



CHAPTER 5 THE DICHOTOMY IN VICTORIAN RESPECTABILITY IS REVEALED IN THE EMBEDDED AND GENDERED DISCOURSES IN VICTORIAN DOMESTIC SPACE

SUBPROBLEM 4 How can embedded and gendered discourses in selected texts associated with domestic space in the Victorian period be analysed to explore the dichotomy?

PRÉCIS 4 Criteria derived from the theory and the literature study are applied to critically analyse Victorian domestic space. Texts are identified, selected and interpreted according to the aforementioned criteria, revealing how space was gendered and gender made spatial.



5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter two showed that the Victorian age was one of transition and doubt, yet belief in reason and respectability provided stability and displaced much doubt. Order was maintained through the strength of the individual, family discipline and codes of conduct, not through civil action. The nineteenth century saw the continued separation of work from home, which became a place of refuge from the world. A diverse range of occupational groups and levels of income constituted the Victorian middle class who were bound together in their common endeavour for respectability. Further, Chapter three revealed that respectability was a complex combination of moral, religious, economic and cultural systems, and dictated specific gender definitions. Women were seen as naturally domestic beings, the 'Angel in the House', yet this positioned the middle class housewife as an active agent in her family and home. Chapter four established that architectural space maintains gender distinctions. It encodes and perpetuates male power and superiority, which was evident in Victorian architecture where space was structured around respectability and male dominance over the public and the private. The separation of work from home resulted in new domestic layouts. Domestic space was structured around segregation and specialisation, differentiated according to a specific 'socio-sexual' code. The house became a symbol of upward mobility, a means to establish identity in terms of outward signs of respectability.

The preceding chapters provide a contextual as well as a theoretical framework of Victorian England and its domestic architecture. Against this context, five texts (cf 1.1) are identified and selected. The texts are presented and discussed according to criteria derived from the literature study.

5.2 CRITERIA FOR ANALYSIS

The following criteria derived from the literature study are used uniformly for the analysis of each text.

5.2.1 Public/private

It has been argued (cf. 3.5.2) that while the public/private division must not be mistaken for the Victorian model of separate spheres, the two are intrinsically related. The separate spheres paradigm provided a rigid framework for a world neatly divided into male and female. Public/private incorporates complex gender assignments that shift



according to context. Within the theory of separate spheres the existence of a private sphere is linked to the hegemony of men and modern masculinity within the public realm. The separation of public from private, work from home, male from female, held implications for the organisation of architectural space. Therefore, both public/private and separate spheres provide a relevant model for understanding the class specific yet gendered organisation of Victorian English public and private life.

5.2.2 'Angel in the House'

During the Victorian age one of the most powerful and notable registers of woman's sphere was the phrase made current by Coventry Patmore (1854) in his poem about the ideal woman and wife, the 'Angel in the House' (cf. 4.6). Thus, the Victorian housewife was her family's moral and spiritual guide. The 'Angel in the House' is situated within the ideology of respectability and positions woman as naturally domestic. It is both double-edged and problematic: it projects an image of a passive and subordinate woman, yet it positioned the middle class housewife as an active agent in her family and home. It has been argued (cf. 4.6) that 'Angel in the House' presents a valid tool for evaluation of domestic architecture, as a means to ascertain the extent to which the ideal was attained and evidence of possible subversion.

5.2.3 Decoration and ornament

In addition to spatial zones, sexual and social differences were formed and structured through furnishings, decoration and ornament that was gendered in terms of colour, style and detailing. Victorian decoration refers to both the development of a consumer economy and to the ideology of separate spheres. Through decoration a family expressed its proper understanding of life and beauty, the latter was deemed a moral quality. In particular, the decoration of their homes was seen as the outflow of their gentility (cf. 4.5.1 & 4.5.2).

5.3 SELECTION OF TEXTS

Three types of texts were identified: architectural drawings; sketches documenting interiors and photographs of a house interior with associated diary. The architectural drawings comprise the floor plans of Samuel Hemmings £1,550 Model villa (c 1855), Lewis Cubitt's (1799-1883) Terrace, Lowndes Square, London (1841-43) and Henry Ashton's Apartment houses, Victoria Street, London (1852-4). The sketches documenting interiors comprise drawings by George Scharf (1820-1895) of four rooms:



library, study, bedroom and his mother's room, in his house at 29 Great George Street, London (1869). The photographs and associated diary comprise photographs of three rooms, drawing-room, dining-room and studio/study, in the Sambourne House, 18 Stafford Terrace, London (1877) and the accompanying diaries of Mrs Marion Sambourne (1851-1914).

The following criteria were used for selection of these texts from the limited number of possibilities (cf. Chapter 1). Firstly, regarding the period, the text had to originate from 1837-1901, and secondly the graphic and written documentation surrounding the texts needed to be comprehensive and establish context. In the case of the architectural drawings, the floor plans chosen are representative of the three middle class housing types current in Victorian England: the detached villa, the terrace and the apartment. George Scharf's drawings are highly detailed and reveal both his culture and scholarship. Scharf was a bachelor and lived with his elderly mother and aunt. Moreover, although they represent the antithesis of the Victorian archetypal middle class family home, they remain an unusual but lucid illustration of the extent to which domestic space was gendered. The Sambourne House provides an excellently preserved and documented example of Victorian domestic life. The photographs and diaries offer rich and detailed texts for analysis.

5.3.1 Architectural drawings of three housing types

5.3.1.1 £1,550 Model villa (c 1855)

Designs for Villas, Parsonages, and Other Houses...from £200 to £5000 by Samuel Hemming of Birmingham is a publication for the use of builders. The book contains plates lithographed in two or three colours, a detailed and businesslike set of specifications provided with each design. In Hemming's design for a £1,550 villa:

...rustication covers the entire ground storey, and the middle section of the façade projects, although only very slightly. But the triple windows in this central section give a richer and busier effect to the whole façade. Their cornices are supported on deep scrolled brackets and they also have curved pediments over the wider central windows...The entrance is placed on one side so that the front façade may be regular; but the symmetry toward the street was not allowed to restrict the free grouping principal rooms of varying size. The service wing and the stable yard ramble off to the rear and side with real functional ease. The upper storey has an open gallery at the rear intended, apparently, for the children of the family. (Hitchcock 1954a: 429-430).

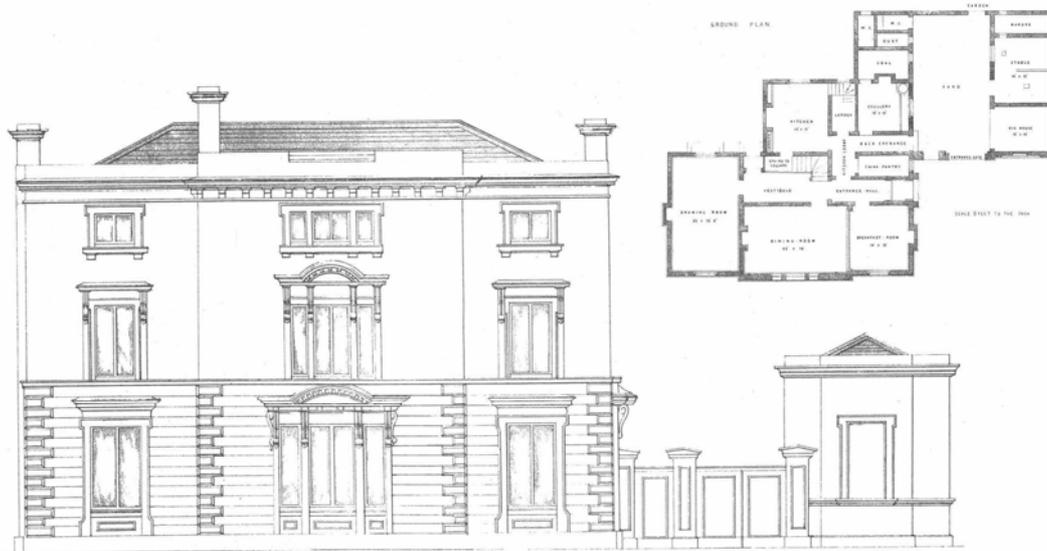


Figure 5.1 Elevation and plan of £1550 Villa, by Samuel Hemming, c. 1855

Samuel Hemming's model villa (Figure 5.1) is an example of a purpose-built 'ornamental villa' to be located in newly developed suburbs outside the town centre, which allowed the middle classes to avoid noise, pollution and the lower classes (cf. 4.3). The ground floor is divided into three sections: the first section spreads straight ahead and to the left of the front door and leading off of the entrance hall and vestibule are the breakfast-room, dining-room and drawing-room. Separated by the principal staircase, the second section is a service area and includes the kitchen, scullery, various storerooms and a servant's staircase. In so doing, chance encounters with the lower servant class could be limited. Across the yard from the service area is the third section, the stables and gate house. A drawing of the second floor and attic have not been included by Hitchcock (1954b), however, it is assumed that the second floor was comprised of the principal and spare bedrooms, with dressing-rooms, possibly a bathroom and the day and night nurseries for children. These intensely private spaces are, thus, kept separate from public, safeguarded against intrusion. The attic space was most likely used for accommodation of the servants.

5.3.1.2 Terrace, Lowndes Square, London (1841-43)

The terrace in Lowndes Square (Figures 5.2 & 5.3) is one of the few examples built at a known date by a known architect. It has further interest in that it probably initiated the first important new Victorian mode of terrace design. The prestige of the Belgravian

location and their builder, if not so much the architect, was the primary reason for the unusual acknowledgement given these houses by the press and the particular interest of other builders in emulating them. At the time of its construction, Belgravia was seen as an excellent example of speculative building (Hitchcock 1954a: 431).



Figure 5.2 Elevation of Terrace, Lowndes Sq, Belgravia, London, by Lewis Cubitt, 1841-43

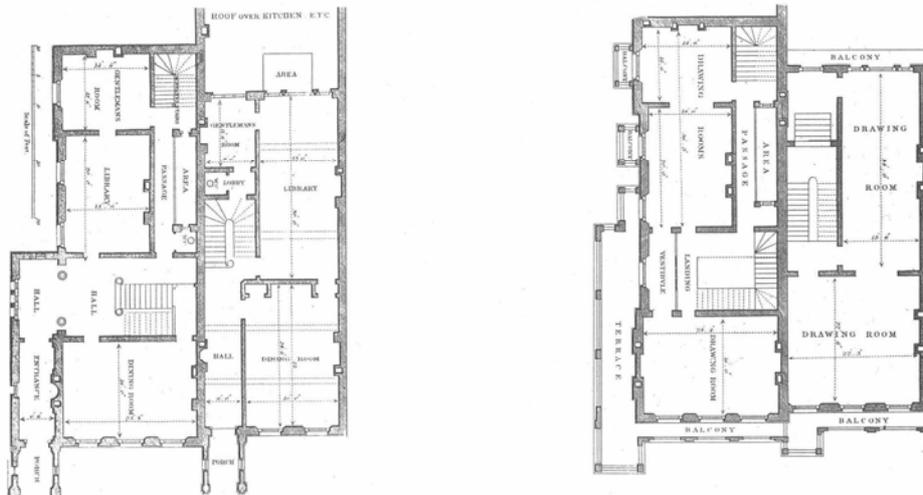


Figure 5.3 Plans of two units of Terrace, Lowndes Sq, Belgravia, London, by Lewis Cubitt, 1841-43



The building of Grosvenor Estate in Belgravia was far from complete and in the mid 30's Thomas Cubitt obtained the lease of a narrow tract of land lying between Wilton Crescent and Sloane Street beyond the northwest edge of the Grosvenor lands. In 1836-37 Cubitt laid out on the Lowndes tract a long and narrow square. Lowndes Square was not built up until 1849, except for this short terrace of five houses at the south end which was erected in 1841-43 according to the designs of Thomas' brother, Lewis Cubitt (Hitchcock 1954a: 431).

According to Beresford Chancellor (in Hitchcock 1954a: 432), Lowndes Square was in the 40's supposed to have been built up with greater regard to architectural effect than any other existing square in London and broke with Georgian convention.

One end house of the terrace on the south side...stands almost free, with a low projecting entry along its open side; the other end house, at the closed corner of the square, has no such appendage. But this slight asymmetry in the layout is minimised in the elevation; for the two end houses stand equally from the main range of the façade between. Despite five irregularly spaced doors in the ground storeys of the houses, the composition suggests a single palazzo with...strong end emphasis... . There is no central motif at all such as had long been usual in pretentious terraces, particularly those running along the sides of squares...Many terraces hitherto had been without orders merely because they were modestly designed but none had hitherto been 'astylar'... (Hitchcock 1954a: 432).

In this regard the design of the terrace was influenced by Sir Charles Barry's architecture. Furthermore, evidence of a second influence of the "...plastic gusto of [Charles] Parker's characteristic peasant-Baroque detail..." (Hitchcock 1954a: 433) is present in some elements of the detail. "The bold cornices on the chimneys and their ornamental chimney pots, although they are used in a Barry-like way, are more wilful in their picturesqueness than Barry would have approved of" (Hitchcock 1954a: 433).

The terraced house (cf. 4.3.1.2) is based on the principle of shared party walls. The basic plan of the regular terraced house is simple: two floors, with two rooms each. For variation and enlargements there are further floors on top, a basement and back extension, or both. The house plans (Figure 5.3) are of a regular upper middle class terrace type. The narrow hall widens towards the rear to make room for the stairs. From the hall little beyond the stairs can be seen so the visitor's experience of the house is controlled. The more intimately related acquaintances were allowed to enjoy more of the house. The library behind the dining-room is long and narrow, with a smaller 'Gentleman's Room' opening off it behind the stairs. "A 'Gentleman's room' in

the modern sense, a ground-storey water closet, is approached by a tiny lobby which leads back to the hall under the stairs” (Hitchcock 1954a: 433). On the first story, away from the public gaze, the principal drawing-room runs across the whole front of each house; from this a large secondary drawing-room extends to the rear of the house. The two are connected by a wide opening and they form a characteristic L-shaped reception suite which is practically one big room occupying most of this floor. The opening connecting the two spaces of the drawing-room could be opened or closed with sliding doors that slid back into recesses in the wall, thus controlling public in private or private in public. Each house is provided with a principal staircase and a servant's staircase at the rear, separating the two classes of occupants from each other within 'shared' space.

Hitchcock (1954b) does not include the plan drawings for the basement, second and third floors and attic. However, the drawings for a terrace of similar size and class, Albert Houses, Queens Gate, London, 1859-60 (CJ Richardson architect) include these floors. Due to the regularity in layout of terrace houses it is assumed that the layout for Lowndes terrace basement, second and third floors and attic would have been similar (Figure 5.4). The kitchen and its ancillary spaces are located in the basement which extends well beyond the rear of the main block of each house. The bedrooms and their associated dressing-rooms are located on the second and third floors. Servants were accommodated in the basement and the attic, as in Hemming's villa.



Figure 5.4 Plans of Terrace, 'Albert Houses', 44-52 Queens Gate, London, by CJ Richardson, 1859-60

5.3.1.3 Apartment houses, Victoria Street, London (1852-54)

In 1852 the architect Henry Ashton was asked by the entrepreneur, Mackenzie, to design the first London apartment houses or flats. Ashton gave the design of his building a definite continental character, although recalling Vienna or Berlin more than Paris, and subsequently more respectable in the eyes of the middle classes who would occupy them (Figure 5.5) (Hitchcock 1954a: 476-7).

The undomestic scaling and the foreign look might help to make more palatable the fact that there were shops below. These shops were not modest sales premises in the West End manner... Rather Ashton provided a range of wide-arched shop windows, with a mezzanine above in an arch, quite in the grandest manner of the new banks and insurance offices in the City. Prince Albert...inspected some of the apartments in 1854 when they were available for letting and was 'pleased to express his approbation of them architecturally'. Mackenzie's project included a long multiple block between Carlisle Place and Howick Place on the south side of Victoria Street, with two additional blocks to the east and west... Discussion may well be confined to the central and largest of Mackenzie's three blocks, about which the most information is available, since all the blocks are quite similar. This one...was not built as a unit but as four attached 'houses', each with its own staircase. The façade, however, was treated as a continuous composition like a terrace. The arched ground storey and mezzanine were broken into four rusticated and pedimented doorways that provided the entrances to the apartments above, as well as by wide rusticated piers between the bay. Above there are four storeys, each containing within the over-all length of the multiple block eight apartments arranged in pairs on either side of the four staircases. (Hitchcock 1954a: 476-7).



Figure 5.5 Apartment houses in Victoria Street, London, by Henry Ashton, 1852-54. General view looking east

According to Hitchcock (1954a: 478), although the layout of the floor plans (Figure 5.6) is quite poor, it is fairly ample in its accommodations, comparable to housing for a lower middle class family.



Figure 5.6 Apartment houses, Victoria Street, London, by Henry Ashton, 1852-54

At the front of each apartment is a drawing-room; the dining-room opens into this through a wide door. The drawing-room is the largest room in the apartment, although facing the street it is located as far away as possible from the entrance. These reception rooms are approached by an interior hall from the entrance lobby which is entered from the stair landing. Just as with the villa and the terrace the family's privacy is maintained. To the rear there are three bedrooms in each apartment, one very small. A fourth bedroom opens off the hall in front, indicative of the poor planning, to have an essentially private space located in a public area. A kitchen is accompanied by a small scullery and a water closet as well as by a servants' bedroom (practically without air or light). Once again social propriety takes precedence over the pragmatic. The kitchen is located as far as possible from the dining-room in the main part of the apartment and a separate servants' stair is provided. The master's water closet and a storeroom, as well as the servants' stair, open off the passage that leads from the hall to the kitchen; while a large closet is also provided off the main corridor.

5.3.2 Drawings of the interior spaces of a house

5.3.2.1 George Scharf, 29 Great George Street, London (1869)

George Scharf exemplified the Victorian phenomenon of the 'professional' man. Initially secretary and subsequently the first director of the newly-established National Portrait Gallery, Scharf was a man of many talents. Among his abilities he was an accomplished draughtsman and the detailed drawings he made of his home in 1868-9 are an extraordinarily revealing record of his expertise as well as his character. His home was not necessarily formally decorated, as was typical of the time, instead he allowed his many possessions that were an integral part of his life and work to

embellish his home. It is also evident that the maintenance of his household was as much a part of his life as his work. Scharf was a busy, thoughtful and endearing bachelor, who divided his time among his numerous interests. Lasdun (1981: 103) notes:

He gave as much time to the 'elderlies' (his affectionate name for his mother and aunt with whom he lived)...as he might give to working on an essay, meticulously observing the passage of the sun on his pictures, giving a dinner party, selecting paintings for the gallery or rushing out to record some ancient building before it become lost under the demolishers' axe...

It may be assumed, given the nature of Scharf's 'profession', the number of servants and his mother and aunt's co-residence with him, that he lived in a three-storey terrace or semi-detached house, with two rooms per floor plus a basement (cf. 4.3.1.2). Figure 5.7 depicts his "most preferred friend", Jack Pattisson, in Scharf's library. This room is especially crowded. One can almost not discern the door and walls for all the clutter: bookshelves brimming with books, framed prints and paintings cover the walls, while two work tables and a desk fill the floor. The visible sections of the walls are bright crimson, the ceiling white and the furniture is mahogany.



Figure 5.7 The library, 29 Great George Street, London, drawing by Scharf, 1869

Figure 5.8 is of Scharf's second workspace, his study. The windows have been left bare, with wooden shutters in place of curtains. Once again the room feels pleasantly muddled and personal. This time the walls are a more sombre sage green and the ceiling white.



Figure 5.8 The study, 29 Great George Street, London, drawing by Scharf, 1869

Figure 5.9 is of Scharf's bedroom, the window is bare except for a frilled pelmet. His bed is more conventionally Victorian, frilled and draped. His hip-bath stands before the fireplace. Figure 5.10 illustrates his mother's room, interestingly located on the top floor tucked away under the roof. Mrs Scharf sits at a table in front of the fire reading a letter. The walls have not been papered or painted a bright colour like the other rooms. Very little of Mrs Scharf's character is evident in her room. Rather, Scharf's collection of plaster casts, sculptures, prints and paintings pervade each room, even that of his mother. Scharf's choice in colour, dark mahogany furniture, heavy table cloths and rugs demonstrate precisely the sort of popular taste at the time. His prolific interests and enquiring mind give all the rooms a distinctive quality (Lasdun 1981: 99).



Figure 5.9 Bedroom, 29 Great George Street, London, drawing by Scharf, 1869

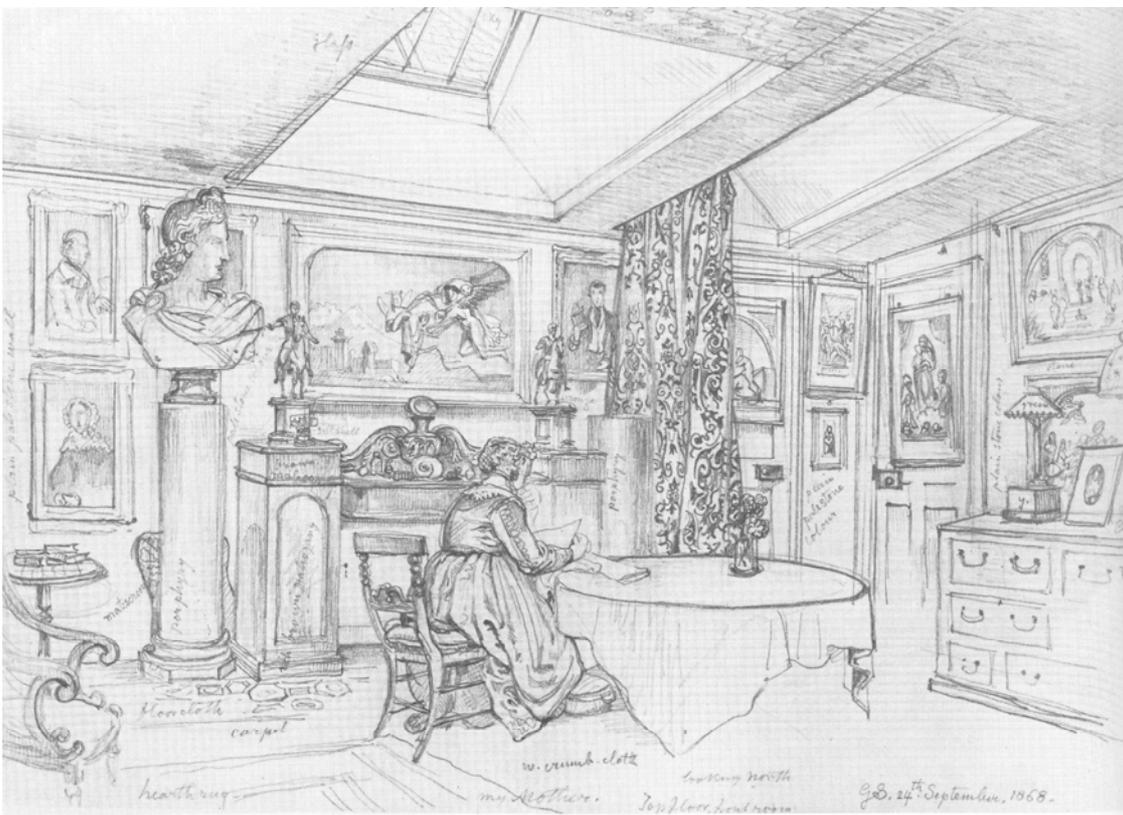


Figure 5.10 Scharf's mother's room, 29 Great George Street, London, drawing by Scharf, 1869



Scharf's position as bachelor would have been viewed by Victorian society as in conflict with domesticity. Domesticity projected an ideal of manhood that only marriage could fulfil, thereby yielding the full privileges of masculinity. By contrast bachelorhood provided freedom from the responsibility and burden of a wife and children, and allowed for unfettered homosociality (regular associations with other men). During this period it was not uncommon for respectable men to develop intimate friendships with other men, especially amongst bachelors. Tosh (1999: 110) notes that while the phenomenon of male friendship surely included a fair amount of overt homosexual feeling, it is seldom possible to know whether this was so in particular instances. The language Scharf uses in the description of Jack Pattison as his 'most preferred friend' may allude to a homosexual relationship, however, it should be noted that the use of elaborate language in letters between friends, regardless of their sexuality, was characteristic of the period.

Nonetheless, the life of George Scharf, 'professional' middle class man, demonstrated that domesticity need not be a condition exclusive to marriage. Despite his ageing mother and aunt living with him, there is little evidence of a feminine presence in his home. Even his mother's quarters are overwhelmed by his collection of sculpture and art (Figure 5.10). His was, thus, a peculiar sort of domesticity. He himself ran his household, managed his two servants personally, paid the bills, took pleasure in planning dinner parties (seating and menus) and 'decorated' his home. These activities would have typically been left to the wife, as part of her role as homemaker. The case of George Scharf presents an inversion of the Victorian ideal of domesticity, yet it is in this converse that the power and pervasiveness of Victorian respectability and the gendering of space becomes particularly evident.

5.3.3. Sambourne House

Sambourne House was opened as a museum in 1980 and is located at number 18 Stafford Terrace, in the London borough of Kensington. Sambourne House exists as an example of a genuine Victorian home where the original decorative scheme, devised in the 1870's is almost unaltered (Nicholson 1988: 9).

Edward Linley Sambourne (1844-1910), was a black-and-white artist who worked as a cartoonist for *Punch*, one of the most successful of nineteenth century periodicals. As a result of his energetic and gregarious nature he was on friendly terms with a wide circle of well known artists, sportsmen and literary men, many of whom were



entertained at his home (Nicholson 1988: 9). His influence can be seen throughout the house; however, there was another person responsible too for the arrangement of the rooms at Stafford Terrace. This was his wife, Marion, whose contribution has had little recognition. “Marion could not claim to be an artist, or a writer, or a social reformer, or even a famous beauty. She was just a typical middle class Victorian wife” (Nicholson 1988: 10). The couple had lived at 18 Stafford Terrace, Kensington, since their marriage in October 1874 and by 1881 had two children, Maud and Roy (Nicholson 1988: 13). Both Linley and Marion kept diaries, from which a picture emerges of two interesting people, both busy and preoccupied in their individual spheres but happily united in their appreciation of each other, their family and their home.

At a glance Linley and Marion Sambourne appear to be the archetypal respectable middle class Victorian couple (Figure 5.11). As a cartoonist, Linley, narrowly made it into the professional middle class, outside work, sport and a full social life were given highest priority. He was involved in both public life as well as his private world of his home and family. Marion, his *angel* wife, was content to live her life as wife and mother, “She was just a typical middle class Victorian wife, wrapped up in her husband and children in the security of a happy home, and having no desire to break away from the conventions of her upbringing.” (Nicholson 1988: 10). She maintained their home, managed their servants, acted as spiritual guide to and cared for her family and spent the perfunctory amount of time calling on acquaintances and entertaining at home. From their diaries it would appear that Linley and Marion were content with their life and home that they had made together.

On balance...Marion's criticisms were few and their marriage would have been extremely happy...Nor was she ever bored, but filled the time to her own satisfaction, frequently recording her appreciation of the good things that came her way. Victorian women found the conventions of middle class life restrictive, if not stifling, and used their surplus energies in good works, art or literature. Today more is known about those who rebelled against the system than about the vast majority who were happy and fulfilled in the role of wife and mother. To keep a man contented, bear his children, look after his home and entertain his friends was the main object in life for most young women, and there is nothing to show that Marion ever considered the possibilities of a wider sphere of activity outside her own close-knit domestic circle. (Nicholson 1988: 16-17).



Figure 5.11 Linley and Marion Sambourne photographed in Rome on their wedding tour, 1874

5.3.3.1 18 Stafford Terrace

The Sambournes' house is an example of a typical Victorian terrace (cf. 4.3.1.2). It consists of three storeys and a basement: behind the narrow frontage, the house has two rooms on each floor; the staircase rises from the back of the hall with bathrooms and lavatories off the half-landings. The kitchen and servants' rooms are in the basement, the dining-room and morning-room on the ground floor, and the drawing-room on the first floor. On the second floor are the main bedroom and a spare bedroom, with the day nursery, night nursery and room for the nursemaid above that.

According to Nicholson (1988: 24), Linley rather than Marion decided on the style of decoration for their new house and later again in 1887 when they embarked on some fairly extensive alterations and improvements. At thirty years old he knew what he liked, and his young wife would have been full of admiration for his knowledge as an artist and his taste. It would appear that Linley and Marion adopted many of the precepts of the Aesthetic Movement in the decoration of their home. The aesthetic movement was associated with the artists: James Whistler, Oscar Wilde, Gilbert and Sullivan, and with the idea of 'Art for Arts' Sake' (Dixon & muthesius 1978: 23). Nicholson (1988: 90) states, "In spite of their possible differences in outlook, Marion was very proud of her artist husband and delighted with the beautiful home which they had created together".

The Sambournes chose to combine the usual two rooms on the first floor into one large L-shaped drawing-room (Nicholson 1988: 25). Due to the nature of his occupation Linley worked from home, in the drawing-room (Figure 5.12), his 'studio', with drawing board, drawing and camera equipment set up on the southern side where the light was good. The house was not large enough nor was he rich enough, to have a separate studio.



Figure 5.12 The drawing-room looking north, 18 Stafford Terrace, London

Nicholson (1988:25) states:

It was at first papered in a William Morris yellow and white "Larkspur" design, which made a light and pretty, though still typically Aesthetic background for more pictures...and more blue and white china. Some of this paper can still be seen behind the pictures, although exposed areas were later covered with the more sumptuous-looking imitation Spanish leather. There were no comfortable upholstered chairs here or anywhere else in the house in 1877: deep-buttoned upholstery was popular in most homes at the time, but the Sambournes must have considered it incompatible with the Aesthetic mood. The other pieces of furniture – the tables, writing desks and commodes – are mostly

eighteenth-century French (Louis-seize) or good-quality Victorian copies in the same style.

The drawing-room, both a public and private space, functioned as an important means of display of a family's wealth and respectability. As a result it was the most decorative room of the house.



Figure 5.13 The morning-room, 18 Stafford Terrace, London

The morning-room (Figure 5.13) was Marion's. According to Nicholson (1988: 24-25):

It seems likely that the choice of decoration of the morning-room would have been to Marion's choice rather than her husband's, and it does have a different character from the rest of the house. Though the wallpaper is again the Morris "Fruit" pattern, this time the background colour is blue for the walls and cream for the ceiling. None of the other rooms in the house has a brightly coloured paper on the ceiling, and the morning-room is also unique in that it is not hung with photographs and drawings. We can assume that Marion insisted on something approximating to Old Masters, which we know she admired.

In 1899 after Maud's marriage the Sambournes decided to make some alterations and improvements to Stafford Terrace. These included fitting out the old night-nursery as a studio for Linley (Figure 5.14).



Figure 5.14 Linley's new studio, 1899, 18 Stafford Terrace

The prospect of getting all Linley's work and photographic equipment out of the drawing-room was pleasing to Marion who had complained about a lack of space for years (Nicholson 1988: 173). As with the other improvements it was Linley who organised labour and bought the furniture and curtains, "Lin to Maples...more furniture arrived...Lin v. busy re-arranging his room...helped Lin with books etc in his room all morning..." Marion wrote at intervals in January (Nicholson 1988: 173). Marion continued to keep Linley company while he worked, who felt far from banished, was delighted with what he called his "little room". The room is decoratively an entirely different space from the drawing room in which he had worked. Although full of furniture it is remarkably free of ornament and coverings.



5.4 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF TEXTS

The texts of the model villa, terrace house and apartment are analysed only according to the criteria of public/private, as they do not contain information relevant to 'Angel in the House' and decoration and ornament. The texts of George Scharf and Sambourne house provide content relevant to all three criteria and are therefore analysed as such.

5.4.1 Public/private

The nineteenth century saw the continued separation of the public from the private, work from home. The layout of the Victorian house reflects this change. The home was no longer the site of communal endeavour. Life became formalised and was organised according to social convention (cf 4.4.1). The house was structured according to this respectable separation of activities, gender, age and class, at the expense of practical planning. Victorian architects reproduced spatial and social hierarchies by structuring architectural space according to gendered ideals of the public and the private. For women their relation to the notion of public was complicated in that houses had a shifting division within their walls between more public spaces and absolutely private areas (Davidoff 2003: 18).

The three house types, villa, terrace and apartment, and their plans which have been described (cf. 5.3.1) are evidence of this specialisation and segregation of space, even the apartment which had limited space is divided and subdivided into separate spheres, public and private. Specialisation is evident in the variety of spaces assigned to specific functions and reflects the middle class beliefs about proper social relationships (cf. 4.4.1). Thus, class privilege and urban life influenced the social practices associated with the gendering of the public and private spheres (Davidoff 2003). Segregation is evident in different zones, structured according to gender, age or class separated by levels or staircases and vestibules. Each room is separate from the next with only one entrance so that visitors need see little more than the room they find themselves in. The kitchen was situated below stairs in the basement as in the terrace house, or behind the entrance hall and principal staircase as in the villa. This illustrates that irrespective of practicalities, it was important that the bustle, commotion and odours from the kitchen did not reach the dining- or drawing-rooms (cf 4.4). The following characteristics are common across the social spectrum: a separate room for dining, a separate drawing-room and a separate kitchen. Even in the apartment



'house' the kitchen is separated from the rest of the house by the servants' staircase and the entrance hall. It also served to avoid contact with the lower servant class.

It has been established (cf. 4.4.1) that the spaces within the home were divided according to a 'socio-sexual' code. Who has access to which parts of the house and when becomes a marker of gender and age categories as well as permitted intimacies (Davidoff 2003: 18). Accordingly the dining-room, library, study, 'gentlemen's room' and dressing-room were considered masculine; the boudoir, morning-room and the drawing-room feminine. Although the private house was supposed to be the women's sphere, men retained a privileged position within it (Davidoff 2003: 18). As mentioned, the men would remain in the dining-room after dinner to smoke, talk politics or just sober up, later joining the women in the drawing-room. In addition to social gatherings the drawing room was used for a number of disparate purposes: piano playing, writing letters, embroidery and so forth. Thus, the drawing-room was a complex and layered space, as it served as both public and private space. Although essentially a private area for women, it was still subjected to the privileged position of men, who as 'male head of the household' had legitimate access to both public and private. Furthermore, the drawing-room was located away from the public gaze, either at the furthest end from the entrance, as in the villa and apartment, or on the first floor, as in the terrace. The Victorians valued their privacy and did not want to be looked in upon (cf. 4.3). Thus, the drawing-room, where the women of the house would spend a considerable amount of their time, would be protected from the street and gaze of strangers.

The profusion of rooms, in Ashton's apartments, each with its own function, despite the limited area, shows the length to which Victorians would go in their quest for privacy and control over the environment so as to maintain the appearance of their gentility. Further, Lowndes Terrace and the Albert Houses were designed for upper middle class Victorians. The houses contained a number of additional rooms to Hemming's villa, the library, the 'gentleman's room' and a drawing-room comprised of two rooms. The higher one moved up the social scale, the more compartmentalised and specialised the house became and life became more formal and contrived. Respectability, together with it a life bisected by intricately conceived public and private space, was a luxury that only some could afford, and some more than others (Davidoff in Landes 2003: 33).

Furthermore, Hemming's villa was designed to be built in the context of the suburb. The notion of suburb also invokes the public/private divide. The introverted character



of the suburb reads as a *private* space as opposed to the *public* city. The suburb represented that which was clean, respectable and comfortable, an escape from the city which was dirty, immoral and uncomfortable.

The entrance in each case acts as a threshold between public and private and is either concealed or buffered. In the case of Hemming's villa, the entrance is situated to the side, so that from the street access to the house is not at first evident. This reflects the idea that a dwelling should be a space enclosed from the intrusion of all who were not family and friends (cf. 4.3). In Lowndes terrace the entrance is an added bulwark separating the internal space from the contaminated public realm. The front door is reached after climbing a few steps and going through a short porch. On entry the visitor is confronted with a hall and sees little except the room he/she has been led to and thus does not penetrate at once into the privacy of the house. The visitor was carefully controlled, restricted to strictly defined public spaces and prevented from penetrating the family's personal space (Kleinberg 2003: 149).

Davidoff (2003: 19) links the existence of a private sphere to the hegemony of men within the public realm, yet it extended further than this, men were able to legitimately bridge the public and the private. The home of George Scharf illustrates this argument. The rooms Scharf used as his library and study were most likely originally the morning-room on the ground floor and the drawing-room above. The morning- and drawing-rooms were seen as part of the feminine sphere, but Scharf has annexed them for himself, despite the presence of two women in the house. In so doing his mother and aunt have been displaced, relegated to the top floor under the roof, which was typically the floor used for the children of the home, where rooms for a day and a night nursery and a room for the nursemaid would have been found. Was Scarf's mother in her status as a widowed woman, dependent on her son, so reduced to be equated with that of a child? Victorian children were sequestered at the top of the house, under supervision of a nursemaid and rarely seen or invited into the public rooms of the home (c.f 4.4.1.1). Further, it may be inferred that by locating his ageing mother and aunt in the highest part of the house, Scharf limited their movement through *his* house, as it required her to climb many steep flights of stairs. As Davidoff (2003: 12) points out, the notion of public and private inevitably connotes hierarchy. Within this dualism people are assigned to either category, differential consequences follow in terms of power and access to resources. Just so, Scharf has a position of power and with access to resources, while his mother finds herself in the reduced position of the dependent



widow. He thus colonises the private feminised space of home, rendering it public and masculine.

As there was no extra room available in the house of the Sambournes to serve as a studio, Linley used part of the drawing-room as studio space. In so doing, he requisitioned a space, typically identified with the women of the house, thus inserting public into private.

Despite her husband's appropriation of an essentially feminine space, Marion held onto the morning-room, as her own, separate sphere.

The morning-room was generally considered to be the sanctum of the lady of the house. At Stafford Terrace it faced south and would certainly have been easier to heat and keep cosy than the vast drawing-room upstairs...Here Marion would have done her sewing, interviewed Cook, and received her callers. (Nicholson 1988: 24).

That Linley Sambourne worked from home and had to occupy a conventionally feminine space is evidence that the ideal of separate spheres cannot be applied rigidly to Victorians. The convergence of Linley and Marion's spheres meant that they probably lived together in greater mutual understanding of one's activities than couples where the husband worked away from home.

Yet, despite this blurring of boundaries Linley and Marion still lived relatively separate lives:

He and Marion went out to dinner parties and theatres together, as well as entertaining friends at home, but the number of his acquaintances was very large and included people she never met. Gentlemen belonged to clubs where they could gather to talk politics and sport, or smoke and read the papers... . Thus Linley was out in the evenings quite often... (Nicholson 1988: 16).

According to Nicholson (1988: 53), a large part of Marion's diary was taken up with her social engagements, which included 'calling' (calling on friends or acquaintances on their 'at home' day or receiving guests on her own 'at home'). Many of her friends were artists, colleagues and friends of her husband's, however, a number of Marion's close friends were not connected with the art world at all, "...scattered through the diary are the names of unmarried friends and cousins... . Then there was quite a different set of acquaintances, probably made through her father's interests in stock-broking and banking." (Nicholson 1988: 58). Many of these friends she visited or went out with independent of Linley, and travelled across the country on her own to spend holidays



with family. She was not solely reliant on Linley for intellectual company and contact with the outside world.

It is apparent from the texts that the dichotomy of separate spheres, male and female, was coded into the division of domestic space. Nevertheless, gendering of the drawing-room is tenuous in that it functioned as both public and private. As women spent a large part of their time there, it is viewed as essentially feminine (cf. 4.4.1), however, the room was also used for social gatherings, rendered public and subjected to intrusion of men. From the texts associated with George Scharf and Linley Sambourne, it is evident that the notion of public/private is layered and complex, boundaries shift according to context. Both Scharf and Sambourne annexed feminine space, affirming that though ostensibly valued, the home was 'other', a narrow and colonised female space that existed in opposition to and in support of the master space (cf. 4.2). Thus the Victorian house reflects realities about the relationships between men and women, both in the home and society.

5.4.2 'Angel in the house'

The Victorian woman was a 'relative creature' (cf. 3.4.1.1), her role was defined by her relationship to men. Mrs Scharf was both widow and mother. As a widow she was dependent upon her son, a grown man and bachelor, who no longer needed her as nurturer and moral guide. That Mrs Scharf lived with her son, in his house, as a dependent was acceptable, yet that she took no active part in his household was unusual. It would have been expected that she ran his household for him, just as she had done for her husband. However, Scharf took over her role as homemaker and displaced his mother to the top floor, where she was no more than an echo. Stripped of her angelic powers, this loss of identity is evident in her room, where her few personal effects are overshadowed by Scharf's collection of plaster casts of robust masculinity. Thus, it may be argued that the *realisation* of the Victorian feminine ideal, that of 'Angel in the House' (already a male construct) was ultimately shaped by and dependent upon men.

Marion Sambourne was the typical Victorian wife, wrapped up in her husband and children in the security of a happy home, and having no desire to break away from the conventions of her upbringing. To some extent, she exemplified Coventry Patmore's ideal woman and wife; she was the 'Angel in the House'. Marion supported her husband and was the most ardent admirer of his work, "She did everything she could to



help and encourage her husband; sitting beside him for many hours while he drew, chatting or reading aloud, to ease the tedium of endless meticulous shading.” (Nicholson 1988: 15). Yet, while Marion was supportive and subordinate to her husband she was certainly not passive, as an 'angel' she was still an active agent in her family and home.

Part of her role as homemaker Marion had to take on the responsibility, as well as endure the trials and frustrations, of an employer. The running and controlling of a household with four servants was no easy task, as good servants were difficult to find and seldom stayed for long leaving Marion with the tedious task of finding replacements. Marion, a shrewd housekeeper, sometimes wrote crossly about the servants, “Vexed drawing-room not properly cleaned”, “Found top of house very dirty, spoke to Minnie and Nurse”, “Cook does not see dirty plates.” (in Nicholson 1988: 67). Moreover, Marion actively took part in household cleaning. She relates that she quite enjoyed dusting the drawing-room, and always washed the delicate ornaments in the cabinets herself. Marion herself tended the “bay of ferns” built out from the window in the dining-room and other indoor plants, which were deemed, at the time, to be a suitable occupation for ladies. She noted in her diary whenever she bought new plants, and often wrote “did fern cases” or “watered plants” (in Nicholson 1988: 24).

Although Marion went to church, Linley did not. He would attend a funeral as a mark of respect, or go to admire the architecture of a famous cathedral. Marion saw to it that the children were taken to church every Sunday morning by Nurse or her mother-in-law. Marion herself did not go as regularly, “...she did seem to be looking for salvation, albeit in a half-hearted way.” (Nicholson 1988: 59). In this way she fulfilled her role as her family’s spiritual and moral guide, maintaining their respectability.

Household shopping was another of Marion's responsibilities and took up quite a lot of her time. Most of this was done locally, Marion's day often began “To stores morning.” and other entries, “Walked to Kensington, bought brushes & dusters” (in Nicholson 1988: 69). With shopping came the responsibility of maintaining a budget and paying off accounts. Except for special occasions she was very careful with housekeeping money and constantly worried about over-spending. “Books very heavy” she wrote quite often or “Books fearfully heavy, so many dinners & company this week and last.” It was a relief when she was able to write “Paid books morning, very low thank goodness” (in Nicholson 1988: 69). It would seem that Marion was the financially



aware and responsible one in their relationship, in 1884 she wrote, “Dear Lin worried with bills, wish he could be less extravagant, so difficult to make him understand absolute necessity” (in Nicholson 1988: 78). Linley appeared to be quite content to spend what money there was and leave Marion to sort out any little financial problems. Marion had inherited some of her father's money, who was a successful stockbroker and financial acumen, although she was better at saving than taking risks, “She had a nest egg invested in shares and her diaries are full of notes about buying and selling...and reminders about when money should be paid into her account.” (Nicholson 1988: 78). It is inferred that in this way Marion acted outside of convention, through her diligence with the household budget and personal investments she was able to complement Linley's income.

In addition to her responsibilities at home, Marion enjoyed the archetypical activity of needlework. Indeed, Marion had a reputation of being a good needlewoman. Sewing and embroidering was seen as an essential expression of femininity; thus, it was not accorded much artistic or creative value (Parker 1984: 5). According to Nicholson (1988: 85), her early diaries are full of notes like “Worked on pink cotton”, “Mended dresses & finished home-made black”, “Bought frilling and altered silk shirt”. She did not own a sewing machine, “Cut out flounce, Judy took it away to machine”, but made clothes for herself and her daughter Maud by hand: “Finished Maud's blue dress, will wear it on Sunday.” She would make the occasional trip to the Royal School of Needlework to buy materials but she does not specifically mention embroidery, although it is said that she made the cushions now found in the morning-room. Lampshades were quite a speciality of hers and “Worked at new shades” is a frequent entry. Marion also made other things for the house: “Busy all morning cutting out sofa cover”, “Hard at work on covers”, “Very busy with drawing-room curtains, did three sides.” Other entries like “Trimmed bonnet & read to chicks”, or “Finished mother's pincushion” show that her hands were seldom idle. Clearly Marion's sewing and embroidery meant more to her than just 'work', the stereotypical notion that patience and perseverance go into embroidery but little else (Parker 1984: 6). It was something she enjoyed in which she was able to express herself creatively.

The ambiguous nature of ‘Angel in the House’ is illustrated through the life of Marion Sambourne, while supportive, subordinate and content with her lot as the respectable Victorian woman, yet also an active agent in her home and family. She acted independently by taking responsibility for their household, their finances and their



spiritual well-being. Linley and Marion's separate spheres converged with him working at home, yet Marion also enjoyed activities independent of her husband. She had her own friends, went out with them, went shopping alone or ventured into the City accompanied by her mother-in-law or parlour-maid and she was a creative and successful needlewoman. Thus, Marion fulfilled the Victorian feminine ideal (cf. 3.4.1.1) never straining against the confines it imposed on her, while at the same time subverting the very ideal she was operating within by operating as an active agent in her home and family.

5.4.3 Decoration and ornament

Scharf's choice in décor and furniture is in certain respects representative of the conventional Victorian home, reflecting the popular style and taste of the period. He chose rich and sombre colours, crimson and sage green, with dark mahogany furniture. The walls are either painted or covered in wallpaper, barely visible beneath an abundance of framed prints and paintings. The layering continues on the floors, wall to wall carpeted floors are strewn with Persian rugs. Tables are draped, covered with heavy tablecloths. The clutter and layering, a reflection of substance and status, contributes to an atmosphere of cosiness (cf. 4.5). Scharf's lived-in look signified a respectable lack of idleness. However, the draping stops here; unlike the typical Victorian fashion of elaborately draping the windows Scharf's windows are bare of curtains, only a frilled pelmet is present in his bedroom. The chairs are generally upright and unpadded, which must have been disagreeable to Scharf's guests. Despite being overcrowded with furniture and a variety of objects, which creates a certain sense of comfort, the comfort is particularly idiosyncratic to the owner and raises the question whether his co-inhabitants and guests felt as 'at home' as he did. Where surfaces would typically be adorned with various decorative objects and ornaments, Scharf's rooms are "...crammed with plaster casts of ancient and classical figures, engravings of Renaissance paintings, portraits of friends and family, all jostling for space on his walls and cupboards, with books bursting from bookcases..." (Lasdun 1981: 97).

It has been argued that Scharf transformed the morning- and drawing-rooms into his study and library. Scharf colonised these rooms with his books, plaster casts, pictures on the walls as well as his presence, rendering them masculine. Scharf's presence is continued into his mother's room; his ancient and classical figures and engravings have made their way up here too. The only traces of his mother's feminine presence are the



little vase of flowers on the table where she is reading and a comfortable upholstered arm chair (the only armchair recorded in all of Scharf's drawings). A patterned curtain hangs from one of the skylights, managing to slightly diffuse the light coming directly through the roof and softens the space.

Fireplaces throughout the house are left bare, none are draped or fringed. There is no evidence of overmantels or other such popular treatments. Scharf's classical collection continues right over the mantelpieces and it is especially noteworthy that the mantelpiece in Mrs Scharf's room is embellished with what appears to be a classical Roman insignia, signifying a conquering masculine presence. However, a single sea shell and a few small decorative glass bottles, perhaps perfume or smelling salts, on the surface of this mantelpiece, suggest his mother's scant personal touches.

Thus, George Scharf's home incorporates many of the symbols of respectability, rich furnishings and colours, artefacts and books indicative of his profession and his industrious nature, yet it has not been feminised. Despite the presence of two women in the home, it remains an essentially masculine space. He allowed his interests and passions to infiltrate the entire house, even his mother's room. Although he was fond of his mother, she appears stripped of her voice and identity. In this case, while operating within bounds of respectability, the entire private sphere of home has been gendered masculine. Decoration and ornament reinforced this gendering of space; however, at the same time it functioned as an important signifier of respectability.

In the case of the Sambournes, the task of furnishing the home was undertaken by the husband, which concurs with Cohen (2003) and Tosh's (1999) argument (cf. 4.6.1) that both husband and wife might share in the enterprise of furnishing and decorating their home. Linley set the Aesthetic tone of their home in the furnishings, colours and wallpaper that he chose, as well as the stained-glass windows that he designed, while Marion filled it with decoration. Yet, the maintenance and ongoing decoration of the drawing-room in particular, whether with the work of her own hands or with consumer goods (Logan 2001: 35), was considered one of her primary duties as wife.

Linley's presence in the drawing-room/studio is evident, "Beside his chair he had a portable gas lamp and an engraver's globe, which could be used to focus a beam of bright light on to his drawing board." (Nicholson 1988: 15). Moreover, he took over the drawing-room and other parts of the house to accommodate his work: the chests of



drawers in the drawing-room were filled with his photographs, Marion wrote “Bitterly cold in morning-room. Lin busy with photos, in & out, curtains taken down for it.” (in Nicholson 1988: 16).

The most striking thing about this room is the accumulation of furniture and decorative details. Every possible type of seat is present: comfortable chairs, upright chairs, stools and footstools, all of which are padded and upholstered in patterned or hand-embroidered fabrics. The other furniture, tables, writing desks and commodes, are mostly eighteenth-century French (Louis-seize) or good-quality Victorian copies in the same style (Nicholson 1988: 25). Loose, intricately patterned carpets, Turkish or Persian, are strewn over the already patterned parquet floors.

Besides the forest of furniture, the wallpapered walls almost disappear behind the closely hung framed prints and paintings, and “...a whole range of ornaments, lamps, and knick knacks, including Neopolitan copies of Etruscan vases, Japanese painted vases, a French boule clock, a bronzed reduction by Coalbrookdale of John Bull's Eagle Slayer, shown at the 1851 exhibition, and a bronze nymph by Barbedienne.” (Nicholson 1988: 25). This demonstrates how the Victorian home could combine the restraint of neo-classicism on plan with a proliferation of decorative detail and interiors full of furnishings.

Above each of the two white marble fireplaces is a large mirror in a heavy and ornate frame, which was a classic mid-Victorian indicator of status. Logan (2001: 114) states a mirrored reflection of domestic space would have enlarged the sense of space and doubled its contents. This enlargement and replication would have contributed to an appreciation of material wealth and comfort. The mantel garniture, a symmetrical arrangement of bronze figurines and classical vases, all individually mounted on a substantial piece of marble, bring 'art' into the home, providing a visual confirmation of the family's gentility.

The various ornaments and knick knacks were all objects signifying the home's respectability. For example, the small statue or bust suited both the financial means of the middle classes and their desire to use such objects to adorn the mantel, tables, occasional tables, overmantels or whatnots. According to Logan (2001: 129), in Victorian sculpture and its reproductions, nudity could legitimately be displayed under the aegis of art and were quite commonly found in respectable homes, provided that



the representation of female nudes carefully followed the conventional prohibitions of colour, body hair and details of genitalia. Besides decorative objects the surfaces are generally covered with textiles, many of them embroidered. Some would have served a purpose, such as lamps mats to catch spills, while others were purely ornamental. In this way objects were 'underlined' by placing pieces of fabric under, over or around them. Many of these would have been made by Marion herself. There was also the fashion of 'draping', which included chairs, tables, fireplaces and windows. In this instance not only are the windows hung with heavy curtains and tassels, but the doorway is also draped with fabric. This suggests sensuality and the pleasure taken in the tactile and visual appeal of fabrics as additions to home décor (Logan 2001: 134). Thus, the rather severe type of furniture which Linley bought was covered and softened with the multitude of ornaments, family portraits, embroidered mats and sentimental keepsakes that were cherished by most Victorian ladies. Despite the unusual presence of Linley and his work in the drawing-room, it is filled with decoration and ornamentation signifying the home's respectable status.

It is more apparent that the morning-room, Marion's domain, is a feminine space (cf. 5.3.3.1). The morning-room has a lighter, cheerful and cosier feel in comparison to the rather heavy and formal atmosphere of the drawing-room. It was a style Marion admired in the homes of friends, according to her diary. Moreover, the room is not as crowded with furniture and ornaments as the drawing-room. The prints and paintings on the walls, unlike the photographs and paintings in the drawing-room, are of the Grand Masters, whom Marion admired. Thus, the morning-room reflects Marion's own her character and style.

In Linley's new studio, the transformed nursery room, the furniture is boxy and severe, typical of his taste. It has managed to remain free of covers, tassels and fringes. The walls are once again papered, however, this time they are largely visible, only sparsely hung with a few swords, prints and a mirror. Forming part of the dado is a single bookshelf that follows the perimeter of the room, filled with Linley's books. The parquet floors have been left bare and there are only a few ornaments. Of the furniture included are a number of chests of drawers, presumably to sort Linley's extensive collection of photo's and drawings. The space, very unlike his 'studio' in the drawing-room, is practical, free of any fuss and clutter.



Even though Linley primarily used a large part of the drawing room for his work as a studio, a sense of respectability was maintained, it was comfortable, filled with ornaments used to signify gentility. However, Linley's penetration of the space caused tension, by inserting public into private masculine and feminine spheres collided. Linley's choice of severe chairs and boxy chest of drawers were covered, smothered and padded. Marion's own room, the morning-room, was more clearly gendered. It was the one room in the house where her taste was honoured, albeit Linley's upright chairs are ever-present. Once Linley acquired a space truly his own, his masculine sensibilities were completely exerted. Therefore, it can be said that the home was indeed ordered according to a 'socio-sexual' code, with certain rooms allocated to each sex. Decoration and ornament reinforced this gendering of space; however, at the same time it functioned as an important signifier of respectability. The masculine furniture, drawing equipment and ornament infiltrated a space considered feminine, yet respectability prevailed and it is still full of symbols of a genteel middle class family.

5.5 CONCLUSION

In Chapter 5, three types of texts documenting Victorian domestic space were identified: architectural drawings; sketches documenting interiors and photographs of a house interior with associated diary. The hypothesis that there are embedded and gendered discourses in Victorian domestic space that reveal the dichotomy in Victorian respectability was supported by the identification of:

- the architectural drawings of the floor plans of Samuel Hemmings £1,550 Model villa (c 1855);
- the architectural drawings of the floor plans of Lewis Cubitt's Terrace, Lowndes Square, London (1841-43);
- the architectural drawings of the floor plans of Henry Ashton's Apartment houses, Victoria Street, London (1852-4);
- drawings documenting interiors by George Scharf of four rooms in his house at 29 Great George Street, London (1869);
- the photographs of three rooms in the Sambourne House, 18 Stafford Terrace, London (1877) and the associated diaries of Mrs Marion Sambourne.

An interpretive research stance, a detailed examination of the text so as to discover embedded meaning, and a feminist critical perspective were applied to read these texts. Further, these texts were analysed according to criteria derived from the



literature review: public/private, 'Angel in the House' and decoration and ornamentation. It was found that Victorian domestic space was gendered according to the dichotomy of respectability, space was differentiated according to a 'socio-sexual' code; however, male members of the home had legitimate access to both public and private space.



CHAPTER SIX

6. RECAPITULATION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 RECAPITULATION

The main problem investigated in this study was the influence of the ideology of respectability on the gendering of Victorian domestic space.

In Chapter two the first hypothesis that the political, social, economic and religious context of Victorian England contributed to the ideology of respectability was investigated. The study was exploratory and descriptive in nature. The chapter was written in a narrative style, a framework of information on the subject was established, while at the same time acknowledging where sources colluded and differed. It was found that the character of the age was marked by transition and doubt, the products of which, positivism and respectability, provided the Victorians with the sense of hope and order they required. Order was maintained not through civil action, but rather the strength of the individual, family discipline and codes of conduct, indicative of the regulatory role that respectability played within Victorian society. However, the factor that most contributed to the Victorian moral imperative was the result of religious revival, in which the home was central and which inspired an obsessive belief in work, sobriety of behaviour, respectability and self-help. Respectability became the most compelling strand binding together the disparate elements of the middle class within the revised domestic world. In this way the initial hypothesis was confirmed.

In Chapter three the hypothesis that respectability was a specific manifestation of the prevalent ideologies of the Victorian era was investigated. The study was exploratory and descriptive in nature, read from a scholarly critical perspective. The chapter was written in a narrative style, a framework of information on the subject was established, while at the same time acknowledging where sources colluded and differed. Respectability, at the core of Victorian life, was structured around a heavily polarized understanding of gender, which became inseparable from the home. The hegemony of modern masculinity privileged men with access to both the public and the private spheres. Women were seen as naturally domestic beings, limited to the private sphere. The separate spheres paradigm provided a rigid framework divided according to male and female. Sexual roles were demarcated: men became the sole bearers of



sexuality while women were seen to lack any sexual desire. The middle class ideal of marriage was one based on companionship. Further, the family was a sign of moral order, a unifying and universal norm. Thus, it was found that prevailing Victorian ideals were constructed along the precepts of respectability, in an endeavour to maintain order in an age marked by change. The hypothesis that respectability was a specific manifestation of the prevalent ideologies of the Victorian era is validated.

Chapter four investigated the hypothesis that domestic space is a vehicle for the encoding of socio-cultural values. The study was exploratory and descriptive in nature, read from a scholarly critical perspective. The chapter was written in a narrative style, a framework of information on the subject was established, while at the same time acknowledging where sources colluded and differed. The encoding of socio-cultural values is manifest in architectural space, which maintains gender distinctions and is evident in Victorian architecture where space is structured around respectability and man's dominance of public and private. The separation of work from home resulted in new domestic layouts, activities were segregated and space compartmentalised according to a specific 'socio-sexual' code. Moreover, sexual and social differences were formed and structured through furnishings, decoration and ornament that were gendered in terms of colour, style and detailing. In this way the hypothesis is affirmed.

In Chapter five, three types of texts documenting Victorian domestic space were identified: architectural drawings; sketches documenting interiors and photographs of a house interior with associated diary. The hypothesis that there are embedded and gendered discourses in Victorian domestic space that reveal the dichotomy in Victorian respectability was supported by the identification of:

- the architectural drawings of the floor plans of Samuel Hemmings £1,550 Model villa (c 1855);
- the architectural drawings of the floor plans of Lewis Cubitt's Terrace, Lowndes Square, London (1841-43);
- the architectural drawings of the floor plans of Henry Ashton's Apartment houses, Victoria Street, London (1852-4);
- drawings documenting interiors by George Scharf of four rooms in his house at 29 Great George Street, London (1869);
- the photographs of three rooms in the Sambourne House, 18 Stafford Terrace, London (1877) and the associated diaries of Mrs Marion Sambourne.



An interpretive research stance, a detailed examination of the text so as to discover embedded meaning, and a feminist critical perspective were applied to read these texts. Further, these texts were analysed according to criteria derived from the literature review: public/private, 'Angel in the House' and decoration and ornamentation. It was found that Victorian domestic space was gendered according to the dichotomy of respectability, space was differentiated according to a 'socio-sexual' code; however, men had legitimate access to both public and private space.

6.2 CONCLUSIONS

By investigating the main hypothesis of the influence of respectability on the gendering of Victorian domestic space it becomes evident that house and home embodied a male/female dichotomy where men owned and 'ruled', while women were confined to and maintained it. The study revealed that Victorian ideology was fissured and developed unevenly, yet these ideological constructs still functioned in terms of suggesting an ideal. Architectural space embodies knowledge of social relations, in so doing the home reflected the ideals and realities about distinctions of gender-status. Thus, the middle class ideal of respectability became inseparable from home, both meta-physically and physically.

With the separation of work from home, public from private, the Victorian home was privatised and compartmentalised. It is apparent from the public/private analysis of the texts that this dichotomy of separate spheres, male and female, was coded into the division of domestic space. However, the texts also disclosed that while the ideology of separate spheres provides a descriptive tool, the notion of public/private is layered and complex, boundaries shift according to context. Thus, public/private, with their multiple and shifting gender connotations, remains relevant framework for gender analysis. As Landes (2003: 34) notes by addressing the politics of gender on both sides of the public/private divide, as well as the interrelationship between the public and the private, feminist scholars can help to illuminate the manner in which boundaries have been and continue to be drawn or negotiated.

Furthermore, the nineteenth century home was re-invented as woman's natural place or appropriate place; she became the 'Angel in the House'. Yet the analysis of the texts uncovered the equivocal nature of this ideal. Women subverted the very ideal they chose to emulate, by operating as active agents in their homes and families. The



Victorian woman's ability to realise this ideal was further complicated by her position in relation to men, her husband, father and son. Man's privileged position entitled him to determine whether women would achieve this ideal that he himself had constructed. Therefore, the application of an ideological construct, such as 'Angel in the House', can present a valid tool for critical evaluation of architectural space, as a means to ascertain the extent to which the ideal was attained and evidence of possible subversion.

The analysis of decoration and ornamentation of the texts confirms that decoration and ornamentation reinforced the gendering of space, while at the same time signifying the respectability of the home's occupants.

Therefore, public/private affords an indispensable tool for gender analysis of both historical and contemporary architectural space, provided it transcends mere description and retains analytical clarity and significance. The 'Angel in the House' and decoration and ornamentation present valid tools for the critical analysis of Victorian architectural space in Britain and could be used in future research for analysis of architectural space in the context of British colonies of the same period.

6.3 CONTRIBUTIONS

The study makes the following contributions:

- i. the identification and critical analysis of the texts chosen;
- ii. the broadening of the usage of public/private for gender analysis to interior architecture;
- iii. the literature review disclosed that scant research in the field of interior architecture had been produced on the subject matter (most research has been conducted by social, cultural, gender, literary and art historians). This study is, therefore, novel within the discipline of architecture and broadens the theoretical base for analysis and understanding of the extant historical built environment and associated artefacts;
- iv. conducting this study from a feminist and critical theory point of a view provided an alternative practice of writing architectural history, through the application of concentrated analysis and critical interpretation;
- v. a useful analytical tool for understanding contemporaneous interiors throughout the British empire;



- vi. a model for interpretation of interiors across different styles and periods.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for further study:

- i. It is recommended that the three criteria for critical analysis, public/private, 'Angel in the House' and decoration and ornamentation, be applied in a study of Victorian public and domestic interior architecture against the context of colonial South Africa.
- ii. It is recommended that public/private be applied in the gender analysis of public and domestic interior architecture against the context of contemporary South Africa.