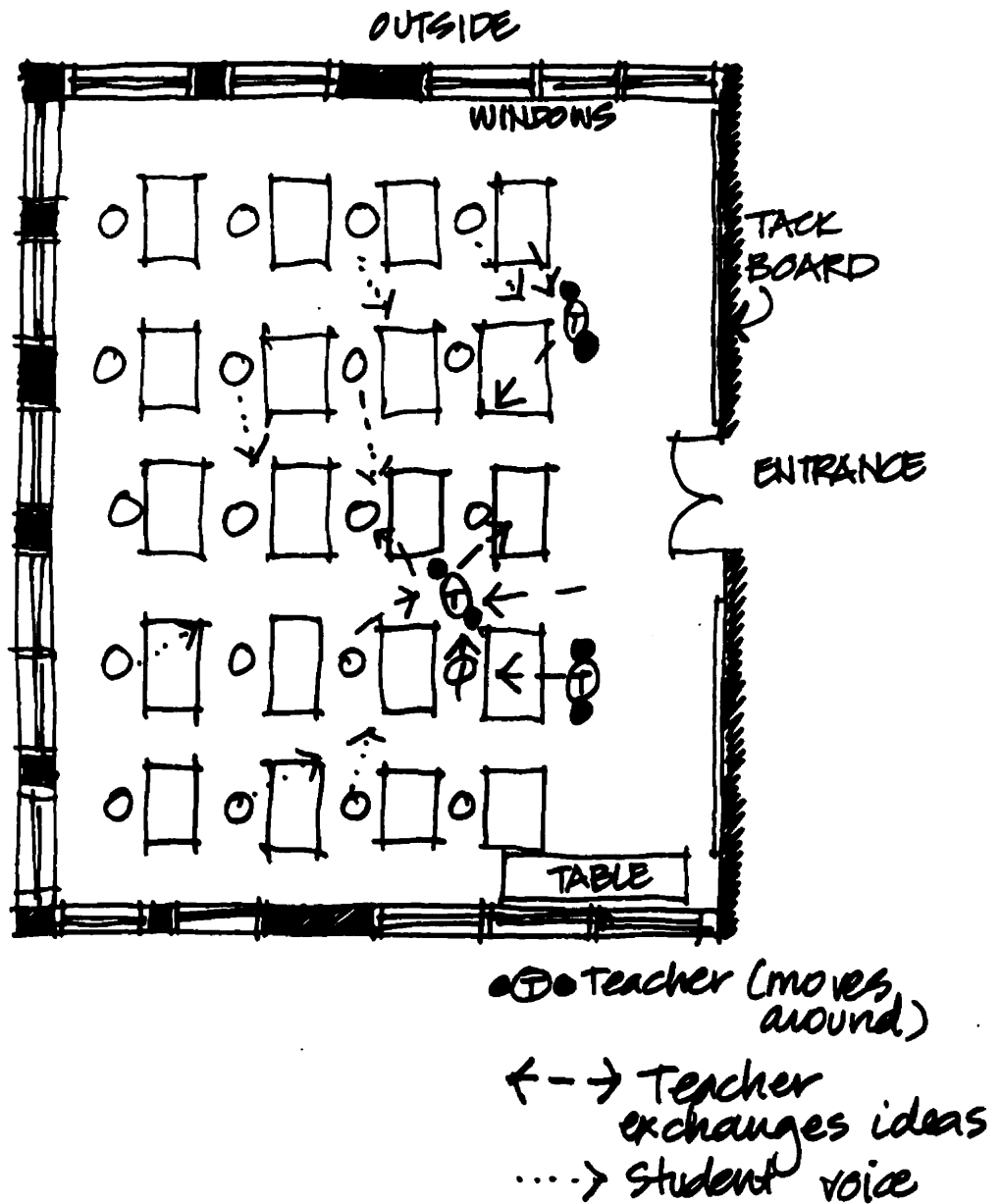
I believe that when we teach interior design to students, we inadvertently teach counter-productive attitudes of a hierarchical nature when we follow the functionalist model.



**Figure 3.3**

**Typical studio layout/traditional design studio at Dawson College**

This plan shows a series of drafting tables (20) facing a blackboard. The teacher stands at the table, which is a physical barrier to the students. Conversation is mostly one-way: the lecturer to the student.



**Figure 3.4**

**Typical studio layout/design studio of teacher as facilitator**

This plan shows the same layout as Figure 2.3, except the teacher is moving around and engaging students. Ideally, the tables would also move and be "freer", not all in rows.

In today's interior design work climate, I as a designer often must collaborate with other architects, engineers, and, most importantly, the client in the successful realization of a project. If I teach students separateness and attitudes modelling the "all-knower", then by extension they do not learn about collaborative and cooperative strategies. This dichotomy is often seen when students are asked to do group work. They tend to dislike working on group projects, which are normally introduced in third year. In studio in the previous two years, they have been taught to design as an individual. After two years of individual work habits, it is difficult for some students to suddenly become collaborators. Again, this is my own observation and it points to another aspect of the way in which interior designers learn that requires further study. However, in a recent article in *Canadian interiors*, entitled "Designer as trusted advisor", the collaborative and interactive designer was seen as most trustworthy. Sharon Van der Kaay says that:

When clients talk about their designers to other clients, they rarely express concerns about esthetics—they expect excellent design. Instead, clients want to know about the working relationship...The era of I-know-what's-best-for-you professional is fast disappearing. The Expert with Answers is being replaced by the Collaborators with Questions. (Van der Kaay, 1997, p. 10)

When we as teachers teach individuality and then expect cooperative behaviour, we can encounter resistance. Students need to understand and learn in a cooperative manner even at early stages of learning design. They need to have a teacher who guides them and interacts with them, in the same way that designers work with their clients. Clients do not want someone (to work with) who is uninvolved, and teachers need to show, by example and by pedagogical method, the tools for this type of work. Hierarchical methods do not fit this type of teaching. Critical pedagogy that uses the subject as part of the known is crucial to the education of the designer. The designer must see the client's problem through the client's eyes.

### **3.6 GENDER LEGITIMACY AND SUBJECT LEGITIMACY**

#### **3.6.1 The implications for gender and subject choice- Inter-linked concepts in school and in society**

Earlier I discussed Bourdieu's idea of the legitimacy of the dominant culture over the dominated, and how this "illegitimizes" their existence. As Bourdieu states, to do so is "...to inculcate the fait accompli of the legitimacy of the dominant culture...to internalize the legitimacy of its exclusion; by making those it relegates to second order teaching recognize the inferiority of this teaching and its audience..." (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 41). Bourdieu means that certain subjects are more "legitimate" and he also says that:

One of the least noticed effects of compulsory schooling is that succeeds in obtaining from the dominated classes a recognition of legitimate knowledge and know-how..(E.G. in law , medicine, technology, entertainment or art (in the traditional sense), entailing the devaluation of knowledge and know-how they effectively command (customary law,...folk art...) and so providing a market for material...monopolized by the dominant classes. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 42)

Not only are certain subjects favored, but they are then proliferated in many aspects of society as "important". In theoretical terms, Bourdieu confirms that not only are certain subjects considered "better", but fundamental values and feelings such as emotions are of less importance.

#### **3.6.2 Comparison of interior design and architecture**

A good example of this legitimizing of subjects in the society is the role interior design has played vis-a-vis architecture. Interior design has always played "second fiddle" to architecture politically and economically. Historically, this is to be expected since interior design has only evolved as a "profession" in the last fifty years. However, this historic evolution has also politically entrenched interior design into a societal and political quagmire that interior designers battle with daily in three ways: popular perception, education and legislation. I've observed that popular public perception of the interior designer is of a person that "decorates bathrooms". North American

educational standards such as F.I.D.E.R. do exist, but few schools have accreditation.

Legislatively, the role the interior designer plays in the community varies greatly from province to province and state to state.

Legislatively in Quebec, there is an ancient and outmoded law limiting what a designer can do. The designer in Quebec is limited to project values up to \$100,000.00 and not over 1000 square feet. Many architects agree that this is ludicrous; however, others wish to maintain the status quo. This is an especially touchy subject, since architectural contracts have dropped off and architects are seeking interior work which, when they had larger building contracts to carry out, was not seen as lucrative. Aside from the fact that architects and designers see the problem differently, in other provinces legislation states that designers can do any size project, provided that they do not endanger public safety. This is possible as many large-scale interior design projects are offices, and the type of work involved is not beyond the scope of an interior designer. In Quebec, however, the designer who wants to do this type of work must hand over their plans to an architect to get approval, even if they have done all of the work. Designers by law can work for architects, but the reverse is not the case. Designers in Quebec require an architect's or engineer's stamped drawing for any work over 1000 square feet in size or over \$100,000 in value. Needless to say, this accounts for most commercial work. The law hasn't changed in many years, so the economic value of construction allowed by a designer has shrunk. The Interior Designers' Society of Quebec is working to change this status and legislation as it is outdated and, as a law, is presently being manipulated by some architect lobby groups who wish to maintain the status quo. Not all architects think in this way—as I mentioned earlier, interior design as a profession in Canada is ideally part of a collaboration of architects, engineers and other consultants who work together to create a

successful project for the client. This example reinforces Bourdieu's idea of how the power /authority within structures reflects and contributes to the reinforcement of values in disciplines.

### **3.6.3 Student perceptions of the visual arts**

Underlying the political problem that I just described is the larger social perception of subject legitimization, and in attitudes about the visual arts and whom they represent. Certain subjects in school are favored over others; when I receive applications from students entering the interior design program, they reveal a lack of art as a subject in many schools. In my own high school experience, physical education was heavily emphasized in a strong academic setting, and arts were relegated to the basement. In fact, art was not regarded as worthy of one award, versus the possibility for students of winning one of several for academic subjects such as math. The arts in many schools are not considered of primary importance, and are relegated to secondary status, or are not even offered.

The gender implications of this are tremendous. In her study *Gender and subject in higher education* (1990), Kim Thomas implies that subjects are divided along gender lines and that fundamental values instilled at an early age create a more complex interaction of gender and subject. Thomas studies how perceptions of gender are tied to concepts of "powerful" and "powerless". She suggests that there is a perceived "masculinity of science versus femininity in the arts" and states that:

Artist, poet, and novelist are all seen as warm and exciting, but as of little worth. Mathematician, physicist and engineer are seen as extremely valuable...These stereotypes have a much wider set of connotations... 'science', 'masculinity', 'hardness' 'difficulty', and 'value' are all apparently associated ideas...feminine men as arts oriented....saw science as masculine and arts as feminine... (Thomas, 1990, p. 33)

Thomas traces the link between concepts of "feminine" as tied to the arts and the arts as effeminate/worthless, while "male" is more closely associated with science and is considered to be



more "legitimate". In popular culture these ideas are constantly reinforced. For example, in the fall of 1997, I viewed a television program on the education system in Vermont called "You Can Quote Me". The local school boards were considering cutting "non-priority" subjects such as art, and supporting "priority" subjects such as math, sciences and English only. Intentionally or not, these changes were listed on charts that sent a message to the average viewer that certain subjects are "more important" than others. As Thomas concludes, the implications of these attitudes are not male versus female but rather powerful versus powerless. The fundamental value issue is not strictly about females since she also makes reference to "effeminate males", also associated with arts in the "secondary" category. Finally, Thomas succinctly states that:

...perceptions of the arts and sciences are shaped by notions of masculinity and femininity ... (and) are ultimately related to issues of power and control and the need to concentrate power in the hands of certain groups of people. Women... have been historically excluded from the making of knowledge, in particular science, and this is related (not necessarily causally) to women's powerlessness. (Thomas, 1990, pp. 35-36)

As with my earlier discussion of Code's female ways of knowing and Bourdieu's theories of the dominant class, the issue becomes one of who controls the making and legitimizing of knowledge.

### **3.7 IMPLICATIONS**

As we have seen to this point, the nature of knowledge and who controls its dissemination are political and social vehicles through which interior design is taught. In the education of students, curriculum is controlled by several forces: administrators with political agendas, and teachers with personal or pedagogical agendas, and by the conditions that create the knowledge and attitudes of the individual student as female or male.

However, the discussion is not complete without an understanding of the influence of curriculum content on the attitudes that have been discussed in the previous chapters. In the next

two chapters, I will round out the discussion of the politics of voice by looking at design from two vantage points: feminist epistemology in art history and the design process of space itself.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGY AND THE RELATIONSHIP OF ART AND DESIGN**

#### **4.1 CONTEXTUALIZING THE DISCUSSION**

Parallel to the role of education in shaping attitudes of the student interior designer is the historical influence that art history has had in formulating perceptions that students have. Part of the pedagogy of interior design is the incorporation of fine arts, and art and interior design history, into interior design curriculum content. In the interior design curriculum at Dawson College, for example, fine arts courses account for 50% of the curriculum in first year and 15% in second and third years.

I will discuss feminist epistemology from the viewpoint of feminism and art education. Feminism and aesthetics have been seen ultimately as polarized concepts, as feminists reject the "traditional art canon" as it is known in art and aesthetic circles. The traditional art canon embraces formality at the expense of inclusion. Recall that feminists reject the canon because in it female and minority perspectives are overlooked, and female interpretation of subject matter and aesthetic values do not constitute part of the canon dialogue.

There are two points that I would like to emphasize in this chapter. First, values, as explored and defined earlier, are perpetuated in the traditional art canon, and in the attitudes that have prevailed in the teaching of art history. Secondly, there are inherent values that are taught when the "traditional" art canon overlooks female art and supports male art. In my discussion, I will look at Griselda Pollock's viewpoint as it impacts on our perceptions of art and ideas about beauty and about values related to the private and the public. Pollock's view of French Impressionist artists is an example of the ways in which theoretical ideas of subject and object and concepts of

public and private are indoctrinated into a culture. These value concepts are translated into an artistic style, and these views then become part of the culture that is supported by the dominant culture (Bourdieu, 1990) that perpetuates the status quo.

#### **4.1.1 The role of the visual arts in society at large**

Art is a cultural form that has historically reinforced social attitudes and values. The study of art history and art as a form of expression has been a fundamental part of the pedagogy of visual arts programs at higher institutions. As a practicing interior designer, I use the fundamental understandings of art and its history almost daily as I apply what I learned as a student. Art history, and in particular Modernism, was part of my design education, and subsequently greatly influences how I teach and practice design. A fundamental aspect of the social constructions that govern our values in the pedagogy of interior design and architecture is the context of the art history that we are taught as students, and that we subsequently teach to our students as they formulate their values.

Contemporary feminists are deconstructing art history, questioning the value constructs of whose version of art shall be seen. Eurocentric value constructs have dominated Western art history for centuries. Society sees itself through its art; this was especially at the turn of the century with the artists of the Impressionist era. However, as Griselda Pollock demonstrates, the artists we learn about in the traditional version of the Impressionist era are only part of the picture.

#### **4.2 POLLOCK AND MODERNIST WOMEN ARTISTS**

Most of us who have studied or taught interior design have been heavily influenced by the Modern Era. As a student, my art history and design history classes focused on Modernism and the Bauhaus school. Even then I wondered (yet did not question!) the sheer lack of women. I often find it odd that in a field dominated by women, we study periods in history that influence the very

way in which we think, and yet we study mainly male artists, designers and architects. As Griselda Pollock states, "All those canonized as the initiators of modern art are men." (Pollock, 1988, p. 245). Pollock tackles several complex issues, citing the male as viewer/consumer and art as gender specific, to the detriment of women. Pollock states, in her treatise "Modernism and the spaces of femininity", this is not due to lack of women artists. Rather "...it (is) because what modernist art history celebrates is a selective tradition which normalizes, as the ONLY modernism, a particular and Gendered set of practices..." (cited in Broude & Garrard, 1992, p. 245). Pollock engages us in several issues, questioning underlying values that appear to be taken for granted in society.

Pollock begins with a "...deconstruction of the masculine myths of modernism." (cited in Broude & Garrard, 1992, p. 245). Modernity is canonized in Pollock's eyes in two ways: through sexuality and through commercial exchange (for example, prostitution). Within these parameters, and through a study of two female Impressionist artists, Pollock constructs two primary theses. First, she argues that there is a different definition of public and private space for men than for women. Secondly, she contends that woman as other or as an object of beauty in the traditional art canon "...is both an idol and nothing..." (cited in Broude & Garrard, 1992, p.246). Pollock herself states that she is presenting art history as a social construct that not only deprives the female of her voice, and also more importantly as establishing differences based on sex. She uses numerous examples and comparisons of both female and male artists of Impressionism to support her ideas. She evaluates the art of Cassatt and Morisot, two female artists of the Impressionist era. Her fundamental question for the essay thus becomes "How do socially contrived orders of sexual difference structure the lives of Mary Cassatt and Berthe Morisot?.....How did that structure what they produced? The matrix...is that of space." (cited in Broude & Garrard, 1992, p. 248).

#### **4.2.1 Pollock and spatial interpretations of art**

Pollock defines three ways in which Cassatt and Morisot deal with space. First, they locate their subjects in settings different from those of their male counterparts. For example, they choose "private" spaces such as bedrooms and parlors, as compared with the bars, seaside and other public places of a Manet or Monet art piece. Morisot and Cassatt do paint public spaces as well, but their vantage point is different. They do not, however, use the subjects of male Impressionists in their public spaces, such as the bars and cafes. As Pollock states, "...a range of places was closed to them while open to their male colleagues...(the) fluid, public world of the streets,...or sexual exchange..." ( cited in Broude & Garrard, 1992, p. 249). They also show the relationship of working-class labour to the bourgeois home, as in Morisot's 'Wet Nurse', a painting that touches on subjects seen by "French society" as not "public".

Secondly, Pollock defines the spatial order of Morisot and Cassatt's paintings. Pollock compares Morisot's 'On the Balcony' with Manet's 'The Garden of the Princess' and unveils a complex underlying social order within the spatial order of each painting. Manet's viewer is not seen, and remains outside the painting, and Pollock describes his viewer as almost in a fantasy and floating. By contrast, Morisot's viewer is in the same plane as the woman and child on the balcony and immediately part of the image. She describes how Morisot "...locates the viewer in that same place...forcing the viewer to experience a dislocation between her space and that of a world beyond its frontiers." (cited in Broude & Garrard, 1992, p. 251). Pollock points out a stronger social message in the positioning of the woman on the balcony. Pollock states that

What Morisot's balustrades demarcate is not the boundary between public and private but between the spaces of masculinity and femininity inscribed at the level of both what spaces are open to men and women and what relation a man or woman has to that space and its occupants. (cited in Broude & Garrard, 1992, p. 251)

Pollock cites several examples of this different positioning of women artists and their subjects as having a relationship, unlike the voyeur and the gaze of male Impressionists. The interesting thing that I also noticed is that Morisot chooses to paint her subject away from the viewer and with a small child. If you compare it with female images by Renoir or Monet; their subjects always face the viewer, who is thus in a dominant position. Morisot's viewer is rendered less important to the relationship of the two on the balcony, yet on the same plane spatially. Pollock contends that the producer and subject are thus part of the same psychological and social structures that define the image seen. As Pollock states, "As both ideal and social structure, the mapping of the separation of the spheres for women and men on to the division of public and private was powerfully operative in the construction of a specific bourgeois way of life." (Pollock in Broude & Garrard, 1992, p. 253). Pollock goes on to stress that Cassatt and Morisot, through their art, throw these structures into disarray and this is perhaps partly why their art is criticized and intentionally "left out" of the canon. They question the social structures within which they are situated.

Lastly, Pollock does a comparison of the images of women by various artists by constructing a grid. She separates images of women as "ladies" and as "fallen women" and Cassatt and Morisot's women are located in the "ladies" category. By contrast, although some of the male artists' women are in the "ladies" category, a larger proportion of women are located in the "fallen women" category as dancers, mistresses, kept women, prostitutes, and so on. While the two female artists deal with locations within which they are also situated, male artists tend to paint scenes of desire, sexuality and fantasy, scenes with which they may or may not be familiar. Nevertheless, the larger implication is that Morisot and Cassatt depict women as a part of society that they understand, whereas Degas and Manet see women as an ideal of men.

The irony is that the art of Manet and Degas is the known and the art of Cassatt and Morisot is not. Pollock realizes that these women were situated in their historical context and thus saw the world in the way they painted; what is important to note is that Pollock sees the problem not so much of context but rather of denial of their legitimacy in the first place. As she states, "...the critique of authorship is relevant,...cultural producers who are women...(are) typically in art history...denied the status of author/creator. Their creative personality is never canonized or celebrated." (cited in Broude & Garrard, 1992, p. 261). Pollock's goal is to bring female artists of Impressionism into the discourse as active participants.

Crucial to all these complex ideas is the very method Pollock uses in her construction of art history. She uses both male and female artists to demonstrate how the female artists paint from a different perspective. She uses male Impressionists to compare and contrast with the female artists' works, pointing out the male perspective as intertwined in opposites and the female perspective as "...the locus of relationships..." (cited in Broude & Garrard, 1992, p. 264). Pollock is constructing not only differences but also reconstructing the absent female voice in art. Female value systems take shape in Pollock's discourse as a part of the canon, yet distinct in character.

### **4.3 IMPLICATIONS**

The very complex constructions of the various themes explored by Pollock and Nochlin have some very serious implications for my work. In interior design we seem to be well versed in one version of art history; the one that was socially constructed at the expense of the female voice. Pollock's study of Berthe Morisot and her male contemporaries point out the many layers of control by a dominant elite, and show how Morisot attempts to voice alternative statements in her painting.

These alternative studies of art history open new doors to students of design. The inclusion of women is not at the expense of the traditional art canon, nor does it accept the canon



ideals blindly. Pollock raises real questions such as the "social construction of opposites" and the perpetuation of the division of public and private. This split is perpetuated as a vehicle not only to maintain the status quo, but also to create the public/private space dichotomy as a vehicle of sexual control. Most importantly, as we have seen, Pollock analyses art from its social, phenomenological, psychological and contextual underpinnings, exposing the values that determine the art seen ultimately by the public.

What are the implications for us as design educators? We need to look at the values behind the material that we teach, and to be mindful of the social constructions creating the basis of pedagogy in interior design or art history. We need to ask questions such as how the female is positioned in art, and what that says about cultural and social relations between men and women. We need to question, and to encourage our students to question, how we see design historically, contextually and socially. The implications for interior design pedagogy concern the very value systems that support our work as designers.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **THE DESIGN PROCESS**

#### **5.1 THE DESIGN PROCESS AND THE POLITICS OF VOICE**

Throughout this thesis I have illustrated aspects of the design process, as it related to the issues that I have raised. Interior designers and architects, philosophers and theorists have historically created myths about the creative process, and by extension, the design process. I will separate the design process from the creative process, as in my view the creative process is part of the design process but not its determinant. In other words, I do not believe that you have to be “creative” to be able to learn and create using the design process (the philosophical and phenomenological theories of creativity are a complete thesis of their own).

In this chapter, I will present two principal ideas. First, I will argue that the evolution of home and office designs in the twentieth century have had an impact on what Spain calls evolving “the prevailing male privilege (Spain, 1992). I will show that the evolution of these designs also perpetuates Pollock’s ideas of public, private and female. Using the example of the historic evolution of the office, I will look at how issues of privacy and power promote gender (and thus power) segregation.

Secondly, I will discuss various versions of the design process, in the context of the issues that I have evolved to this point. I believe that there are several versions of the design process that we learn, and adhere firmly to the belief that what version we learn determines how we design spaces.

## **5.2 SPACE AND GENDER IMPLICATIONS – THE RESIDENTIAL VIEWPOINT**

In the introduction, I discussed space as an architectural and geographic entity that also reflects epistemological and social constructs. Feminist concerns about how issues such as the “public” and the “private” female are manifested in society were explored. As we saw in the example of Morisot’s art as evaluated by Griselda Pollock, social roles are presented in art differently from the male and female perspectives. In this way, space becomes a physical setting as well as an aesthetic being that envelope our human concerns.

I’d like to come back to Spain and her discussion of the gendering of spaces here, as I believe that the cultural and social spatial constructs that Pollock described are played out in a similar fashion in interior design and architecture. I will present two themes that evolved from my feminist discussion. First, home and office are two examples of space where the status between men and women is reinforced. Historically, the status of women has been lessened, and masculine power has been linked to spatial resolutions of the public and the private. Second, in the residential designs of the Modernist era the voice of the female is scarce; when I studied Modernism, there was an absence of women participants in the production of design and/or architecture. This has implications in terms of gender and subject legitimacy, in that one gender is legitimized over another.

### **5.2.1 The example of residential space and Modernism**

Recall that, as discussed previously, Daphne Spain (1992) investigates the ways in which homes define familial relations and how space defines status and subsequent gender roles which, consequently, become entrenched in societal behaviour and in societal spaces such as the workplace. Spain explores the historical and social evolution of the social construction of men’s and women’s status within the home or office.

I will discuss the home during Modernism in terms of both the way that female spaces are seen, and in terms of gender legitimacy. When I studied Modernism at school in various art history classes, I learnt about exclusively male architects and designers of the Modernist era. The Modernist era was an extremely pivotal era in design in that it was a new aesthetic that evolved and that had not existed before. Pollock's Modernist examples showed a lack of "the spaces of femininity" (Broude & Garrard, 1992). Pollock demonstrated through her comparison of male Impressionist art to that of Morisot, how gender affected their respective points of view.

When I studied Modernism we studied the work of prominent architects such as Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe, and the aesthetic movement in the 1920's in Holland known as DeStijl. These men are examples of architects and designers that redefined aestheticism during the Bauhaus movement of the 1920's and 1930's. What we did not study were the "other" people, notably women, who made significant contributions to these movements, but not in ways that would be considered "acceptable", such as a commissioned work of a Le Corbusier.

Notwithstanding, in her book, *Women and the making of the modern house*, Alice T. Friedman (1998) evolves the thesis that the women clients that these architects worked for had a lot to say about the houses that they commissioned. She broadens the common myth of the architect as "lone ranger" and includes "...women roles as family historians and collectors...and of the home as representational (in stylistic as well as spatial terms) of the activities and values of its occupants." (Friedman, 1998, p. 17). She cites the "...a shift in balance between the public and the private activities of the spaces was the first priority..." (Friedman, 1998, p. 17). She studies the clients as "subjects" and as partners with the architects; I had never even heard of the collaborations of these clients. Certainly the social relationships that architects may have had with clients were never taught in design school. For example, Friedman examines Gerrit Rietveld's

collaboration with Mrs. Schroder on the design of the Schroder house. She describes their client/designer relationship and says that

The Schroder House was an extraordinary achievement...After it was built, Rietveld and Schroder pursued a number of design projects together, collaborating...on interior designs that drew equally on the expertise and experience of each - his in dealing with form, color and design...hers in thinking about modern convenience and new ways of living, especially for women and families. (Friedman, 1998, p. 85)

What is so exciting in Friedman's research is the revelation that gender was not an issue in the work and collaboration. What is disturbing, however, is that this work relationship and collaboration is not what is taught in Modernist pedagogy. What is taught is the value of the architect as "all-knower" and as the struggling "lone artist" who creates; the client is very rarely (if ever) mentioned. Thus the female collaboration is deemed insignificant and, historically, is not mentioned to be of worth. However, as Friedman reveals, there is a wealth of female knowledge that was tapped by these architects in the creation of these spaces. If this is true, then the products are a result of female and male collaboration and values, not just male "creativity" as it is taught currently.

### **5.2.2 Public and private in Modernism**

The concept of public and private space is played out in a somewhat confusing manner in the work of Adolf Loos. Beatriz Colomina (1992) elaborates the theory that buildings have (through their designs) power to create ideals. According to Colomina, each architect is hired to interpret human interactions in a private space such as the home and manipulates architectural form and the social interactions of the inhabitants of the spaces they design, but in a different manner. Colomina says that Loos sees the home as a theater box and comfort as "both intimacy and control", confusing this concept of the private and public spheres. As Colomina explains, in Loos' house designs, there is "...an increasing sense of privacy from (the dining room)...to the ladies room...which occupies the center of the house,...but the window of this space looks into the living

space. Here too, the most intimate room is like a theater box...hardly an idea of comfort..."

(Colomina, 1992, p. 79). As Colomina laments, this type of design perpetuates the male value ideal of the public and the private, but it far removed from the reality of comfort.

By contrast, Friedman's (1998) example of the Schroeder house situates the female client as influencing and changing public/private spatial layout. At the same time as Loos evolves the male ideal, Rietveld's collaboration with Schroeder answers client issues about the home and its functional layout. Ironically, when we learned about Rietveld designs in school we looked at the simplicity and beauty of the aesthetic design rather than at the meaningful relationship that he had with his client. Our design education emphasized Modernism as an ideal rather than Modernism as a vehicle of change in the interrelationship of space and its user.

### **5.3 THE WORKPLACE AS A GENDER STRATIFIED SPACE**

Status and power in the segregation of space is exemplified in the American workplaces of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Spain (1992) shows how office layouts create public and private spaces that are related to power. This idea supported with an examination of the way in which office layouts evolved from the turn of the century (Malnar & Vodvarka, 1992). The types of work available to women were limited until the late nineteenth century, but only after World War II were white-collar jobs available to women in any great degree. Even then, spatial segregation paralleled "occupational segregation", as women tended to find jobs in administrative, household and service sectors of the economy.

#### **5.3.1 Private space as enclave of power**

According to Spain (1992), privacy is linked directly to status: the more private the office the higher the status. In her study, she found that men generally were in the closed offices and tended to work behind "closed doors" with little supervision. Women, on the other hand, were

concentrated spatially in jobs that limit their access to knowledge; "open floor" jobs, clustered together in "secretarial pools" and supervised (Spain, 1992, p. 211). In my own work experience I have experienced the status relationship of men and women in several ways. For example, I worked at a design firm where the male partner occupied an office but the female partner worked in the studio with the drafts-people. Just recently I was waiting in an office at Dawson College and observed that of the eleven people who worked there, seven men were behind closed doors in private offices and four women worked in a common open space. As you can see in Figure 3.3, the layout reflects the hierarchy that was established in the office. There was a mix of the closed and open concepts; the closed offices (as a hallmark of privacy) were allocated to men, and the open spaces (without privacy) were allocated to women.

### **5.3.2 Shifts in the contemporary workplace**

These patterns are shifting in the contemporary workplace, as companies are slowly shedding the model of the hierarchical corporation and as designers are consequently scrambling to learn new ways of creating office space to reflect knowledge and shared expertise rather than power and secrecy. This shift will have major implications for gender relations in the workplace. Figures 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 illustrate this point. Figure 5.1 shows how a "traditional" office is laid out, with private closed offices along the perimeter (all male) and the secretaries in the center (all female). This demonstrates a situation where the lower the individuals' position on the hierarchy of a company structure, the smaller and less private the person's space becomes. Figure 5.2 illustrates how within the "traditional" office, information flow is interactive between people and departments and that offices need to be functionally related rather than laid out according to status, gender rank or power.

Recent designs of office spaces do reflect changing hierarchies, as companies shift their managing styles and thus how they function. An interesting component emerging in the marketplace is the rapidly changing nature of work. The burgeoning of the home office, layoffs of middle management, and the buyouts and restructuring of companies all impact upon and change the ways we work and live. The problem now, however, is that designers are still creating designs that respond to criteria such as company hierarchy, whereas companies' employees work very differently in how they interact with one another. A good example of this is the emergence of "The Office of the Future", as profiled in an article in *Time* magazine. Therein, an executive of Mobil Oil tells the story of a geologist who did not want to be promoted. In the company hierarchy, managers occupied window offices. The geologist did not want a window office as he would lose valuable wall space needed to display maps. The Mobil Oil executive said that management realized the need to revamp office size requirements according to need, not hierarchy, and began to question the concept of "office" in terms of the company structure. Thus the function determines spatial layout, as opposed to hierarchy, as I demonstrate in sketch from in Figure 5.3.

As I indicated at the outset of this thesis, there are paradigm shifts that changing the way that we live and work. The office at home, for example, is changing the social relationships of public versus private on a very intimate level, which also impacts gender relations (if for example, the major breadwinner works from home). Certainly these upheavals increase the level of uncertainty in society, as we question our respective roles and status as both men and women in the society; but they are also changing the ways that we do work and how workers produce for companies. They can do business from home, on a plane and on a portable computer. Designers have a unique opportunity to look at these changes and respond to the changing user as they shape space to respond to new needs.



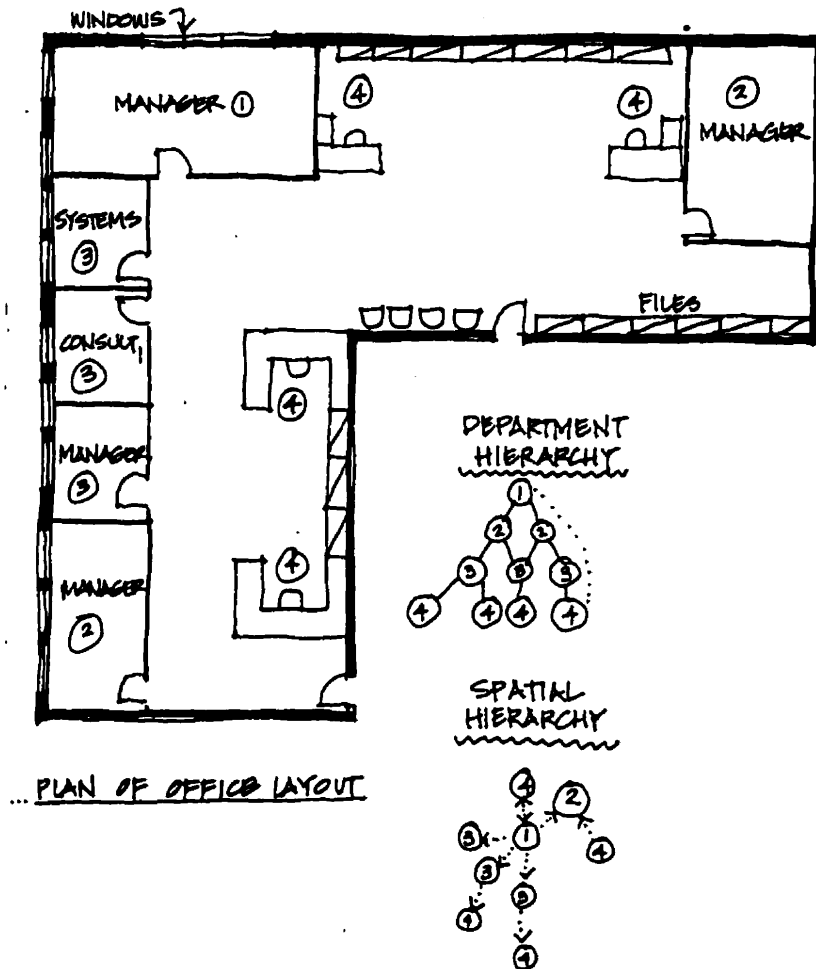
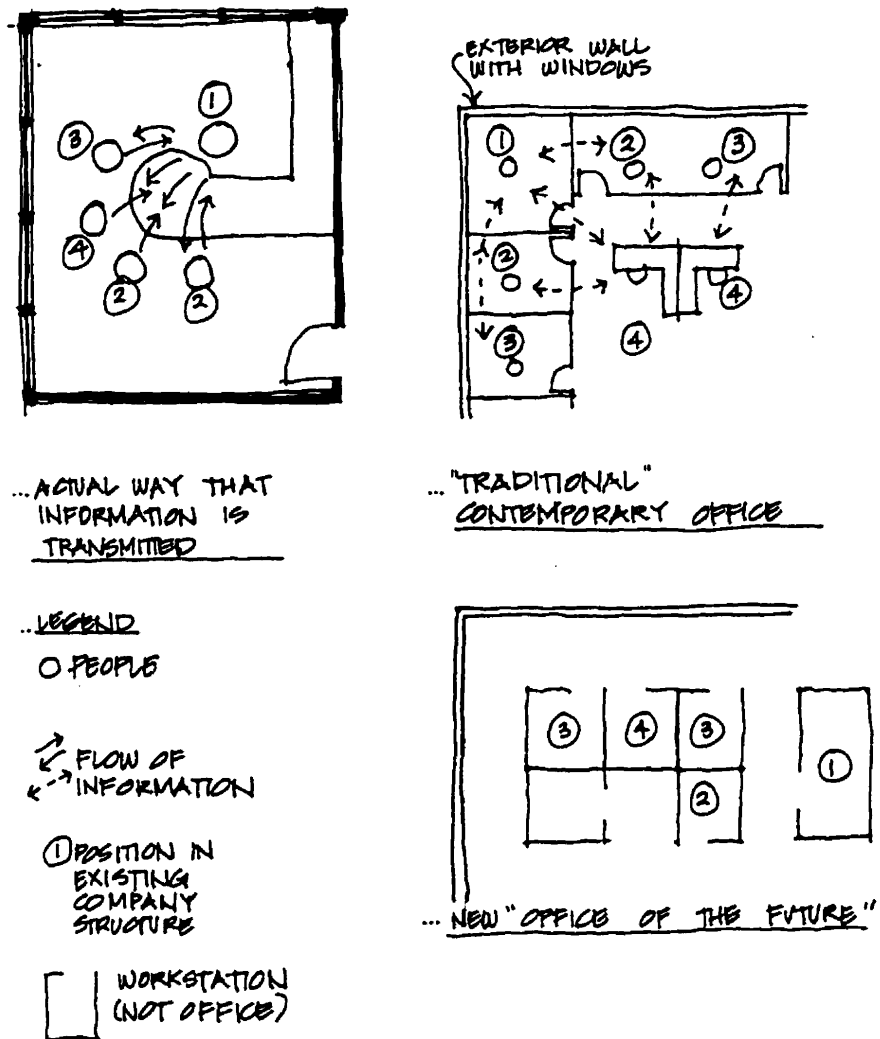


Figure 5.1

An example of the "traditional" workplace

The plan at the top is a layout of a typical office space. The department head manager (1) sits in the prime spot in the corner, with windows and the largest office. The managers of the sub-departments (2) have corner offices, but not as large. The unit manager and consultant (3) have offices but not in a prime spot. The administrative assistants and purchasers (4), who are doing the bulk of the work, sit spatially "in the middle" and in the open space. All the people in the open space are women and in the private spaces we find men. This is an interesting contradiction to the woman as private/ man as public concept explored in Impressionist art. However, as Pollock notes, the female public persona was one of prostitution. (Broude & Garrard, 1992)

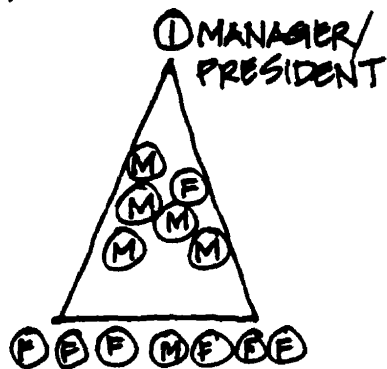
The two sketches below the plan demonstrated the company hierarchy and the spatial hierarchy. Note that the spatial hierarchy appears to mirror the company hierarchy. But as shown in Figure 5.3, neither relates to the functions that occur in the space.



**Figure 5.2** Information flow in the "traditional" contemporary office

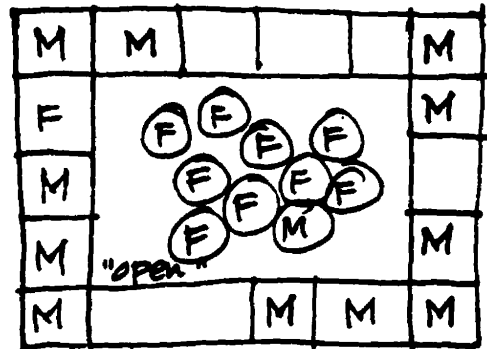
A closer look at a hierarchically designed office is in evaluating the paper flow and the ways that the office workers communicate. In the traditional office, the layout dictates closed offices for managers (1) and (2). Yet if the managers are in constant communication with the various staff members (3) and (4), this spatial design is detrimental to the flow of information, detrimental to worker "work comfort" and becomes economically detrimental to the company. The three sketches and plan at the top show the flow of information in the traditional office. The plan below gives an alternative layout of the "new office". Here the layout of spaces is based on the interrelationship of information and the optimal positioning of people relative to the work.

### Company Structure



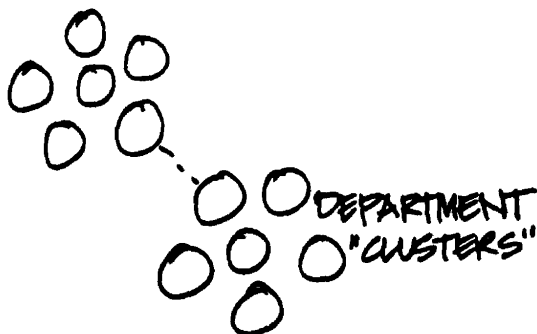
..."TRADITIONAL" OFFICE

### Office Layout



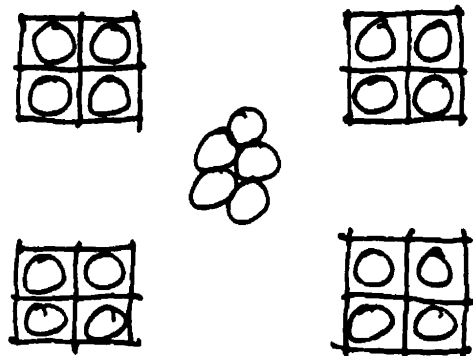
↑ "closed" offices along perimeter

### Company Structure



..."NEW OFFICE"

### Office Layout



...LEGEND

- (M) Male
- (F) Female
- ( ) Person - Male or Female

**Figure 5.3**

Company structures : Two models showing two different ways to function

The two diagrams at the top show the traditional hierarchical company structure and schematically how this looks in a spatial plan, and as shown in figure 5.3. The diagrams on the bottom show the "new" office organization and how this schematically could work.

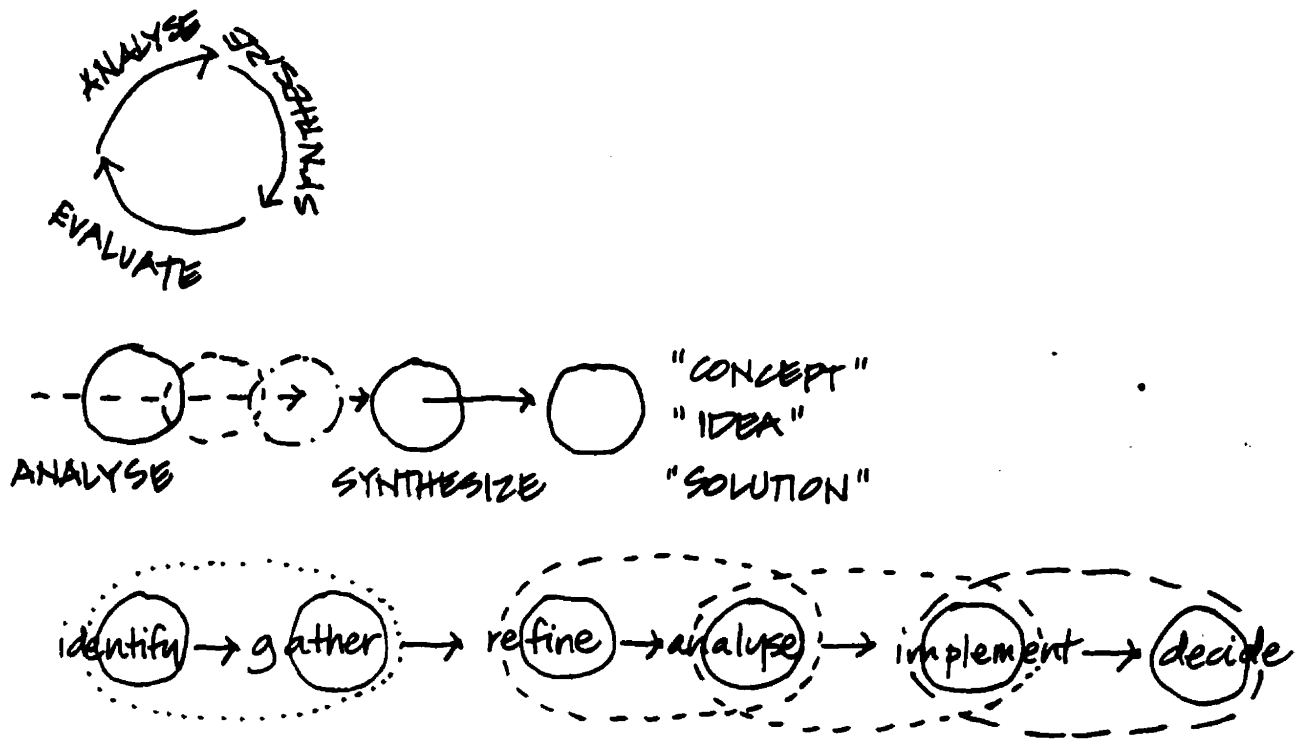
## **5.4 THE DESIGN PROCESS AND PEDAGOGY - A PERSONAL VIEWPOINT**

The design process is a way of drawing and expressing ideas that allows a designer to translate the client needs and intangible ideas into a tangible reality of interior space. Client and designer experience physical, psychological, social and aesthetic needs that are combined with an exploration of possibilities, trial and error and the evolution of a solution to the spatial problem. On the following pages, I will demonstrate some of these processes through the use of visual examples. Throughout the thesis I have demonstrated the ways that design creates spatial relations, and conversely, how spaces create social relations. The following examples will clarify visually some of the processes used to create designs.

The design process can be expressed in several ways. Figure 5.4 shows examples of the design process taught to students. In simple terms, the designer “analyzes” the problem by collecting data. The designer then interprets this data and “synthesizes” it in the sketching of drawings that include plans and views of the spaces.

In Figure 5.5 I present my version of the design process. I believe that the process consists of two opposites as I just described, but that the diagram is a somewhat more complex one reflecting a more complex process. In Figure 5.5, for example, I weave the analysis and synthesis of the problem around concepts of “known” and “unknown”. Designers collect and analyse “known” data about the problem, and then generate what I call “unknown” ideas. The designer bounces back and forth between the “known” and “unknown”, all the while evaluating what he/she creates. This type of process is circular and fluid, whereas the examples of the process in Figure 5.4 are more linear (and traditional) in nature.

I see the process as a positive dichotomy of the bringing together of these polar opposites. As I defined in the introduction, space is referred to as an institution such as home, school or



**Figure 5.4** Versions of the design process

Above are reproductions of three versions of the design process that I have collected over the years. As you can see, the top one is circular and the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> describe a "linear" process. All are relatively simple diagrams, and none encompass the way that designers actually design. For more detailed explanations of aspects of design, such as programming, design development and the client presentation, please see Appendix B, which outlines what these phases are, commonly known in design terms as the scope of work. (Hanks & Belliston, 1977; Koberg & Bagnall, 1981; Miller, 1995)

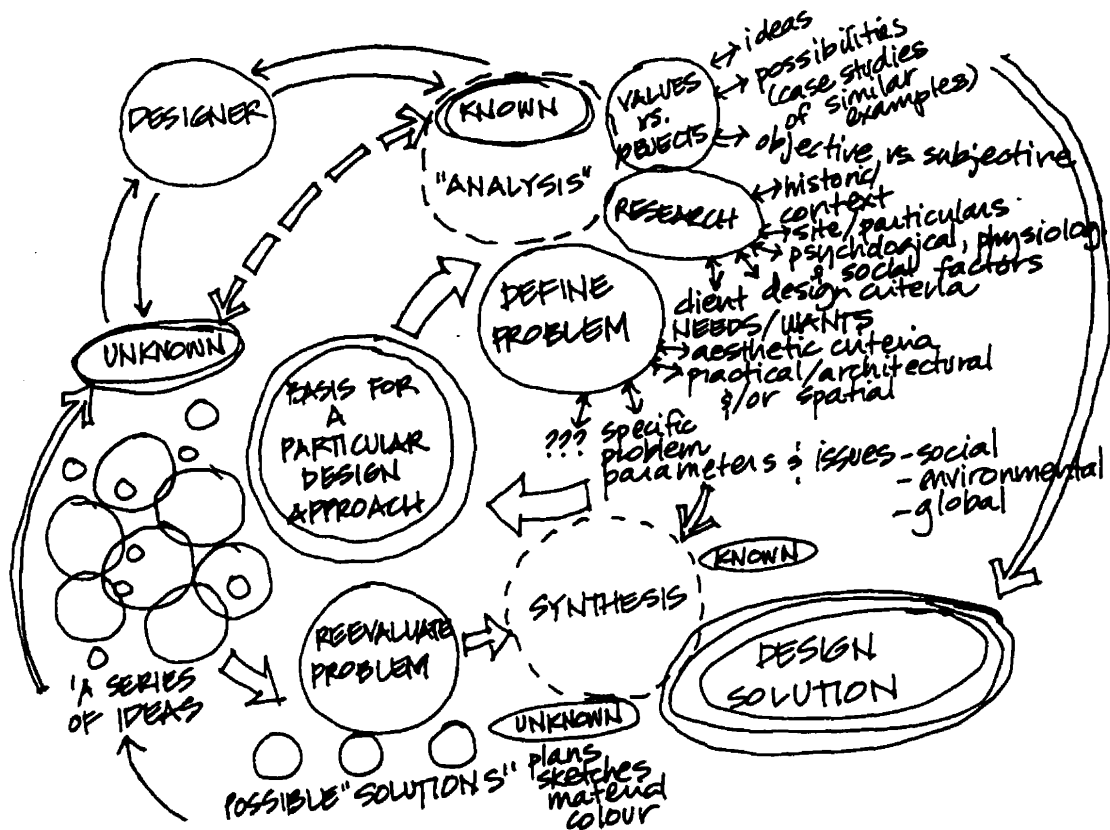


Figure 5.5

### The design process- T.Poldma version

This sketch is an example of the design process as a more "holistic" approach that I show my students in design classes. The analysis consists of several areas that are researched and documented. Once done, the student defines the problem again and evolves possible approaches for the design ( the unknown). Then the student returns with the possibilities to the known and tests his/her ideas against the known parameters/requirements. The student then goes back and explores more possibilities, each time in a little more detail. The process is done using sketching and visualization techniques involving the space and its three-dimensional properties of height, width, length and volume.



workplace (Spain, 1992), as a geographical location (Hanson & Pratt, 1995) or as a myriad of psychological, physical and/or mental states of being (Colomina, 1992). As interior designers, our concerns about space encompass all of these aspects. Figure 5.5 illustrates how we must weave many issues around a design problem. For example, as a designer, I take physical constraints of space and the limitations imposed by client needs, requirements, budget and other restraints, and solve problems with aesthetic solutions that give the user a better environment than if I had not done the design. The limitations of the design are the space, its height, length or width, and also the context of the user, the client and my own experience. I must not only interpret the client's needs: I must also question the constructs that guide the client's needs and the end user's requirements. I must question the solutions that already exist in the marketplace, using social, psychological and contextual value evaluation. I must take both tangible and intangible data and create an interior space that resolves the interrelationships of functions, needs and spatial parameters. My tools are the sketches, such as the example shown in Figure 5.6. These sketches, along with other tools such as "bubble diagrams" and plans, when done in a meaningful way, help to link the "known" data with the "unknown" processes that the designer uses to generate ideas. These sketches are the "unknown" elements and use visualization techniques and drawing small "thumbnail" sketches of ideas that are in the designer's head as a means to generating ideas. It is a combination of these processes that leads to possible design solutions that the designer then proposes to the client.

## **5.5 IMPLICATIONS**

Given the circular and fluid nature of the design process, implications emerge regarding the value constructions that influence the teaching of the design process. In my vignette of my colleague and her methodology, I demonstrated how Bourdieu's theories of pedagogic work (1990)



played out in our design studio. My colleague preferred control and order in her class, elements not conducive to the fluid nature of the design process in the way that I define it. She used the linear examples that I showed in Figure 5.4 to support her methodology, by demonstrating to the students, through her methods, that studio time was itself linear and controlled.

If we are to create design solutions that are creative, solve space problems, and address underlying value systems and their validity, students must be able to be engaged and engage the teacher, and the teacher must broaden her/his methodology to include the environment within which they teach. First, the teacher can demonstrate the designer/client collaborative relationship in creating a more collaborative environment, and can foster the design process more easily by presenting it as a circular process. Second, through subtle methodology such as a more interactive relationship with the students, the students can become engaged by the teacher and can then engage themselves in the design process.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSION - IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This thesis has explored several issues revolving around value constructions and the ways that they influence space and its occupants. Conversely, I have also uncovered and explored complex issues surrounding the lack of the female voice in the formation of the underlying values that shape space.

The theories and constructs that shape our values and attitudes socialize us into behaviours that, in turn, determine the designs that designers create. As Spain (1992) has stated, when social roles determine status and status determines power of one gender at the expense of another, then power relations in society are entrenched in the spaces that are formed by these social constructions. When spaces represent the social constructs of school, home and environment in political terms, then people are manipulated by the belief systems that are perpetuated through the design solution in the first place.

But, conversely, humans have a strong capacity to influence and judge the spaces that they occupy as positive and useful or negative and unusable. As Malnar and Vodvarka conclude:

...Man seeks to make sense out of his surroundings and to define and locate himself with respect to these surroundings. To this end, humans are directed towards organizing their environment, giving it significance, and assessing their position in the altered structure that ensues...A designed space, by definition, is meant to encourage and facilitate certain kinds of behaviour within it, and communicates that fact through the use of codes. But clearly spaces may undergo a change of significance when used by persons who no longer accept these codes, especially spaces that failed their users. In any case, spaces are subject to individual interpretation, itself a product of expectation. (Malnar & Vodvarka, 1992, p. 290)

Thus, the user becomes the voice that the designer needs to heed. As an interior designer, I am interested in solving spatial problems that fulfill human functional needs and that create a

positive environment. Space as a physical entity defines social relations and reinforces them.

When designers design spaces such as offices with client criteria that supports company hierarchy, the designer reinforces social patterns of behaviour that segregate and demean one gender over another.

The opening up of possibilities begins with the client/designer relationship. Crucial to seeing the underlying values that produce client needs is the collaboration with the end user and the dialogue that ensues. Both designer and user become co-participants in the production of the design concept. And when users such as women create new needs through new voices, designers must have the capacity to explore new possibilities. As Alice Friedman (1998) states when she draws this parallel in architecture:

Sustained and detailed discussion of the program requirements...ensured that the strong foundations of the collaboration were laid early. Further, these conversations were an opportunity for architects and clients to exchange ideas; such a process is grounded in the recognition that each participant has a role to play in the project as it develops. (Friedman, 1998, p. 228)

When a designer questions the client needs, questions the behaviour and endeavours to solve the problem by looking at all the issues, they take the first step. The second step is the collaboration with the client and the recognition that the client voice forms part of the design solution. The designer gives the client choices and the two work together to formulate a functional and pleasing spatial environment, where the values reflect are those intended by both client and designer as agent of interpretation of the client's needs and desires.

## **6.1 IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION**

I have woven a story throughout the thesis about the parallel teaching methods of myself and my colleague in the design studio. Our example is a vignette of the various issues that I have raised and of how theories and processes that I have described have evolved in practice. My

colleague's concern with power and control echoes Bourdieu's discussion of the entrenching of values into classroom pedagogy. She formulated her teaching based on underlying values of maintaining order and control, and on her perceived values of the class, rather than on the exploration of the design process and the voices that express it. She relied on her understanding of the voice of the dominant authority of the classroom as a controlled environment (Code, 1991; Field Belenky et al., 1997; Bourdieu, 1990) rather than on the nature of the design process as needing a more fluid environment in that particular situation.

I propose a more fluid approach to classroom pedagogy, responsive to the student's need to learn to produce design effectively, and conducive to the support of the student's voice. I believe that, in education, the parallel for the designer/client relationship lies in the teacher/student dynamic. The teacher is ultimately a facilitator of knowledge who works with the student as she/he learns the process of design. Currently, interior design is taught in many ways, often with unquestioned pedagogy that does not deal with gender. Gender is an issue because female voices construct and use meanings differently. The philosophical underpinnings of our society include notions of absolute truth and objectivity, which are entrenched in the studio in terms of solitude and individuality. The student body, male or female, has a need for a voice of collaboration, and this voice can also be used in the studio in teaching design. Ideally, knowledge construction in the classroom should come from many points of view. The idea is not, as Lorraine Code (1991) infers, to emphasize differences only, but to include and broaden the basis of philosophical and, thus, pedagogical thought.

Bourdieu maintained that pedagogic work is the key to opening up possibilities. How we teach does become important and what we teach provides the student with the value system which she/he takes and implements in society. The challenge for interior design educators is to sensitize

themselves to gender and ways of knowing, and to teach the design process as a process ground in interpersonal experience. Methods of teaching must be expanded to take into account gender differences. Professors need to reexamine how they teach, and they need to realize that they are socializing students unconsciously and consciously through their pedagogic methods. I do not maintain that my version of the design process is the best approach. However, I do believe that students need exposure to various ways of knowing and that these ways of knowing should be reflective of both genders and of the design process itself.

## **6.2 MODELS OF LEARNING**

If teachers are to use pedagogy that is gender-aware, they must themselves be aware of the underlying values that create social constructs between men and women. Teachers must also harness techniques that support the circular and fluid nature of the design process. Alice Miel advocates "...human relationships that teachers encourage in social settings..." (Miel, 1996, p.342). Maxine Greene discusses what she calls "freedom" in the way that we could learn, advocating what she calls "connected teaching". She states that:

Where freedom is concerned (and it is rarely mentioned in contemporary women's literature) it is taken to signify either liberation from domination or the provision of spaces where choices can be made. There is a general acknowledgment that the opening of such spaces depends on support and connections,...connected teaching...the caring teacher tries to look through the students' eyes, to struggle with them as subjects of their own projects, their own ways of making sense of their world. Reflectiveness, even logical thinking, remains important; but the point of cognitive development is not to gain an increasingly complete grasp of abstract principles. It is to interpret from as many vantage points as possible lived experience... (Greene, 1988, p. 120)

These concepts are crucial to the development of the well-rounded designer, be they female or male. The practicing designer must see the lived experience of the client in order to solve the problem. In the same way, the teacher must try to see the lived experience of the students through the student's eyes, what gender socialization does to affect their ways of knowing, and how to tailor

teaching to encompass many points of view. Then the teacher can translate the meaning of the client/designer relationship to the student in a meaningful way.

Further guidance as to how this can be achieved is provided by Karen Hamblen (1986). She advocates cross-cultural art, which could be studied as a parallel for design. In her article "A universal-relative approach to cross-cultural art", Hamblen develops the model for cross-cultural inclusion in art. In her thesis, aesthetic thinking is a part of a larger study of life experience. The traditional aesthetic model is expanded to include both cultural and gender variations, and she expresses the need to move "... from human experience to ever more cultural, personal and specialized meanings..." (Hamblen, 1986, pp. 69-76). She uses the term universal not in the universal-neutral sense discussed earlier, but rather in the "...coming together of ideas that are relative to all gender and culture, not centered on one dominant culture." She states that "Art may function to reveal new insights, to present hitherto concealed meanings, or to sanction the lifestyles of the less powerful." (Hamblen, 1986, pp. 69-76). She uses art as the vehicle to bring cultures to the "center" and in so doing gives voice and identity to women and cross-cultural groups.

### **6.3 POSSIBILITIES**

In terms of pedagogy, certain patterns have emerged from this thesis:

- underlying values of female ways of knowing suit the design process, but cannot be supported by pedagogical methods that suit hierarchical pedagogy;
- female ways of knowing must be legitimized in political structures such as school and the workplace, and supported by culture and government;
- pedagogical methods in design need to be given priority and explored as channels of value dissemination;

- the circular nature of the design process is in direct dichotomy with the “politics” of the education system;
- the design process is a circular and fluid process, not a step-by-step series of sequential events;
- the design process demands collaborative and team oriented problem-solving;
- the interior design profession needs to expand its own discourse to include larger social issues in society and reduce the reputation it now has of creating “pretty picture” environments that don’t work.

Questions for further research remain, as this thesis has just begun to explore the issues. Some of these questions are as follows:

- To what extent do female ways of knowing actually impact on spatial design?
- If, as Alice Friedman uncovered, women have voices in architecture that are “hidden” in history, then what other “voices”, both male and female, need to be uncovered ?
- How can these voices be heard in existing curriculums?
- In what way can pedagogies of teaching be tailored to respond effectively to ways that the design process is produced, in ways that uncover value systems and show many possibilities?
- What happens to women in design practice as they progress in company structures and is this reflective of entrenched value systems?
- How are companies currently dealing with the growing influx of women into the workforce and is this changing the ways of working in a substantive way? How do designers deal with these changes?

It is not only the physical space that forms our social relationships. It is the designers' ability to transform physical constraints into an exciting and functional yet tangible reality that interacts with the user in the creation of a new and positive experience. The potential for power in the formation of space is great in that the manipulation of space can manipulate the social behaviours of people and support the political structures that exist, or give an alternative view that questions the status quo.

In this way the politics of voice influences gender, design and education. Ideally the designer's task is to counter and question entrenched values and systems as a designer is always in search for new possibilities. The designer needs to learn to decipher both male and female voices in the interpretation of the fundamental values that shape client and user needs and desires for a particular spatial design.

Although not referring to design, Maxine Greene uses art in her concept of the way we can open up new possibilities. She states that

To recognize the role of perspective....is to recognize...that there are always multiple vantage points, is to recognize that no accounting, disciplinary or otherwise, can even be finished or complete. There is always more. There is always possibility. And this is where the space opens for the pursuit of freedom. Much of the same can be said about experiences with art objects- not only literary texts, but music, painting, dance. They have the capacity...to enable persons to hear and see that they would not ordinarily hear or see...to disclose the incomplete profiles of the world. As importantly...they have the capacity to de-familiarize experience; to begin with the overly familiar and transfigure it into something different enough to make those who are awakened hear and see. (Greene, 1988, pp. 120-121)

As interior designers, I see this pursuit as one of my chief goals: to see for the client a new possibility, and to make that new possibility real and economically viable. What Maxine Greene talks about is the design process, and it is on that level that we, as educators, must reach our students and enable them to reach beyond themselves.



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**APPENDIX A**

**F.I.D.E.R. STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES**

**(Note: this is a partial sample of pages that outlines specifically guidelines and is taken from a binder supplied by F.I.D.E.R. to accredited schools such as Dawson College)**

# **Standards and Guidelines**

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## **Process for Adopting Standards and Guidelines**

Standards and guidelines for accrediting interior design programs are formulated by the Standards Committee and, as appropriate, by specially appointed subcommittee(s). Committee members may be interior design educators or practitioners, representatives of the publics served by interior designers, other environmental designers or educators, and others deemed appropriate to the development of acceptable standards for reviewing interior design educational programs. A balance of interests is maintained in committee composition.

The review cycle for FIDER Standards and Guidelines is a minimum of every five years. The timetable recognizes the continuous development of the practice of interior design, the expanding body of knowledge in interior design, and changes in postsecondary education. Following the introduction of changes, FIDER sponsors research to test the validity and reliability of the standards and guidelines. This research then informs the next review phase.

Proposed standards and guidelines and revisions are circulated to FIDER constituencies for review and comment. Those invited to comment may include: FIDER-accredited programs, FIDER site visitors and committee members, the interior design organizations and individuals from those organizations, representatives of industry, other accrediting bodies and related regulatory groups, interior design programs, and interested individuals. Comments gathered in this process are carefully considered by the committee. Changes to the standards and guidelines resulting from the review and comment may be circulated repeatedly for additional review. This dialogue with the field of interior design is an important component of the accreditation process.

Once formulated, standards and guidelines are submitted to the FIDER Board of Trustees for adoption. The FIDER Board also determines an effective date for all FIDER Standards and Guidelines.

# **Standards and Guidelines**

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## **Preamble**

It is important to acknowledge the ever changing nature of the education required for a growing profession.

The responsibilities of the interior designer encompass all spaces within environments built for human habitation. Educational philosophies and goals should be applied in the development of a creative professional who can synthesize information, and analyze problems from many different perspectives.

Institutions of higher learning are re-examining their goals and directions. New technologies affect the skills and knowledge required of interior designers. The best preparation for the future is an education that will enable graduates to adapt to a changing world. Adaptation to change requires that the graduate draw on history and on the experience of many cultures and apply the theories and methods of empirical investigation. A sound curriculum for professional interior design education must provide a balance between the broad cultural aspects of education, on the one hand, and the specialized practical content integral to the profession, on the other.

Programs must work within their individual institutions to offer the widest possible benefits to students. The stimulation and advice from a variety of subject areas of an institution are major advantages of postsecondary education.

To ensure excellence, interior design programs must maintain high standards of student and institutional performance. The results must be measured against FIDER's established performance standards. Evaluation of these results remains the responsibility of the accrediting committees and the governing board of FIDER.

## Definition of a Professional Interior Designer

The professional interior designer is qualified by education, experience, and examination to enhance the function and quality of interior spaces for the purpose of improving the quality of life, increasing productivity, and protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

The professional interior designer:

- analyzes client's needs, goals, and life safety requirements
- integrates findings with knowledge of interior design
- formulates preliminary design concepts that are aesthetic, appropriate, and functional, and in accordance with codes and standards
- develops and presents final design recommendations through appropriate presentation media
- prepares working drawings and specifications for non-load bearing interior construction, reflected ceiling plans, lighting, interior detailing, materials, finishes, space planning, furnishings, fixtures, and equipment in compliance with universal accessibility guidelines and all applicable codes
- collaborates with professional services of other licensed practitioners in the technical areas of mechanical, electrical, and load-bearing design as required for regulatory approval
- prepares and administers bids and contract documents as the client's agent
- reviews and evaluates design solutions during implementation and upon completion.

## Professional Level Education

Accreditation at the professional level of education is directed toward those programs that provide academic preparation for the professional interior designer. This preparation is the first component of a recommended sequence including formal education, entry level experience, and satisfactory completion of a qualifying examination. Compliance with the FIDER professional level standards can occur in a variety of academic settings.

## Standards and Guidelines Professional Level Programs

This document identifies those clauses which are Standards and those which are Guidelines. Standard numbers begin with S, Guideline numbers begin with G. The Standards for professional level programs in interior design are minimum requirements. Compliance with criteria designated as Standards is of primary importance. Guidelines indicate factors which contribute to the quality of the program. A program need not achieve compliance with all criteria listed as Guidelines. Where compliance cannot be demonstrated, commentary on the circumstances may be presented.

Terminology used in the Standards and Guidelines is defined by FIDER as follows:

- Compliance — a demonstration that an interior design program fulfills or accomplishes the stated performance criterion.
- Substantial Compliance — a demonstration that an interior design program conforms to a large degree but not fully to the stated performance criterion.
- Non-Compliance — evidence indicates performance below minimum level.
- Awareness — familiarity with basic information and procedures; the ability to recall and correctly associate knowledge with appropriate circumstances.
- Understanding — specific and detailed knowledge; a thorough comprehension of concepts and the ability to demonstrate their interrelationships.
- Competency — successful application of concepts and information to complete specific tasks.
- i.e., (id est) means "that is" and the expectation is that all items noted should be evidenced.
- e.g., (exempli gratia) means "for example" and there is no intent that all items listed should be evidenced.

## 2. Educational Program

The curriculum is the core of a program. FIDER's evaluation of a program's compliance with standards relating to curriculum is done primarily through an examination of student work.

The common body of knowledge required in the professional level program in interior design is divided into categories which are sub-divided into content units. The required minimum student achievement level for each content unit is shown. Each content unit represents a FIDER standard.

Evaluation of the program's effectiveness is based on student achievement for the various required levels of performance in the content units. Student achievement is defined by the following criteria:

- Awareness — familiarity with basic concepts, information, and procedures; the ability to recall and correctly associate knowledge with appropriate circumstances.
- Understanding — specific and detailed knowledge; a thorough comprehension of concepts and the ability to demonstrate their interrelationships.
- Competency — successful application of concepts and information to complete specific tasks.

### Standards

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| S2.1 | The curriculum encompasses continuity, repetition of significant concepts, sequential ordering of content, progression of learning, and interrelationships among learning experiences. |
| S2.2 | The curriculum fosters innovative and creative approaches to design problem solving in the work and attitudes of the students.   |
| S2.3 | The program encourages exposure of students to more than one professional point of view, design background, and experience.  |
| S2.4 | The program promotes team approaches to design solutions.  |
| S2.5 | The curriculum incorporates global and multicultural issues.   |
| S2.6 | The curriculum incorporates design for diverse populations, e.g. age, culture, income, physical abilities, etc.  |
| S2.7 | The curriculum incorporates design for adaptive use and/or historic preservation.  |

# Standards and Guidelines

## 2. Educational Program *continued*

### Standards *continued*

<b>2.8</b>	<b>Theory</b> Thorough knowledge of the elements and principles of design, design theories, and their evolution enables designers to understand the interrelationship between human beings and the environment. This knowledge stimulates depth of thought and a more creative approach to problem solving.	<b>Awareness</b>	<b>Understanding</b>	<b>Competency</b>
S2.8.1	Theory: elements and principles of design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S2.8.2	Theory: color	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S2.8.3	Theory: 3-D spatial composition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S2.8.4	Theory: human environment, e.g. proxemics, behavior, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S2.8.5	Theory: design, e.g. planning, stylistic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.9</b>	<b>Basic and Creative Arts</b> The basic elements of design and composition and their application are essential to any program of study in interior design. They are the foundation for creative design and require instruction and experimentation through studio work. Awareness of the various media in the visual arts assists and enriches the understanding of the universality of the fundamentals of design.	<b>Awareness</b>	<b>Understanding</b>	<b>Competency</b>
S2.9.1	Studio: two-dimensional design fundamentals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
S2.9.2	Studio: three-dimensional design fundamentals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
S2.9.3	Creative arts and crafts, e.g. drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics, weaving, photography, etc.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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- Awareness — familiarity with basic concepts, information, and procedures; the ability to recall and correctly associate knowledge with appropriate circumstances.
- Understanding — specific and detailed knowledge; a thorough comprehension of concepts and the ability to demonstrate their interrelationships.
- Competency — successful application of concepts and information to complete specific tasks.

# Standards and Guidelines

## 2. Educational Program *continued*

### Standards *continued*

2.10

#### Interior Design

Participation in a wide range of design experiences through studios, lectures, group discussions, seminars, etc., is highly desirable. The development of space planning and problem solving skills is essential and should relate to a broad range of residential and non-residential projects, including all types of habitation, whether for work or leisure, new or old, large and small, for a variety of populations, young and old, of varying physical abilities, low or high income. Problem solving experiences should follow a theory of design process involving physical, social, and psychological factors and reflect a concern for the aesthetic qualities of the built environment.

		Awareness	Understanding	Competency
S2.10.1	Design process, i.e. programming, conceptualization, problem solving, and evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
S2.10.2	Three-dimensional spatial development, e.g. study models, drawings, mock-ups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
S2.10.3	Human factors, i.e. anthropometrics, ergonomics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
S2.10.4	Space planning, residential	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
S2.10.5	Space planning, non-residential	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
S2.10.6	Furniture selection and layout, residential	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
S2.10.7	Furniture selection and layout, non-residential	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
S2.10.8	Application of design elements and principles, i.e. color, texture, and scale	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
S2.10.9	Selection and application of finish materials, i.e. textiles, floor treatments, and wall treatments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
S2.10.10	Selection and application of decorative elements, e.g. accessories, artwork, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
S2.10.11	Selection and application of lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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- Awareness — familiarity with basic concepts, information, and procedures; the ability to recall and correctly associate knowledge with appropriate circumstances.
- Understanding — specific and detailed knowledge; a thorough comprehension of concepts and the ability to demonstrate their interrelationships.
- Competency — successful application of concepts and information to complete specific tasks.



# Standards and Guidelines

## 2. Educational Program *continued*

### Standards *continued*

2.11	Technical Knowledge			
	Interior designers must have technical knowledge and understand related disciplines and the constraints they impose. Interior designers must be competent in the application of laws, codes, regulations, and standards that affect design solutions in order "to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public."	Awareness	Understanding	Competency
S2.11.1	Detailing/technical drawings for custom furniture, cabinetry, design elements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
S2.11.2	Materials, i.e. surface materials and textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
S2.11.3	Laws, codes, standards, and regulations, e.g. universal accessibility guidelines, life safety, fire, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
S2.11.4	Specifying, estimating, and installation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S2.11.5	Construction systems and materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S2.11.6	Building systems, i.e. electrical, acoustics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S2.11.7	Building systems, i.e. HVAC, plumbing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S2.11.8	Metric system	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S2.11.9	Environmental concerns, i.e. energy, ecology, indoor air quality, sustainable materials	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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- Awareness — familiarity with basic concepts, information, and procedures; the ability to recall and correctly associate knowledge with appropriate circumstances.
- Understanding — specific and detailed knowledge; a thorough comprehension of concepts and the ability to demonstrate their interrelationships.
- Competency — successful application of concepts and information to complete specific tasks.

# Standards and Guidelines

## 2. Educational Program *continued*

### Standards *continued*

#### 2.12

#### Communication Skills

Visual presentation skills are essential for the communication of design concepts. Exposure to a variety of media allows experimentation with new ideas, broadens the scope of creative expression, and allows discovery of the best means of portraying the individual's thought processes. Oral and written presentation skills must be practiced to give added depth to the visual presentation. Computer literacy promotes continued growth and development in communication variables.

		Awareness	Understanding	Competency
S2.12.1	Visual presentation, i.e. sketching, rendering, sample boards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
S2.12.2	Oral communication skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
S2.12.3	Writing skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
S2.12.4	Working drawings, including drafting, lettering, symbols, dimensioning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
S2.12.5	Computer, i.e. CADD, word processing, and graphics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S2.12.6	Graphic identification, e.g. signage, logos, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S2.12.7	Other presentation media, e.g. photography, film/video, multimedia, etc.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### 2.13

#### Profession

The individual entering the profession of interior design must have a thorough understanding of the history and organization of the profession; knowledge of the methods and practices of the business of interior design; an understanding of ethical constraints; and an understanding of relevant relationships between the various segments within the broader sphere of the built environment.

		Awareness	Understanding	Competency
S2.13.1	Interior design profession, organizations, related professions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S2.13.2	Business and professional practice including ethics, management, relationship to industry, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S2.13.3	Project management and contract administration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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- Awareness — familiarity with basic concepts, information, and procedures; the ability to recall and correctly associate knowledge with appropriate circumstances.
- Understanding — specific and detailed knowledge; a thorough comprehension of concepts and the ability to demonstrate their interrelationships.
- Competency — successful application of concepts and information to complete specific tasks.

# Standards and Guidelines

## 2. Educational Program *continued*

### Standards *continued*

<b>2.14</b>	<b>History</b> Interiors reflect an evolution in art, architecture, and design over centuries of past civilizations. Study of the built environments of diverse cultures in conjunction with the economic, social, political, and religious influences that have shaped them enables a designer to anticipate and design for present and future demand.	Awareness Understanding Competency
S2.14.1	Interiors, art, and architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
S2.14.2	Furniture, textiles, and accessories	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.15</b>	<b>Information Gathering Techniques/Research</b> The use of information gathering techniques and reference materials is necessary to enable designers to accumulate and analyze data to develop a design concept. Students should also be aware of scholarly research as it contributes to the discipline.	Awareness Understanding Competency
S2.15.1	Information gathering techniques, e.g. survey, literature search, observation, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
S2.15.2	Reference materials, i.e. codes, regulations, and standards	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
S2.15.3	Awareness of research contributing to the body of knowledge	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

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- Awareness — familiarity with basic concepts, information, and procedures; the ability to recall and correctly associate knowledge with appropriate circumstances.
- Understanding — specific and detailed knowledge; a thorough comprehension of concepts and the ability to demonstrate their interrelationships.
- Competency — successful application of concepts and information to complete specific tasks.

**APPENDIX B**

**SAMPLES OF THE DESIGN PROCESS**

## **SCOPE OF WORK OF AN INTERIOR DESIGNER**

The following is a listing of the range of services that an interior designer can provide for a client.

This is my version of the various stages in the design process, and although I list them the stages and items will vary in order from project to project. Each interior designer has their own version of these components, but most do some or all of what I describe.

### **PROGRAMMING PHASE**

- Prepare letter of agreement outlining scope of services to be provided and fee schedule;  
signature of contract
- Explore site requirements, context and building parameters (physical dimensions of space)
- Establish client needs and requirements for specific project type
- Investigate local, national and specific zoning requirements for specific project type
- Establish client design criteria and involvement of other consultants such as architects and/or engineers

### **PRELIMINARY DESIGN PHASE**

- Examine client existing plans and requirements for space
- Determine extent of existing or new requirements within space
- If required, conduct inventory of existing furnishings and fitments to be reused
- Product research on new materials and ideas that are to be generated
- Periodical meetings with other professionals throughout all stages for coordination of the work as it materializes
- Identify client needs and requirements based on above research

- Preliminary layouts and space planning
- Preliminary conceptual development of two-dimensional and three-dimensional ideas for discussion with the client
- Preliminary budget figures, if required, for anticipated work and conceptual ideas

## **DESIGN DEVELOPMENT PHASE**

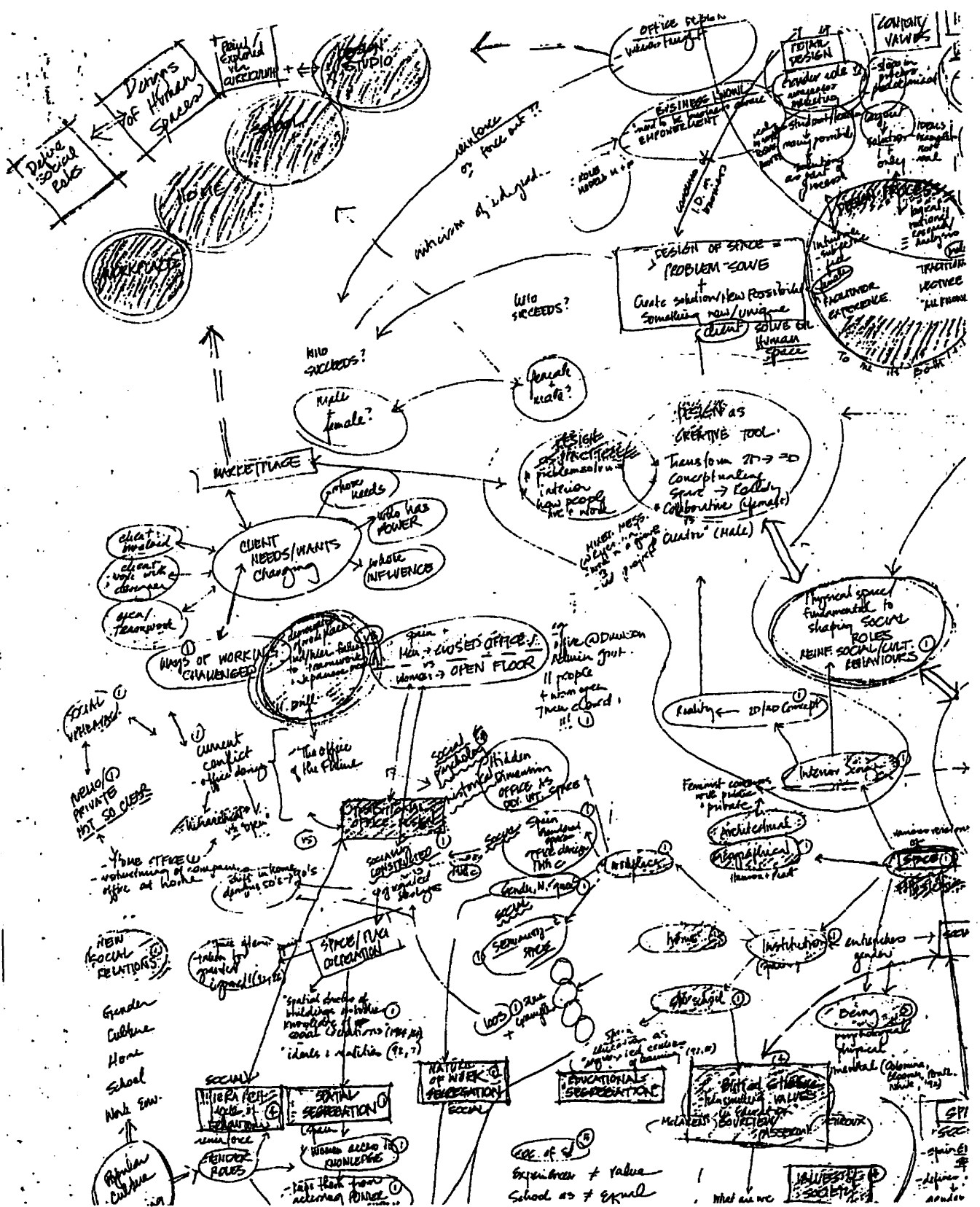
- Design proposal(s) including plans, elevations, three dimensional views and colour, material and lighting development; presentation of same in a two phase process(preliminary/final) or as one presentation , depending upon agreement
- Budget proposal
- Client approval

## **EXECUTION PHASE**

- Detailed drawings and specifications, including plans, sections, elevations and details
- Coordination of consultants' work
- Coordination and execution of contract documents for pricing purposes
- Coordination of permit requirements
- Coordinate tender process and pricing of project
- Advise client on choice of contractor
- Prepare necessary documents upon client approval of contractor, and if changes or modifications are required
- Meet with contractors and consultants as required to determine scheduling of the work

## **PROJECT ADMINISTRATION PHASE**

- **Monitor progress of project and advise client of progress of the work**
- **Site supervision and coordination of meetings**
- **Advise client of changes on site and coordinate changes with contractor and/or consultants, upon client approval**
- **Inspect materials and furnishings as installed according to specifications**
- **Post - occupancy deficiency list with contractor and client**



EXAMPLE OF A BUBBLE DIAGRAM