GIVEN DOMAIN

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This essay examines three houses by the architects Mockbee-Coker-Howorth, published in a special awards issue of Progressive Architecture. The houses were part of the architects' ongoing participation in a social program intended to provide appropriate housing for disadvantaged families in rural Mississippi. The essay examines the forms of the houses, with additional reference to their text and graphic representations, and suggests that if realized these dwellings could not help but produce for their users a range of undesirable and counter-intentional effects. Much of the explicit social program authorizing the designs is effectively overturned as the houses are understood to be spatially marked by gender, class, race, and age-related ideologies that are in no way apparent if the formal configurations of the works are not seriously considered.

Madison County in rural Mississippi comprises a population of residents in some cases so impoverished that the homes in which they live are little more than sheds. The low skill and income levels of these residents coupled with the extreme inadequacy of their housing has resulted in a situation where often the most basic and essential needs of home remain unremarked and unattended to. The project discussed here represents an attempt to intervene in this situation by providing much improved housing for three families, by directly involving residents in the design of the houses they will later occupy, and by orienting the methods of construction to the skills of a local YMCA on-the-job-training program.

intentions

"Breaking the cycle of poverty" is thus not only the "caption" of the project by Mockbee-Coker-Howorth published by *Progressive Architecture* as part as their awards issue for 1987 and the motto of the United Way agency that commissioned the work, but also the intention of an overall social program. Clearly, this sentiment represents a real desire on the parts of both the architects and the agency to help defeat what can only be a desperate and debilitating condition of life for these families. And, no doubt, the new houses are meant if not actually to break the cycle of poverty, then, more modestly, at least to resist any substantial contribution to the conditions of its reproduction.

The primary mechanism for this resistance is the provision of adequate and appropriate housing. But the ambitions of the scheme are more intimately tied to the particular recipients to which the three houses are addressed than is usually the case in projects of this type. Thus while the program as a whole is aimed at "families living in overcrowded and substandard dwellings without running water," the architects themselves write that each of the three designs "reflects the climate and individual family requirements"¹ Indeed, beyond the provision of clean,

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¹ "Breaking the Cycle of Poverty," *Progressive Architecture* 68, no. 1 (January 1987): 88.

comfortable, adequately sized living space,² there is in this work a real attempt to match the architectural spaces to the specific needs of each family. An inspection of the family portraits published in the magazine together with the floors plans of the three houses reveals the following: the Day family comprises two women and five children, the Day House contains central living/dining areas, two "master" bedrooms, and sleeping lofts above for the children; the Boone family comprises one woman and thirteen children, the Boone House has a large kitchen and living area, four bedrooms, and sleeping lofts above for the children; the Lockett family comprises a couple with three children, the Lockett House contains modest living spaces, a single bedroom for the parents, and two sleeping lofts above for the children.³ Unlike much "social housing," which tends both to flatten differences among the families it is designed for and to employ a reduced and banal formal vocabulary, the Day, Boone and Lockett Houses seek to keep the families' particular spatial needs in mind while finding expression in what could be called a "regional" vocabulary of forms that draws on local rural building references.

It is widely asserted that contemporary products and works of culture are increasingly *disposable*, *consumable*, and *depthless*. In the opinion of observers like David Harvey and Fredric Jameson, such objects thus tend to reproduce in all of us, as consumers, notions of disposability and instantaneity that extend beyond our use and understanding of "goods" to include "values, life-styles, stable relationships and attachments to things, buildings, places, people, and received ways of doing and being."⁴ This is clearly a reference to the power of at least certain cultural works to instantiate social meanings and modes of being in which the rich variability and sheer density of experience offered by the life world are progressively reified. To support this contention, Harvey and Jameson each cite as examples a number of works in film, poetry and painting,⁵ yet the ultimate casualty of this reification is nothing less than the possibility of genuine *lived* experience of mutuality and sociality in the present.

This critique is aimed primarily at works produced under "postmodernity". Mockbee-Coker-Howorth's houses are certainly postmodern in the more familiar architectural sense. They retreat from the modern "total project" of social

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² Climatic issues are presumably addressed in the use of reflective siding, wisteria sun shading, elevated floors, dogtrot breezeways, and so on. Many of these features are present in the historic types themselves, which seems to make these types attractive as models for contemporary southern housing.

³ This description of the constitution of the three families is based only on the "evidence" of the photographs and may well be inaccurate. As my treatment here is necessarily textual, I am relying on the "presentation" of the families in the magazine rather than their "actual" constitution. Obviously, the photographs themselves are hardly free or transparent - they have been selected, cropped and composed as "meaningful" representations of what the families "are" - and thus are as relevant to an analysis of the presented work as might be the plans or frontal elevations.

⁴ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 286. Harvey attributes this trend to late capitalism's desire to force consumption by reducing turnover time and product life to keep pace with technical and organizational improvements in production. This maximization of both production and consumption is directed, of course, to the maximization of profit. See especially chap. 9, "From Fordism to Flexible Accumulation."

⁵ See especially Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, pt. 4, and Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review* 146 (1984).

housing (instead, they are detached and dispersed units); they refuse modernist formal languages (the geometrically defined objet-type, machine rhetorics, and industrial references); they gesture toward historical or vernacular types (rural forms and agricultural building materials). But can any work of architecture be considered disposable, consumable or depthless? It seems there is a dimension to this problem that is itself neither reducible to nor entirely independent of more obvious economic issues involving land speculation, accelerating turnover times, and short-term life-cycle costing. Because this issue involves the question of how these houses are received by their viewers, it will be useful, before turning to an analysis of the houses themselves, to look more directly at the magazine spread that initially described the project.

representing the work

It is possible to think of this presentation as a kind of "documentary" about poverty, rural life, architectural intervention (although it is neither less nor more a story than the one being developed here) and to inspect the family photographs for hints of the constitution of the families and their previous living arrangements. Additionally, however, because both the houses as designs and the four-page spread as a story are constructed out of the same "raw" materials, it is worthwhile to look at how the project is documented and to ask whether rhetorical moments in the presentation can tell us anything about the intention and content of the architectural work itself.

Deferring discussion of depthlessness until later, let us briefly take up the question of consumption and disposability. The Mockbee-Coker-Howorth houses have already suffered a certain consumption and depletion as far as their professional reception is concerned: the mainstream architectural press has applauded the project and disseminated it in a popular monthly magazine to an audience of practicing architects.⁶ Harvey notes that poverty, as soon as it is aestheticized, becomes "quaint" and "moves out of our field of social vision," aesthetics and pleasure thus joyfully displacing ethics and action.⁷ It seems that we can now wrap social housing in a package that quickly manages to ease our social consciences while engaging our design sensibilities.⁸ Of course, this process is bound up with "external" economic and gender issues of a systemic or structural nature (a point to which we will return), yet it is helpful to examine the mechanisms and strategies present *within* this aestheticization to understand how these operations may be related to the building forms themselves.

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⁶ One of the *Progressive Architecture* awards judges commented, "We are all very impressed with this project; this is a beautiful step in mainstreaming the issues" ("Breaking the Cycle of Poverty," 90).

⁷ Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 336-37. Harvey is quoting here Rosalyn Deutsche and Cara Gendel Ryan, "The Fine Art of Gentrification," *October* 31 (1984).

⁸ Another awards judge noted, "I was nervous as I went through it; is it going to get too sentimental, to tug at our heartstrings too much? For me, it never did" ("Breaking the Cycle of Poverty," 88). Of course, this aestheticization of poverty is nothing new in the design fields. See, for example, Anne Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), or Stephen Daniels and Denis Cosgrove, eds., *The Iconography of Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). For an interesting view of the "contemporary picturesque" as a strategy of power, see R. E. Somol, " 'You Put Me in a Happy State': The Singularity of Power in Chicago's Loop," *Copyright* 1 (Fall 1989).

As might be expected in a mainstream professional magazine, the project layout in *Progressive Architecture* starts out with full-color photographs of models of the three houses. These photographs appear to have been carefully color adjusted to complement the blue-gray background tones used throughout the awards section of this issue, and indeed their "cleanliness" is quite extraordinary.⁹ The model shots depict rural sites, dotted with wandering cows but otherwise lacking any signs of human occupation or marks of animal life. Just as on the next page the elevations of the houses constitute a highly abstracted and conditioned representation of the rural image, these photographs take the reader an additional step away from the realities of rural poverty (which, of course, is never as thoroughly ameliorated by housing as the model shots seem to suggest).

Turning to the second double-page layout, this operation continues with the elegant high contrast line drawings of plans and elevations and with family portraits reminiscent of the documentary style "art" prints of Walker Evans. These photographs operate as a sort of ideological "inoculation," whereby a little aestheticized poverty serves to legitimize a considerable social distance.¹⁰ While none of this is remarkable as far as the presentation itself is concerned, it is consistent with the contents of this material and the manner in which the photographs, elevations and plans are related. The arrangement of the images follows an apparently rational, tabular order where subjects are read *across* and categories are read *downward*. Thus, reading left to right, each family/house unit begins with a family photograph, moves to an elevational view, and ends with a floor plan. This arrangement proceeds from representational realism to increasing abstraction, but more important, it appears to document, with a certain inexorable logic, the design process itself. We are given to understand that the starting point of design is the family, the end point the floor plan, with the scenographic elevation acting as a mediating bridge that both reflects the family and realizes the plan. Of course, these plans cannot be both the result of a strictly linear process that begins with the family *and* the result of rigorous typological application that begins with formal precedents. In fact, despite the architects' gloss, if we are looking for a procedural narrative, it is probably as sensible to read the process as beginning with the type and ending with the family as encoded or concretized by way of the plans.

But there is no process. Instead, what is "written" here amounts to a (seemingly) unified, stable construct, within which a certain sense is produced, a kind of closure to which we assent when we consume it. In other words, both the complex and contradictory forces at work in the production of the design (that is, the demands for rational process, social responsibility in design, stylistic unity, architectural elegance and originality, historic precedence, and local reference) and the density and fluidity of family life and neighborhood sociality (that is, the subtle balance of intimate relationships, parental duties, family and kin allegiances, community responsibilities, household work, and local politics) are highly reduced or reified in the very coherence and unity of the presentation. Yet although any but

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⁹ These are by far the "cleanest" of the awards projects published in this issue of *Progressive Architecture*. I recall reading that in North America housewives buying laundry detergent generally perceive blue-toned "white" to be cleaner than yellow-white, pink-white, or even white-white (although in other countries this is apparently not the case). While this perception is of no small consequence to the makers and sellers of soap, of course, it is also interesting in the context of architectural representation.

¹⁰ See Roland Barthes, "Myth Today," in *Mythologies* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972).

the weakest sort of history is suppressed, it is not entirely eliminated. What becomes clear upon closer inspection is that the elevation views are inconsistent in what they depict: the Day and Luckett Houses are represented by *front* elevations, but the Boone House is shown in profile, in a *side* elevation. This is perhaps the first symptom of a very particular logic that runs through the entire presentation.

If we look even more closely, we can see that the Boone House is oriented in plan, as well as elevation, with the front door to the side, while the other houses are oriented conventionally with the front door facing the bottom of the page.¹¹ This orientation reinforces the notion that the house follows a "dogtrot" arrangement, although, as we will see, this type is rather more rhetorical than actually constitutive of the house. Indeed, the Boone House appears far more symmetrical than it is, in part because the "back space" that makes up the kitchen is turned toward the reader, conforming to the frontal symmetry of the dogtrot. This sense of symmetry is reinforced by the selection and cropping of the Boone family photographs: an image of a large but unified family protectively flanked by the telamonlike figures of the eldest sons. This heavily loaded image, its patriarchal overtones aside, appears to offer a visual map of the Boone House itself, but one in which the distortions of the plan are idealized and therefore provoke a distorted reading of the house's design. Additionally, a certain inversion is present: here the portrait acts as a true reflection of the *front* elevation, which is indeed rigorously symmetrical, and rather baldly encodes the primacy of the eldest sons in the central entry and flanking bedrooms at the expense of the mother in the rear kitchen. At the same time, the photograph quite realistically marks the mother as "support," and it takes little imagination to believe that once the child she holds is old enough to take up his (now empty) position on the porch with the rest, the woman will "disappear," kept busy elsewhere by her other "support" duties. Thus while, in one sense, the portrait acts as an idealization, it also, ironically, documents the truth of the plans.

A similar reading could be produced for the Day House, where the family photograph documents the asymmetry of its "double mothers" while simultaneously announcing the ideal family in traditional pose: two smiling adults (one "supporting" a child) with the older siblings disposed in front. Rather than pursue this example further, however, let us turn to the different issues raised by the Luckett case. If the other family photographs mark both a denial and an affirmation of the architectural situation encoded in the plans, the Luckett photograph seems to express quite straightforwardly the "truth" of the Luckett House. This house, as we will see, is "founded" visually and conceptually on the notion of man's work. The sign of this work is inscribed into the portrait by the baseball cap that marks its wearer as working class and distinguishes the legitimate "head" of the household from the others. Marked for work and grouped with the family, this man has claim to both the lower and the upper floors. As the plans reveal, the mother and children are assigned to the upper floors; the father thus mediates between the family above and the

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¹¹ I am assuming that the "front door" here is the exterior entrance that leads through the formal entry space and most directly to communal and public areas such as living/sitting rooms. This seems to follow the architects' intentions as it is the only area labeled "entry" and, in all three plans, leads into the house from either a front porch or a covered stair. The deviation in the Boone House's orientation cannot be accounted for by restrictions of space, for rotating what is roughly a square image would not have effected the space taken up by the layout.

work world below by occupying these dual spatial and symbolic positions. Moreover, while the Day and the Boone families are depicted *outside*, in front of their old homes, the Luckett family is shown *inside* and therefore removed from the neighborhood in what can only be understood as a perfectly fair reflection of the enclosure and distancing effects marked out in the raised form of the Luckett House itself.

As a way of working toward a symptomatic reading of the houses themselves, let us now consider the issue of depthlessness mentioned earlier in the context of postmodernity. This term can be taken here literally to indicate that what is present is "thin" or a mere "surface". However, in these houses there is certainly something (namely, living space) behind their surfaces. It might be useful to think of depthlessness as a rhetorical moment in the work where the image presented has no substance of its own or where what substance actually *is* present bears little relation to the surface that "presents" it.¹² While this is perhaps little more than an instance of elevational signification, it is a signification that no longer operates quite in the manner of Barthes's "naturalization," the ideological operation that we might otherwise have expected.¹³

Indeed, the rhetoric of the facades is freely admitted in this work; it is constituted as an exchangeable "architectural" surface over interiors that are themselves presented as the "natural" results of the demands of function solidified over time into the types of the "shotgun," "dogtrot," and southern colonial house. Beyond but in concert with this strategy of rhetorical "confession," there is a disquieting elision of the complexity and irreducibility of the lived experience from which the floor plans have supposedly emerged: the depth, the subtlety, the richness, and the social density of the life world appear to collapse onto the surfaces of the images and onto the antiseptic models that then stand as "reality" itself. In a move that is, again, a reification of experience, the houses become little more than their magazine images, made fundamentally equal to their presentation, where the aesthetic consumption of the work as image takes priority over the social realities the projects presumably address. We may find additional support here for Harvey's notion that disposability and instantaneity can extend to include values, life-styles, attachments to things and buildings, indeed, to the production and presentation of built form itself. In the Mockbee-Coker-Howorth houses it seems to matter little what the context of the project actually *is*, or how presentation, object, and life world profoundly *differ*, as long as the final image (the presentation of the buildings) is "elegant," "architectural," or "appropriate."¹⁴ This noncorrespondence between social subject and aesthetic object, between outside and inside, however, is joined to a consoling historical and regional aestheticization by which the potentially distressing, if perhaps "euphoric," disposability of the facade treatment is balanced with the reassertion and reassurance of

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¹² Jameson produces his own definition of this depthlessness, based on perceptual experience in postmodern space, but it fails to prove very satisfactory in the context in which he uses it -John Portman's Bonaventure Hotel.

¹³ See Barthes, "Myth Today."

¹⁴ As one of the award judges said, "The first thing that caught my eye was not the social aspects [of the project], but the excellence, the pristine quality of these designs" ("Breaking the Cycle of Poverty," 88).

traditional Tidewater South housing types.¹⁵ This is a rather particular "euphoria": for it is nothing less than the euphoria of unconstrained consumption and it is profoundly class-specific. The rural poor of Madison County, it can scarcely be doubted, have little access to it. But what is especially interesting here is that the historic types the rural poor might in fact want to call their "own" (even though hardly free to "consume" them, and even were typical form to answer the particular needs of any of these families)¹⁶ are not quite present in the actual plan arrangements. The "type" provides only the thinnest preliminary conceit for a spatial and symbolic operation of an entirely different order.

The plans show that the designs are relatively simple, and, in some ways, the houses do resemble the historic types from which they have presumably been drawn. The Day House is essentially linear in plan and comprises a gabled double-height volume and three smaller single-story shed-roofed spaces. The first floor of the main volume contains living and bathroom as well as a single bedroom. The gabled roof space above contains two sleeping lofts and a children's study area connected to the living spaces by a "ship ladder" stair. The shedlike volume behind the main space (spatially connected to the living room) contains the kitchen and dining area; the shedlike volume on the end contains a second bedroom; while a third shed roof covers an enclosed entry porch. The Boone House is slightly more complex. There are two main volumes on the first floor, the larger of which contains the living room, two bathrooms, and four bedrooms and the smaller of which contains the kitchen. A covered porch separates these spaces. The house has a partial second floor over the porch and the larger of these volumes. This upper level contains two large sleeping lofts open to the living area below and connected to it by a ship ladder as well as a study space similarly connected to the kitchen. Finally, the Luckett House is a two-story building with an additional loft volume in the central roof gables. The first floor contains a tool room in back and an entry hall in front, the stair to the upper floor between them; the stair is flanked by two small storage closets and, on one side, a covered porch, on the other, a covered parking area. The second floor contains kitchen, dining, and living spaces as well as a bathroom and a single bedroom. The gable space above contains two sleeping lofts and two attached study areas connected to the second-floor circulation area by ship ladders.

The Day House purports to be an enlarged shotgun house. To be charitable, it is perhaps a variation of the "one-room-deep, hall-and-parlor plan of the rural South," which may indeed have been a model for the shotgun house as it was adapted for narrow urban lots.¹⁷ The reason this seems significant at all is that the locations of the front and back doors signal a fundamental deviation from the single major defining feature of the shotgun house, the rear entry. What accounts for this deviation? The explanation lies a little closer to home than we might imagine. The photograph of the Day family shows them posing in front of what is presumably their old "house," a beat-up travel

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¹⁵ On the abuses of the concept of "schizophrenic euphoria" as a cultural effect, see Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 351-52.

¹⁶ If it is even conscionable to call sharecroppers' shacks and slaves' quarters these people's "own" dwelling types.

¹⁷ See Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 90.

trailer lifted onto blocks and adapted for wood heat. And the plan of the new Day House clearly resembles nothing so much as the basic trailer home layout.

Now I am not suggesting that this sort of floor plan is intrinsically wrong, but it does seem that the distance from trailer to house is less than might be anticipated -which raises two related questions: First, if the distance from old home to new falls short of what we might expect in a social housing program that seeks to take a resistant position as regards cycles of poverty, we might ask to what extent, what type of, and how easily preexisting, routinized spatial practices are imprinted onto the new form and whether or not such practices help to reinscribe the poverty from which the family hopes to escape. Second, if the new home is, in fact, substantially different from the old one, we could ask to what extent, what type of, and how easily are new spatial practices are inscribed by the form and whether or not these *still* work to reinscribe the poverty from which the family hopes to escape, or whether other, unsuspected inscriptions result from such spatial reordering. To really consider these issues calls for a relatively close reading, but in attempting such a reading it will become apparent that traditional methods of formal analysis will not suffice.

In any case, the Day House is not *just* a travel trailer: in its functional organization it is a relatively conservative (if highly reduced and linear) expression of the suburban home. As already noted, however, there is one real difference: as the family has two "mothers," the house has two "master" bedrooms. This seems to be a positive transformation insofar as it formally acknowledges a central fact of family life in the rural South (and elsewhere). Yet the second of these bedrooms, the one to the right, is doubly marginalized: not only is it "contained" within a shed addition to the main volume of the house (this "second mother" is "temporary," "extra," "added-on"), but it is both maximally distant and topologically remote from the rest of the house.¹⁸ Pushed behind the service spaces of the house, access from this bedroom to the house proper requires a traversal of the front entry area, which effectively inscribes repeated "visits" to the main volume. Coded as "exterior" to this volume, "the second" bedroom is thus "outside" the "real" house, itself doubly marked by the twin gables above the trellis on the front elevation.

engendering space

Luce Irigaray notes that the Western cultural tradition, emphatically patriarchal, seeks always both to (re)inscribe the phallic model and to deny, in its discourse of "truth," the independent existence of woman: "*the feminine occurs only within models and laws devised by male subjects*." Which implies that there are not really two sexes, but only one.¹⁹ The Day House not only evidences a certain formal discomfort with regards to its two mothers, but further, it

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¹⁸ While every other room except the bathroom is directly adjacent the main living volume, this bedroom is one space removed. For a detailed discussion of topological relations in spatial analysis, see Bill Hillier and Julienne Hanson, *The Social Logic of Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

¹⁹ Luce Irigaray, "Cosi Fan Tutti," in *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 86 (emphasis in original).

actively pronounces a *double containment* of the "extra" one. In the first place, an exteriorization occurs where the second mother is cast to the margins (into the [wood?]/shed). Additionally, though, it seems that the "reentry" of the main space that results from this expulsion is itself the sign of a coy gender reversal whereby this (now differently marked) mother enjoys (she has no choice) a repeated "penetration" of the (maternal) enclosure of the main volume (although she is "outside," she is not required to knock). Nevertheless, this is perhaps no more than an especially abstract example of what Irigaray calls "pleasure without pleasure," the otherwise unremarkable feminine experience of a pleasure *itself* unremarked, of which she remains ignorant, " 'saying' nothing ... after all, thus not enjoying it." This, then, is a flat, depthless pleasure, a spatial acknowledgment of difference "put into place," physically inscribed yet wholly unrecognized.

This symbolic reengenderment thus not only spatially remarks another unfelt pleasure, but moreover, seems to work this operation through an extreme and inverted (but not extraordinary) variation of Irigaray's *acquittal of debt* whereby mastery fantasizes "that [the woman] wants to take the part of his own body that he values most highly" (although clearly this acquittal is played out with both a generosity and an [un]remarkability quite surprising in their inventiveness and ambiguity).²⁰ This silent reversal of gender along with its silent "privilege" (itself purchased at the price of banishment) is, in this reading, a unique, contorted example of that much more general imposition of feminine silence that "sustains, for [mastery], the dual role of the impossible and the forbidden" - taking the form here of the *mother* impossibly gendered *male*, inscribed and installed in a space coded at once as *privileged* and *marginal*.²¹

In the Boone House, "type" again gives us reason to pause. As noted earlier, the house is presumably based on the dogtrot: according to the architects, it is a "dogtrot, doubled." If this is true, then it is a doubling in which a second dogtrot house is turned at ninety degrees and "overlaid" on the first so that the enclosed area of the second "fills in" the previously open middle section of the first. This effectively converts the traditional multipurpose breezeway of the "first" dogtrot house into a middle-class living room. We can see here not only a class-based mis-reading of the dogtrot type, but also a radical evacuation of the social particularities and practices historically and persistently linked to it.

Gwendolyn Wright points out that even though the typical slave cabins in the South were extremely small and lacked the luxury of multiple spaces, in fact, these cabins "functioned as complex spaces for family living, eating, cooking, entertaining and intimacy."²² The dogtrot house and other cabin types traditionally operated by subtle differentiation according to time of use and activity. A single space might be used for sewing in the daytime,

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²⁰ Ibid., 94.

²¹ Ibid., 96. This interpretation puts a new twist on the fate of the lost "rear entry," apparently not sacrificed as completely as it seemed with the initial reinscription of the trailer plan arrangement.

²² Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), 50.

cooking in the evening, age-and/or sex-segregated sleeping at night. In the Boone House the subtlety of the dogtrot house as a container for the particularities of lived sociality is flattened in a move that makes a middle class living room out of a richly complex indoor/outdoor space.²³ As in the second bedroom of the Day House, this "problematic" breezeway space (that is, the dogtrot proper) is treated as both *privileged* (now the site of the most prized space in the bourgeois home) and *marginal* (in and of *itself* not worth preserving and better taken over for more "appropriate" use).

Let me emphasize that the Boone House resembles less a dogtrot *doubled* than a *single* dogtrot rotated to favor one end as a front that contains the living and sleeping spaces.²⁴ This, in effect, removes the kitchen/eating "half" of the extreme rear of the house and turns the traditional front-facing breezeway into a secondary exterior zone that separates the house into clearly marked front and rear. In fact, the rear portion of the house is all too neatly coded as the domain of the "mother," who is assumed to be fully occupied with the task of feeding her family (and again we note that the front portion of the house, in its rigid symmetry, makes no symbolic provision for this woman's personal needs). As in the Day House, this "mother" is marginalized (she occupies a "back space," performs "service" or "servant" functions), and marginalized not simply in that her presence goes unmarked in the living areas, but again through topological depth, this time the move from the kitchen to the living room and bathrooms requiring a very *real* reentry of the house. (Notice the asymmetry here, whereby the children's sleeping lofts have direct interior access to both sides of the house, while the mother's kitchen is preserved in isolation.)

It would be wrong, however, to imagine that this marginalization is of the same order as the one present in the Day House. It would appear, instead, that the woman in the Boone House is inscribed within a highly reduced and enclosed version of the role *woman of the house*. Here is a woman whose entire spatial inscription is subsumed under a "supporting" role and whose symbolic containment in the kitchen is close to absolute.²⁵ Again Irigaray provides the starting point for an understanding of this situation when she writes that girl-subjects "have no absolute need for either the penis or the phallus, but rather, much more, a need to be born to themselves and to gain their autonomy themselves, not the least, *the freedom to walk - that is, the freedom to go away and to draw close in all ways*".²⁶ As the Boones are a family without so much as a symbolic "husband/father," we should hardly be surprised that no special "master" bedroom is marked out in space. What might be taken in this context as the feminine's primary inscribed positions within patriarchy - "passivity" in the bedroom, "activity" in the kitchen - are thus oddly

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²³ For a discussion of the cultural persistence of these complex uses of living space, see Molly Crocker Dougherty, *Becoming a Woman in Rural Black Culture* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978).

²⁴ It is interesting to note from the photograph that the Boone family, too, appears to be making the move from one house to another of the same type.

²⁵ Clearly, the reference here is to woman as a spatially constructed figure and not particular woman.

²⁶ Luce Irigaray, "The gesture in psychoanalysis," in Teresa Brennan, ed., *Between Feminism and Psychoanalysis* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 134 (emphasis added).

reduced or collapsed:²⁷ in the Boone House the kitchen is less a marked territory offering some "freedom to walk" (along with the constraint to cook, of course) than a spatial site of passivity, of imprisonment and exclusion. This woman is physically isolated from the rest of the house. And her cooking duties turn her away from the space in which she works: she may watch the stove but others may watch at her. If, as Irigaray proposes, the aggression of the psychoanalytic scene is "designed for *remembering*," then the asymmetric orthogonality of this kitchen scene is designed for *being controlled*: a "woman is more at a loss when she is immobile than when she is moving, for she is fixed in one position, exposed in her own territory."²⁸ In the Boone House, the (only) place (left) for the woman is reduced to a space of functional support.

This marginalization and containment is more than symbolic. While this arrangements no doubt result in very real effects on lived practice and on social interaction, the exact nature of these effects remains unclear. Nevertheless, built into the form of the Boone House are considerable disincentives and physical barriers to the ongoing copresence of the primary occupants of the two "halves." Furthermore, the asymmetries of access, spatialization, and symbolization between left and right, public and private, inside and outside, woman and family necessarily inscribe certain default patterns to interactions, which, while perhaps not determinate of all *actual* or *present* interactions, doubtless provides the ground for whatever elaborations and counterpractices are developed.

In the Luckett House we are confronted with something of a different situation. We have little "evidence" as to the sort of housing the Luckett family originally occupied, and while the new house certainly shows some similarities to the southern colonial type of which it purports to be a variation, it seems in other ways closer to an urban walkup or rowhouse. Thus while the Day and Boone Houses make liberal use of rural building references (barns, sheds, and the like), the Luckett House is a *house*. The elevations are comparatively conservative, the floor plan is highly centralized, and the entry sequence is much more formalized. Whereas in the other houses a front porch is inserted between approach and entry - a figure (and fact) of neighborhood/household social interaction - the Luckett porch is turned away to face the more private side yard. The entry itself is separated from the living spaces by a flight of stairs, which introduces a significant physical and symbolic barrier between any prospective visitor and the family within. The Luckett House is the only one of the three that has its main spaces elevated a full flight off the ground and that lacks a back door or kitchen entry.

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²⁷ Irigaray defines three positions: "*Mother, virgin, prostitute: these are the social roles imposed on women*. The characteristics of so-called feminine sexuality derive from them: the valorization of reproduction and nursing; faithfulness; modesty, ignorance of and even lack of interest in sexual pleasure; a passive acceptance of men's 'activity'; seductiveness, in order to arouse the consumers' desire while offering herself as its material support without getting pleasure herself" ("*Women on the Market*," in *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 186). It seems to me that even if Irigaray is on the mark with this summary, the space of the house itself offers only *two* real possibilities, in Irigaray's schema, *mother* and *virgin*, while the role of *prostitute* (commodification and seduction) is acted out elsewhere or subsumed under "passivity" in the domestic bedroom scene. In any case, a "passive motherhood" seems to be marked out in the space of the Boone House kitchen.

²⁸ Irigaray, "The Gesture in Psychoanalysis," 128, 136.

We might wonder whether it is incidental that the Lucketts are the only "traditional" family among the three. The entire first floor of their house is given over to the signs and activities associated with *work*, man's work. The truck replaces the family station wagon in the driveway, and the only enclosed room on the first floor is reserved for tool storage. (It is easy to imagine that the porch, remote as it is from the upstairs living quarters, proves more convenient for something like drinking a beer after changing the truck's brake pads than as a place for family recreation.) Note also that this is the only house with a real foundation. The other houses are raised on blocks "for climatic reasons." It is perhaps not stretching things too far to suggest that the metaphoric foundation of the house is the truck itself: when it is gone the house rests on a void. The awkward landing at the top of the stairs, from which a person must completely turn around to enter the living areas after passing the private areas of bed and bath, is the result of giving the first floor over to work functions and symbols: in other words, of inscribing family convenience and neighborhood interaction as secondary to the status of the job and the validation of work.

There is no question that neighborhood interaction is fundamental to the maintenance of sociality and group solidarity in communities of the type found in Madison County. Rural black culture has a long history of outdoor and interhousehold activities that rely directly on community use of "private" porches and yards. As Gwendolyn Wright notes, "the dwelling was ... not a haven for the black family. Many activities took place outside the cabins, and many social ties were based on extended family or friendship bonds.... Because the cabins were so tiny, dancing, singing, storytelling, and religious meetings usually took place on front porches or in the 'street' behind the row of slave cabins."²⁹ Like the complex use of interior space in rural cabin culture, outdoor social patterns similar to those Wright discusses persist to the present time.³⁰ Yet in the Luckett House, the very spaces which traditionally support neighborhood sociality are oriented to private family use.

Still, I do not want to give the impression that social coding and spatial order are adult gender and class issues alone, and therefore let us touch very briefly upon spatial mappings that involve the children in these households. As the plans indicate, the children occupy the symbolic and physical centers of the three houses. This seems to indicate a certain hope for the children, it implies a deferral of comforts or spatial conveniences to a future that rests on the children themselves.³¹ The centrality of the children's room is clearly "utopian," marking out in space an orientation toward a condition yet to come. What is disturbing, however, is the extreme unevenness with which this hope is played out among the houses.

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²⁹ Wright, *Building the Dream*, 51.

³⁰ See Dougherty, *Becoming a Woman in Rural Black Culture*.

³¹ There is more to the centrality of the children's rooms than the simple spatial economy of using gable volumes for living space. For example, in the Boone House the gable area above the kitchen wing is left open, while the gable areas above the main volume are devoted to children's sleeping lofts. This is true in the Day house as well, where the "second" master bedroom is designed as a single volume, and the children's loft areas are located only over the central space and above the "primary" bedroom.

In the Luckett House the fact of current employment (the man's) is realized as a vision for future employment (the children's) in the form of study areas adjacent the sleeping lofts - education and training being understood, we can believe, as necessary preparation for success in the adult world to come. Study areas are also present in the Day and Boone Houses, of course, but rather than contained areas free from motion and distraction, the studies amount to functional *hallways and passages*.³² In other words, in these two houses the children's study lofts are very directly linked acoustically to the living, dining, and kitchen spaces. It takes little imagination to realize that in these houses after-school study and homework sessions will demand of the children unrealistically high levels of concentration and dedication. In contrast, each study area in the Luckett House is highly self-contained and each is connected to the living areas of the house by a narrow and relatively private access stair that serves only the study area itself and the single bedroom to which it is attached.

There is more to this discrepancy than the constraints of economy or spatial efficiency. In the Boone House, for example, it appears that moving the study/kitchen stair from the center of the porch to the present location of the kitchen/porch door would eliminate through traffic, would allow greater privacy for the study (including the possibility of erecting partitions along the stair and/or balustrade sides), and would create a more efficiently proportioned study space. This small change would not increase costs and would require simply shifting the locations of one or both porch doors, perhaps altering the configuration of the furnace plenum on the loft floor, and possibly modifying the roof configuration. It would also make the porch considerably more usable, since the stair would no longer run through its middle. Minor changes of a similar type would improve the study in the Day House, again with virtually no additional costs.³³ The simplest modification would be to extend the gabled roof over the main volume of the house to the bedroom presently designed as a shed-roofed "addition." This modification to the roof plan would allow the upper level loft on the right to be relocated over this second bedroom and the space currently occupied by the loft to be used as a study. Not incidentally, this would also symbolically integrate this second bedroom into the rest of the house. In the end, this particular disparity between the study areas of the Luckett House and those of the Day and Boone Houses is perhaps consistent with the differences evident in overall spatial strategy among the three houses. It may be argued that the Boone House acts spatially to reproduce one more

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³² This is quite obvious in the Day House, but in the Boone House a discrepancy between elevation and plan makes this much less clear. The stair leading from kitchen to study, no doubt drawn correctly in the elevation, is labeled as a "ship ladder" and drawn highly foreshortened in plan, indicating far more study space than can actually be present. It is always possible, of course, that this really *is* meant to be a ship ladder and that the elevation is incorrect instead, but this seems unlikely given the heavy demands put on the vertical circulation by a family of fourteen. In any case, the area is clearly a passageway and whether or not adequate study space is provided, the area is coded as marginal and functionally subject to traffic and noise.

³³ At any rate, the issue of cost may be less important than it seems; as noted earlier, the architects indicate that these houses are to be built by labor provided by YMCA on-the-job-training enrollees using donated materials. See "Breaking the Cycle of Poverty," 88.

generation of educational "low achievers,"³⁴ or that, to a much higher degree of articulation, the Luckett House is spatially encoded to reproduce a skilled workforce.

Nonetheless, it seems that economic and class explanations are themselves quite insufficient to grasp the complexities of the encodements present in these houses. Additionally, where spatial operations seem directly to involve issues of gender or age, it is by no means apparent whether such operations on the whole lend support to, tend to conflict with, or are independent of class inscription. Indeed, we cannot assume that the relationships among these operations will be consistent from case to case, or even that a clear separation of these issues is possible except rather arbitrarily for the purposes of discussion. By way of caution, as it is clear enough that physical and material containments are far from determinate themselves (thus we cannot diminish the role of symbolic formations, conceptual constructs, and ideological mechanisms in the constitution of self and space), it is equally apparent that a reading such as this that relies only on textual materials without seriously considering lived practice is perpetually in danger of totalizing and abstracting the functions of space and spatial representation to the point where it might quite fairly and properly be considered reductive. Nevertheless, while the analysis sketched out here is highly schematic and speculative, there seems to be enough to suggest that if the social efficacy of spatial encodement cannot be determined on the basis of formal analysis alone (that is, without knowing how the spaces are actually used), spatial ordering does appear to impose on lived practice certain symbolic and at times quite physical constraints to counter-use. Furthermore, it is fair to say that any critical approach adequate to the architectural object will need to make provision for both representational and material inscriptions in space and will need to grasp something of the relationship *between* the two, even if only on a case-by-case basis. Certainly, if consideration is not given to the material arrangements of architectural space, any critical reading is bound to miss much of what is genuinely social in an architectural work.

effective form

At least one trouble with readings of the present type, however, is that as much as they may circle around issues of material spatiality and its social implications, the results are finally haphazard and serve more to indicate problems than to suggest a coherent approach. Thus while the "geographic" frictions of distance, local adjacencies and role inscriptions present in the arrangement of these houses have, no doubt, very real effects on lived practice and on subject constructions, it seems that a more general account of what these effects might be and how preexisting, routinized spatial practices are involved are issues that readings such as this ultimately cannot address.

If the effects of gender marginalization or age-related class containment are indeed indicated in the Mockbee-Coker-Howorth houses, a more systematic spatial inventory would be useful, especially where an interpretive reading hopes

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³⁴ Or a "reserve army of the unemployed," presumably undertrained and maximally available for unspecified and contingent types of employment. For a contemporary interpretation of Engels' classic remarks on the subject, see Mark Gottdiener, *The Social Production of Urban Space* (Austin: University of Texas, 1985), 84.

to engage sociospatial mappings and interactions more complex than those discussed here. And if Irigaray offers a starting point in considering the gender effects of spatial order, a formal reading more sensitive to bodily comportment and movement is required to make the most of her work. Of course, such comments apply equally to social theoretical work, since, while particular formulations of intersubjectivity or sociality may be reasonably well developed of themselves, spatial or bodily dimensions directly useful to architectural analysis are generally lacking.

We have seen that the Boone House "mother" is physically and symbolically contained in the kitchen, subject to the gaze of others, and that the Day House "second mother" is coded as marginal and made to live this coding in daily routines that take her from her "add-on" bedroom through the front entry to the living areas of the "real" house. We also have seen that the study areas of the Boone and Day Houses are subject to considerable noise and traffic disturbance, and that the Luckett House marks out a family terrain in which both symbolic and material constraints work to limit neighborhood/family interactions. The readings of the Mockbee-Coker-Howorth houses undertaken here thus implicitly involve the following issues: vision/visibility, gaze and the eye; hearing/listening, voice and the ear; access, pathways, routes and boundaries; coding, designating, naming and marking; and motion, movement, and routinization. In the present context, the material intersection of these issues is essentially the intersection of *bodily capabilities*, on the one hand, with *spatial limitations*, on the other. Before a rigorous social or interpersonal interpretation of architectural space can be developed, and therefore before any meaningful conclusions as regards the material functions and related aesthetic operations of the architectural work can more generally be offered, some means of considering the *body* and *space* together in an everyday context seems necessary.

In the example, again, of the Boone mother's relation to the kitchen, asymmetries of *gaze* and *access* were most clearly apparent. A topological reading of material constraints and enablements coupled with a narrative reading of spatiotemporal sequences may allow these two issues to be considered together. Bill Hillier and Julienne Hanson propose a method of spatial description that proceeds from an interest in morphological constraints on physical access. Their approach is based on two premises, the first of which interests us here: "Human spatial organization, whether in the form of settlements or buildings, is the establishment of patterns of relationships composed essentially of boundaries and permeabilities of various kinds."³⁵ Perhaps most important is that under certain morphological conditions "the density of potential encounters [between individuals] is inferable from the space pattern"; that is, "architecture determines to a substantial extent the degree to which we become automatically aware of each other" and, indeed, such "random encounters and awareness of others may be a vital motor of social systems at some, or even all, levels."³⁶ For Hillier and Hanson, therefore, the morphology of material space defined in terms of physical constraints on copresence and awareness is likely to be a fundamental determinant of human sociality. If this is true,

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³⁵ Hillier and Hanson, *The Social Logic of Space* „54. The second premise is that "although there are infinitely many different complexes of spatial relations possible in the real world, there are not infinitely many underlying sets of organizing principles for these patterns."

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

the configurations of architectural space become central to social analysis. In contrast, the work of Torsten Hagerstrand originates in the conviction that social relations are founded on the spatiotemporal paths, or "trajectories," traced out by individuals in everyday activities; together the corporeality of human actors and the "geographic" characteristics of human environments constitute the primary material constraints on such paths. Hagerstrand thus identifies distinct space and time boundaries in social regions by relating the limits and capabilities of the human body to the unique features of a particular context. His mapping of spatiotemporal trajectories connects physical and corporeal constraints with the variety of temporal "projects" in which individuals are engaged and by which they interact.³⁷

There is much of interest in this work, but let us simply assume here that Hillier and Hanson's physicalist approach can be extended to include physical (corporeal) attributes of the human subject beyond simple *access* from space to space - adding here *visual* and *auditory* attributes. Let us further assume that Hagerstrand's model can be reinterpreted as a simple temporal linking of such extended topological maps. Without engaging in interpretive exercises at this point, it should be apparent that a cooking scenario involves a "single-frame" sequence in which the subject (the woman as object) is fixed in space (in the kitchen) as described above.³⁸ Leaving the kitchen involves multiple frames and therefore constitutes something closer to a common understanding of narrative. Narrative mapping of the type proposed here would make it very clear that the *spatial fixity* Irigaray theorizes is multiply overdetermined in Boone House. With the single frame, the woman is asymmetrically disposed for vision with respect to the rest of the kitchen and with respect to the study (including the stair) above; she is neutrally and symmetrically disposed for sound with respect to these spaces; finally, she is symmetrically disposed for access with respect to the rest of the kitchen but disadvantaged for access with respect to the study (from which, as noted, the entire house can be accessed without going outside). Similarly, the Boone House study area is relatively empowered for interior events while less favored for exterior access when compared to the kitchen. Depending on the particular event, the actors involved, and the social context, that the study area asymmetrically commands views of the kitchen and parts of the sleeping lofts may be a distinct interpersonal advantage. Again depending on event, actors, and context, the repeated objectification of the other's gaze in a routinized choreography, or the uninterrupted ability to overhear activities in other spaces, may have profound social effects. I will not further discuss the value of a

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³⁷ See Torsten Hagerstrand, "Survival and Arena: On the Life-History of Individuals in Relation to Their Geographical Environment," in T. Carlstein et al., eds., *Timing Space and Spacing Time* (New York: Wiley, 1978), and idem, "Space, Time, and Human Conditions," in A. Kalquist et al., eds., *Dynamic Allocation of Urban Space* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1975). For recent discussions and extensions of Hagerstrand's work, see D. Gregory and J. Urry, eds., *Social Relations and Spatial Structures* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), and Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

³⁸ While this is not the place to discuss Laura Mulvey's rendering of fetishistic scopophilia and sadistic voyeurism (in film), it does seem, in the present reading, that Irigaray's version of "forced immobility" involves something like both of these at once. This might become an issue in future work, assuming that the interpretation of "routinization" or "choreography" as *narrative* is pursued any farther in the context of very narrow spatial channeling of activities. See Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in Philip Rosen, ed., *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 198-209.

narrative approach such as this except to note that where space, power, and subject are mutually implicated in a social topography such a methodological treatment obviously stands as a useful supplement to observations based on simple geometry.³⁹

reduction and resolution

But let us return for a moment to the Day, Boone, and Luckett Houses understood as part of the more general project of "Breaking the cycle of poverty." To attempt any definitive conclusions at this point would be premature yet perhaps several comments might be made on the basis of the present analysis. While it would be unfair to accuse the architects of complicity in the maintenance of unequal conditions of social reproduction, the design of these houses does seem to indicate that the physical ordering of space may be far less innocent an activity than we are accustomed to believe. It appears that what Henri Lefebvre calls "spaces of difference," even when produced and controlled by users and their sympathetic agents, can act in ways at the very least inconvenient to the emancipatory aspirations of those involved. "Space is political and ideological. It is a product literally filled with ideologies": the issue for Lefebvre is not to socialize or politicize space (it is already social and political), but rather to understand *how* it is

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³⁹ Hillier and Hanson discuss at some length the computational (and presumably, therefore, interpretive) advantages of topological methodologies. Some of this may be useful for projects such as the one at hand, but certainly a sequential summary of relative corporeal constraints and enablements in space, especially when combined with a toponymical and/or symbolic narrative, would prove helpful in understanding active social routines in architectural space. One obvious advantage of a formal technique such as this is that it would enable the graphic display, in multipart summaries, of complex, intersecting narrative actions. In the Boone House scenario, we could use a table to compare the single-frame topography of the kitchen space with that of the study:

	KITCHEN	STUDY
SIGHT	Views to porch Viewed from study	Views to kitchen, parts of sleeping lofts Not viewed from other spaces
SOUND	Hears study Heard by study	Hears kitchen Heard by kitchen
ACCESS	Porch, study	Kitchen, sleeping lofts, living room

A more complete inventory would perhaps produce maps (rather than written summaries) for all spaces in the house and thus might provide the basis for assembling graphic "narrative sequences" for the particular social choreographies under consideration in a given analysis. In an approach such as that outlined here, these graphic summaries might string together topographic/topological diagrams, they could also include columns for body "choreography" for the path under consideration as well as descriptions of the event taking place in each frame.

A graphic system of this type would need to be developed and tested over a number of cases, but Sergei Eisenstein's "Audio-Visual Correspondences" table would be a good starting reference. In his analysis of the film sequence from *Alexander Nevsky*, Eisenstein separates music, film image, and conceptual movement into six rather redundant strips see Sergei Eisenstein, *Film Sense*, trans. Jay Leyda [New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich 1970], 176-77). For our purposes, we would need to include (in horizontal, temporal sequence) at least the following vertical (synchronic) columns for each "frame": toponymy (name); topography (schematic plan); topology (access graph); topology (vision graph); topology (sound graph); body choreography (path and position); description (of frame "event").

political and social and to work toward a *new* space.⁴⁰ As for the Day, Boone, and Luckett Houses, it is clear that their modified typal forms encode more than just climatic or decorative information and, further, that uses or modifications of "given" or "received" forms involve unintended consequences that cannot be ignored under pressures to satisfy representational or functional demands. Finally, if it now appears that the description of this project in *Progressive Architecture* is somehow devious with respect to the truth of the houses and, indeed, that the houses are somehow delirious as interpretations of the needs of the three families involved, we might recall what is, for Julia Kristeva, the real and convincing power of delirium: it "masks reality or spares itself from a reality while at the same time saying a truth about it," and as manifested in the interpretive function of politics, it "correspond[s] to the essentially utopian desires of the majority... Even if it lacks reality, it contains the truth of desires [and is] for that very reason utopian and ideological."⁴¹

Let us recall that one of the questions opening this line of inquiry was whether or not the magazine article could tell us anything about the building forms themselves. We can say now that if the layout and arrangement seem to indicate little more about the buildings than can be seen from the plans, it is nonetheless the "delirious" reduction and ordering necessary to produce the presentation that makes much more explicit the logic of the plans. And not just the logic of the plans, of course. Under analysis the magazine article brings into plain view some of the contradictions inherent in reform housing and in contemporary family stereotypes at precisely the same moment that it attempts to resolve them and present the project as a coherent and stable whole.⁴²

But what does come as a surprise is the explicitness with which class and gender conflict is brought forth. On the one hand, the entire project, understood as a work of representation, seeks quite naturally to make "sense" out of these two problems by bringing them to a unitary (stylistic) resolution in the forms of the three houses. On the other hand, however, where class is strongly invoked (for example, in the Luckett House), gender is seemingly submerged; where gender appears dominant (for example, in the Day House), class issues appear to recede. The exemplary value of this project lies in the way the disjunctions between families and the disparities between "levels" of existence (the level of gendered sociality or the level of class economy) are visibly articulated within a unified frame. Without the attempt to make three quite disparate family situations cohere in a single presentation and in a single project, I very much doubt that the real disparities among the three houses and the three families would appear so strongly illuminated.

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⁴⁰ Henry Lefebvre, "Reflections on the Politics of Space," *Antipode* 8, no. 2 (May 1976): 31.

⁴¹ Julia Kristeva, "Psychoanalysis and the Polis," *Critical Inquiry* 9, no. 1 (September 1982): 82, 86.

⁴² For more on this point, see Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production*, trans. Geoffrey Wall (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978); and Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981). For interesting discussions of Jameson's and Macherey's work in the context of politicized literary criticism, see Terry Eagleton, *Against The Grain: Essays 1975-1985* (London and New York, Verso, 1986).

This points to the critical potential of work such as that of Mockbee-Coker-Howorth's. In "Breaking the Cycle of Poverty" the social and familial demands placed on the three houses genuinely differ from each other, but equally important, they differ significantly from the demands put on the middle-class family. Perhaps what is most strongly illuminated in the project, therefore, is the serious limitation of the middle-class worldview in accommodating lived otherness. Mockbee-Coker-Howorth's work makes it clear that a singular ideology (whether patriarchal, phallocratic, bourgeois, or otherwise) can be stretched only so far before rents appear. By conscientiously attempting to accommodate *social difference* within the parameters of normative design, the architects have highlighted both the *real differences* present in the Day, Boone, and Luckett situations and the *real rigidity* present in middle-class ideologies of dwelling. To put this another way, Mockbee-Coker-Howorth's "Breaking the Cycle of Poverty" exposes both the existence of real lived otherness and the shortcomings of middle-class ideology precisely to the degree calibrated by the differential between those normative ideologies of dwelling underlying "appropriate" design strategy, on the one hand, and the concrete dwelling needs of families living outside ideological norms, on the other. Everywhere this differential is marked by the failure of the design work to realize the social intentions from which it draws its justification.

Nonetheless, and perhaps most importantly for the present study, the Day, Boone, and Luckett Houses stand as examples of how dense and complex even simple works of architecture can be; they therefore offer themselves both as critical challenges and as concrete points of departure for architectural theory. Indeed, Mockbee-Coker-Howorth's "Breaking the Cycle of Poverty" makes it abundantly clear that the architectural object is far more than "textual": as the physical site of everyday life and as the symbolic space of social identity, the architectural object is a profoundly *material* terrain. We are reminded that architectural works, at once constituting the world and delimiting the scope of lived subjectivity, are no less than built topographies of the social.