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SUMMARY

Victorian respectability: The gendering of domestic space

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Space is socially constructed, reflecting and reinforcing the nature of gender relations in society. This is evident in nineteenth century architecture, particularly domestic architecture, where space was structured around the ideology of respectability.

Within the discipline of interior architecture, this study investigates the relationship between the Victorian (1837-1901) ideology of respectability and the gendering of domestic space. The problem was investigated by means of a literature review; thereafter, a set of criteria derived from the literature were applied in a critical analysis of selected examples of Victorian domestic architecture, interior space and the decoration thereof. The findings indicated that Victorian domestic architecture embodied a male/female dichotomy in which men owned and 'ruled' the home/house; while women maintained it. Although Victorian ideology was fissured and developed unevenly, it still functioned in terms of the ideal of respectability which was embedded and demonstrated in domestic space.



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