

FILM ANALYSIS

Masculinizing and Emasculating in Domestic Space: Comparative Studies of *Homebound* (1967) and *Anatomy of a Fall* (2023)

Abigail He

Center for Experimental Humanities, New York University, New York

Abstract

By comparing the gender division of labor in domestic space in both *Homebound* (1967) and *Anatomy of a Fall* (2023), I address the issue of masculinizing and emasculating on the counter gender with a spatial perspective. First, physical mobility decides the prior access to the public sphere as well as the position of the householder psychologically. Also, the typical and conventional vertical structure of "home" in both films visualizes the gender hierarchy and its collapse within the domestic space. The vertical structure embodies the historically inherited phallus worship symbolically. In this sense, it encounters the requirement of a new space structure that claims gender equality. Approaching the ideal model with practice case of functionalism in architecture, I recount the controversy of the radical equality at the geographic level practiced in communist society by architecture and other supporting mechanisms, which drives the interrogation of the essential association between capitalist structure and male subjectivity since the former, including the basic concepts of private property and liberal market-based competition, is designed and extended by the latter in a biologic sense.

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Henri Lefebvre demonstrates that a space of modernity is highly gendered. In a spatial analysis, space is perceived in three dimensions: the geometric, the optical,

and the phallic.¹ The capitalist metropolitan governs people in a patriarchal order. From the dissemination of commodified news and the appearance of public space in Paris in the 17th and 18th centuries to the market-based competition in neoliberalism in the postcolonial period, the male is the subject agent while the female, as the subject counterpart, is theoretically excluded. Some scholars argue that patriarchy and inequality only have been built from the agricultural period since based on archeological studies about the hunter-gathering culture thousands of years ago, women participated in the hunting activities and shared the domestic work with men.² Intensive progress in the historical period established the boundary of the works between internal and external, domestic and social, private and public. The world outside of the “home” is merely designed by men: economy, politics, transportation, education, and recreation, are male-oriented. Space is produced by violence.³ Following Lefebvre’s framework, women are vulnerable, spatially enslaved.

In the discourse of gender and space emerging from the 1980’s to the 2000’s, two waves of feminism reshaped the question from equality to difference (Jane Rendell 16), forming a kind of sexual politics and challenging the existing narrative in multiple disciplines, be it history, sociology, visual media, and architectural theories. From this view, architectural design can be interrogated and criticized as it determines men as the center of the home, a private space, and linked up to organize a patriarchal vernacular society.⁴

It is intriguing how the capitalist metropolis, driven by a demand for abundant labor, flattens the gender discrepancy to some extent through intensive unified management and standardized urban planning, which renders the predicament for male group who has been the controlling role so far. This process commodifies the labor in a general sense, thereby contributing to the emancipation of females from the confines of domesticity. More importantly, the dismantling of mobility limitation triggers females to be integrated as independent subjects in both senses of economy and social identity.⁵ The power pattern between the sexual dimorphism of humans seems to be ramshackle recently. Also, the discourse of transgender, bisexuality, and queer punch the patriarchy together. When women are endowed with more masculinity and the dichotomy gender balance has been broken, what will happen? Issues of gender shifting and the reversal of the masculinity trend, are playing an increasing role in cinema. Some films tell us that the men will *suffer* a kind of *conversion*, turning back to domestic space. Thus, the question should be: What do films suggest about this ‘conversion’? How is emasculation visualized spatially? What kind of ideal “home” space can be envisioned and represented in the cinematic field?

This article, compares two films *Homebound* (1967) and *Anatomy of a Fall* (2023) in terms of the demonstration of “home” in both spatial and gender dimensions. Though produced in different periods and countries, these two films share some

formidable aesthetic and theoretical recognition of space, especially their techniques of symbolizing masculinity. Following this comparative analysis, this article enters a discussion about an ideal gender-equal space, which refers to a revelation and distilled insights from architecture in communist society.

Masculinizing Female and Unisex Alpha

Homebound (1967), directed by Lee Man Hee, a pioneer of Korean film, talks about the marital infidelity of the wife of a disabled veteran. She meets a reporter in Seoul regularly. The young reporter encourages her to elope with him, getting rid of her prosaic and tortured life, but after struggling, she comes back home in the end. Comparably, *Anatomy of a Fall* (2023) anchors the cheating issue with the lens of sexual diversity. This is a story about a fall. The husband died in front of their house and could not be confirmed whether it was suicide or homicide. With the query from the prosecution in court and the deepening into the investigation of his death, the affair of the wife with girls has become powerful evidence for killing her husband. In the end, the child's testimony of his father's suicide prevents her from jail.

I would like to start with the depiction of domestic work as the masculine process, as the gender division of labor in a family in these two films is opposite from the conventional cognition. Both display a story about a nuclear family, in which the husband has turned back home while the wife tends to be more external. In *Homebound* (1967), a disabled war veteran and writer lives with his wife. Since he can only move in a wheelchair, his wife substitutes for him to deliver his scripts of novels weekly to the press, which is located in the center of the city, far from their house. In comparison, *Anatomy of a Fall* (2023) illustrates a family of three living in a cabin far from the city. Their child, Daniel, lost most of his sight after an accident in his 7-year-old. His father, out of guilt since he thought he should be blamed for Daniel's accidental blindness, decided to homeschool him from then on. To balance child care and career, he cancels most of his music classes in school and continues the musical creation at home. On the contrary, his wife, a writer, undertakes the work of socializing, communicating with publishers, and operating the household finances.

In both stories, the husband is situated negatively in the domestic space, in other words, not quite voluntarily, which is the conventional domain of women. Conversely, the wife is entering the outside world to support the household ostensibly or managerially.

By associating with a third person outside of the sexual relation within marriage, the female characters tend to be more stable and positive, particularly, I emphasize the spatial sense of "outside". As mentioned above, the wives are kicked out of the domestic domain to substitute their husbands to face temporalities, involving resources, information, material, and relationships, in other words, a process of

being socialized.

For Habermas, the appearance of the public sphere is accompanied by the establishment of the private sphere simultaneously. A “pure” public sphere implies a complete privatization of civil society since there is a sense of liberation in terms of politics and economy from rule by state authority.⁶ In the public sphere, people can talk about politics, art, and market publicly and freely since they can possess and dominate their property liberally, which is based on the successful operation of private law. In this sense, “home” is classified into the private sphere and obviates the surveillance of any other agencies. It is a space dominated by those family members who participate in both the public and private spheres because these people, I would like to call them Alpha, with their property, traverse between different spheres, express their ideologies freely, and associate with other similar liberal Alpha regularly and broadly. Usually, the Alpha role is played by the male in a family since the agricultural period based on their better performance in intensive labor work.

In *Homebound* and *Anatomy of a Fall*, we see women as the bridge connecting the private and public spheres as the dominant subject (Alpha) in their family. In the smallest social unit “home” in the conceptual sense, the steady hierarchies between family members did not change until the power of mass media broke the privileged access between the private sphere and public sphere, state socialization, and society nationalization intertwined. The private sphere has been meddled by external organized powers. Compulsory education, military conscription, and labor unions are embodiments of the interference. With the external impact and the advent of the intellectual era, the gender issue became conspicuous and polemical when interrogating the hierarchical structure of a family. Let us concretize the sphere into a geographical sense: space, since events happen in different spheres requires different spaces as well. It is undisputed that private space is available and manipulated by the connection with public space, but the crux is, does gender matter in the process of connecting? Why can’t we admit that a female is the Alpha once she becomes the connecting and supporting character in her family? Alpha is unisex.

Thus, from the geographic sense of home, the hierarchy is dependent on their mobility between different spaces. Masculinity can be owned by either gender once it grasps the initiative of space design. That’s what the modern capitalist liberal market and public space taught us.

Emasculating House Husband and Psychological Incapability

In both films, since the male characters are locked in the cage named domestic space, both suffer a long-term mental collapse, which triggers the culmination of contradiction when knowing that they are cheated by their perfidious wives. In this section, I would like to articulate the linkage between the mental emasculating and physical incapability of male characters.

At the beginning of *Homebound* (1967), the disabled veteran fell from his wheelchair when he heard a military song and recalled the scene of war where his squad was wiped out and he lost his legs. The crippled legs as an embodiment of the shadow of the war lock the veteran in the room upstairs and forces him to face his incapability permanently. Some other films made by director Lee Man Hee also reflected or projected the traumatic memory of the Korean War from 1950–1952: *The Marines Who Never Return* (1963), and *Aimless Bullet* (1960). After the war and coming in the 1960s, was a golden age for the Korean film industry to discover different genres of films as well as to ruminate the tremendous impact of the war. From then on, North Korea became a symbolized issue, a contrapuntal space in South Korean film.⁷ The incapability of the veteran seems to project the incompleteness of the nation. The repeated nostalgia of patriotism in the film also conducts and emphasizes a sense of impotence under the outside oppression, which is embodied by his useless legs. Also, the emasculation of male characters projects the harsh rule of military dictators from the 1960s in South Korea. With the soaring development of industries and intensive surveillance of Park Chung Hee government, the anxiety, self-suspicion, and alienation of men has been represented multifaceted on screen during this period. The extramarital affair of their wives can be considered as a challenge toward the superiority of male character.

In *Anatomy of a Fall* (2023), though the scene of the husband is quite less, the feckless moment of her husband can be told from a couple's quarrel which is reappeared in court by her husband's audio recording. The husband complains his time has been deprived and that his contribution to this family has not been emphasized by his wife, accusing her of betraying and indifferent attitude to all the frustrations he met.

Obviation of the emasculating. In both films the scene of the collapse moment and the traumatic memory of the male character are hidden deliberately, instead, remaining the blank space for the audience to imagine. In *Homebound* (1967), when the husband recalls the scene of war and his squad withdraws, all we see is his dull staring at the ceiling when sitting in his wheelchair, hearing the military song playing in the house. The scene of war is erased from the screen. So does in *Anatomy of a Fall* (2023). The director applies an exquisite transition from the scene of the court to the imaginary quarrel in their house, and deliberately back to the court at the exact moment when their debate comes to climax. Only the sound of the fight leaves viewers to imagine, which not only helps to maintain the suspense of who made the sharp boom in the recording but also moderates a sense of ferocious conquering and violence between the two.

The obviation of direct collision weakens the sense of masculinity of the male to some extent. By dividing their initiative conquering and violent nature from their whole entirety, their impotence is more conspicuous. Especially in *Anatomy of a Fall* (2023), the avoidance of his masculinity is in stark contrast with his wife's

extramarital affair with a young girl. It should be considered as another collapse moment for the husband when he finds that his wife has an affair with a girl. When his wife's character, as a masculine (butch) one in a homosexual relationship, has been realized and introduced to their heterosexual relationship, their relative sexual position seems ramshackle. In the above statement, we know that the husband guards their house, playing a feminine character in the sense of social gender. It is universally acceptable that social gender is a stereotypical impression of gender, and everyone can do anything they want. But the biological sexual performance lands a bitter punch on his self-identity.

The feeling of being insignificant and being dominated by others in an intimate relationship may relate to the metaphor of castration anxiety. It is a well-known Greek myth that Oedipus killed his father and married his mother, which has been introduced into psychoanalysis studies by Sigmund Freud to develop the concept of castration anxiety and other extending theories. There are different stages of the anxiety formation. A male child is motivated to make his mother a sexual fantasy at first, which cannot be countenanced by the child's father, and the child is threatened by castration. In the following stage, the child struggles with the Oedipus conflict and identifies with their father, accepting the fact that it is wrong to have sexual desire for his mother, which grows a sense of sexual repression. In the later years, his inclination toward his mother continues there, but due to the fear of castration, he would object to having a sexual desire for his mother. Rather, a sense of displacement is produced when he finds he can have sexual desire for other females who would not trigger the castration anxiety in himself.⁸ Briefly, castration anxiety represents a growing process with repression and displacement. We can see that during the primary stage when the child realizes he cannot be the imaginary phallus to refill/pleasure his mother's lack because his father owns the "real phallus."⁹ This is that moment that child realizes he is powerless and useless in the intimate mother-child relationship. The recognition of lacking real phallus in mother-child relationships, in other words, losing domination in this relationship, appears with the castration anxiety simultaneously. Though in adulthood he learns to displace the emotion of being with other females, the castration anxiety continuously impacts him when he feels like losing control of his partner.

In practical rather than imaginary and symbolic contexts, the threat is raised by the broken hierarchy in sexual relationships since the penis owns the dominant role in sexual intercourse. Based on the castration theory, a female is considered as the one who has been castrated already. In this sense, the penis owns a superior position in sexuality while the female is biologically decided to be inferior to the male in context of the traditional sexual intercourse.

Resistance of Emasculating and Spatial Embodiment of Gender Hierarchies

Different from the permanent taboo of sexual desire towards his mother, confronted with the crisis of being powerless in both marital relations and sexuality, male characters react differently. In *Homebound* (1967), when the husband notices that his wife has an extramarital affair in Seoul and tryst with the third person when she delivers his script, he kills her beloved dog Bess to redeclare his control.

Even though he is resentful of her adultery, he feels great misery and less courage when his sister persuades him to divorce. It's a complicated codependent relationship. His physical defect is replaced by his wife while he creates the attachment to his wife mentally as well. In the end, his wife turned back home, giving up the chance of elopement with the young reporter. The husband accepts his "impotence", which means metaphorically, being insignificant in the intimate relationship, and succumbs to the twisted condition of their gender hierarchy.

In *Anatomy of a Fall* (2023), the husband chooses to suicide by jumping off their four-story house to end his failure. Though there is not a confirmed scene to replay his suicide, according to the wife's and their child's testimony as well as the abnormal behavior before his death, it is safely concluded that at least he owned the suicide tendency. In this film, the husband has taken pills for years since his child lost his sight after the accident. Being a househusband, he has been afflicted by the guilt and responsibility of this family for so long that he made outbursts in the quarrel with his wife. The shattered knowing of his wife's affair frustrates his priority in



Figure 1. The close-up of the stairways of their house. Left: the wife goes up to her husband's room to deliver the medicine, *Homebound* (1967). Right: A scenery shot of the stairways after the fall, *Anatomy of a Fall* (2023).

both sexual and family structure. To some extent, suicide is a radical expression of one's oppression. In this sense, it can be considered as an ultimate resistance to the emasculating tendency.

Interestingly, both films deploy vertical structures and narrow stairways to represent the home, which also makes the hierarchy visual. In *Homebound* (1967), the husband lives alone on the second floor and the wife comes up the narrow stairways to bring medicine for him every day. Following the woman, the camera's point of view looks up from the first to the second floor. Similarly, in *Anatomy*

of a Fall (2023), when the wife sits in the first-floor lobby talking with a female editor, suddenly, we hear loud music coming from upstairs and we know later that this is played by her husband who stays alone in the attic, the vertically top place of their house. Her husband is unseen during the whole scene and only the sound is conspicuous, which is too conspicuous. Intentionally or not, in the



Figure 2. Left of Upper line: The wife knows her dog was shot from second floor. Coincidentally, camera is also from the second floor to view this scene. Right of Upper line: in *Homebound* (1967), their house is a multistory structure. Left of Lower line: The attic where the husband works alone. Right of Lower line: A picture of the front view of their house, which is multistory structure as well. *Anatomy of a Fall* (2023)

beginning, the male character is assigned to the unseen top place geographically. The vertical structure of their home represents the gender hierarchy within a family. The masculine power is symbolized by the top room.

In both films, the expression toward the emasculating is bonded to the same vertical structure. It has been discussed above that the husbands in these two films react differently when facing the loss of power in the original gender structure. In *Homebound* (1967), when the wife bitterly asks the maiden who's the killer of her dog, the maiden tells her that she heard a shot from the second floor. Thus, we know it is her husband, who cannot go downstairs by himself, who killed her dog by shooting from upstairs to redeclare his domination of the home. Coincidentally, in *Anatomy of a Fall* (2023), the falling from the attic employs the vertical structure to complete her husband's final expression and complaint, as well as achieving the symbolic falling of masculinity in the wrestle between genders.

Symbolized Patriarch in Domestic Space: Penis Worship and Vertical Structure of House

How does verticality enter the gender discourse and become a visualized symbol of hierarchy?

Verticality produces the upper-lower space for overlooking and looking up, different from the horizontal planimetric which is neutral space, vertical space born with a sense of hierarchy. That naturally relates to an archaic sense of reproduction worship. From anthropological and archeological studies, we know penis worship appeared in various regions in the world from the prehistoric age, which makes the male's reproductive organ to be the symbol of virility and displays a biological desire for regeneration. People utilized the erection as the standard of a male's reproductive ability. The male doll with an erect penis can be seen in many ancient pottery sculptures around the world. It's not only a physiological phenomenon but also a cultural symbol being integrated in different contexts.

When bodies are laying down, only the penis erecting, declaiming a power of resisting gravity and nature, as well as dominating their own will as an entity from nature. Verticality seems to represent a resistance toward the powerful gravity and the volatile nature. Thus, when people build the statue of their guardian or the palace for their Savior, lord, or governor, who deserves their highest worship and admiration, the architectures tend to be magnificent, *pumposo*, and most important, towering.

In this sense, the erecting condition of the penis shapes human's recognition of power in the visual dimension. Lefebvre names it "phallic verticality", a visualized "phallocratic" authority to all the spectators.¹⁰ And male who owns this organ is considered as the owner of power as well. Some female organs are also the symbol of reproductive worship, but since the physical change of the organ during mating is obscure, it's not so astonishing as the erection of phallus.

The sense that vertical represents masculine power has been brought into house design. A house as a detached residential building that owns watering, ventilation, and maybe heating systems in cold regions, is an individual geographic unit. Usually, two or three floors with a basement is a default choice. Multistory is not only economical but also aesthetic when you plan to build a house by yourself.

To return to the relation between householder and domestic space. It is acknowledged that at least from the agricultural age the patriarchal society has grown up. Males become householders in a family. Considering every family as a single unit geographically located in a community, we can see that the whole society is under the masculine order. Every single house represents the patriarchal domination that operates in a single unit. Thus, people are dominated by masculine power from double dimensions: within a patriarchal society ideologically and within a house geographically.

The detached house isolates itself from other interferences and makes sure of



Figure 3. Left: Bronze Herm, unearthed in Arcadian, Greece. ca. 490BCE. Collected by the MET. Photo available at: 11-02-2023. Herm is a kind of sculpture with a head and above a plain, squared low section, on which the erecting male genitals also be carved. Middle: *taozu* (pottery statue of phallus), unearthed in Fujian, China. ca. 4000BCE. Photo available at: 11-02-2023. (*zu*), which is considered as hieroglyphic word representing penis in ancient Chinese, evolves to represent ancestors, kinships in modern Chinese. Right: Local Souvenir in a store, a doll with an erecting phallus, Cuzco, Peru, Photo by author, date: 07-14-2023.

the operation of masculine power. Householders can manipulate everything behind the house gate successfully. In both films, we see that stories happen in a detached house, which is a traditional type of residential building and still popular in many regions of the world. Directors assign the conflict between gender hierarchy within a family to be visualized through the vertical structure of a house. Not enough. The exchange of gender division of labor has been performed by utilizing the viewer's perception of house space as well.

The house is a physical stage for performing the power pattern. The obviation of men's impotence and the outburst in the end are conveyed by the vertically hierarchical structures of their house. But the crux is, when the platitudinous discourse about gender has changed, the domestic power pattern shifted, and the hierarchies within a family have broken, what kinds of orientation should the spatial design turn to? Further, what kind of new order should be executed geographically? What's the new recognition of the relationship between space and gender? Is there a conceivable model of de-hierarchical gender space? Taking a controversial but constructive idea, functionalist architecture, into account

Gender De-hierarchized? Rethink of Functionalism in Architecture

Functionalism architecture argues that functionality should be prior to the aesthetics and other values in design. A building should be designed around the purpose of functionality to ensure people's demands of living. The typical building of functionalism is multistory with numerous similar units. All the functional sections (fitness room, laundry, restroom, etc.) are connected within the main living area to

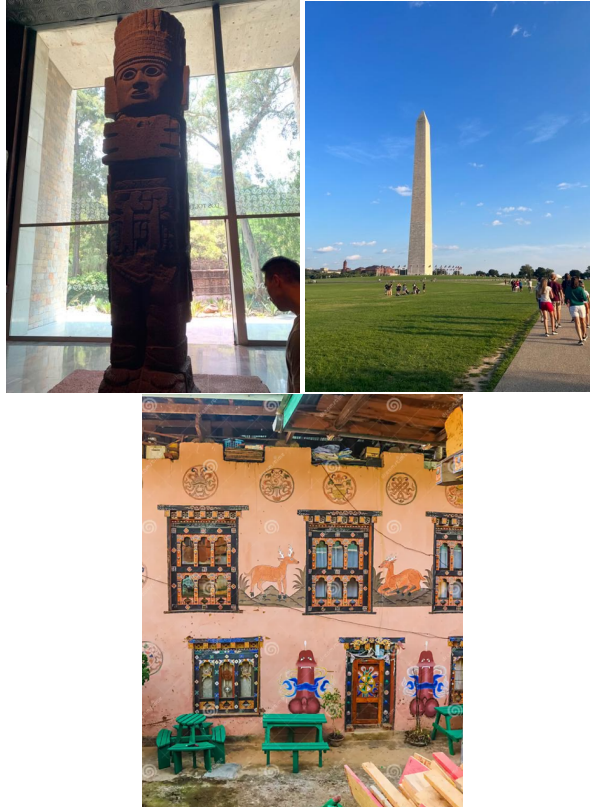


Figure 4. Left: An Atlantean figure (represents the Toltec warrior), belongs to Toltec Culture, a 483cm height humanoid sculpture, collected by National Museum of Anthropology (Mexico), available at:11-02-2023. Photo by author, date:07-19-2023. Right: Washington Monument, Obelisk, 500-foot-tall column. Photo by author, date: 08-08-2023. Bottom: Wall Painting of Phallus, Chimi Lhakhang, Bhutan. It displays a religious belief of phallus fertility in modern Bhutan, which is also a good case that vertical structure of a house visualizes the penis erection. Photo resource, available at: 11-04-2023.

cater to the demands of residents. It's an efficient way for a collectivist living. The concept of skyscrapers comes from functionalism as well. This architectural style prevailed in the Soviet Union in the 1930s and some other socialist countries.

Though radically, functionalist theories serve for capital to construct colossal exploitation machines and extend the crack between classes, functionalism is still one of the mainstream styles in modern architecture design. Especially in places where people are gathering, like cities. Nevertheless, functionalist architecture renders an ideal spatial equality when anchored in different superstructures. To some extent, functionalism makes the living space to be standardized and unified by posing people into the same type of units. The hierarchy within a family has been replaced since people living in identical units in the same building, under the unified administration. This community achieves the goal of egalitarian utopian geographically.



Figure 5. Left: Painted pottery 7-storey funerary building with storehouse, unearthed in Jiaozuo, China. ca. 25-220CE. Collected by Henan Museum, available at: 11-02-2023. Middle: Old Jacob Rapalaye House, in Queens, United States. Photo date: 02-15-1927. Collected by New York Department of Records. Available at: 11-03-2023. Right: Prince House (Flushing), in Queens, United States. Photo date: 04-20-1927. Collected by New York Department of Records. Available at: 11-03-2023.

There is a spontaneous association between functionalism architecture and communism since personal expression is subject to efficiency and equality in this context. Take typical functionalist architecture planning for example. Before the economic reformation in China, in 1978, the Planned Economy had been executed for 30 years which made the distribution of goods, services, production, as well as the lands directly decided by plans.¹¹ Without the currency and the real estate market, people live in residential buildings allocated by their workplace, which involves state-owned companies, factories, or government agencies. The allocation rules vary according to different workplaces but generally, the priority of room choosing is seniority-based. The longer your working age, the shorter waiting line you deserve. If a couple is in the same workplace, the length of the waiting line would depend on the one who is a longer working age. No inheritance, no transfer. Once you move to a new workplace, the room should be returned. It is quite an equitable mechanism since gender and class factors have been excluded. The position of householder did not belong to a single gender, instead, a unisex cooperative production mechanism has been established within a family.

If the couple belongs to different workplaces, they can only obtain a unit from one of these two workplaces, which is also unrelated to their gender but focuses on other dimensions, like location, room size, etc. However, this case implies that the couple's private information, be it their occupation, their partner, or their property, is open to all workplaces and other upper organizations. There is a higher surveillance agency that utilizes these private information data to manipulate the macro allocation smoothly. Thus, it challenges the argument about the divergence between the private sphere and the public sphere. In China, we call the collective residential area "dayuan", a compound belonging to a socialist work unit, a "danwei".¹² People who live aggregative here are all employees or employees' families of the company. It's a

quasi-“company town,”¹³ equipped with infrastructure like kindergarten, hospital, stores, and recreation facilities.¹⁴ The majority of residents’ living demands can be satisfied here. Within dayuan, people are extremely intimate. Information sharing through the intentional observation of intimate group living, daily chit chatting, and other deep-rooted interpersonal relationships. Everyone lives a transparent life.

Understandably, the barrier between the private and public spheres disappears from the pursuit of egalitarianism. When getting rid of the masculine hegemony and breaking through the shackles of gender hierarchies of domestic places, we’re confronted with the insecurity of private space since equality needs to be supervised by external forces. Further, beyond every single unit dwelled by every family, there is a quasi-authoritarian power that overrides the whole unit group (or the society in a broad sense) to ensure equality at the grassroots level. Thus, the rethinking of the functionalism architecture, which is an obsolete and flawed idea, is also an interrogation of the feasibility of decentralization as well as a revision of the paradigm of gender equality in the spatial sense.

Some scholars suppose an architecture designed for gender equality to be executed in a capitalist society. Dolores Hayden elucidates the idea of an organization of gender egalitarian society, in late 1980s.

The basic logic is by setting public childcare center, lightens the burden of childcare with the wives,¹⁵ which *de facto* resembles to the statement of “socializing housekeeping” in Soviet Union: public canteens, laundries, and kindergartens liberate both male and female labor from individual family and turns the chores to be a “collective housework.”¹⁶ Fundamentally, most of the existing designs of pursuing gender equality is radically same with the communist model which pursue an all-round equality.

Though the communist model failed due to the existing supply fall short of the public demand, Soviet Union manifested an ideal futuristic living mode, especially for the discussion of decentralization and chasing equality. The allocation policy of uniform residential buildings is still working in North Korea nowadays. Identical residential buildings with only differences in colors are everywhere in Pyongyang. People are encouraged to move into these apartments to enjoy the unified heating, watering, and other amenities. Particularly, some buildings in unique shapes with different bright colors, standing along the main road in Pyongyang, are the exclusive residential buildings for awarding those excellent people, including scientists, soldiers with meritorious service, and outstanding athletes. It is alleged that besides the room size, there is no difference between their units and other citizen’s units.

Though existing socialist modes are flawed, theoretically, communism renders a radical paradigm of geographical gender equality. But what if we address an egalitarian space in a relatively subtle sense within the existing frame? Is it an equivalent exchange between gender equality and the private sphere? When society invades the private sphere, which has happened in modern society through the



Figure 6. Left of Upper line: Mirae Scientist Street Residential Building, the apartment for outstanding scientists and professors. Photo by author, date: 06-05-2019. Right of Upper line: distant view of the building and other apartments along Taedong River. Photo by author, date: 06-05-2019. Lower: Satellite map of Ansan Street, on both sides of which are the scientist residential building, government office, and teacher apartments. A typical occupation-oriented planned block. Google map, available at: 11-02-2023.

impact of social media, does the insistence on the barrier between the public and private sphere still make sense? The rethinking of communist equality gazes back to capitalism itself and makes an inquiry about the structure: under patriarchal control, capitalism is designed based on male motivation biologically. Thus, the rhetoric of the private sphere, the market-oriented liberty, as well as the competition, are all out of the instinct of buck/male animals from a biological reproduction perspective.

Like Spivak said, the subaltern classes have been overrepresented by other subjects.¹⁷ The rethinking of gender identity, the redesign of rules, and the reshaping of social structure are exigent to be completed, especially by female themselves. In this dimension, these films which project the shift of gender power patterns within the marital relationship offer a great view to discuss these questions as well as a disseminated appeal of gender equality through mass media.

Conclusion

In both films, *Homebound* (1967) and *Anatomy of a Fall* (2023), the husbands make a conversion of turning back to the domestic space of a family due to some contingency factors while the wives *de facto* become the access linking domestic and outside space and, by accident or not, having affair with third person. Because of the long-term restriction of domestic space and recognizing the cheated issues, husbands are forced to confront their incapability, which triggers a mental collapse of their masculinity and renders their emotional outlets of resistance through violence: by killing their wife's pet, or by suicide.

We see the shift of gender power patterns coincides with the transition of domain spaces. Women became the ones connecting internal and external, private sphere and public sphere. The breakdown of gender hierarchy within a family is led by the change of their mobility in different spheres. The shrinking of male characters' space triggers a structural emasculation which achieves the peak when they realize their exclusive control within a sexual relationship has been suspended by their wife's extramarital infidelity. Through the lens of psychoanalysis, the emasculation is rooted in a projection of castration anxiety.

Intensively, both films demonstrate the husbands' response/resistance to the overturned gender hierarchy in a symbolic expression with the help of a vertical structure geographically. Male characters are assigned somewhere upstairs off-screen at first to convey the mysterious sense of power within a home. However, by engaging the vertical structure, the shooting and falling from upstairs visualize the collapse of their masculinity and dignity. The gender hierarchy in a family is associated tightly with the geographical vertical structure of a house. A multistory house is a symbolized architecture which can be traced back to the penis worship in the prehistoric age. The phallus erection, visualizing the power to resist natural gravity, has been engaged in a patriarchal society as subtle power within the family, the

smallest units of groups, to execute the male governance. Thus, people suffer the double governance involving both general orders of patriarchal society and gender hierarchy within geographically domestic space, "home" in other words.

When back to the broken gender hierarchy in domestic space, a new spatial design for gender equality is necessitated. In this sense, functionalism in architecture sparks an interrogation of the tradeoff between radical equality and the private sphere deprived. Referring to some functionalist architecture and supporting mechanisms in a typical communist context, the contradiction between gender power patterns has been transformed into the doubting of capitalism, overarchingly, which is based on the male motivation of reproduction in a biological sense and is uncondusive to female development.

It is polemical what kind of perspective in a film can be considered as a feminist perspective. Lots of scholars argue that visions in modernism offer privilege and

authority for male since there are gradually increasing cases of the female body being commodified in visual media these days.¹⁸ Even in these two films, the narrative of the women concentrates on their affairs and the relationship with men to project men's incapability, rather than focus on the women's own identities. Female is still considered as the counterpart of the subjectivity of male. It is a necessitated and continuous discussion about the resistance of female power within the existing structure. How to make the virtual sense of gender issues cross the border from the screen into the physical world is also worth contemplating.

Notes

- 1 Henri Lefebvre. 2013. *The production of space*. 33. print. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 285.
- 2 Cara Ocobock Lacy Sarah. 2023. The theory that men evolved to hunt and women evolved to gather is wrong. *Scientific American*, November 1, 2023. Accessed March 29, 2024. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-theory-that-men-evolved-to-hunt-and-women-evolved-to-gather-is-wrong1/>
- 3 Lefebvre 2013, 302.
- 4 Jane Rendell, Barbara Penner, and Iain Borden, eds. 2007. *Gender space architecture: an interdisciplinary introduction*. Repr. von 2000. The Architext series. London: Routledge, 227.
- 5 Doreen Barbara Massey. 2001. *Space, place, and gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota press, 179–180.
- 6 Jürgen Habermas. 1999. *The structural transformation of the public sphere: an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. 10. print. Studies in contemporary German social thought. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 74.
- 7 Travis Workman. 2015. Other scenes: space and counterpoint in cold war korean melodrama. *Journal of Japanese and Korean Cinema* 7, no. 1 (January 2, 2015): 28–40. Accessed March 29, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17564905.2015.1035002>, 38.
- 8 Irving Sarnoff and Seth M. Corwin. 1959. Castration anxiety and the fear of death. *J Personality* 27, no. 3 (September): 374–385. Accessed March 29, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.1959.tb02360.x>.
- 9 The theories about “imaginary”, “symbolic” and “real” phallus refers to David Macey. 1988. *Lacan in contexts*. London: Verso, 182–193.
- 10 Lefebvre 2013, 287.
- 11 Chengri Ding. 2003. Land policy reform in china: assessment and prospects. *Land Use Policy* 20, no. 2 (April): 109–120. ISSN: 02648377, accessed March 29, 2024. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0264-8377\(02\)00073-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0264-8377(02)00073-X). <https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S026483770200073X>, 109–120.
- 12 The definition of “danwei” refers to Qian Zhao’s argument in Qian Zhao. 2017. Self-organization in planned danwei and dayuan: a case study of the transitional houzaimen neighborhood of nanjing in urban china. In *Proceedings 24th ISUF 2017 - city and territory in the globalization age*. 24th ISUF 2017 - City and Territory in the Globalization Age. Universitat Politècnica València, September 27, 2017. Accessed March 29, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.4995/ISUF2017.2017.6010>.

13 Different from most of the company towns in the western context, being associated with state-owned plants/factories which is based on natural resource and decline when the resource is exhausted (Garner 1992), dayuan in China not only refers to the dormitories of industrial factories but also involves the residential area for administration agencies, hospitals, police offices, and other national administrative organizations.

14 There is a referable graphic mapping of the infrastructure of a dayuan in Zhang Mengke's paper. They remapped the dayuan compound of a chemical factory in Beijing and displays the change of different infrastructures in both socialist period and reforming period. See, Mengke Zhang et al. 2021. Property rights redistribution and the spatial evolution of the chinese danwei compound: a case study in beijing. *J Hous and the Built Environ* 36, no. 4 (December): 1585–1602. Accessed March 29, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10901-020-09810-z>

15 Dolores Hayden. 2000. *The grand domestic revolution: history of feminist designs for american homes, neighborhoods, and cities*. 8. print. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Pr. ISBN: 978-0-262-58055-7, 272-3.

16 Mary Buckley. 1981. Women in the soviet union. *Feminist Review* 8, no. 1 (July): 79–106. ISSN: 0141-7789, 1466-4380, accessed March 29, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1057/fr.1981.13>. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1057/fr.1981.13>, 89.

17 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. 2023. Can the subaltern speak? In *Imperialism*, 171–219. Routledge

18 Massey 2001, 232.

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