



PURPLE

Journal

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N.GAMZE TOKSOY | 'REWEAVING THE WORLD' ECOFEMINISM BY SHIVA AND MIES

Ecofeminism is constituted by different feminist approaches and environmental studies including critiques of modernity, capitalism, and neoliberalism. The book *Ecofeminism* by Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva has been a source of inspiration for many feminists with their criticism of the current system after its first edition in 1993. The authors regarded ecofeminism as a criticism of both the patriarchal science and the degradation of nature, and they established links between these two. From the perspective of Mies and Shiva, ecofeminism is not only a field of academic studies but also a way of doing politics. Since the first edition, ecofeminism has played an important role as a source of inspiration for woman studies and remained valuable today as guides for the struggles against the destruction of nature. In this paper, the book of *Ecofeminism* is examined around the main themes, and attention is paid to the holistic criticism brought by ecofeminist economic approaches.

For full article, [click here](#). *Only in Turkish for now.



Kadın Eserleri
Kütüphanesi ve
Bilgi Merkezi
Vakfı

<http://kadineserleri.org/>

THE WOMEN'S LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CENTRE FOUNDATION (WLICF)

The Women's Library and Information Centre Foundation (WLICF) is the first and only women-centred library and archive in Turkey. It was founded in Istanbul by Aslı Davaz, Füsün Akatlı, Füsün Ertuğ, Jale Baysal, and Şirin Tekeli; and opened to the public on 14 April, 1990. At that time, the women's movement in Turkey had already gathered a wealth of documents related to the struggle for women's rights. These documents concerned issues such as equal pay for equal work, equality in civil rights, ending all kinds of violence against women and equal representation in parliament. The collections of the Women's Library in Istanbul are organized in sixteen main sections: Women's Private Papers, Women's Oral History, Women's Organizations, Ephemera, Women Writers, Women Artists, Visual Documents, Audio Material, Posters, Art Collections, Newspaper Clippings, Books, Periodicals, Rare Material, Thesis-Dissertations and Articles.



<https://kadinkoalisyonu.org/>

WOMEN'S COALITION TURKEY, WOMEN'S LIFE CENTERS

The Women's Coalition is working on opening "Women's Life Centers" in earthquake-affected cities based on their needs. In Malatya, the Women's Coalition is collaborating with the Bodrum Women's Solidarity Association, the Arguvan (Malatya) Municipality, and the Bodrum (Muğla) Municipality. In Adana, the Women's Coalition is partnering with KÖVED and Adana Metropolitan Municipality, and in Adıyaman, they are working with the KAMER Foundation to establish a Women's Life Center.

Through the activities carried out at these centers, single mothers, children, and groups living in unequal conditions will have a safe place to come together, gain knowledge about their rights, increase their awareness, and be referred to relevant institutions according to their needs. These centers will include areas that address daily needs such as laundry, bathroom, and kitchen facilities, as well as spaces for psycho-social support and group activities, including playrooms for children and areas for socializing.

The Women's Life Centers are not only intended to address the problems created by the earthquake but are designed as a new model where women and girls can create their own empowerment areas through their participation in decision-making processes. This model will go beyond the service provider and receiver relationship and will serve by creating participation mechanisms for the affected regions to be rebuilt and establish life in the long term, directly led by women.



BÜKE UYGUR | SPACE (FOR ALL)

The spontaneity of the space and the spontaneity of the society; is the beginning of the future. Is it possible to create equal spaces that would change and transform through architectural discourse? Can we -acting within our everyday practices- create various realities for the future? Architectural discourses throughout history have created platforms to reflect on those questions and especially in a designed world. These discourses established possible futures with what is already there and what people need. Through, with, within conversations, people, materials, voices, platforms, artworks, and protests; space has been reproduced, relabeled, accommodated, and transformed. Architecture, as a spatial practice, therefore, became an agent.

For whom is the space designed?

Architecture has never been neutral in social struggles.¹ By nature, architecture was always the designed reflection of the selected values. Thinking about whom architects serve, and for whom they design, is the essence of this discussion. The voice architects and clients represent is the value they (people who are in control of the decisions) choose to show. As a public profession, architecture influences the spatial experience, reproduces the actions that are taking part in a space, and rethinks and creates possible interactions, expectations, realities that influence people on how to behave in a space. Every design has this proposal of a function of the space. Certain unwritten rules come together with interventions of what they do in the space.

Most of these reflect ideas and discussions around the design, with people that architects design for and the architect. The reproduction of the ideas, and values in the form of space, therefore, says many things about the socio-economic presence of the location, culture, identity, resources and who is being represented. The narrative of the space is defined by the people being represented. Aftermath of design, thus creates a selected narrative of the experience.

While creating the space, the intention and reality of the use don't necessarily coordinate. Often, the lack of representation of certain groups who can also use the space, creates the process of accommodation and transformation of the spatial experience. What happens between the design and the social practice of the space therefore becomes political. In a critical examination of understanding how power, political hegemonies and inequality lead to different reactions and performances through designs, protests, materials, narrating and expanding the limits of cultural heritages, this essay gives a platform to some of the examples that have been tried out, to reflect an idea of the future, or possible futures where the narrative and representation of equal, feminist spaces and performances act upon for what can be possible. The examples and arguments in this essay could open up to discussing the possibility of engendering social change. Understanding space through projects that put forward questions, give birth to discourse by its nature and make us rethink the values that are being represented or that can be represented in a critical manner is the natural process of being the user of everyday activities. Therefore, using the terms "spatial experience" and "spatial practice" to create an interdisciplinary identity for architecture is important. Because architecture is defined within and beyond buildings.

Although this essay might be about giving feminist examples, it is not dominantly about gender but the possible futures of equally represented spatial experiences within the architectural culture. The intersectional and transgressive nature of architecture, by being public both as physical and as discourse, focuses on shared experiences, reinventions of existing spaces, resistance, and building virtual and international communities.

The impact of feminist methodologies and design research has been crucial for understanding the relationship between us and the environment. So, the question of to what extent architecture reflects social relations or how the physical representation of social values (political reflections of how people see the social structure) organises or influences people's behaviour in a space, can be and will be asked and examined through how people react to those social structures of the design in this article.

Space is representation.

As Jane Rendell points out, space and social practice are interrelated, both determining other ones production.² So the production of the space becomes dynamic, becomes re-production through everyday life use. It changes its values, what it represents, reflects on the change of the demographic structure of the public life that is located. Space is occupied, transformed, and used by several groups throughout its existence. Sometimes it becomes the subject of reclaiming a territory, demonstrating the power of a group, to make a statement. The social conditions, therefore, impact the space as well as space impacts the social structure. Spatial experiences manifest constructions of ideologies, struggles and gender relations. Space is also produced by representation. It is an interrelated and dialectic relationship. Women's relation to the city, whether being there for a long time or a short period, their experience and the solutions to urban design are produced through their culture, as women and as with their background. Their narrative becomes various because the importance of representing what is not being represented becomes an important focus through a male-led management. The example of a research project through series of workshops in Malmö, Sweden on narrating cultural heritages was written as a result, by Ragnhild Claesson. In *Doing and Re-doing Cultural Heritages: Making Space for a Variety of Narrative*, Claesson reflects on how cities consist of variations of cultural expressions in a "glocal" context, where pasts are located in near as well as distant places, what this could entail for future planning.³

Considering global independent from the local is impossible. Being global is related to what is local, through urbanization and migration. Cities therefore become more eclectic and people become mobile. Cultures become mobile too; they intersect or encounter other cultures. Through mobilization, new identities and shared cultures are being born. The past carries on with people, cities become more eclectic timewise and culture-wise. Boundaries are extending and breaking with these networks. Within this glocal context, some narratives are selected to be represented, some try to find their place in the political strategies. Because the aftermath of immigration consists of different aspects. Of course, this brings us to the question of whose voice is being represented and seeing examples of a search for representation. In a search for more inclusive representation in the city, space can be considered an open possibility. In this context, cultural heritage is mainly considered a conservative subject, that has to be protected and is the reflection of the culture from the past. But considering cities now as dynamic and everchanging, as well as the past as dynamic, the word heritage can also be interpreted. What is in the present, will someday be the past, as a part of the culture. In glocal context, the term heritage can also be eclectic, reflecting the new order of the space as more inclusive. Narratives can extend across urban scales, even international. Remaking connections between the past, present and future by using various past and present narratives in today's context can extend the representation of what inclusivity aims.

In the workshops held in Malmö, these questions eventually formed a design proposal. The participants were a women's association, an artist and three municipal planners. The women's association was a migrant group. All of the participants have lived in Malmö for various lengths. With migrant people and various experiences of local they all had different relationships with the space. The interesting thing is that in the workshops, they used materials to represent their perspective, past, and experience rather than architectural drawings. This was making architecture as a practice an inclusive process where everyone could feel comfortable with a familiar material to represent themselves. Three workshops that were held were focused on the past, the present and the future. In the past, the narratives showed their memory represented with their past. The present, participants shared their spatial experiences in Malmö. The third one, the future, the narratives of their past, the experiences they have in the present came together in a shared platform as a design proposal. All of the ideas were interconnected with their past and present, their narratives were represented on their future. The shared experiences among women created a connection between different experiences from the past in a common ground, sharing the similar experiences in different locations, making this a shared narrative. In their design proposal, the memories of similar experiences, opened up a possible space they all could share, making it an inclusive spatial experience without forcing it. For the physical place, someone in the participants suggested a place from her own cultural heritage. A past experience, a once considered local culture and space, became a shared experience to create a mutual space to carry that heritage as a new glocal heritage.



Fig1. The workings of a tandoor is demonstrated for urban planners in the last workshop. Photo: Re-Doing Heritage Project., (Ragnhild Claesson Doing and Re-doing Cultural Heritages: Making space for a variety of narratives, Feminist Futures of Spatial Practice, 51.)

Using materials to express their ideas, they created a new and collective language to communicate and represent. Through their narrative, they actually created a cultural heritage for the future. One narrative, a local narrative, created something international. They relabeled cultural heritage in urban planning context. It showed that the culture can change, space can represent various things in different time periods, that architecture can shift what is being represented through narratives. The women's association appropriate the once exclusive space, to have their own representation there. The boundaries and territories were extended, created a heritage for the future. ⁴ Apart from what municipal and urban planners think and try, this example showed that city planning and administration mostly focus on desired identities, impose political goals of a heterogenic and hegemonic city, disregard the place-making process of the reality of migration and cultural identities that is there even when they are not being represented, by not planning parallel to what resident's needs are. At this point, it is safe to say that representation is an ongoing challenge for those who use the city. Nina Lykke, reflects on the problem of representation in her article, writing: Whose cultural heritage matters in which context becomes the problem between people who live in the city and people who are in charge.⁵ This problem is being narrated by this workshop in a feminist standpoint, by a group of women coming together, producing ideas and narratives that will be used in the city, through a collective work. They did not put forward of being women to the focus on this design but reflected on the need to build a safe place in the city to experience in the city. Their spatial experiences are connected to their search of safety. Spatial experiences and therefore the result, as spatial practices, are open platforms to reflect the problems and highlight the potential of the spaces and materials as a form of representation. When they are given the opportunity to become inclusive through discourse, space becomes an open area for numerous possibilities to reproduce the space on top of what is already there, challenging and leading the way to architects with their demonstration and presentations. To what extent and when do people have a platform to reflect on the architecture, intervene and accommodate the space, extend their experiences and the narrative of the space are represented at any chance when they are given an opportunity or a platform to raise their voice. This essay is also aims to give the futures, feminist futures, a platform to reflect their possibilities, by not narrating them but to use them to discuss.

Activism all over: Space is a political act.

Writing about agencies and how architecture become an agent in spatial experiences, and the significance of feminist examples that created a possibility for feminist future of spatial experiences, it is important to say that women are also active agents. Reproduction of the values that are being represented in the space, by women, creating opportunities to open up discourse around what space is capable of when giving the opportunity, it is all connected to what is lacking in the existing spaces. In the words of Gillian Rose, a feminist geographer, masculinist space or paradoxical spaces, hegemonic spaces created and dominated by men "for women"; these were spaces imagined and conceived underman male perspective, through male-led political and social norms.⁶ Because of these paradoxical spaces, women are acting as agents through their need of taking action by using spaces as resistance symbol or place, statements, activism platforms and a platform (or a space) for social and political change. They are taking actions by using space, transforming what was representing social and political structure of where they live and changing it to take over the narrative they need to have. Through space, activism is created. Women are occupying and taking over the public space to demonstrate their presence. This part of the essay focuses on how activism can take over a space, focusing on performative and spatial experience of activism, the triangular relation between architecture, discourse and spatial experience. Can architecture, as space, be a platform for discourse and change? Can it become a symbol? Can it put forward questions towards socio-political structures? The intersectional approach has facilitated a more holistic understanding of feminist struggles, resistance and activism as a response to structures and mechanisms of oppression.⁷

The space transforms when a space is chosen, specifically a public space to represent something. It transforms and what happens there, stays there forever. Though the memory of the space, experience, shared knowledge, space will be constructed and gain a new identity. Once an imagined action, an imagined action in the space, becomes real and creates possibilities for building imaginary communities. In the light of an article written by Elke Krasny and Meike Schalk, Resilient Subjects: On Building Imaginary Communities, this essay builds a narrative of counter-actions against patriarchal power structures and hegemonic regimes, in different forms and in different spatial experiences.⁸ Through these counter-actions taking place in different spaces, by using space as a communicator, activism has built communities to an international extend. Space became a symbol, a communicator, a platform for resistance. The ability to connect through shared spaces in different locations, local spaces transformed the similar spaces globally, transforming them and giving them a new identity. This time the meaning of the space is reproduced as well as political structures.

In Turkey, there is a saying that "streets belong to people (Sokaklar halkındır.)". Through series of political movements and actions, numerous protests, some of the public spaces gained an identity and became a symbol of resistance. With some political events happening between the multiple governments and public, public space and who uses the public space gained awareness. Conversations around public spaces, questioning the urban planning policy and the authority for the streets, have been held. Streets and public spaces became manifestation platforms. Through these processes, what people expect during their everyday life from some spaces also transformed. It became a political culture, to use certain places at certain times. Like in Turkey, most countries also have these public spaces. In Buenos Aires, one of the most significant public space took over a role of resistance and protest. A group of people, -women-, became resilient subjects in this public space. Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, that started in 1977, demand information and justice for their children and husbands who had disappeared under the Argentine military regime between 1976 and 1983.⁹ During their protests, government was using their authority in a public space with security forces, occupying what is public to control their actions by forbidding what they can do in a public space. Governments can control their authority by using public space to demonstrate their power, because cutting off the public connection is the easiest way to stop collective actions. Slowly by appropriating the space, mothers organized themselves later to demonstrate cardboards, making their presence more visible.



Fig2. Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, image: <https://abuelas.org.ar/idiomas/english/history.htm>

This spatial occupation created a space for them to become public with their action. Once ignored by the police, because they represented no threat since they are mothers, they influenced many countries. (in 1995, Cumartesi Anneleri -Saturday Mothers- started their sitting protests in one of the most important public spaces in Istanbul, today they are still there every Saturday, became important public figures for further protests) By the patriarchal power structure of the system, mothers were representing domestic values, they couldn't have political presence. But women of Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, challenged the border between domestic and public, becoming public resistance symbols. They became actively participating agents in political climate. They appropriated a hegemonic space and took hegemonic power symbols to appropriate them, simply by being present. They changed the perception of public space as well as gender representations in public spaces. Mothers, women, were represented in a public space, by doing something that was not domestic. They gave the public space a new meaning, an identity on human rights. They changed the power demonstration of police force against public protests, with police eventually attacking the protesters, proving they have significant presence as threat to government. With these protests, not even using words to represent what they want to represent, as a political act, they made the space a symbol of resistance, showing a space can have an impact on political movements. They created a community in their present time and in the future (like Turkey example that is 20 years later), by using a shared space, that is public spaces in the cities.

With Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, a connection between domestic and public has been made. The given role to women as domestic subjects, proved against it as they are more than their domestic role. The mother can be a symbol of a political act in a public space and the given sexist role to a certain space of the house can also be used as creating a feminist community. The space, whether it is in a private environment or a public one, therefore can transform the given role.

At the International Dinner Party on March 14, 1979, organized by Suzanne Lacy and Linda Preuss, kitchen as a domestic space became a call to women around the world to build a community to honor women. This invitation was a global call to all the women, to use the act of preparing dinner not as a domestic subject but to communicate among women. The shared experience connected the domestic space, with women who participated from their own space, with public space, the opening of Judy Chicago's exhibition.¹⁰ By experiencing the same thing in their own space, women exchanged messages through telegram, many of them writing messages for a feminist future. The space they experienced became a place for their stories, conversations, hopes for the future. Space connected different cultures, different feminist perspectives, different hopes and different meals with different plates, forks, tables to a common ground. A space, that is not in the same location, became a shared space through experience.



Fig3. The International Dinner Party: Women from all over the world hosting dinners at home and sending telegrams to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art to celebrate global sisterhood, 1979, courtesy Suzanne Lacy, (Elke Krasny and Meike Schalk, *Resilient Subjects: On building imaginary communities, Feminist Futures of Spatial Practice*, 144.)

In an era, with much more limited communication tools comparing to what we have now, over 2000 women worldwide, participated in the International Dinner Party. Telegram was used to help women draft messages and send them off to San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. With the messages that were received, a live-action performance was held. These messages were sent from the dinner tables to a dinner table. It was women, communicating with women, from different races, countries, ages, occupations. Interestingly, this communication was mainly used for building a feminist future. Most of the messages that were sent were about possible futures, hopes, demands. Suddenly there was solidarity, without even knowing who sent what. The solidarity was a resistance to the patriarchy worldwide. The dinner party, and the dinner table had become a performance and a platform. Now the dinner party in the domestic places had become more open. Women who participated in this performance and resistance, had opened their homes to be with other women when the event was happening. Apart from the messages, they communicated around the table, ate together, laughed together, hoped together, empowered together, demanded together. This one dinner table in San Francisco, became thousand dinner tables.

Solidarity.

Dinner table as an object had created spatial and social encounters. A simple table, with food on it, created solidarity and collective feminist experiences. As a table, it collected so many stories and narratives that day. With every message, table expanded. Every plate that was put on the table, for a woman, by a woman, gave people the strength to talk, reflect, and share. It was never just a table.



Fig4. International Dinner Party, 1979, Suzanne Lacy and Linda Pruess, image: <https://www.suzannelacy.com/international-dinner-party/>

Feminist futures are possible.

The rules given by the designer or the architect on how to use the space control the narrative. Some representations are selected, some not, leading to people acting upon them. This time, this essay focused on what kind of reactions people gave to a space. What happens after architect's design is being represented through interdisciplinary spatial demonstrations with different forms. The bridge between the design and the social and political practice of the space after the design, is being discussed on various platforms. Architecture creates networks, both social and physical. It creates a social structure that determine people's actions. Within these constructed social structures, ideologies form themselves in shape of actions through space. Every action that is taken in a space, therefore becomes political. One of the most visible examples of this political structure is women having lack of representation in public spaces, giving them a domestic role and therefore not a public and social power.

Women, when given a chance, or when they create that chance with protests and artworks, claim their political and social space in a physical place, making their spatial presence existent. The relationship between gender, space and architecture is beyond what is being built. Beyond the physical reality, lies the political. The reality that is imposed on us can be interpreted, accommodated and transformed by using feminist theory to the use of space. A reality and possible futures can be reinvented, a production through discussion can be made. Architecture as a social and political practice, therefore can put forward questions. Through those questions, creating possible new futures, feminist futures are possible.

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