



In an increasingly alienating and fractured urban landscape, desire for belonging to place and community shapes our experience of city living. But for many, feeling at home in the city is an elusive quest.

Home/World is a series of reflections on the yearning for home and communality in the modern world. The writers explore these concepts through an analysis grounded in the specific and historical realities of urban living in the region known as 'Western Sydney'. The picket fence, the display home village, the town planner's map and the local restaurant are some of the sites through which the authors contemplate questions of spatiality, subjectivity, ethnicity and communality.

While the collection engages with familiar Australian debates about suburbia and the 'great Australian dream', national identity and multiculturalism, it does so through broader theoretical concerns about the relationship between western understandings of the city, reason, freedom, home and modernity. It traces the changing historical meanings and representations of the 'western' city – bringing into focus the way in which taken-for-granted notions of 'city as centre' or 'urban sprawl' structure our perceptions of urban spaces. In this way, the book provides a new and exciting cultural, social and historical reading of Australian and international urban imaginaries.

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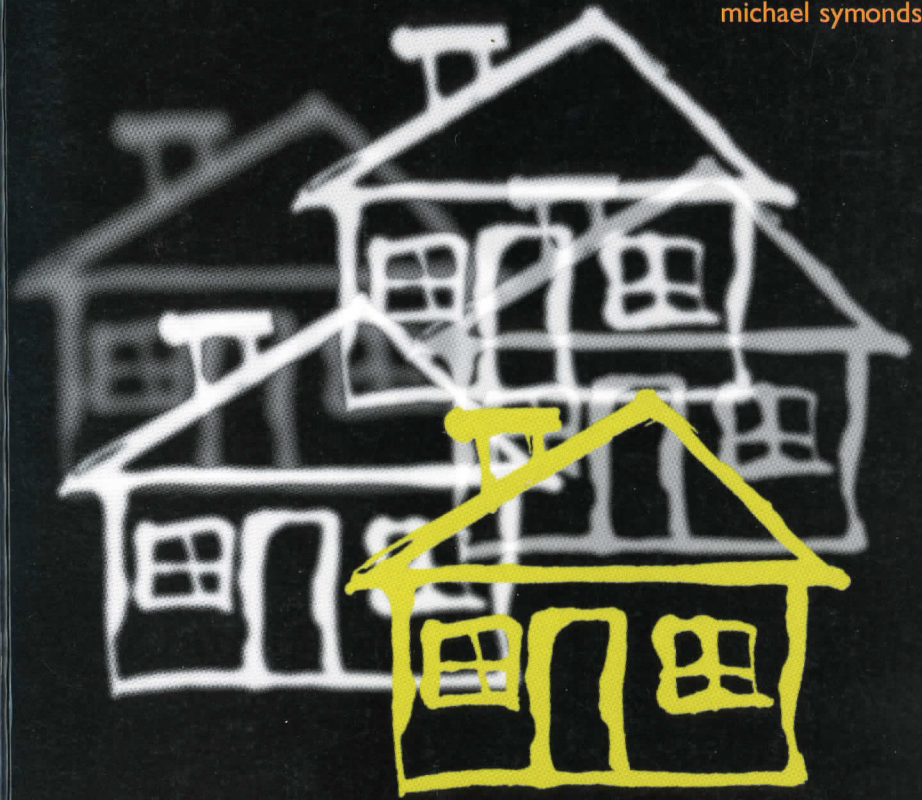
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home/world

space, community and marginality in sydney's west



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contents

preface	ix
1. introduction	1
<i>lesley johnson, julie langsworth and michael symonds</i>	
The politics of defining western Sydney	
Mapping western Sydney	
Aboriginal people in western Sydney	
Locating western Sydney; locating ourselves	
Suburbia and Australian debates about the city and modernity	
The city, space and modernity	
Readings of the landscape	
2. feral suburbia?	31
western sydney and the 'problem of urban sprawl'	
<i>lesley johnson</i>	
Imagining the city	
'Urban ... What's that word mean?'	
'A people's plan'	
Private dreams and the 'public interest'	
'When one flies over the County ...'	
3. outside the spaces of modernity:	66
western sydney and the logic of the european city	
<i>michael symonds</i>	
I The logic of the city	
The city-as-cultural-centre	
Early origins of the modern city	
The city-as-secular-centre	
II Home and modernity	
City and nature	
Modernity and loss	
The logic of home	
III Understanding the western suburbs	
The western suburbs' relationship to nature	
The end of the 'westie'?	

- 4. at home in the entrails of the west:** 99
 multiculturalism, 'ethnic food' and migrant home-building
ghassan hage
- I Migrant home-building**
 Multiculturalism, food and migrant home-building
 On the nature of homes and home-building
 Migrant home-building: the fostering of positive intimations
 Migrant home-building and food
 Migrant home-building, food and the dominant culture
- II Cosmo-multiculturalism**
 The field of culinary cosmo-multiculturalism
 Cosmo-multiculturalism and class
 Cosmo-multiculturalism, class and western Sydney
- III Multiculturalism without migrants**
 Cosmo-multiculturalism, ethnic 'authenticity' and power
 Cabra-multiculturalism
 For a multiculturalism of inhabitation
- 5. 'icon house':** 154
 towards a suburban topophilia
helen grace
- I Utopian dreaming**
 The socialist garden suburb
 'The Australian with his clay hut'
 Everyman's 'instinctive desire'
- II Displacement and disorientation**
 'House famine'
 'House hunger'
- III At homeworld**
 Dreamscapes
 'Icon House'
 The real and the fake home

IV 'The lost paradise of the body'

- The centrality of the girl's room
 The marital bedspread
 The nursery
 The absence of the boy's room
 Kitchen and bathroom utopias
 The veneer of the father

Index

196

5. 'icon house':

towards a suburban topophilia

helen grace

That people could come into the world in a place they could not at first even name and had never known before; and that out of a nameless and unknown place they could grow and move around in it until its name they knew and called with love, and call it home, and put roots there and love others there; so that whenever they left this place they would sing homesick songs about it and write poems of yearning for it, like a lover...¹

And will the troglodyte with his cave, the Australian with his clay hut or the Indian with his own hearth ever accomplish a June insurrection or a Paris Commune.²

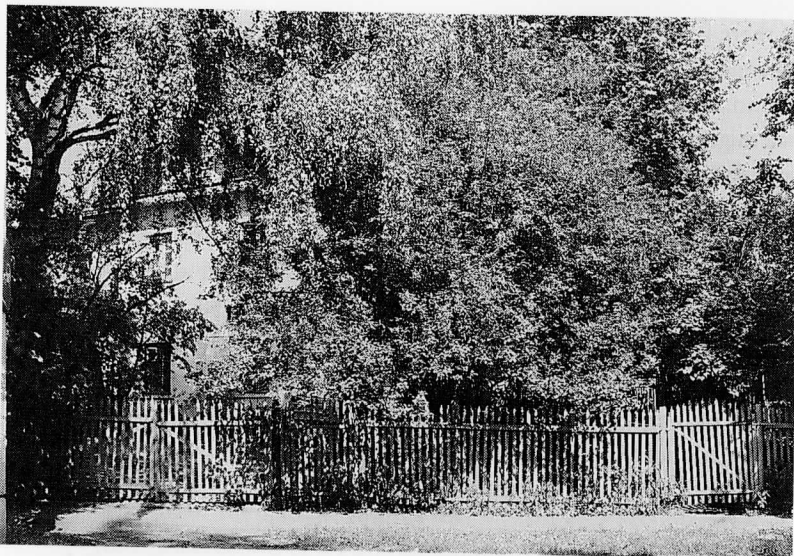
This chapter speculates on the suburban space of the display home village, a site which has not received very much serious attention in Australian studies of suburbia. This may be because it is seen as an inauthentic manifestation of the idea of home, a commercialisation of homeliness, an unreal space incapable of yielding knowledge of any kind. My particular focus is a place called HomeWorld, the 'largest display centre in Australia',³ situated in the aptly named suburb of Prospect in western Sydney.⁴ This concentration of names (home, world, prospect) neatly condenses the hopes and dreams of home-seekers in the broad spaces of western Sydney and beyond. In this consideration of HomeWorld, I argue that the display village is the site of projection and indeed enactment of ideas of home, ideas which are themselves partly utopian, even if their realisation is reduced ultimately by the economic limitation of individual dreams. These dreams are spatially realised in the display home 'village' which I call a 'dreamscape' in order to suggest that the imagination is highly active in producing individual meaning and value in these sites and that we must read beyond their surfaces. I also argue that the display home reveals an aesthetic overarticulation of the feminine and a spatial absence of the masculine, which is a manifestation of women's power, rather than powerlessness, in the symbolic construction of home.

'icon house'

If there is a home for these speculations, it might be located in an imaginary place between the two epigrams with which this chapter began. The first refers to a spatial reverie which acknowledges a longing we might simply call sentimental or even nostalgic ('homesickness'⁵) and the second to the unrealised dreams of a utopian political desire. The images invoked by these two epigrams in turn identify the separate spheres of the domestic or private, and the public — home and world — which define the boundaries of the space in which I am working here.⁶ What becomes immediately obvious is that the domestic is never a separate sphere but constantly intersects with the public sphere, creating its very conditions of possibility and its ethical purpose. This image of intersection or, more accurately interchange, is a useful way of thinking about the relation between home and world, the private and public, the local and the global.

To explore the meaning of HomeWorld and its location in the western suburbs of Sydney, I want to begin by looking at what at first might appear to be a very different dream of domestic bliss. At the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, reformist ideals of the garden city or suburb received considerable support in many countries, including Australia. These schemes promised the spatial realisation of homely ideals for individuals and families, as well as the possibility of shaping populations through the rational planning of urban spaces by governments. Later in this chapter I will consider the contemporary re-emergence of garden city architecture in what is now being called 'new urbanist' or 'neo-traditionalist' architectural and planning discourse. But I begin with a historical example — the Sokol housing settlement, established in the suburbs of Moscow in the 1920s — which allows me to consider some important debates on domestic space and reveals most starkly the utopian dreaming that underlies such schemes. I want to look at this scheme to introduce three main themes in relation to domestic space and the imagination of the ideal home in Australia.

First, consideration of the Sokol housing settlement allows me to explore a notion of residual utopianism as continuing to exist in the desires for an ideal living space now articulated in the space of the display home village. I argue that individual solutions emerge to enable the pursuit of this ideal at a moment of disenchantment with the



Sokol — utopian remains

HomeWorld — utopia privatised



collective dream or a realisation of its impossibility.⁷ Second, I use the Sokol example to emphasise the intensity of a parallel historical experience occurring after the First World War, one of extreme displacement and disorientation. Despite clear national–historical differences between Russia and Australia, the experience determines the nature of the different housing solutions which are subsequently developed in each place. Third, the debate over the uses of domestic space, especially in attempts to collectivise domestic labour, provides a stark reminder of the everyday intersections of public and private. Spatially, it might be said that the focus of these concerns is the kitchen and the bathroom — the heart and circulatory system of the house, the sites of women's most intensive labour and the very spaces which were the most contentious in the Soviet communal house.⁸

These three themes provide the framework for this chapter. I look first at utopian dreaming as revealed in the socialist garden suburb and in the plans for urban development in Australia after the First World War. I then turn to examine the tensions that emerged after both the First and Second World War in Australia as people became frustrated by the lack of adequate accommodation. The beginning of project homes and the development of display villages are traced to these historical moments as 'speculative builders' began to find ways of responding to these needs and desires. Though these developments emerged as effective selling tactics of commercial interests, the physical setting of the display village did not look unlike the garden suburb or city. I am interested in the echoes of the same kind of urban dreaming in both the commercial and government schemes, as well as the differences to be found there too. Finally I explore the gendering of spaces within the contemporary display home. Suburban developments, whether they have been sponsored by government or commercial interests, have typically been analysed by feminist scholars as oppressive of women. The domestic interiors of HomeWorld suggest that a more complex analysis is needed.

I utopian dreaming

the socialist garden suburb

Not far beyond Moscow's Garden Ring — the series of boulevards which delineate the city centre — and just before Leningradsky Prospect divides into two highways heading north by north-west out of the

metropolis, lies a unique settlement of single-family dwelling wooden houses, surrounded by trees and gardens and complete with picket fences. The streets are named after nineteenth-century realist and symbolist artists: Ulitsa Levitana, Ulitsa Surikova, Ulitsa Vrubelya. This remarkable settlement, a remnant of utopian housing plans is a rare and unexpected example of Soviet *gorod sad* (garden city) architecture. The settlement was established by the Sokol Housing Association⁹ in 1923 at a time of fierce polemic about the nature of socialist housing and city redevelopment.¹⁰

Markovnikov, the architect of the Sokol scheme, had participated in a number of experimental housing projects in the early 1920s, involving single-family dwellings, favoured as a model of workers' housing by supporters of the garden-city concept. On the other side of this polemic and much better known, the communal house was proposed, in which the socialisation of 'domestic concerns' was a key element: 'What is a socialist home? It is a home free of all domestic concerns, whether individual or collective'. In one of the more revolutionary aspects of the reorganisation of everyday life, kitchens and bathrooms were collectivised, producing, by the late 1920s, a particular technical problem:

We have now arrived at a moment of disenchantment with the so-called 'commune' that deprives the worker of living space in favor of corridors and heated passages. The pseudo-commune that allows the worker to do no more than sleep at home, the pseudo-commune that deprives him of both living space and personal convenience (the lines that form outside bathrooms and cloakrooms and in the canteen) is beginning to provoke mass unrest.¹¹

The main protagonists in this debate about socialist housing and city redevelopment were the more western-oriented modernists or urbanists (the Constructivists) and the more organicist 'de-urbanists' (the Rationalists). The latter believed that the architect needs to take into account the biological and physiological aspects of perception in devising forms and structures.¹²

Between 1919 and 1923 a new city plan for Moscow was devised by Zholtovskiy and Shchusev (who were classicists rather than de-

urbanists). In their New Moscow plan, they envisaged surrounding the city with a ring of green spaces between which garden suburbs for the workers would be built. The plan was barely realised because of the civil war in particular, and the heated architectural polemics of the time.

For Ginsburg, one of the most prominent of the Constructivists (though later a de-urbanist¹³), socialist housing solutions did not lie in the scaled down 'manor house' model of the detached dwelling, which represented the ideals of the 'sentimental and individualistic bourgeoisie'.¹⁴ The garden-city idea was seen as 'catastrophic' by El Lissitzky: 'These Utopians have simply quickened the corpse of eighteenth century Moscow and revived the old ring concept. Such ridiculous fantasies are born and will die in the archives.'¹⁵

While this prediction proved to be more or less correct, most of the plans of the Constructivists also shared this fate when a 1930 decision of the Party Central Committee brought an end to the utopian schemes of both the urbanists and the de-urbanists¹⁶ and architecture developed its better-known monumental Stalinist style. The *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* of 1932 had the final word on the garden-city movement, the worst possible insult which could be directed at it: it was of course 'petit-bourgeois'.¹⁷

'the Australian with his clay hut'

Engels' 1872 speculations about housing locates home ownership in the space of the pre-industrial — the sentimental, the petit-bourgeois — and, indeed, the primitive. When he refers to 'the Australian with his clay hut' in the second of my epigrams, he does not of course have in mind a white Australian suburban dweller, but an Aboriginal Australian. In almost all references to Australia in the work of European social and political theorists (Marx, Engels, Freud, Weber, Levi-Strauss), the whole country remains an entirely ethnographic and unsettled territory, useful as a site for speculating on the possibilities of ideal societies, in spite of its primitivist limitations. We will hold onto this shadow of European thought in considering the present and the local because it has strong resonances in western Sydney, and in Australia, today. This example also reveals how dependent European political theory is on those colonial localities beyond the international

sphere of 'real' historical consciousness — places where the laws of history and historical materialism do not apply, allowing the theatre of European politics to enact its dramas as exemplary narratives to be emulated everywhere. And so it is Engels who brings me back to Australia and particularly to western Sydney — spaces which are imagined culturally, politically and historically as *tabula rasa*, places where revolution could, ostensibly, never happen because of the limited cultural development of people who have an attachment to small ideas of home.

everyman's 'instinctive desire'

If this space beyond history is regarded as primitive or petit-bourgeois in the terms of Engels' imagining, the implication of its being designated 'sentimental'¹⁸ is that it is also frequently characterised as feminine.¹⁹ Later the ambivalences of this femininity will be seen in the formulation of the terms of housing need in Australia earlier in the twentieth century. It is perhaps surprising to discover that the 'natural' preference for home ownership and for the single dwelling turns out to be, above all, what men want. In introducing the 1927–8 *Commonwealth Housing Act*, the conservative prime minister Earl Page argues that social stability and individual contentment are only possible through 'the satisfaction of the *intense desire* of the individual to own and live in *his own home*' (my emphasis), and Charles Morgan, a Labor Party member for the western suburbs seat of Reid, went even further in identifying the urge to home ownership: 'Every man has *an instinctive desire* to own his own home and this instinct should be fostered in the interests of the nation'²⁰ (my emphasis).

These projections of everyman's instinctive desire for home ownership are the culmination of a long history of spatial practices of bodily reform. The view that a certain relation to space itself has the capacity to reform or indeed to produce the modern citizen is implicit in prison, barracks, workhouse and hospital design from the late eighteenth century. In early nineteenth-century philanthropic schemes such as Robert Owen's model village in Scotland, The Institution for the Formation of Character at New Lanark, opened in 1816,²¹ attention to ideas of communality and bodily discipline provided a model for later nineteenth-century 'model housing' projects in Europe which began to

consider the spatial requirements of the working classes. In debate around the 1834 Amendments to the English Poor Law, a strict economy of space applied, with the establishment of specific allowances by the Poor Law Board: paupers in good health required 300 cubic feet each (8.5 cubic metres); the sick, 500 cubic feet (14 cubic metres) and criminals 1000 cubic feet (28 cubic metres).²² From here, the optimum size of rooms in model housing could begin to be devised, as well as the correct division of space between the preparation of food and toilet facilities, living and sleeping quarters, sexual and generational segregation within sleeping quarters (the separation of children from adults, and men and women in lodging house accommodation). Exposure to the elements — light, air, warmth — under controlled circumstances²³ became the means by which romantic ideals of the benefits of nature were domesticated. Later this would become anti-urban in Ebenezer Howard's 'garden city' idea,²⁴ which gave rise to a whole movement far more realisable in the New World than the Old.

Australian suburban solutions in turn-of-the-century land subdivisions²⁵ established the ideal of the quarter-acre block, now increasingly seen as part of the problem of urban sprawl — or a 'waste of space'. This perception of space as a non-renewable resource, something like oil or minerals, has entered contemporary planning discourse and in particular marks the limit of the concept of western Sydney as an infinite space of expansion.²⁶

In referring to garden-city ideas of urban redevelopment, it is worth remembering that Ebenezer Howard's inspiration was a socialist novel, Edward Bellamy's utopian *Looking Backward*,²⁷ in which a young American, seeking relief from insomnia through a hypnotist, wakes up to find himself in the year 2000; the world has been transformed and a new civilisation has arrived in which monopoly capitalism has been replaced by the benevolent state ownership of industry and services; conflict has disappeared and service to the community rather than self-interest is the dominant spirit. Howard reads the novel and immediately begins to imagine his own ideal future, one in which housing and its arrangement becomes the solution. This dream of the possibility of a rational city, a community separate from the larger unmanageable city is an old one, forming the basis of Fourier's Phalanstère — the idea of a self-managing commune. It is an ideal shared both by the garden-city

planners and by the more modernist utopians like Le Corbusier. In the more banal forms of this utopianism and by the time it reaches the western suburbs of Sydney, communal dreams have been replaced by family values.²⁸

But, like all utopias, failure rather than success is the more common outcome. In 1931 an ambitious plan by Australian-Made Motor Cars and Aeroplanes Ltd to build Austral City, a model industrial community near the western suburb of St Marys, came to grief in the depressed economy of the early 1930s.²⁹ This early plan to introduce a 'motor car manufacturing industry' in Australia argued that the establishment of such an industry invariably resulted in new, large communities of citizens and highly profitable businesses and cited the growth of the American auto industry, with asset and profit figures for the Ford Motor Company, Dodge Brothers and Studebaker. Imagined international markets were projected ('New Zealand, Fiji, Dutch East Indies, British Malaya, Philippines, Indo China, Siam, India, South Africa, China and Japan'³⁰), and it was argued that Australia, with its vast mineral resources, was the 'natural manufacturing centre for the whole of the East' because it was, by steam, many days closer to its potential markets than other manufacturing nations.

The Austral City plan provided for an art-deco-style factory building which would not merely be a functional building but a 'thing of beauty' in itself, complementing the mission-style architecture of the civic centre, arranged in radial fashion around a circular park, with provision made for residential housing, churches, a social hall, a shopping centre, recreation facilities, irrigated land for growing fruit and vegetables, the installation of a water service, electric light, and power and sewerage for a self-contained city — 'all the requirements of a modern city laid out in accordance with town planning principles'³¹ (that is, garden-city principles).

Sixty years later, another ambitious plan to bring the garden city to western Sydney was attempted, reviving earlier ideals of community; in an ironic coincidence, the plan overlapped the site of the earlier failed development. The proposed new development at St Marys was designed for major property developers Lendlease, by leading American architects and townplanners, Andres Duany & Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk,

the internationally prominent proponents of 'new urbanism' or, as they prefer to call it, 'neo-traditionalism'. The development is characterised by 'pedestrian-friendly' living and an emphasis on what we might call *topophilia*, a love of place. The general principle is eloquently articulated in Duany's words: 'Things are not safe anywhere in a city unless the streets are loved ... and it's only the places that are loved that retain their value'.³²

The philosophy of new urbanism represents, on one level, an aesthetic-architectural engagement with the perceived social evils of urbanism, a belief that the reformation of space can reduce, or at least isolate, the undesirable features of urban expansion.³³ A desire for 'urban consolidation' has been a feature of governmental policy debate in Australia since the late 1970s, influenced at that time by rising oil prices and the need for extensive investment in infrastructure to solve the social problems of earlier urban development.³⁴ As a result, substantial consolidation had already begun³⁵ and this debate and its effects provided the climate in which the desire for an 'architecture of community' (as opposed to 'social engineering') could emerge. A competing architectural view would see the overwhelming size of the city as a positive quality, and one which might encourage technological (or more capital-intensive) solutions.³⁶

II displacement and disorientation

'house famine'

As noted earlier, my second reason for using the example of the Sokol settlement is because of the parallels which can be drawn between the intensity of post-war experience in both places. The Sokol settlement elaborates a particular ideal relation to space at a time of intense displacement, such as also happened in Australia after the First World War. Within that moment a certain imaginary was formed which produced the terms of debates about housing provision in Australia up to the present. In both places, a dream of semi-rural self-sufficiency existed, one which was shaped by the particular histories of each national experience: in one place the ideal of the suburb of single dwellings remained an isolated example; in the other it became the norm.

In a quite striking example, a returned serviceman and professional who had served with the AIF throughout the war refers to a 'house famine' which greeted him on his return to Sydney. Although increased housing construction was occurring by 1920, this had little impact on 'the undoubted overcrowding which had resulted from the comparatively little building done during the war and the tendency to crowd people into tenements, flats and houses sublet to families'.³⁷ In Australia the intensity of housing desire in post-war periods was a direct response to shortage and homelessness which have been acute at a number of moments: after both wars and during the Depression, when widespread evictions occurred.³⁸

Our present concerns with housing and the search for homeliness might also be said to relate to a post-war experience: in general, in the sense of the end of the Cold War, but very particularly for Vietnamese, Laotians, Cambodians, Lebanese, Bosnians and Turkish refugees as well as Fijian Indians, Pacific Islanders displaced by massive economic shifts in the Pacific Basin, or Hong Kong Chinese nervous about July 1997.³⁹ The post-war experiences which formed an Anglo sub-urban consciousness are now forming another kind of Australian sub-urban life, which manifests itself in particular transformations of landscape and interior space.

Another 'house famine' occurred in Sydney at the end of the Second World War and, like many famines in history, it might be said that it was artificially produced. The 1948 *Landlord and Tenant (Amendment) Act* extended wartime legislation which protected tenants and introduced rent control mechanisms; investors responded by not investing in housing and, because evictions were difficult to obtain, by allowing properties to fall into disrepair or by selling them. Aided by public housing policies which encouraged owning rather than renting, owner occupancy rose from 39.7 per cent in 1947 to 71.8 per cent by 1966.⁴⁰ The 'naturalness' of home ownership was thus achieved.

'house hunger'

Of all the people who knew his obsession, who knew it and admired it and even profited by it, little Julie Maide had been the only one who understood that Roger's huge talent

for architecture was really his own wistful homelessness turned into something presentable. Of the brilliant admiring people who knew him now, she was the only one who had known Roger's house-hunger when it was so ingenuous that it did not wear its acceptable disguise of talent.⁴¹

As well as producing orphans and homelessness, war provides a sphere for pure research and unlimited funds for materials experimentation which find more profitable civilian uses at the cessation of conflict. Troops have to be housed and the prefabrication experiments find their way into civilian housing schemes in peacetime. In the United States, during the Second World War, leading architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Gropius and Richard Neytra were commissioned by the government to design defence housing communities. Their projects were among the first in the United States to feature elements of European modern design — flat roofs, large windows, site plans harmonising with the landscape.

The largest private builder of housing communities in the eastern United States was Levitt & Sons, who, before the war, specialised in custom-built houses in affluent New York suburbs. The firm's wartime experience constructing defence houses was then applied in the building of private housing, or the Levittown concept, a lower-cost, less utopian version of the garden-city model, sold through project or display home developments. The moulded plywood chairs, tables and screens introduced by Charles and Ray Eames in 1946, and later reproduced in lower-cost versions, ideal for the modern project home, grew out of wartime designs for molded plywood stretchers and leg splints developed for the United States Navy.⁴²

In Australia, the Commonwealth Housing Commission, established in 1943 within the Ministry of Post-War Reconstruction, set up the Commonwealth Experimental Building Station, which explored alternative housing construction, such as mudbrick or rammed earth construction, wheaten-straw houses and ideas for water storage tanks as well as insulating materials using wool. Steel and concrete houses and methods of prefabrication were successfully attempted.⁴³ This idealism and experimentation did not, however, prevent the situation in which post-war migrants were inadequately housed for many years in the

temporary quarters for war workers built by the Commonwealth Housing Commission during the war.

Radical architects formed the Modern Architectural Research Society (MARS), led by Walter Bunning, a Commonwealth Housing Commissioner and an early advocate of innovative housing and solar design.⁴⁴ House and garden magazines were one of the key sites for the dissemination of these new ideas, and regularly carried articles about leading international architects, such as Frank Lloyd Wright.⁴⁵ They also carried fictional stories about a longing for home ('house-hunger'), such as the story which begins this section: an orphaned child adopted by a childless couple takes refuge from a loveless family life by building cubby houses; when he grows up, he goes to an Ivy League college and becomes a leading architect, a lonely figure until he realises that his childhood sweetheart has always loved him.⁴⁶

In spite of the promotion of modern architecture and interior decoration, a more amateur, do-it-yourself approach also becomes popular for economic reasons.⁴⁷ A tension exists throughout the period between the professionalisation advocated by architects and the necessary improvisation of the owner builders. This is manifest in the usual way, in that a process of professionalisation displaces the diversity of vernacular use, instituting its own normative practices and values: from the height of assumed authority in aesthetic matters, the vernacular and the improvised are declared to be inferior and in poor taste. An early article by Robin Boyd describes Australian house-building as being in a 'rut' because the builders are 'amateurs'. Help is at hand, however, as the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects has responded to the need to beautify the Australian 'ugliness'⁴⁸ by introducing a new service of making available architect-designed houseplans which might be purchased by prospective owner-builders and dreamers of home.⁴⁹ This follows a practice which *Australian Home Beautiful* introduced from the mid-1940s of presenting a regular column in which readers were invited to submit their own plans for aesthetic critique by a resident architect.⁵⁰

Remnants of this tension between the architect and the builder or, more accurately, between mental and manual labour, exists in current project home design, which specifically employs contract draughtspeople rather

than architects — the same people that architects use to visualise and draw up their own plans.⁵¹ Elements of design are determined by market research, which identifies preferences and market trends.⁵²

This suburban DIY story is a feature of the Australian narrative of the project home which begins in 1932. In that year, according to the industry's own account, Albert Jennings took out a £700 overdraft and, using the designs of a young architect, Edgar Gurney, hired six men, built nine homes costing £895, and made a £1000 profit. The Jennings narrative ends in 1995, when the Jennings Group went into receivership⁵³ after losing heavily on debt-funded investments in the commercial property market, which crashed in 1990–91.

The purpose of starting the operation was, to quote Jennings: 'to build houses that were good enough and cheap enough to sell against the many mortgage sales taking place in those depression years'.⁵⁴ This 'good enough and cheap enough' dictum must be understood in the context of its emergence — the loss of home during the Depression. This narrative of loss continues to determine the nature of housing provided in the home and land packaging industry, and helps to explain the very quality of domestic space provided, the dimensions of rooms, the connections between rooms, the cost minimisation for plumbing and servicing, and so on. Notwithstanding the assumption of cheapness, the features of Hillcrest, in Caulfield, a suburb of Melbourne, Victoria, the first of the Jennings estates were not completely spartan; they included hot water to six points, tiled bathrooms and kitchens, French-polished joinery, chrome-plated swivel taps, a solid brick fence and a tree on the nature strip.

One of the original purposes of the display home — a simulacrum of the idea of home — was to provide local utility companies with the opportunity to display their appliances. If we regard the rapid expansion of domestic commodity consumption as having occurred primarily after the Second World War, then it is worth noting that the display home phenomenon, arising as it did out of the shortages of the Depression and the immediate post-war period, had helped put a consuming desire into circulation before the technical and economic possibility of its realisation could be put in place.⁵⁵

For reasons to do with the specific nature of post-war public housing

policies in New South Wales, the first display-home village in Sydney, located in Carlingford in the north-west, was not built until 1961⁵⁶ but since then the display home — initially small pockets of houses in new release areas, constructed by individual 'speculative' builders — has become a widespread feature of outer urban landscapes.

III at homeworld

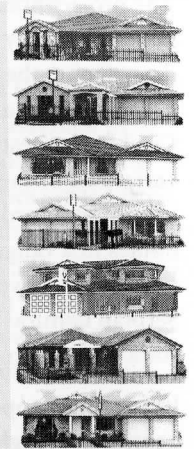
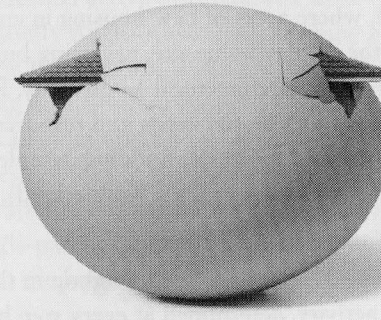
dreamscapes

HomeWorld II is one of a number of display-home villages dedicated to the selling and celebration of the idea of home, and because of the availability of larger pockets of land on the edges of the city, almost all these project home selling points are located in western or south-western Sydney.⁵⁷ The original HomeWorld, also in Prospect, was opened in 1986 with the intent of turning it into an actual living environment after all the homes were sold. Today there are no longer any indications that the small quarter of houses, built around curving roads like any other suburb, was once a display-home village.

The same fate has just overtaken HomeWorld II, established in 1990 and closed in September 1996. Although the houses are said to become 'tired'⁵⁸ and require new decor and new trim, the time-span of about six years seems to be the life cycle, not only of the display home but also of the village in which it is located. Beyond this time frame, the spaces cannot maintain the appearance of a dreamscape, since they become worn, lived in — too homely perhaps. They shift from representing the idea of home to becoming actual homes. The dream of an ideal space becomes the reality of houses which are lived in; the interior decoration, chosen according to an interpretation of market taste, is removed and replaced by ordinary things, objects which are selected — or select themselves — according to economy rather than aesthetics, or according to an unpredictable combination of the two.

In this sense, the display-home village comes to life in a way that it can never do when it is fulfilling its purpose as a point of sale. There is a troubling presence in the display home, an emptiness at its heart, which is produced by the static, frozen neatness of its arrangement and the sadness of a space designed for familial occupation yet finding itself unoccupied. It is a quintessentially melancholic space, having links with

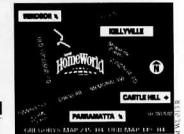
Come and see the beginning of a whole New HomeWorld.



The most exciting variety of homes ever put on display have started to appear at New HomeWorld. Soon you'll be able to wander through 120 homes that will offer the very latest designs from 34 of Australia's best-known builders. Right now you're invited to preview our first homes featuring concepts developed for 1997. Come and discover your new home...prices will range from \$60,000 to over \$400,000. There's nothing like living in a brand new home...from New HomeWorld. Open 7 days, 10am to 5pm.

New HomeWorld

There's nothing like living in a brand new home.



*Allan Affordable Homes • Allstate Homes • Alkath Homes • Australian Housing & Land • Brechwood Homes • Bellmarch Homes • Bernard Constructions • Cahill Homes • Calpro Homes • Chandontay Homes • Charleson Homes • Dalech Homes • Ferriter Homes • Fitzsimons Homes • Hasky Homes • Jandson Homes • Kralovs Homes • Long Homes • Masterton Homes • Meriden Classic Homes • Michael Hill Designer Homes • Mirvac Homes • Mitchell Homes • Pinnacle Homes • Pioneer Homes • Provincial Homes • Rawson Homes • Rosewood Homes • Sherline Constructions • Sunellin Homes • Sydney Housing Company • Westminster Homes • Worcester Homes • Homeworld Landscapes • Landcom

Organic origins, cosmological suburbanism

Created by I.H.J. Advertising Pty Ltd. © Homeworld III Pty Ltd. 1996

other such spaces, like the theme park at the end of the day, the fairground or circus once the show is over and the sideshows and all the animals packed up to move onto the next town. The display-home village is always moving onto the next town, which means it is constantly engaged in the contradiction of setting up an ideal space, which when consumed as such, leads to its destruction. And so the caravans and coloured flags move on and are set up somewhere else, along another margin, a kind of frontier of the suburban dream, a circus, a sideshow, a mundane carnival, part of an everyday dreaming. These are not, then, landscapes so much as dreamscapes for an endless dreaming. In the latest version of the HomeWorld theme, the latest episode of this popular and long-running serial, New HomeWorld at Kellyville promises to be bigger and better. There will be 127 homes and, if HomeWorld II could claim to be the biggest display-home village in the southern hemisphere, the New HomeWorld is aiming for global distinction.

The project home concept is one which, although centred on groups of houses specially built for display purposes, spreads beyond the 'village', determining the look of all the new houses in the surrounding areas. This is particularly apparent around the display-home development at Cecil Park, west of Fairfield, where acres of new housing in endless variations of the designs at the display home site, are being built, in an area of extraordinary social — and architectural — diversity. Project homes in a range of sizes, depending on the needs and resources of the purchasers, have sprung up, around mosques, Buddhist temples, a Serbian cultural centre, theme parks (Australia's Wonderland), service stations, garden centres.

If it seems inappropriate to speak of houses 'springing' up in the context of a highly planned activity, determined at every step by restrictions — local government regulations, building codes, bank interest rates — which seem to preclude the possibility of describing these activities in organic terms, there is nonetheless a propensity to use the metaphor of new life to understand both the rapidity of change and the naturalness of urban development. This is made explicit in the first of the advertisements for New HomeWorld. An egg with the tiled eaves of a new house bursting through its shell is used as the central image announcing the new concept, and prospective seekers of home are invited to 'Come and see the beginning of a whole New HomeWorld'. In this way, the fact that the village is incomplete (it is only in its infancy) does not prevent it from functioning immediately. Houses can still be bought and sold, since they will be built afresh on the purchasers' own land.

New HomeWorld's very incompleteness enhances the possibilities of imagining the dream home and simulates home life itself, an always incomplete, provisional process. The homes which are completed will stand alongside empty blocks of land and new building sites. If incompleteness in this sense can be thought of as a kind of real virtuality, computer simulation also brings the world of virtual reality to the idea of home and to the home construction industry. The expense of building actual houses is replaced with software that creates virtual model homes, infinitely increasing the choices — the menu items — which may be available.⁵⁹ In this context, the organic image of the egg serves to anchor the dream in a world of reality and a sphere of

reproduction, a cycle of life which is not simply suburban but cosmological.

Although the idea of home and suburbia which has been the subject of much intellectual activity in Australia since the 1950s is assumed to be quintessentially Anglo-Australian, as many as half the sales of homes through the HomeWorld II site are to Asian buyers,⁶⁰ either settled here or investing in Australian property. The architecture of the houses might be called 'international-domestic' style, providing a kind of generic western idea of the use of home space, one which imagines a two-generational nuclear family unit, even though this might not apply to the single-parent families or extended multi-generational families who live in the houses.

The houses are given names, which suggest aspirations or dreams which are a long way from the real lives of the purchasers: the Regency Royale, the Ascot Grove, the Brittany, the Killara series, the Cremorne series, the Forrest Lodge, the Seaview. The name of the house refers to another time, another place, a better suburb, a better location, a better view, an Anglo or European imaginary. The new migrant, whose cultural background is beyond this experience, encounters a desirable foreignness which will be adapted by the use of furniture never seen in the display homes, by food, clothing, religious ornamentation, subtle changes which will transform the living spaces, subverting the connotations of the naming. These details are, on the whole, worn in the interior spaces of the houses and are not yet reflected in external architectural details or styles. Some architectural register of population change occurs in the building of places of worship, for example in mosques and temples, but domestic architecture does not yet declare these shifts.

The home theme continues in other consumption possibilities close to HomeWorld II. The local shopping centre is Homebase, a group of furnishing and home supply shops which includes a McDonald's and other fast food stores. The complex also includes a huge Ikea store, a model of conveyer-belt consumption which also applies in moving through HomeWorld II. The one-way traffic direction of this marketing concept means that the consumer is processed in a particular way, directed through the store according to a carefully worked out plan of consumption habits. There is little room in this model for what

Margaret Crawford describes as the Gruen Transfer,⁶¹ a principle which applies in shopping malls in which the consumer is converted from being a shopper with a specific purpose and focus, walking briskly towards a particular destination, into an impulse shopper, with a more meandering gait, and a less focused purpose, a kind of sleepwalking.

The uni-direction of the prospective purchaser's walk through HomeWorld also has a specific purpose. It suggests a path of social advancement, an upward mobility, beginning with the house at the bottom end of the market, its lower ceilings, its smaller rooms and overall space, its cheaper cost, moving up through higher ceilings and more bedrooms to the deluxe models, with two storeys, spa-baths, walk-in wardrobes, en-suite bathrooms, centralised vacuum cleaning with outlets in each room, and two and even three garages. The reality is harsher than this and the purchasers are aware of their economic constraints but the dreaming has no limits.

'icon house'

If the problem of the popularity of the project home blurs the borders of the display-home village, so that it appears to spill into the surrounding suburbs, a new marketing concept attempts to recentre the site and also to deal with the perception of decentredness, which may be a disorienting aspect of life in the postmodern metropolis.⁶² In the newest configuration of the display-home model, one of the largest of the home-building firms, Pioneer Homes, is using the concept of the 'icon house'. In this marketing concept, they have developed a model village in which a central house — the icon house — is surrounded by a small group of exhibition houses. The icon house is used as the place where all the business of mixing and matching house styles, colours, fittings and so on is done, finance arranged and contracts signed. Once these transactions are finished for the day, it is hoped that the icon house can be used as a 'community house' for functions and meetings by local groups. Because the icon house is set up as a house rather than a hall, it has an inbuilt 'homeliness' absent from older kinds of public space. As such, we might suggest that it constitutes a newer form of public space, ambivalently located between public and private. A sense of communality is in this case being produced around the idea of homeliness. This tendency might be called the spatial production of

community since it draws on the same material as New Urbanism's 'architecture of community'.

What is emerging in the improvisational attempts to build homes in cities and to build them with(in) communities is a newer form of civic life markedly different from the classical forms which it has taken. In these newer models, governmentality is increasingly privatised, although this tendency has not been as formalised in Australia as it has been in the United States.⁶³

the real and the fake home

there is ground for taking the house as a tool for analysis of the human soul.⁶⁴

What are the contradictions of camp and kitsch, the proliferation of consumption as a form of magical labor, the over-articulation of the discourse of the feminine here, but the contradictions of a sign in crisis?⁶⁵

The materiality of homeliness is not easily locatable. It belongs primarily in the sphere of experience and memory and its value cannot be specified or quantified but it can be evoked in spaces which are thought to be homely. The display home is a space which imagines the possibility of successfully simulating homeliness, and the unoccupied absence which resides at its heart is the very ground on which this possibility is realised. In discussions of suburban Australia, the emphasis has been on the more quantifiable aspects of domestic life, the historical, economic, political and sociological details of that experience.⁶⁶ More recently, particularly in architectural and aesthetic theory,⁶⁷ and to some extent in anthropology and cross-cultural studies,⁶⁸ attention has been given to what might be called the spatial experience of the house — or the incorporation of perception, memory and experience.⁶⁹

The domestic interior has long had a capacity to be seen in iconic terms: it is a place where objects become icons — photographs on a mantelpiece, things to which deep sentimental value is attached as well as devotional items themselves. One of the richest speculations on the meaning of interior space is Bachelard's *Poetics of Space*, and I would like to draw on it in walking through the display home, in order to

suggest the possibilities of reverie even in reading such a site, a space usually thought to be beyond the possibilities of such imaginings.

The houses of Bachelard's reverie are old houses, houses which possess the sediment of history, while the display home is a new house, one unmarked by personal association. It is, in this sense, a blank space on which the occupiers write their own histories, inventing a past as well as a future. In any case, in Bachelard's reverie, the meaning of the house is not to be explained in terms of its history, the politics and economy of urban planning and consolidation, or in the sociological account of its use, since: 'Space that has been seized upon by the imagination cannot remain indifferent space subject to the measures and estimates of the surveyor. It has been lived in, not in its positivity, but with all the partiality of the imagination.'⁷⁰

Bachelard employs a phenomenological poetics, concentrating less on the materials of causality and prosaics and more on the materials of poetry. For Bachelard, space has a resonance, a quality of reverberation produced by the poetic image, which has the capacity to make the distant past resound with an echo, the intensity and duration of which is hard to predict. Bachelard's concern in *Poetics of Space* is with what he calls *felicitous space*, with eulogised space, and he prefers to call his investigations *topophilia*, since 'they seek to determine the human value of the sorts of space that may be grasped, that may be defended against adverse forces, the space we love'.⁷¹

The display home is resistant to this kind of analysis because it is a space of simulated memory and yet such an approach is able to recognise the value of the *idea* of space in which the display home also partakes. This is all the more so if we refuse to accept the opposition between 'the real' and simulation, between authenticity and inauthenticity (which we must do as soon as we allow imagination to enter our deliberations). Bachelard's approach is, however, more on the side of a particular authenticity and one which must also be allowed in thinking of the value of the spaces with which I am dealing — an authenticity of knowing the self:

Not only our memories, but the things we have forgotten are 'housed'. Our soul is an abode. And by remembering 'houses' and 'rooms' we learn to 'abide' within ourselves.⁷²

There is also a certain romanticism in Bachelard's evocations, particularly of 'the "wax" civilization', a little reverie on domestic labour, harder to imagine for those who actually perform it:

From one object in a room to another, housewifely care weaves the ties that unite a very ancient past to the new epoch. The housewife awakens furniture that is asleep.⁷³

And yet HomeWorld in its name mirrors Bachelard's contrast of house and universe, a contrast which is clearly operative in the space itself. Bachelard's spatial reverie is evoked wherever there are dreams of the French provincial countryside; these are not New World spaces, though they may also be dreamed here.

Although Bachelard's work provides a preliminary framework in thinking about the display home, Susan Stewart's work can also help in understanding the fine detail which is to be observed in these spaces. Her book, *On Longing*, a critical discussion of the miniature, the gigantic, the grotesque, the souvenir, arises from within the New World's attempts to come to terms with spaces which do not carry (for the newcomers) the sediment of history. In considering the space of the display home, Stewart's work is especially useful because her concerns have a place for the value of the inauthentic:

If authority is invested in domains such as the marketplace, the university, or the state, it is necessary that exaggeration, fantasy, and fictiveness in general be socially placed within the domains of anti- or nonauthority: the feminine, the childish, the mad, and the senile, for example. In formulating the loci of authority and exaggeration in this way, we necessarily and nostalgically must partake in the lost paradise of the body and the myths of the margin, the outside. Exaggeration always reveals the cheap romance that is reality, but then it must move on.⁷⁴

The 'fake' home is such a reality and its magic consists in the infinite capacity which people have to transform its exaggerated promises into meaningful living spaces, while also savouring its cheap romance. And so we move to the manifestation of dreamscape in the prosaics of display-home space.

IV 'the lost paradise of the body'

As already cited, Stewart has written of the over-articulation of the discourse of the feminine in referring to the camp and the kitsch and if we can, with due respect for them, suggest that indeed these two styles are also operative in the display home, then it is hardly surprising that we should find a particular decorative intensity here. But paradoxically, what we might call the 'feminisation of space' in the display home is also accompanied by the desexualisation of the family. The ideal home is a place of impossible innocence, like the framed illustrations of pastel-coloured fairy stories on the walls of children's rooms. 'Family values' must eliminate all those signs of the possibility of its own reproduction in the context of an increasingly obsessive attention to the protection of children from strangers, trusted caregivers, incestuous parents and even other children.⁷⁵ This desexualisation of the family is figured in a number of details: the centrality of the girl's room, the marital bedspread, the gender-neutrality of the nursery and frequently the absence of the boy's room. If the use of sex in advertising can be seen as one of the main features of commodity marketing, sexlessness is one of the features of display in the project home.⁷⁶

the centrality of the girl's room

In the display home, the girl's room features strongly and is signified by an excessiveness of furnishings: frills, flounces, obsessive details and ornamentation, a fussiness thought to be feminine. It may have virginal bedcoverings, white or the softest pastel colours, lace, embroidery, broderie anglaise, appliqué; paintings and prints on the walls will feature softness in subject matter (pets, flowers, idealised images of girl children), suggesting overall innocence and purity. Considerable attention to detail is paid in this bedroom and it may sometimes be a more noticeable feature of the house than the 'master' bedroom itself, though of course, never as large. The girl's room becomes a space for imagining the possibilities of a future femininity which will be supportive rather than challenging, ordered rather than disruptive. The decoration of this space is designed to appeal to the parental (or potentially parental) shopper rather than to the girl child: the young couple imagining a happy family, domestic order and homely peace. It is of course a reality which rarely exists; the daughter will not

necessarily be neater and tidier than the son and she will not necessarily be less disruptive. Her delinquency (if it comes to that) will perhaps be more traumatic, especially for the mother.

The door⁷⁷ to the girl's room is open in the display home, but in the 'real' home it is more likely to be shut firmly in the face of the mother. The girl will reside permanently there, playing loud music, or watching television, playing video games, surfing the Net looking for sex and sticking posters of rock musicians on the walls, lifting the paint in the process. Clothes will be scattered everywhere in the room except in the drawers; remnants of food and drink will be found on all flat surfaces, covered in mould, or ants or cockroaches; ashtrays will be full; cigarette butts will be scattered around, especially if there are non-smoking restrictions in the rest of the house. Of course the display home cannot be expected to suggest these possibilities, and indeed there may be some real homes where they do not occur, but these are very rare situations, as rare as the discovery of lost tribes in remote jungles.

the marital bedspread

In the enchanted landscape of the display home, the marital bedspread deliberately and ostentatiously covers over the activities of the bed, detracting from them in a way which also seeks to suggest order and good taste. It must be thick enough to cover the wrinkles of blankets, sheets and pillows, and large enough to entirely cover the bed, including especially its legs or coasters (like tablecloths in Victorian times, designed to cover the legs of tables because it was considered impolite to reveal them). But the bedspread itself is a strange object with its own history. It is frequently padded or quilted. In the past this has provided a space on which personal narratives might be written, narratives of economy and industry, narratives of loss and longing, narratives of family and home. In recent feminist art-historical research, the importance of the quilt has been reinstated and a revival has seen the production of commemorative quilts as historical narratives and these have become major artworks.⁷⁸

In the display home the bedspread retains only a residual connection with the tradition of quilting. It is more likely to be an industrially produced object, made from synthetic ('man-made') fabrics unknown to

the earlier quilting traditions. It is designed to be impervious to the stresses and strains of family life (such as the children jumping on the bed with their shoes on). One of the modern forms of the quilt was the more generic chenille bedspread, representing a particular industrial technique, and signifying a certain homeliness. But the bedspread today is of a stiffer substance, making it somewhat more unhomey in its feel and texture. Instead, it suggests the kind of synthetic material and pattern one expects to find out of this world, in space stations for example. This type of bedspread does not suggest sensuality but rather practicality, since within the display home it must withstand the onslaught of hordes of potential buyers and their sticky-fingered children.

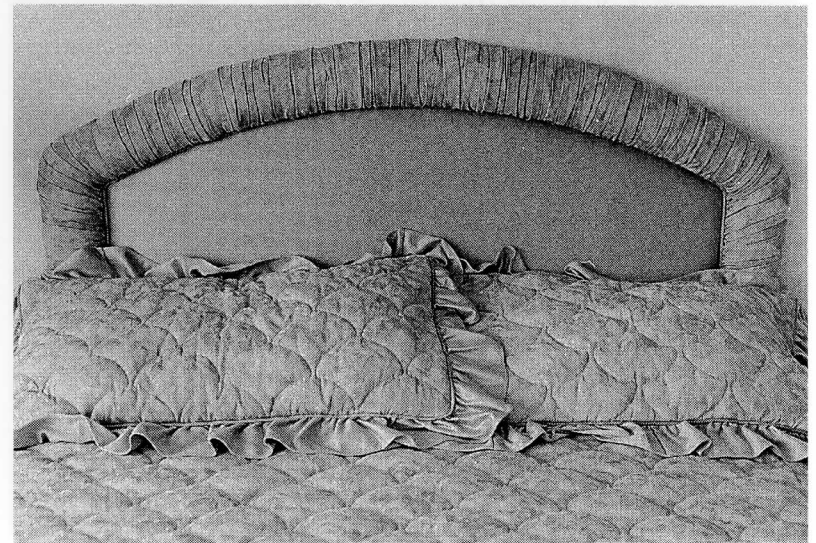
More specialised bedroom displays in furniture salesrooms and manchester shops display more fully the practical and sensual possibilities of bedlinen, in the use of natural materials, particularly cotton and linen, the use of extra pillows, suggesting a life for the bed other than sleeping, an increased use of larger, 'European'-style pillows which suggest luxury and a distinction not to be found in the 'standard' pillow. In display homes, standard pillows are used, but occasionally a number of small 'scatter cushions' may be placed on the bed for ornamental purposes rather than for comfort and this also has the effect of breaking up the overwhelming immensity of the bedspread, especially if the bed is king- or queen-sized.

Because of the particular marketing needs of the display home — the necessity to minimise the threatening suggestion of familial sexual activity — the 'master' bedroom cannot be seen as an intimate space. As already discussed, it is the bedspread itself which succeeds in preventing any sense of intimacy from appearing in this space, by virtue of the loudness of its patterning or the discomfort of its texture when touched. This is again the space of exaggeration as Stewart understands it and as Bachelard writes: 'One might say that immensity is a philosophical category of daydream. Daydream undoubtedly feeds on all kinds of sights, but through a sort of natural inclination, it contemplates grandeur.'⁷⁹

The marital bedspread possesses what we might call, after Bachelard, an 'intimate immensity', bearing in mind the dream of grandeur which

the 'master' bedroom evokes in its scale, its walk-in robe, its en-suite bathroom; this is the territory of television soap rather than suburbia, 'Dynasty' rather than 'Doonside'.

Although I have suggested that the display home is a dreamscape, the sense of reverie which is suggested by this observation is not experienced as intensely in those spaces where sleep and dreaming occur. Rather it is in the spaces of wakefulness and familial activity, the kitchen, the 'living' room, the 'family' room, where daydreaming is more possible. In general the bed itself is less imposing than the bedspread, and the constraints of a certain taste in interior design exclude more imposing beds, such as wondrously baroque expanses of swirling white fibreglass bedheads with built-in mirrors and stereo systems. Expressiveness is limited to the bedspread, and the potential buyer whose taste runs to such beds will not find them here. The display home presents generic choice and the particularity of consumption occurs beyond its confines.



The marital bedspread — desexualising space



The genderless nursery — the 'fanciful cravings' of pregnancy

the nursery

If the 'master' bedroom's reproductive function is masked by the bedspread, the outcome of its activities is represented by displacement onto the nursery, another fantasy space offering considerable scope for decorative excess. The nursery is rarely seen as a gendered space within the display home, so that this most fundamental aspect of the child's life, the first question asked of its identity ('is it a boy or a girl?') remains unanswerable in these rooms. Instead, the display-home nursery is more interested in the crib or bassinet and its coverings, which is the most obvious content of the room especially in the absence of its expected contents. This creates a sense of neurotic intensity, indeed a barrenness within the space, a sense of the anxiety of infertility. Where has the baby gone? Who has taken the baby? Will there ever be a baby? Of course the space can only represent expectant hopes, and marketing departments must be careful in dealing with the complexity of the couple's desires for children. The neutered space leaves room for individual projections of desire, just as the girl's room projects an ideal femininity and the generic master bedroom leaves space for the baroque imaginary bed.

The nursery is a quiet, still space with delicate wallpaper and even greater softness than the girl's room; unlike the other bedrooms, there is a potential for reverie in this space, all the more so because of the absence of the detail of gender. It evokes the rich possibilities of the beginning of life, before the reality of the baby's demanding presence descends into the space, bringing with it endless changing, washing, feeding and, most especially, constantly disrupted sleep.

But the intensity of the space of the nursery can also be related to another dimension of longing and imagination. In Stewart's discussion of longing, she identifies two meanings of the word, one which refers to 'yearning desire' and the other to 'the fanciful cravings incident to women during pregnancy'. It is this second meaning which, she argues:

takes us closer to an imagined location of origin, be it the transcendent with its seeming proximity to the immortal or the rural/agrarian with its seeming proximity to the earth; for it is in pregnancy that we see the articulation of the threshold between nature and culture, the place of margin

between the biological 'reality' of splitting cells and the cultural 'reality' of the beginning of the symbolic.⁸⁰

In the display home, a space which is geographically located between the rural and the urban, projecting a future in which purchasers are able to imagine an escape from reality into an ideal, transcendent private world, the nursery and remembered places of childhood remain sites of 'fanciful cravings', evocative rooms where nostalgia clings to the walls.

the absence of the boy's room

In some display homes, the boy's room may be particularly prominent, signified again by the bedspread, or a bed in the shape of a racing car, a train, a rocket. More commonly, there is no recognisable boy's room within the house. The four bedrooms in display homes will be marked clearly as 'master' bedroom, girl's room, nursery, while the fourth bedroom will be a more neutral space, hard to fix in terms of gender. It may have soft furnishings and wallpaper which is heavier and deeper in tone, but this could equally suggest occupation by another adult, a grandparent or a guest.

This gender ambiguity underlines the problem of masculinity in the space of the display home. It is as if the boy will be required to conduct his activities outside as a means of maintaining order within. It might also suggest that he will be required to leave as soon as possible, vacating his room so that it becomes the longed-for 'spare' room, a breathing space within the stages of family life, allowing for a parental imagining of other possible uses (guests, grandparents, an exchange student, a boarder, a storage space).

The ambiguity of the space suggests a containment which parallels the projections of ideal femininity determining the furnishings of the girl's room. If femininity has to be actively produced within the space of the girl's room, then masculinity must be actively reduced or minimised in the boy's room. A similar scenario of occupation can be imagined for the boy's room as was earlier imagined for the girl's room. However, in this scenario, the volume is turned up. There is an electric guitar or a drum-kit. The room is cluttered and disordered. Or the opposite is also possible. It is quieter: the door will still be closed in the face of the

parent but inside, long hours might be spent in a darkened room, in front of a computer screen playing games. Another world beyond the space of the house itself might be entered, a virtual world of fantastic characters, nothing like the parents, the sister, the neighbours. The boy may indeed eliminate himself from the space, may simply cease to be there, even though he is physically occupying the room.

kitchen and bathroom utopias

As indicated, the spaces of reverie in the display home are more likely to be the waking rather than the sleeping spaces. In part this possibility is produced by the very fact that the house is a display home. Its *not-lived-in-ness* places it in a state of suspended animation which the real home never possesses, so the neatness and order and peace which it convincingly simulates provides an ideal dreamscape. To relax on the new sofa and look at the (always) spacious 'living' room, uncluttered by toys, newspapers scattered everywhere, clothes waiting to be put away; to walk through the kitchen and caress the granite benchtop cleared of dishes, abandoned knives covered in butter and vegemite, half-eaten apples, saucepans soaking, crumbs everywhere — these are the pleasures of daydreaming. In the sphere of revolutionary politics, the truly utopian dream of the collectivisation of housework — the Soviet projection of 'a home free of all domestic concerns' — attempted unsuccessfully to respond to this fantasy that domestic labour might magically disappear simply by turning domestic labourers into industrial workers and eliminating domestic spaces in which individual kitchens were the focus.

It is the kitchen which occupies the central place in the display home, and on floorplans this is easy to see in a spatial sense. Although the kitchen may not be in the middle of the house — it also needs to oversee the backyard — the house's activities are arranged around it. The kitchen is the control room of the house and is one of its most technologically complex and capital-intensive spaces — like the control room in the Starship Enterprise, especially in the case of the 'ultra-modern' style (for those who prefer a more feudal image of power relations, the 'country-style' or 'French provincial' kitchen evokes the domestic order of an *ancien regime*).

It is the place from which activity is directed and discipline and control exercised. In some cases, a bay-window layout provides an overseer's panoramic view of the backyard and the 'family room' simultaneously. This allows for parental surveillance of the other occupants. One might be tempted to invoke the frequently overused idea of panopticism here — the mother's line of vision as a panoptic gaze. But it is perhaps more useful at this point to mention Foucault's emphasis on the productivity of power: children have an infinite capacity to evade supervision and to fall into the pool or to injure themselves just as the mother's back is turned to answer the phone.⁸¹

If the mechanics of sexual reproduction are concealed as I have suggested by the marital bedspread and the arrangement of bedrooms, the kitchen's place in bodily reproduction is more centrally acknowledged by emphasising the mechanics of food production and consumption and the mother's assumed role in this. At the end of this cycle, toilets and bathrooms compete with the kitchen as technological fantasy spaces of the house. Recently, the spa bath has become a new feature of the display home, competing with the now largely defunct waterbed as one of the more excessive details of domestic design — features which exist primarily to signify luxury. Occasionally there will be two spa baths in the one house, one in a bathroom exclusively for the parents and another for more general use. The spa bath appropriates a more social space — the bath house — and privatises it, appropriating it for heterosexual family use. If the master bedroom of a family home must conceal its sensual activities, the fittings of the bathroom and toilets become the site where a formal sensuality is permitted to manifest itself, in the luscious curves of toilet bowls, baths and handbasins, the smoothness of finish in glazed surfaces.

the veneer of the father

There is, however, a contradictory aspect to the over-articulation of the feminine in the display home. We began by referring to the problem of domestic labour in a revolutionary context and the sense in which the activities of the kitchen and the bathroom could be defined as secondary in the face of a need to collectivise and industrialise a society. We saw that in the Australian context, on the other hand, the values of an idealised feminine domesticity were invoked as much by men as

THE MASTERTON HOMES STORY

Masterton Homes began from humble beginnings in 1962 after its founder, Jim Masterton, recognised the unique advantages of prefabrication in home building as he pre-assembled frames and trusses on the front lawn of his modest home.

Like all businesses, Masterton Homes began in a small way, but has grown to be one of the largest contract home builders in NSW. One of the secrets of Jim Masterton's success is that so many of the components of his homes are made by companies within the Masterton Group.

Jim Masterton purchased Superior Frames and Trusses in 1986. This company has since grown to be one of the largest Frame and Truss manufacturing plants in Australia.

In 1986, Jim purchased the Knebel Kitchen company. Knebel Kitchens are exclusive to Masterton, so you can be sure you're getting the kitchen of your dreams.

In 1988, Jim Masterton began manufacturing Aluminium Windows and Doors as well as Vanity tops in a new factory in Moorebank. In 1990, consumer trends turned towards Marble Bench Tops and Vanities which meant moving Fantasy Marble & Glass to even larger premises.

Masterton Homes has constructed just over 17,000 new homes to date and has always been seen as "THE INNOVATOR — NOT THE IMITATOR" and accordingly is seen to be the leading force in the cottage building industry.

Masterton have won more awards than any other builder — 34 awards in 1989-1992 alone. Jim Masterton also won the prestigious "Liverpool Businessman of the Year" award in 1989.

Masterton Homes Exhibition Village at Warwick Farm is forever changing with 18 homes on display 7 days a week. Why not visit us and discover for yourself "the Mastery of Masterton".



The veneer of the father



Reproduced Courtesy of Masterton Homes

women in the establishment of the single dwelling home as a housing norm and the basis of urban development. Alternative possibilities (multi-unit options such as terrace houses, now called 'town-houses', or flats) were not considered until after the Second World War, by which time the ideal had become established as a persistent dream which is realised, more or less, in the display-home village.

One of the most noticeable aspects of the display home is that there is a problem of masculinity in these spaces; it is as if the picket fence is built from the inside, rather than the reverse and men are kept out as much as women are kept in.⁸² If masculinity is figured within the house, it is frequently in terms of a quite marginal front room — a 'study' — spatially separate from the family. It might appear that masculinity does not fit within the home, as if its furnishings prove too heavy and the activities of masculinity too disruptive to maintain order within this realm. These activities are relegated to outside: the garage, the garden shed, the barbecue area.

More particularly, it is masculinity which oversees the concept of the display home itself. At this level, patriarchy functions as a kind of veneer, a sign in search of a referent. The television advertisements for AV Jennings Homes feature an old man — the original Jennings, now dead — declaring 'It makes me a very proud old builder'. In the 1994–95 catalogue for Masterton Homes, a 1950s layout style is employed to suggest the ideal of the Australian dream ('Masterton Homes — Making it easier to achieve the great Australian dream'). But the narrative of the company would be incomplete without a story of origins, a master builder, a story of 'humble beginnings' and hard work. Again, the figure of the patriarch is presented, in this case in a photograph of the builder, looking benevolent, with a young girl who, hyperfeminine in her frilly dress, white shoes, pink ribbon, grasps his arm above the wrist. A granddaughter perhaps. The patriarch must give rise to more than one generation.

The most pointed manifestation of the phenomenon I am describing is condensed in a display feature in one of the Masterton homes at HomeWorld II. A life-sized cardboard cut-out figure of radio talk-show host John Laws is propped in the corner of a living room declaring via a voice balloon, 'Discover the mastery of Masterton'. The irony is that

these are not spaces where men's mastery has a place, hence the necessity to create an appearance of control which is absent in practice.

On the surface, the display home is clad with this veneer of patriarchy: the image of the master builder remains the sign of that which was said to be man's 'instinctive desire' as home ownership became a mass phenomenon. As already argued, in these earlier phases it was the house 'famine' observed by the returned soldier, or the house 'hunger' experienced by the orphan, which gave shape to an ideal space. But within the lived experience of the spaces themselves it is the discourse of the feminine which remains dominant, while the masculine production of domestic meaning and value has not increased.⁸³

The display home is both an ideal place, a dreamscape and a space of anxiety, a contradictory site in which femininity is dominant in an ambivalent sense and masculinity is awkwardly displaced, disturbing the easy assumptions which have been made about gender relations. It is an enchanted space in a complex landscape of the everyday and my reading of it attempts to understand some of the issues at stake when we think about the technical provision of housing, issues which are no longer simply reducible to questions of public versus private. I am also suggesting that the display home is a place in which meaning is made and imagination is at play. A well-known theorist of the everyday reminds us of some of the reasons for taking seriously the value of the meanings produced here:

The everyday is a kind of screen, in both senses of the word: it both shows and hides; it reveals both what has and has not changed ... It is what Hegel called 'the prose of the world', nothing more modest. Before Marx, labor was considered unworthy of study as before psychoanalysis and Freud, sex was considered unworthy of study. I think the same can be said of the everyday. As Hegel said, what is the most familiar is not for all that the best known. The *unrecognized*, that is, the everyday, still has some surprises in store for us. Indeed as I was first rethinking the everyday, the surrealists were already attempting to conjure up ways to bring the extraordinary out of the ordinary.⁸⁴

notes

- 1 William Goyen, 'House of breath', cited in Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1969, p. 58.
- 2 Engels, *The Housing Question*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, p. 25.
- 3 Home '93', Blacktown TAFE Advanced Certificate of Management Students Research Project, 1993, p. 2.
- 4 For an account of the emergence of western Sydney as a distinct area, the result of specific post-war policy and planning decisions, see chapter 2.
- 5 On the ambivalences of nostalgia and 'homesickness', see chapter 4.
- 6 For a more philosophically developed discussion of the significance of this separation of private and public, see chapter 3.
- 7 In Australia of course, the revolution is always a disappointing affair. Robert Freestone refers, for example, to the 'incomplete revolution' which garden suburb thought and experiment achieved in Australia; R. Freestone, 'The Great Lever of Social Reform: The Garden Suburb 1900–30' in M. Kelly (ed.), *Sydney: City of Suburbs*, University of New South Wales Press, Kensington, 1987, p. 73.
- 8 In an ironic return of the repressed, a new kitchen–bathroom renovation shop recently opened in Moscow, called *Svetlyi Put* (Radiant Path), named after a still very popular 1940 Stalinist musical comedy (directed by Grigory Alexandrov, starring Liubov Orlova with music by Dunaevsky) about the values of socialism, collectivism and epic industrial labour. For the best and most richly resonant account of communal living, see S. Boym, *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1994.
- 9 A collective of artists and intellectuals whose descendents still live there. I am grateful to Dr Alla Petrikovskaya, Academy of Sciences, Moscow, for drawing my attention to the settlement and encouraging me to visit it.
- 10 Selim Khan-Magomedov, *Pioneers of Soviet Architecture: The Search for New Solutions in the 1920s and 1930s*, Rizzoli, New York, 1987, p. 345.
- 11 'For a new socialist resettlement of mankind', *Sovremennaya Arkhitektura*, nos 1–2, 1930, reproduced in Anatole Kopp, *Town and Revolution: Soviet Architecture and City Planning 1917–1935*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1970, p. 248.
- 12 N.V. Dokuchaev, 'The rationalist group of modern Soviet architects' in W. Rosenberg (ed.), *Bolshevik Visions: First Phase of the Cultural Revolution in Soviet Russia*, part 2, *Creating Soviet Cultural Forms: Art, Architecture, Music, Film, and the New Tasks of Education*, University of Michigan Press,

- Ann Arbor, 1990, p. 175.
- 13 Vladimir Paperny, *Kultura 'Dva'* (Moscow, 1996) (1st edn, Ardis Publishers, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1985). An excerpt entitled 'Movement — Immobility' appears in translation in A. Efimova & L. Manovich (eds), *Tekstura: Russian Essays on Visual Culture*, University of Chicago Press, 1993.
- 14 M. Ginsburg, 'The prerequisites of the new style' in Rosenberg, p. 169.
- 15 A. Tarkhanov & S. Kavtaradze, *Stalinist Architecture*, Laurence King, London, 1992, p. 80.
- 16 Tasks relating to the transformation of the way of life: 'Decree of the Party Central Committee', *Pravda*, 29 May, 1930, reproduced in Kopp p. 259.
- 17 Cited in S. Buder, *Visionaries and Planners: The Garden City Movement and the Modern Community*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990, p. 140.
- 18 Ginsburg, in Rosenberg, p. 169.
- 19 T. Rowse, 'Heaven and a Hills Hoist: Australian critics on suburbia', *Meanjin*, vol 37, 1978, p. 12. See also A. Gilbert 'The roots of anti-suburbanism in Australia' in S. Goldberg & F. Smith, *Australian Cultural History*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1988.
- 20 Carolyn Allport, 'Castles of security: The New South Wales Housing Commission and Home Ownership 1941–61' in M Kelly (ed.) *Sydney: City of Suburbs*, University of New South Wales Press, 1987, pp. 96–7.
- 21 Robert Owen, 'An address to the Inhabitants of New Lanark' in A. Fried & R. Sanders (eds), *Socialist Thought: A Documentary History*, Doubleday Anchor, 1964, p. 154.
- 22 Cited in E. Gaudie, *Cruel Habitations: A History of Working-Class Housing 1780–1918*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1974, p. 92. In the twentieth century, the quantification of breathing space reached new heights in the Soviet communal apartment, in which it was established that a minimum living space of 10 square metres per person and 13 square metres per family were required. S. Boym *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1994, p. 124.
- 23 In one ingenious scheme proposed to reduce infant mortality it was suggested that infants and children from the slums and 'crowded quarters' should be loaded onto barges during the hot season and towed out to sea to be exposed to the fresh ocean breezes. P.E. Muskett, *An Australian Appeal: The Evil, the Cause, the Remedy*, Sydney, c. 1892. From an advertisement contained in P.E. Muskett, *The Art of Living in Australia*, Eyre & Spottiswoode, Sydney, 1893, facsimile ed., Kangaroo Press, 1987).
- 24 Ebenezer Howard, *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*. Rev. and

- republished as *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (London, 1902). Howard had trouble finding a publisher for the first edition and was finally assisted, as it happens, by George Eastman, the managing director of Kodak. Dulgad MacFadyen, *Sir Ebenezer Howard and the Town Planning Movement*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1970, p. 22.
- 25 The most comprehensive account of these developments is Robert Freestone's *Model Communities: The Garden City Movement in Australia* Nelson, Melbourne, 1989.
 - 26 'There will only be about four years supply of land left in the older release areas of the western corridor after 2000', Lendlease Presentation on ADI Site Plan, University of Western Sydney, Nepean, 14 October, 1996.
 - 27 Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward: 2000-1887*, Ticknor & Co, Boston, 1887.
 - 28 In a promotional tour of Australia by Charles Reade, from the British Garden Cities and Town Planning Association in 1914, a 'one family, one house' message was being presented (Freestone, in Kelly, p. 57).
 - 29 R. Freestone, *Model Communities: The Garden City Movement in Australia*, Nelson, Melbourne, 1989, p. 160.
 - 30 'Austral City: An Australian Motor Enterprise', *Building*, 12 January, 1931, p. 60.
 - 31 *ibid.*, p. 64.
 - 32 Anne Susskind, 'Visiting architect warns about the garages that could eat Sydney', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 September, 1995, p. 9. See also chapter 2 on 'feral suburbia'. For more detail on New Urbanism, including a selection of New Urbanist projects in the USA, see Peter Katz, *The New Urbanism: Toward an Architecture of Community*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1994, (afterword by Vincent Scully). For Australian responses to the concept see Natalie O'Brien, 'Failure in the suburbs and an end to rubber-stamped houses' and Chris Johnson, 'Ten commandments: a better way to live' *Weekend Australian*, 26 October, 1996, Property section, pp. 6-7.
 - 33 The Lendlease promotional package on the St Marys development identifies the problems of suburban sprawl, pollution, transport congestion and unemployment, which it will 'assist the NSW State Government' to reduce by building a new community on the Australian Defence Industries site.
 - 34 M. Edwards, Response from the National Housing Strategy, in *Consolidating for People: The impact of urban consolidation on the planning and provision of human services: Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) Proceedings of Seminar*, 16 November, 1990, p. 32. See also C. Edmondson, *Urban Consolidation and Social*

- Justice: Final Report, workshop proceedings and resource manual*, WSROC, March 1992.
- 35 There were much higher rates of growth in multi-unit housing than in detached dwellings in western Sydney. See A. Gooding, *Background to the Study and its Findings in Consolidating for People: Proceedings of Seminar*, p. 22.
 - 36 D. Jones-Evans, 'Vision of a modern city: bigger, denser, networked', *Sydney Morning Herald* 26 April, 1995.
 - 37 J.S. Purdy, *Metropolitan Health Officers Report*, Department of Public Health Annual Report, NSWPP, Sydney, 1920. Also cited in P. Spearritt, *Sydney Since the Twenties*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1978, p. 14.
 - 38 N. Wheatley, 'Meeting them at the door: radicalism, militancy, and the Sydney anti-eviction campaign of 1931' in J. Roe (ed.), *Twentieth Century Sydney: Studies in Urban and Social History*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney History Group, 1980.
 - 39 The most impressive recent presentation of this is Clara Law's film, *A Floating Life*, 1996, which has been called 'the best Chinese diaspora film ever' (J. Hoberman, *Village Voice*, 18 September 1996). In particular, Dion Beebe's evocative cinematography produces a sense of the colour of the western suburbs — and of the domestic interior — which conveys the experience of the display home better than any other description.
 - 40 Terry Kass, 'Cheaper than rent: aspects of the growth of owner-occupation in Sydney 1911-66' in M. Kelly (ed.), *Sydney: City of Suburbs*, University of New South Wales Press, Kensington, 1987.
 - 41 'Life sized dream', *Australian House & Garden* February, 1949.
 - 42 'World War II & the American Dream: How Wartime Building Changed a Nation' exhibition, National Building Museum Washington, 11 November 1994-31 December 1995. Exhibition design by Michael Sorkin Studio and Design Writing Research. Information taken from electronic version of pamphlet distributed on the exhibit. On Levittown see B. M. Kelly, *Expanding the American Dream: Building and Rebuilding Levittown*, State University of New York Press, New York, 1993.
 - 43 C. Allport, 'The unrealised promise: plans for Sydney housing in the forties', in J. Roe (ed.), *Twentieth Century Sydney: Studies in Urban and Social History*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney History Group, 1980.
 - 44 W. Bunning, *Homes in the Sun: The Past, Present and Future of Australian Housing*, W.J. Nesbit, Sydney, 1945. (Foreword by Dr H.C. Coombs).
 - 45 'A century of modern architecture, part 1', *Australian Home Beautiful*, August 1946, pp. 21-3.

- 46 'Life sized dream', *Australian House & Garden* February 1949, pp. 62ff. The story, like much of the material, is syndicated from an American edition of the magazine.
- 47 In 1952–53 half of the new houses in New South Wales were being built by owner-builders. C. Allport, 'Castles of security: The New South Wales Housing Commission and home ownership 1941–61, in M. Kelly (ed.), *Sydney: City of Suburbs*, University of New South Wales Press, Kensington, 1987, p. 111.
- 48 Robin Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness*, Penguin Books, Ringwood, 1960.
- 49 Robin Boyd, 'Planning for better living', *Australian House & Garden*, July 1949, pp. 22–3.
- 50 'Considering the plan', *Australian Home Beautiful*, 1945.
- 51 For a recent exchange of views similar to the late 1940s and early 1950s territorial–professional disputes, see P. Ward, *Weekend Australian*, Property section, 5 October 1996, and letters in response (*Weekend Australian*, Property section, 26 October, 1996, p. 9.) It is claimed by one correspondent that 80% of home plans submitted to local councils are put together by building designers rather than architects.
- 52 Interview with Allam & Meriden Classic Homes, sales & marketing manager, 21 November 1995; interview with Pioneer Homes sales & marketing manager.
- 53 'Receiver for Jennings: \$258m debts', *Sydney Morning Herald*, November, 1995. The land and home building operations were sold to Long Homes.
- 54 Cited in 'Home '93' p. 4. For more detail see D. Garden, *Builders to the Nation: The AV Jennings Story*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1992.
- 55 In the late 1940s, the concept of the 'packet mortgage' — a scheme for including the cost of a refrigerator, vacuum cleaner, washing machine, floor polisher and sewing machine in the overall mortgage — was promoted. See 'The anti-drudgery plan', *Australian House and Garden* January, 1949, p. 15. The article is addressed to the husband rather than the wife, since it involves economic decisions which were then thought to belong to the realm of the husband. A spatial argument is used to justify the extra loan amount — the provision of a washing machine reduces the amount of space needed for a laundry, thus reducing the overall cost of the house. Laundries remain small spaces in display homes.
- 56 'Home '93', p. 4.
- 57 The main display-home villages in Sydney are located at Prospect (HomeWorld II, with approximately 94 homes,) Cecil Hills (The Masters,

- Elizabeth Park, 94 homes), Narellan (Mt Annan II, 35 homes), Parklea (Parklea Homemarket, 30 homes), Casula (Housing World Casula, 60 homes), Camden (Harrington Park, 26 homes) and Holsworthy (Wattle Grove, 11 homes). New HomeWorld (which will eventually have 124 homes) is at Kellyville.
- 58 S. Molitorisz, 'Buyers feel right at home in display villages', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 December, 1994, p. 7.
- 59 A. M. Moodie, 'Dream homes to become virtual reality', *Weekend Australian*, 8–9 April, 1995, p. 13. D. Vrana 'Virtually home', *Los Angeles Times*, 23 September, 1996, p. D1.
- 60 S. Molitorisz, *Sydney Morning Herald*, p. 7. The builders who display homes at the site are responsible for 70% of all new home starts in NSW, worth three-quarters of a billion dollars annually. The price range of houses is low, beginning at around \$50 000, so the 'good enough, cheap enough' dictum still applies.
- 61 Margaret Crawford, 'The world in a shopping mall' in Michael Sorkin (ed.), *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space*, Hill & Wang, New York, 1992.
- 62 Mike Davis' *City of Quartz*, (Verso, London, 1990) is one of the best known accounts of this decentredness of urban form.
- 63 See in particular E. McKenzie, *Privatopia: Homeowner Associations and the Rise of Residential Private Government*, Yale University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1994.
- 64 Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1969, p. xxxiii.
- 65 Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, Duke University Press, 1993, p. 171.
- 66 Here I have in mind the excellent mapping of suburban space which it is necessary to use, rather like a street directory, in driving around this territory (even though the spaces which are my concern are, on the whole, off the edges of the maps supplied here); M. Kelly (ed.), *Nineteenth Century Sydney: Essays in Urban History*, Sydney University Press/Sydney History Group, 1978; P. Spearritt, *Sydney Since the Twenties*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1978; J. Roe, (ed.), *Twentieth Century Sydney: Studies in Urban and Social History*, Hale & Iremonger/Sydney History Group, 1980; G. Wotherspoon (ed.), *Sydney's Transport: Studies in Urban History*, Hale & Iremonger/Sydney History Group, 1983; M. Kelly (ed.), *Sydney: City of Suburbs*, University of New South Wales Press, Kensington, 1987.

- 67 B. Hillier & J. Hanson, *The Social Logic of Space*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984.
- 68 S. Kent (ed.), *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space: An Interdisciplinary Cross-Cultural Study*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993; J. Fox (ed.), *Inside Austronesian Houses: Perspectives on Domestic Designs for Living*, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 1993.
- 69 In particular K. Dovey, 'Model houses and housing ideology in Australia', *Housing Studies*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 177–188. See also B. Colomina, 'The split wall: domestic voyeurism' in B. Colomina (ed.), *Sexuality & Space*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 1992. Colomina's discussion of the organisation of the interior in the houses of Loos and Le Corbusier is finely nuanced. Although my concern is with the space of more anonymous houses, those which are not 'authored' by high modernist architects, Colomina's approach is useful because she is also dealing in a sense with empty spaces (even if they are lived in).
- 70 Bouchard, op. cit., p. xxxii.
- 71 *ibid.*, p. xxxi.
- 72 *ibid.*, p. xxxiii.
- 73 *ibid.*, p. 68.
- 74 Stewart, p. xiii.
- 75 J. Cashmore, 'When child's play goes wrong', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 December, 1996, p. 11.
- 76 'The exclusion of sexuality is itself sexual' (Mark Wigley, 'Untitled: The Housing of Gender', in B. Colomina (ed.), *Sexuality & Space*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 1992). In the 1993 Australian Perspecta exhibition, a group of artists installed works in one of the display homes at HomeWorld II. The works were uncanny presences within the house, and one artist in particular chose to comment ironically on the pretence of asexuality within the girl's bedroom (see work by Eugenia Raskopoulos in 'Sweet Dreams', curated by Suhanya Raffel & Isobel Johnston, 'Australian Perspecta', 1993, satellite exhibition, The Balmoral (Clarendon Homes), HomeWorld II, 16 October–21 November 1993).
- 77 'But how many daydreams we should have to analyse under the simple heading of Doors! for the door is an entire cosmos of the Half-open', Bachelard, p. 222.
- 78 For example, the commemorative quilt hung in Parliament House Canberra, designed by Kay Lawrence and executed by embroiderers' guilds in each state. For a general account of domestic craft, see Jennifer Isaacs, *The*

- Gentle Arts: 200 Years of Australian Women's domestic & Decorative Arts*, Landsdowne Press, Sydney, 1987. For a more critical account of the place of craft, and especially embroidery, see Roszika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the making of the feminine*, The Women's Press, London, 1984. On quilts, see C. L. Safford & R. Bishop, *America's Quilts and Coverlets*, Dutton, New York, 1972.
- 79 Bachelard, p. 183.
- 80 Stewart, p. x.
- 81 M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Penguin Books, London, 1977.
- 82 On the philosophical problem of inside and outside, Bachelard is again useful. He calls the oppositional relation between the two terms 'this geometrical cancerization of the linguistic tissue of contemporary philosophy' (p. 213). The final chapter of *The Poetics of Space* is indeed 'The dialectics of outside and inside': 'Outside and inside form a dialectic of division, the obvious geometry of which blinds us as soon as we bring it into play in metaphorical domains. It has the sharpness of the dialectics of *yes* and *no*, which decides everything. Unless one is careful it is made into the basis of images that govern all thoughts of positive and negative ... Philosophers, when confronted with outside and inside, think in terms of being and non-being' (p. 211–12). If outside, the space of being, is thought to be masculine, then inside, the space of non-being is feminine. As we have seen however, this dividing line collapses from the inside; in the interior space of the display home it is the masculine which is the space of non-being.
- 83 D. Ironmonger, (ed.), *Household Work: Productive Activities, Women and Incomes in the Household Economy*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1989.
- 84 H. Lefebvre, 'Toward a leftist cultural politics: remarks occasioned by the centenary of Marx's death' in C. Nelson & L. Grossberg, *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, University of Illinois Press, 1988, p. 78.

Acknowledgement

Photographs by author unless otherwise indicated.



In an increasingly alienating and fractured urban landscape, desire for belonging to place and community shapes our experience of city living. But for many, feeling at home in the city is an elusive quest.

Home/World is a series of reflections on the yearning for home and communality in the modern world. The writers explore these concepts through an analysis grounded in the specific and historical realities of urban living in the region known as 'Western Sydney'. The picket fence, the display home village, the town planner's map and the local restaurant are some of the sites through which the authors contemplate questions of spatiality, subjectivity, ethnicity and communality.

While the collection engages with familiar Australian debates about suburbia and the 'great Australian dream', national identity and multiculturalism, it does so through broader theoretical concerns about the relationship between western understandings of the city, reason, freedom, home and modernity. It traces the changing historical meanings and representations of the 'western' city – bringing into focus the way in which taken-for-granted notions of 'city as centre' or 'urban sprawl' structure our perceptions of urban spaces. In this way, the book provides a new and exciting cultural, social and historical reading of Australian and international urban imaginaries.

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