I DON'T FEEL AT HOME IN THIS WORLD ANYMORE: ON THE DETRIMENTAL NATURE OF LIVING 'S-PLACES' IN LATE CAPITALIST URBAN SOCIETY

Master's Thesis in Philosophy

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Continental Philosophy

15.05.2023

Abstract

Our homes serve as the central hubs for our everyday lives and experiences. As such, we expect them to foster the regeneration of the self; provide for our safety and security; and serve as a reflection of our individual identities. However, technological advancements and the re-merging of home- and work environments, have resulted in a constant intrusion of our homes by the outside world, preventing us from finding solace within our four walls. Secondly, the distinction between the inside and the outside world has moved from a reciprocal sparing and preserving to a one-sided focus on self-preservation, in which our suspicion of the outside world leads us to use aggressive security measures that further alienate us from our surroundings. Lastly, our desire to personalise our homes so that they express our identities is thwarted by commodities that are only marginally different, which makes the pursuit of personal distinctiveness become an illusion that is perpetuated by a society in which alienation is total. In short, the home has become the source of every self-estrangement and alienation. Therefore, as this thesis shall argue, the late capitalist urban home is detrimental to the self as an individual and creative agent.

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Introduction

When Heidegger asked in 1954 'what […] the state of dwelling in our precarious age is,' he had a rather bleak outlook on what he considered to be the most fundamental aspect of human being.[1] Next to the shortage of physical housing, Heidegger saw a *plight in dwelling*, caused by mortals in an ever-recurring search for the nature of dwelling, meaning that they constantly have to relearn how to dwell. Due to this, the dual crisis of homelessness cannot be resolved by simply erecting more houses and apartment blocks, for building needs to happen out of dwelling. Fast forward to 2023, and Heidegger's gloomy prospect still rings true at the very cores of Western societies. While the home has become a necessity for our socio-economic functioning in society, there is now a physical housing shortage that is now accompanied by horrendous rent and purchase prices for condominiums built as status objects and assets rather than for dwelling. Nonetheless, or precisely because of that, we are still obsessed with the idea of at least once in our lifetime owning a home, a four-walled refuge in which we can be and thrive as we want to. Homes serve not only as a shelter from the elements, but also as places of retreat from the outside world, spaces for socialising, and sites of personal expression and growth. In short, homes play a crucial role in our everyday lives and experiences. Therefore, we generally expect the homes of late capitalist society to actualise three main expectations: allowing the regeneration of the self; providing our safety and security; and serving as a reflection of our individual identities. However, when examining those characteristics through the lens of contemporary philosophical writing, it becomes evident that these promises remain largely unfulfilled. Even more so, their perceived actualisation presents us with a false sense of reification as a person, as long as the material conditions that allow for this deception are ignored. Based on Marx, we can therefore assert that the home, in reality, is a space of self-estrangement, of the alienation from oneself and one's feelings, where we are met with a loss of purpose as well as self-objectification and depreciation. Crucially, the denial of this form of self-estrangement only further confirms its existence. **Consequently, as this thesis shall argue, the ideal of the late capitalist urban home is detrimental to the self as an individual and creative agent.**

In this thesis, the home is approached as a physically and socially constructed entity, meaning that it is seen as a clearly demarcated material structure in whose confinement a great deal of our everyday life experiences plays out. The walls of the home thus serve as the dividing line between the inside and outside, the public and the private, and ideally speaking the home- and work environment. Especially nowadays, however, the clear distinction between designated realms for work and private is rather fuzzy, as, at the very latest since the CoVid-19 pandemic, the home has become one's

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[1] Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, transl. Albert Hofstadter (New York, NY 1971) 159.

workplace for many again too. Needless to say, this shift has profound implications on our expectations of the home that shall be explored in the course of writing as well. Returning to the home's defining features, this thesis focuses on different aspects of the home as a residence that are distinctive of a Western late capitalist urban ideal. As such, it leaves aside ideals of home that are common in other parts of this vast world. Even though Henri Lefebvre remarks that we can and should not actually make a distinction between the urban spaces of socialist countries and those of other countries, it seems counterproductive to include homes outside of the Western sphere as they lie outside of the main areas of analysis for most of the thinkers discussed. While, for example, Lefebvre writes extensively about Paris and other French towns and cities, Theodor Adorno and Jean Baudrillard use the United States as their point of reference. Furthermore, staying in tradition with Lefebvre and Edward Soja, this thesis distinguishes between urban and rural living situations, focusing on the former for a variety of reasons. For Lefebvre, urbanisation or 'the *production of the city* was the end, the objective and the meaning of *industrial production*,' as people naturally moved closer to the centres of capitalist production.[2] As a consequence, the effects of capitalism are most visible in the city, where urban life and space are downgraded into a commodity. It could be said that urbanism in itself is its own political ideology, one that drives its inhabitants into everyday alienation. Lefebvre then calls for a *right to the city*, meaning that the urban should be reclaimed by the citizens, positing them as the main protagonists in the stride for liveable space. Nonetheless, in his oeuvre, he cautions against an overemphasis on the urban as seen in the Situationist tradition while simultaneously regarding the neglect of the urban in the writings of Herbert Marcuse as problematic. It is indeed important not to be indifferent toward the rural, so it is best to see them as mutually constructive. Lastly, I am concerned with the conception of the home in a late capitalist environment. Combining Jameson's conception of late capitalism, and Adorno's advanced capitalism, I define late capitalism as a form of capitalism in which the commoditisation of human life has become a primary issue. Furthermore, late capitalism is characterised by an internalisation of business accompanied by technological advances, with *late* denoting changes that are generally 'less perceptible and dramatic, somehow, but more permanent precisely because more thoroughgoing and all-pervasive,' thus permeating even the darkest corners of our homes.[3]

Thinkers and Their Connections – A Justification
As subtly hinted above, this thesis is centred mainly around the works of Martin Heidegger, Henri Lefebvre, Theodor Adorno and Jean Baudrillard. While this may seem to be a rather random and at

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[2] Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, transl. Sacha Rabinovitch (New York, NY 1968) 195.
[3] Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC 1991) xxi.

first glance even incompatible selection of thinkers, I argue that their ideas are perfectly congruent with regard to the subject matter. Starting with Heidegger, who is both the most influential yet also controversial of the bunch, I aim to come to an understanding of why the home is important philosophically speaking. Both Heidegger and Gaston Bachelard paint quite an idealised image of dwelling and the house respectively, and while the former has a rather bleak outlook on building and dwelling in the modern world, the latter champions the home as the most fundamental realm of human existence. When then Heidegger laments the aforementioned 'plight of dwelling,' he echoes Le Corbusier's assertions that housing is the 'problem for the epoch,' a sentiment that is also shared by Adorno.[4] And indeed, Matt Waggoner argues, both Heidegger and Adorno seem to have based their observations on the impossibility of dwelling on Le Corbusier's writing, which can then be regarded as the sole point of agreement on this topic between the two thinkers.[5] Their opposing views on the same subject stem from their political and social affiliations during the Second World War: while Heidegger was a member of the NSDAP, Adorno was a Jew forced into exile. This makes Adorno's thought even more valuable to offset Heidegger's ideal conceptions of building and dwelling with the harsh reality of being forcibly uprooted and in a sense being made homeless. Adorno is, however, not the only one critical of Heidegger's political past. While Lefebvre praises Heidegger's work on spatiality, which likewise criticises the prevalent Cartesian definition of space, he calls parts of his work straight-out fascist. Nonetheless, Lefebvre work on the production of space can be read as an attempt to reconcile Heidegger's thought with the Marxist conceptions of production and alienation. Lastly, while critical of the concept of alienation in his later writings, the early Baudrillard openly embraces Marxist thought, following in the footsteps of his doctoral advisor at Nanterre: Henri Lefebvre. While this fact provides us with an outright obvious connection point, there is hardly any work dedicated to exploring the similarities and differences between the two thinkers.

Central Concepts and Structure

Having introduced the main philosophical thinkers cited in this thesis, I want to quickly introduce the central concepts around which this work is structured. First and foremost, the arguments presented in the thesis are for a great deal derived from Heidegger's conceptions of dwelling and building. Dwelling, in its threefold meaning, is building, being on earth, and cultivating and constructing.[6] This should give us an idea of the preconditions to an 'ideal living situation,' one in which we live in an ethical symbiosis with the outer world. Furthermore, Heidegger's work already alludes to a difference

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[4] Charles-Édouard 'Le Corbusier' Jeanneret, *Towards a New Architecture*, transl. Frederick Etchells (New York, NY 1986) 4.
[5] Matt Waggoner, 'How Not to Be at Home in One's Home: Adorno's Critique of Architectural Reason,' *Architecture Philosophy* 4:1 (2019) 27-45, there: 28.
[6] Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 146.

in place and space, a distinction that was furthered by DeCerteau and, to a certain extent, Lefebvre. Here, the former roughly translates to the physical structures around us, while the latter encompasses a threefold of meanings, which are all connected to our experience and movement in space, in short: the production of space. When describing the house, I will use the term 's-place,' a portmanteau denoting both its physical structure and location in the world, as well as its social structuring, and its human element. This human engagement in space plays a dominant role in Lefebvre's analysis of everyday life (*la vie quotidienne*) which he regards to be the primary locus of alienation in today's world. Rather than relying on Marx's economic nature of alienation in which the worker is alienated from their product, the act of production and consequently their species-essence and other workers, Lefebvre aims to project the nature of alienation onto the everyday, thus that which he explicitly situates outside of work. He justifies this move by arguing that the days of industrial production are left behind, and as such we need to understand the mechanisms of alienation at a much more fundamental level, namely in connection to the everyday production of space. Alienation in some form or other also features in the writings of Adorno and Baudrillard, the former arguing from the perspective of a *damaged life*, the latter in relation to consumerism.

Based on these considerations, this thesis is structured according to the outline presented here. To support the main argument that the ideal of the late capitalist urban home is detrimental to the self, this thesis is divided into two main parts comprised of three chapters each. The first part deals with the basic definitions of home and its accompanying characteristics, while the second part is used to argue against the triad of promises shortly mentioned in the introduction. More precisely, the first chapter deals with the need for a home in general while also tackling the distinction between the inside and the outside, the private and public. Based on Heidegger this chapter explores the nature of building and dwelling as well as their significance for being in the world. As such, the home is situated both inside and outside of the world, which is exemplified by seeing the home as a distinct physical structure that allows us to draw a clear demarcation line between the inner and the outer. Subsequently, this chapter will introduce Sigmund Freud's notion of the uncanny. In its German original, there is a clear connection to the home, speaking of the homey (*Heimlich*) and the un-homey, the frightening and eerie (*Unheimlich*).

Building on the findings of the first chapter, the second chapter will situate the home as both a place and a space in the world. Based on the writings of Henri Lefebvre and Michel DeCerteau, it is argued that the home is both a clearly distinguishable physical structure and the lived experience within. This difference is important as it allows us to gain insight into the tensions between structure and agency, control and resistance. While we can change objectively little about the place by ourselves, the space

as an appropriated place can be shaped by both the individual and collective practices of our everyday life. Evidently distinguishable, the home as a 's-place', which I use as an abbreviation for 'space and place', thus becomes the centre of our experiential world.

Ultimately, the third chapter is dedicated to the definition of home and its three expected characteristics. Building on the theories of space and place, of public and private, it will shortly cover a historical timeline of the development of the concept of home and show the connection between the everyday and general alienation. Subsequently, I will situate the three main characteristics in the philosophical discourse of the last two centuries. Within this, these characteristics are to be read as something inherently positive, features that cannot be missed when defining the home. Roughly, these features are privacy, safety and security; the regeneration of the sense of self; and the reflection of individual identity. However, as this chapter rightfully asks at the end, what happens when the late capitalist urban home fails to deliver on these promises of the ideal home?

As pointed out, the second part of this thesis is dedicated to answering the question posed at the end of the first part, arguing against the triad of promises in three distinct chapters. Here, the fourth chapter will deal with the idea that the home provides a space where we can regain a sense of self upon returning to it from the outside world. This means that the home must have certain qualities that allow for this regeneration to happen. However, Adorno argues, the modern home is so infested with spectres from the outside world that there is no real removal or regeneration possible anymore. For the self to flourish we need to remove ourselves completely, for instance by taking some days of vacation at a hotel. Nonetheless, this solution is ridden with problems itself and cannot, in the long run, solve the problem of alienation from the world and oneself. Bluntly said, our only recourse is to accept that we can and should not feel at home in our home.

Subsequently, the fifth chapter explores the notion of the home as a shelter from that which is outside of it, providing privacy, safety and security. While Bachelard indeed sees the home as a shelter for dreamers, imbued with maternal qualities, the reality is more often than not far removed from this romanticised outlook. The late capitalist urban home presents us with a false sense of security and privacy, especially when looking at the ever more blurred lines between the private and the public. This effective intrusion into the private sphere is further enhanced by the use of technological appliances such as the radio, TV, computer or mobile phone, as is also argued by Shoshana Zuboff. To better elucidate the paradox of the sense of security, I will extend her notion of surveillance capitalism to one of security capitalism. While the first can be linked to alienation in the economic sense, the latter also encompasses the social alienation of everyday life.

Lastly, the sixth chapter tackles the promise of the home as a mirror of one's individual identity. The idea is that how we arrange and decorate our homes as well as how we interact with this created environment, reflects the innermost characteristics of our self. However, the choices we make concerning interior design are informed by market availability, nostalgia and future expectations. As such, they are merely a simulation of individuality rather than clear reflections of our pure self. In this way, the furniture and decoration are actualisations of what Frederic Jameson calls pastiche. Furthermore, the move away from bulky yet characteristic furniture to purely functional furniture means that symbolic value and use value are replaced by organisational value, as per Baudrillard. While this absence of style means that furniture becomes free as a functional object, we are only liberated as the user of the object, and we still lose out on our individuality. Crucially, the consumer culture of late capitalist society adds to an all-encompassing alienation, anticipating the later Baudrillard's conception of simulacra and simulation.

1.1. No S-Place Like Home: The Need for Dwelling

This chapter deals with the question of why thinking about homes is philosophically important in the first place. Having a home for oneself and one's nearest and dearest has been the ideal ever since human beings started to settle down and yet its importance to us has been discussed only rather sparsely in philosophical tradition. First and foremost, the home, to a great extent, has become the precondition for our socio-economic being in the world. To participate in and reap the benefits of society, one has to have a home, a physical structure to which an address is ascribed. As a consequence, the home is not only something we want but something we actually need. Secondly, that which we call home can be regarded as our primary locus of being in which a great deal of our lives, primarily and ideally our leisure time, is spent. As such, we can also regard it as the backdrop on which we structure and make sense of our experience and movement in the world. Additionally, due to it being a clearly demarcated structure that puts us into yet also in opposition to the greater world, we feel that it is the one realm where we have the most power over with regards to 'making it our own', ergo, being the masters of our own homes. The question is, however, how much power do we effectively have, if any? Either way, the home comprises an entity that is worth examining through the lens of contemporary philosophy, as this chapter shall show.

1.1.1. Bob the Builder, Can We Dwell Here?

> 'Full of merit, yet poetically, man
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> Dwells on this earth.'[7]

First, let us turn to the importance of dwelling in Heidegger's writing. Borrowing the term from a late poem by Hölderlin, Heidegger likewise asserts that 'poetically man dwells.' This assertion provides us with a curious connection to Bachelard's *Poetics of Space*. Poetics, for Bachelard too, not only refers to poetry but rather to what is denoted in its Greek root: *poiesis* means 'to make', thus one could say the *Making of Space*. Turning back to Heidegger's appropriation of Hölderlin, the phrase 'poetically man dwells' tells us that poetry is the very root of dwelling, it is that which *makes man dwell*, as can be seen more clearly when looking at the greater context of the poem.[8] In his extensive analysis, Heidegger connects dwelling with the merits derived from true building. Building generally is the means for dwelling, yet does not bear any guarantee for it, as not every building is dwelling. Etymologically speaking, building (*bauen*) and dwelling can be taken to signify the same, namely, to stay *in place*.[9] Stemming from the Old English *buan*, which is also *to be*, building means cultivating,

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[7] Friedrich Hölderlin, in: Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 216.
[8] Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 216-218.
[9] Ibidem.

being and dwelling on this very earth.[10] Yet building also encompasses constructing and erecting buildings. If, however, we build solely for the sake of erecting physical structures, then building does not bring any merit to dwelling, and the real meaning of building is lost. This rings true in Lefebvre's work too, for his understanding of *habiter* is a direct translation of Heidegger's *wohnen*, his dwelling. Lefebvre argues that modern society has reduced *habiter* to *habitat*, dwelling to building for the sake of building.[11]

For the buildings that constitute our homes, we do so in *Raum*, a place cleared and freed for settlement, its actual site a *location*. Those locations provide for spaces which gather the fourfold: heaven, sky, mortals, and divinities. This means that the relation between man and space is none other than dwelling. It is our staying among things, even when we reflect and introspect, turning to our *intériorité*. The threefold nature of dwelling is thus as follows: building is dwelling; dwelling is being on earth; and building as dwelling is cultivating and constructing to preserve the fourfold in things.[12] What is important, is that the dwelling happens 'on this earth.'[13] While generally the poetical has its locus in the realm of fantasy, it nonetheless is 'what first brings man onto the earth, making him belong to it, and thus brings him into dwelling,' it *makes* man dwell.[14] However, when we do not understand the poetical, the root of dwelling, then we have unlearnt what it means to dwell. Heidegger likens the 'unpoetic' dwelling to losing one's eyesight: 'For a man to be blind, he must remain a being by nature endowed with sight. A piece of wood can never go blind. But when man goes blind, there always remains the question whether his blindness derives from some defect and loss or lies in an abundance and excess.'[15] In a world in which building for the sake of building is abundant, we are blind to the true nature of building and dwelling. Only if we regain our sight and become once again '*capable of dwelling, only then can we build*.'[16]

1.1.2. The Ins and Outs

Having established an ideal conception of dwelling, we can now turn to the distinction between the inside and the outside. The home's borders, or boundaries, are generally set by its physical structure, its spatial extension in place. Concerning human space, Otto Friedrich Bollnow writes that 'by means of its walls man carves out of universal space a special and to some extent private space and thus separates an inner from an outer space.'[17] As such, the home's boundaries serve as a demarcation line

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[10] Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 216-218.
[11] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, transl. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, UK 1991) 121-122.
[12] Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 146.
[13] Ibidem, 218.
[14] Ibidem.
[15] Ibidem.
[16] Ibidem, 157.
[17] Otto Friedrich Bollnow, 'Lived-Space,' *Philosophy Today* (1961) 31-39, there: 33.

between the inside and outside, the private and public, and ideally even between the home- and work environment.

The demarcation of interior and exterior in relation to the home lends itself to the characterisation of the inside and outside realms. While the outside is seen as a zone of openness, danger and abandonment, the inside is designated as protected and hidden, as providing relief from anxious alertness. However, the boundaries between the inner and outer are not completely fixed, and trespassing happens along multiple axes. To allow for this crossing of the demarcation lines, the physical home exhibits features such as doors and windows, that allow us to enter and exit into the other at our will. This means that we are never fully able to remove ourselves from one or the other, as these features are to a certain extent permeable, even when closed.[18] Furthermore, this permeability or porosity adds to the fact that the interior and exterior are not simple opposites but are mutually enhancing each other. Bachelard gives the example of a winter's evening, where the snow outside makes the inside of the home feel cosier, while at the same time, the intimate sphere of the home makes the outside world feel wilder and potentially hostile.[19] That this conception is subjectively true can be seen in the fact that more and more people regress into almost complete withdrawal from the outside world, regarding it as something utterly dangerous from which they ought to shield themselves by utilising ever greater security measures. Additionally, the demarcation between the inside and outside is further exemplified in the distinction between home- and work environment. We shall return to this distinction in greater detail in the next chapter when I will present Lefebvre's connection to Marx. For now, according to Bollnow, it is as important to have a solid rooting in the inside world when we want to venture into the outside world. Drawing from Heidegger, he argues that dwelling somewhere, being rooted within the walls of a house is fundamental to human existence, as it means to realise one's true existence in the world.[20] We actually 'need a firm dwelling place if [we do not want to] be dragged along helplessly by the stream of time.'[21] Bollnow's emphasis is on dwelling as an action, a 'determination of man in which he realises his true essence' even, that allows us to live in its active form rather than be lived.[22] Our home becomes a point of reference in both place and time, the steppingstone for all experiences in the world, the backdrop on which all else appears to be meaningful. It is from here on that we expand our horizon of experience into the outside world. And even though that outside world may be alien and frightening, we do good to go there

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[18] Bollnow, 'Lived-Space,' 34.
[19] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, transl. Maria Jolas (New York, NY 2014) 38-41.
[20] Bollnow, 'Lived-Space,' 33.
[21] Ibidem.
[22] Ibidem.

every now and then to extend the scope of our lived space that is 'above and below, fore and aft, right and left, by the direction scheme founded in the human body.'[23]

1.1.3. The Heimlich-Unheimlich Heim

When talking about the inside and outside it is also helpful to introduce Freud's notion of the Uncanny in relation to the home. In its German original, there is a clear connection to the home by virtue of its etymology. In fact, the Uncanny, the *Unheimlich* readily contains in it its opposite **Heimlich**, the homely. Freud's definition of the *Heimlich* once more links it directly to the house: the homely feeling is characterised by 'arousing a sense of agreeable restfulness and security as in one within the four walls of his house.'[24] The word uncanny is thus rooted in its connection to the private sphere of the home, the realm in which the feeling of homeliness is experienced in its most banal form. When then the Heimlich and Unheimlich intersect, they evoke a feeling of unease (Figure 2).
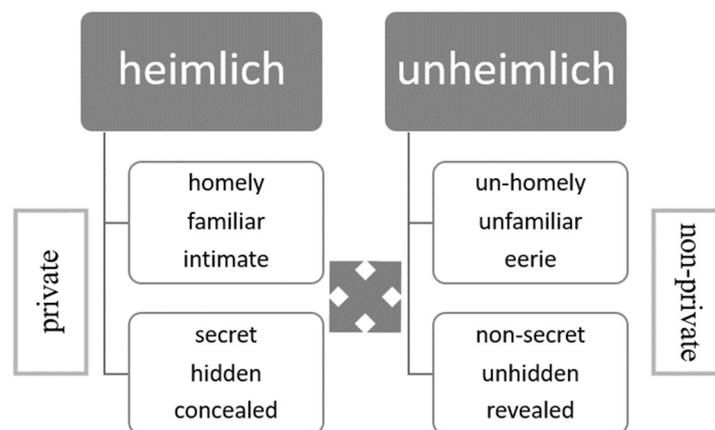

Figure 1: The Uncanny: Interplay of Heimlich and Unheimlich, Private and Non-private

At that moment, both literally and figuratively, the subject is no longer the master in their own house but is taken aghast by that which is uncanny. This uncanny has its roots in the return of the repressed and the resuscitation of an overcome belief in reality, it is 'that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar,' leading to the feeling of the uncanny.[25] While Freud focuses on the figurative house of the unconscious, Johannes Binotto takes on this psychoanalytical concept of the uncanny and turns it into a specific spatial phenomenon.[26] Just as Freud's psychical uncanny reveals a terrifying 'other scene' of the unconscious, Binotto's uncanny is to be found in the spatial itself, which he reads as a literal 'projection of the extension of the psychical apparatus,'[27] With regards to the home, it is familiar to those who inhabit it, while for the stranger, the outsider it

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[23] Bollnow, 'Lived-Space,' 32.
[24] Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, transl. David McLintock (New York, NY 2003) 247.
[25] Freud, *The Uncanny*, 340.
[26] Johannes Binotto, *Tat/Ort: Das Unheimliche und sein Raum in der Kultur* (Zürich, CH 2013) 15.
[27] Binotto, *Tat/Ort*, 7.

represents an unfamiliar environment. As such, the uncanny embodies a dialectic of privacy and intimacy, in which even the Heimlich can become concealed from the self. This becomes particularly obvious when looking at the writing of Adorno, in particular, his criticism of Søren Kierkegaard's *intérieur*, Henriette Steiner argues.[28] According to Steiner, Kierkegaard's privileged position allowed him to conflate the home's interior with one's innermost self, placing the homeworld in direct relationship with the self and thus making the private, the inside the primary locus of meaning.[29] For Adorno, however, this want of absolute control over both the concrete and existential home is in stark opposition to his own living situation as a Jew in exile, concluding that man would do morally good not to feel at home in his home. The inwardness Kierkegaard champions, is for Adorno mere *Raumlosigkeit* (*spacelessness*) and should arouse a feeling of unease in the inhabitant.[30] Isolating oneself in a home in which change does not happen, means that one is strangulated rather than being able to find the 'agreeable restfulness and security' Freud attaches to the idea of the Heimlich. As Steiner beautifully writes, 'the substantial cultural significance that has been attached to the domestic sphere of the home and the house since the beginning of the nineteenth century makes it fold in upon itself and revert into the unhomely, a home deprived of space.'[31] We will return to this uncanniness in relation to alienation at a later point in this thesis.

Talking about the home in a philosophical sense allows us to approach it not only as a physically demarcated and demarcating structure but also gives us insight into the space arising within the confinement of its place, a feature that shall be explored in detail in the next chapter. It explicitly links dwelling, as a relationship between humans and space, with a built place at which we can stay and be. In this home, we turn both outwards to the greater world and inwards to ourselves. This conflation of home and self can, however, conjure a feeling of unease as is characteristic of Freud's concept of the uncanny.

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[28] Henriette Steiner, 'On the Unhomely Home: Porous and Permeable Interiors from Kierkegaard to Adorno,' *Interiors* 1:1 (2010) 133-148, there: 137.
[29] Steiner, 'On the Unhomely Home,' 137.
[30] Ibidem, 140.
[31] Ibidem.

1.2.   The Centre of One's Universe: Home as 'S-Place'

In the chapters prior, the words space and place have been used deliberately sparsely, for they both demand further explanation. Building on Heidegger's notion of dwelling, this chapter examines the difference between place and space, ultimately defining the home in terms of both, through the portmanteau 's-place'. Bachelard makes the importance of distinction very clear when he writes that 'a house is first and foremost a geometrical object, one which we are tempted to analyse rationally. Its prime reality is visible and tangible, made of well-hewn solids and well-fitted frameworks. […] But transposition to human plane takes place immediately whenever a house is considered as space for cheer and intimacy, space that is supposed to condense and defend intimacy.'[32] While the home is a demarcated physical entity, it is through the *making* of its space that we feel at home. This distinction falls within the concept of spatiality, which is an essential characteristic of being part of the physically presenting world. Soja goes on to describe spatiality as the dynamic nature of space. For him, in short, 'the organisation and meaning of space is a product of social translations, transformations and experience.'[33] However, spatiality also encompasses place, as both DeCerteau and, less explicitly, Lefebvre show in their analyses of urban and everyday life. This is crucial as it allows us to talk about the world in distinct terms of its physical structure as well as the lived experience within. When then, according to Bollnow, the house, or better said the home, is the 'spatial centre of the life of the individual,' it is such as the physical structure that is inhabited and as the lived experience by its inhabitants.[34] While the former is characteristic of the home as a place, the latter is so of home as space. Generally speaking, the distinction between space and place presented here, is born from a critique of understanding space using the Cartesian *res extensa*. In this conception, space as *res extensa* represents the entire material world in terms of objects that have the property of occupying space. As such, space is described through logic and definiteness and belongs purely to the realm of the natural sciences. Lefebvre, however, laments that this is inherently problematic as the original meaning of space is obscured in this abstraction.[35] It is on this plane that he and Heidegger meet, as the latter too objects to the Cartesian way of being in the world. For Heidegger, simply put, dwelling has no significance in Cartesian space.[36]

1.2.1. Monuments of Man: Home as Place

As pointed out, place is of minor importance to Lefebvre, who focuses on the primacy of space in his writings. However, as I regard the distinction between place and space to be crucial to understand the

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[32] Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 48.
[33] Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London, UK 1989) 43.
[34] Bollnow, 'Lived-Space,' 33.
[35] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 3.
[36] Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 153-154.

nature of the home, it makes sense to introduce de Certeau's conception of place. While for Lefebvre place can be almost conflated into the mechanisms of space, de Certeau sees places as an a priori to our experiences and movements. As such, it can be likened to a container that shapes our interactions within it. Lefebvre's place, on the other hand, would be the momentary suspension of interaction in space Even though both thinkers have different conceptions about the nature of place, for both of them it would generally refer to specific buildings but also to roads or borders at moments when they are not imbued with action.

De Certeau specifies place as being 'an instantaneous configuration of positions,' and as 'the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationship of coexistence' in the different locations they occupy.[37] This definition also implies an indication of stability, which means that a place stays the same over long periods of time. Thus, while the Colosseum has been around for almost 2000 years, it is to a great extent still a central place in Rome around which roads and houses have been built in later times. Interestingly, the fact that the Colosseum was built to begin with and even more so is still around today points to another characteristic of place. Place is not just a random configuration of physical structures but is also reflecting the social and political structures and ideologies of society at given moments in time.[38] Looking at the Colosseum, it was built as a symbol of grandeur and is now seen as a symbol of the greatness of former civilisations. Both its initial building and the later configuration of place around it point to predominant power structures that are ingrained in urban design and planning. What can and cannot happen in place is thus subjected to rules and regulations. As such, place is also associated with control, discipline, and surveillance.[39] Furthermore, due to its long-lasting stability, place constrains both our movements and behaviour within the place. As such, it enables performance, determining to a certain extent the quality and meaningfulness of activities within place. Returning once more to Heidegger, place provides the conditions for being, as it gathers and manifests the locations through which we participate in existence. It denotes both the physical structuring as well as the social rules and intentions. A place cleared for settlement or lodging, a *Raum*, then is at the beginning of presencing within the world.[40]

Bearing in mind the conflict in definition between Lefebvre and de Certeau, we can argue that when it comes to the home as a place, it denotes the physical structure to which a concrete address is ascribed, that which we would commonly refer to as a house. For us, Bollnow argues, the house is

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[37] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, transl. Steven Rendall (Berkeley, CA 1988) 117.
[38] De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 117.
[39] Ibidem.
[40] Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 152.

the spatial centre of our lives, meaning that it is at the centre of all of our movements in place.[41] It is from the home that we extend our spatial thinking about place: How to get to the supermarket? What is the fastest way to my favourite pub? Is the tower two or three blocks away? It becomes the centre of our own universe whose physical exploration is mainly constrained by obstacles and restrictions to movement imposed on it. This is shown beautifully in the map made by Beaubois-Jude, who depicts his shrunken place-world during the CoVid-19 lockdown in France (Figure 1). The map shows a one-kilometre radius from his physical home, encompassing the configurations in place around him.
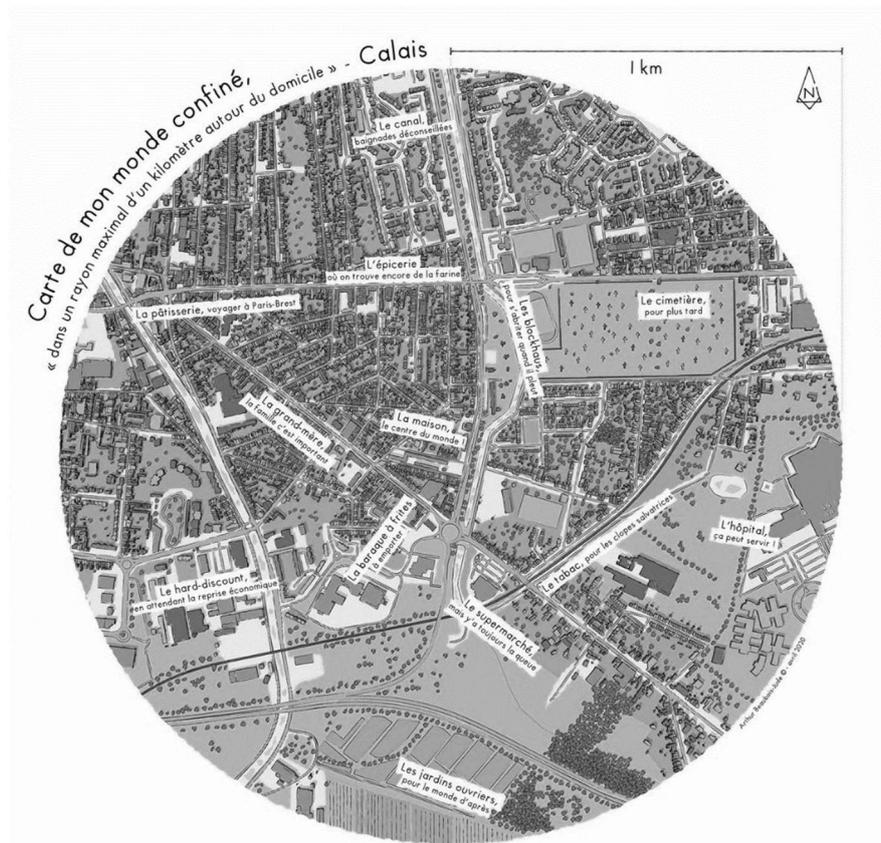

Figure 2: Arthur Beaubois-Jude - Carte de mon monde confiné (2020)

1.2.2. Spacing In and Out: Home as Space

Space, on the other hand, refers to the lived subjective and experiential dimension of place. While place is characterised by stability, space is thus 'composed of intersections of mobile elements.'[42] This means that a place can become space only through the people and beings interacting within it. The Colosseum without people is merely a place, while during a gladiator fight or, more appropriately for modern times, a guided tour it becomes a space. That space is experienced precisely due to the appropriation of the place in ways we deem fit for it. While the place remains stable, space is imbued

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[41] Bollnow, 'Lived-Space,' 33.
[42] De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 117.

with meaning in dynamic and fluid ways, depending on the configuration of mobile elements at a given time. As such, the space is constantly transforming in an active way to meet the needs and desires of both us and society. This transformation can happen also, for example, when we take a different route to our favourite pub or when we use a park bench as a makeshift workspace. Here, Lefebvre adds that we have the right to participate in the production and transformation of urban space, as the urban space is to be openly available for everyone. He writes that 'space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather, it subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity – their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder.'[43] To elaborate further, he distinguishes between three types of space, the so-called spatial triad, which also intersects with Soja's theory of the trialectics of being. For easier comprehension, the concepts presented below are summarised in this table (Table 1).

Lefebvre				Soja	
spatial practice	perceived	physical	absolute	**Firstspace**	materialism
representations of space	conceived	mental	abstract	**Secondspace**	idealism
representational space	lived	social	differential	**Thirdspace**	materialism & idealism

Figure 3: Space in Lefebvre and Soja

Firstly, Lefebvre argues, there is spatial practice, or the space as *perceived* through the senses [*espace perçu*]. Spatial practice 'embodies a close association […] between daily reality and urban reality,' which Lefebvre describes as paradoxical as it 'includes the most extreme separation between the places it links together.'[44] This perceived space is analogous to Soja's concept of *Firstspace* which refers to the perception of the material world on a surface level.[45] Secondly, representations of space, or *conceived* space [*espace conçu*] refers to the space as created through imagination and the planning efforts of individuals, institutions and ideologies.[46] It is the dominant space 'or mode of production' in society.[47] Conceived space directly translates to *Secondspace* in Soja, denoting an interpretation of the reality of *Firstspace* by planners or institutions.[48] Lastly, Lefebvre presents representational space or *lived* space [*espace vécu*]., which is the space created through everyday practices of people within this space, who make symbolic use of the objects in place.[49] For Lefebvre, 'representational space is alive: it speaks. It has an affective kernel or centre: Ego, bed, bedroom, dwelling, house […] It

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[43] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 73.
[44] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 38.
[45] Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Oxford, UK 1996) 10; 66.
[46] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 38-39.
[47] Ibidem.
[48] Soja, *Thirdspace*, 10; 21.
[49] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 39.

embraces the loci of passion, of action and of lived situations, and thus immediately implies time.'[50] In this it is closely connected to Lefebvre's conception of everyday life, *la vie quotidienne*, to which we shall turn in greater detail in the next chapter. Returning to Soja's writing, representational space is one component of *Thirdspace*, where space is both a perceived and conceptual phenomenon, thus both rooted in place and imbued with meaning. As such it is a dialectical combination of perceived and conceived space, of Firstspace and Secondspace. It is a 'fully lived space, a simultaneously real-and-imagined, actual-and-virtual locus of structured individuality and collective experience and agency,' the experience of life in the *Firstspace* mediated through *Secondspace* expectations.[51] Soja's *Thirdspace* also takes inspiration from Heidegger, when he argues that our excursion into this *lived* space begins with the assumption that *Being-in-the-world* is historical, spatial and social.[52] Spaces are indeed important for Heidegger, as they 'open up by the fact that they are let into the dwelling of man.'[53] For him, 'to say that mortals *are* is to say that *in dwelling* they persist through spaces by staying among things and locations.'[54] (ibidem.). In short, space is that which is necessary for humans to dwell, to *be-as-human* and to be at peace in the fourfold – earth, sky, divinities and mortals. It is 'is rather "in" the world in so far as space has been disclosed by the *Being-in-the-world* which is constitutive for *Dasein.*'[55]

Returning to Lefebvre's conception of space, we can assert that each of the modes is present in society at any given point; however, one of them tends to be the predominant producer of social space. According to Lefebvre, we can distinguish between three evolutionary dimensions of space, of which the first two have already been actualised. In the early days of human civilisation, spatial practice was the dominant factor, producing what Lefebvre calls an 'absolute space' of nature.[56] With the Industrial Revolution, however, the conceived space of urban planners took over to produce 'abstract space.'[57] This abstract space is characterised by commodified exchange values and the tendency towards homogenisation.[58] As such, it is the space of late capitalist urban society. Nonetheless, the end of the 20th century also sees the emergence of pockets of 'differential space' in which lived space is the dominant producer. Regardless, abstract space retains the upper hand, casting the prospect for inclusive differential space into the realm of a utopian post-capitalist world.[59]

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[50] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 42.
[51] Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*, 73.
[52] Ibidem.
[53] Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 154-155.
[54] Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 154-155.
[55] Ibidem, 146.
[56] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 218; 236.
[57] Ibidem, 218.
[58] Ibidem, 49-53.
[59] Ibidem, 218-219.

When it comes to the home as space, we see that it refers to the appropriation of the physical structure, of the place, by its inhabitants. The home as space constantly transforms, depending on who is actually at home and who does what when they are home. Transformation in space is grand, as we see in Bachelard who writes that 'a house that was final, one that stood in symmetrical relation to the house we were born in, would lead to thoughts – serious, sad thoughts – and not to dreams. It is better to live in a state of impermanence than in one of finality.'[60] A completely static living environment thus risks losing its poetic character, as we would literally not engage in *poiesis*, in the making of space. It is in such an environment that we would also unlearn to grasp the true meaning of building as proposed by Heidegger and would enter a crisis of dwelling. Returning to Lefebvre's spatial triad, the home is *perceived* space with regards to its physical structure and interior as well as to our sensual experience of other people in this space. It is *conceived* space when we talk about the specifics of interior design as well as imaginative thinking about the future. But most importantly, it is *lived* space, both real and imagined, through the individuals' everyday practices. In short, '(social) space is a (social) product,' whether we are talking about the urban as a whole or the confinements of our homes.[61]

1.2.3. Home as S-Place

Generally speaking, place represents the structural and institutional dimension of spatiality, reflecting social hierarchies and prevalent power relations in society. Space, on the other hand, represents the subjective and experiential dimension of the spatial environment, reflecting the agency and creativity of the individual and the community. These differences between space and place point towards an inherent tension between structure and agency, control and resistance. As pointed out, place is restricting yet at the same time a necessary condition for our performance within it. Space allows us to create within but also around these restrictions and thus permits for production and transformation. For the home, this means that its 's-place' in the world is contested, by both the inside and outside world. Furthermore, the emphasis on the home as a s-place also points to a certain attachment we experience both towards the physical elements as well as the emotional content housed within the material structures. Additionally, as the next chapter will show, it allows us to connect the idea of home to that of everyday alienation.

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[60] Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 61.
[61] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 27.

1.3. Home Is Where the Heart Is: Characteristics of Urban Living

Having established the importance of the home in general as well as how the home shapes our view of the world by means of going out into the world from our first dwelling place, let us now turn to the characteristics we expect our homes to have. As hinted in the introduction, we generally expect the homes of late capitalist society to actualise three main expectations: allowing the regeneration of the self; providing our safety and security; and serving as a reflection of our individual identities. Before we get to that though, I will provide a quick overview about the changing nature of the home throughout distinct periods of human existence.

The home constitutes a fundamental aspect of human history, being structurally and functionally distinct from other buildings such as temples or stables. From naturally occurring caves to simple huts, to advanced composite structures, the home has retained its primary function of being a shelter from the elements and from outside harm up until the day today. Nonetheless, there are important differences that can be observed. For one, in ancient Greece, the *oikos* not only served as a shelter but also as productive units in which the household was seen as part of a greater whole.[62] This feature largely remained in place during medieval times, yet the home also increasingly became a profitable commodity which could be exploited and was elevated to an ever-greater symbol of status. The era of the Industrial Revolution sees an escalation of status symbolism as private property ownership becomes the sought-after reality. Living s-places of that time moved from being centres of production to being centres of consumption as work environments and home environments became further and further separated. As a result, the home has lent itself to living in greater anonymity than ever before. Additionally, while the ensuing mass production of items such as furniture or appliances made basic living quasi-affordable for everyone it also added to the alienation of people from their products, acts of production and aspects of their human nature.[63] This estrangement, Marx argues, stems from the prevailing economic conditions in which a capitalist bourgeoisie owns the means of production and controls the means of coercion, creating an ever-widening rift between them and the working class they exploit. This cleft between the exploiting employer and the exploited employees is even more prevalent in today's society, although some might argue it is so in a *purer* form of capitalism, that does not necessarily follow the laws of classical capitalism anymore. While Jameson acknowledges a change in capitalist structures, he cautions against obscuring its roots in industrial production.[64] As such, we should abstain from perceiving this *late* capitalist society as a strictly post-industrial society,

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[62] *Oikos* refers to the basic unit of society in Greek city-states. It refers to a triad of concepts: the family, the property and the house.

[63] Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, transl. Martin Milligan (Mineola, NY 2007).

[64] Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 3.

to affirm the continuing relevance of Marxist theories in today's world. For Jameson, this new stage of capitalism first emerges in the 1950s after wartime shortages were replenished and the emergence of new technologies and products can be observed. Here, society becomes increasingly characterised by the internalisation of business, automated processes, greater globalisation and heightened consumerism driven by the urge for individualisation and also by planned obsolescence.[65] In short, the socio-economic changes of late capitalism are generally 'less perceptible and dramatic, somehow, but more permanent precisely because more thoroughgoing and all-pervasive.'[66] This is especially visible in the entrenched instructionist codification that also permeates the home. In other words, s-places are organised along the principles of McDonaldisation and Disneyfication, meaning that they are transformed into carefully controlled, specialised and homogenised environments that allow for greater predictability and calculability of human interaction in s-place. With this ever-growing separation and codification of s-places comes a much more pronounced compartmentalisation of time, whose primary use function is inextricably linked to the different spheres of our being in the world. Lefebvre broadly distinguishes between required time (or working time), constrained time (or travelling time) and free time (or leisure time). Broadly speaking, the latter is where our everyday life (*la vie quotidienne*) plays out.[67] When reading Marx's *Estranged Labour,* we become unduly hopeful for the nature of free time when he writes that the 'worker only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself. He feels at home when he is not working, and when he is working, he does not feel at home.'[68] Taken by itself, this implies that free time, or the time when the worker is or feels at home, is unalienated time, is real time for the 'full development of the individual.'[69] But Marx readily crushes this hope, regarding free time as a time for the 'production of fixed capital, this fixed capital being man himself.'[70] Lefebvre jumps onto the case and proceeds to substitute everyday life for the workplace as the primary locus of exploitation, domination, and thus alienation.[71] Nonetheless, production and productivity remain the main driving factors behind alienation, if not through industrial work, then through the production of space. Returning to the above-mentioned codification of s-places, we can assert that the home, too, becomes a s-place in which human behaviour is increasingly predictable, as both the outside and the inside are more and more assimilated to fit certain norms which put constraints on how people can shape and experience this abstract space. As such, I argue, we find ourselves subscribing to three basic expectations of an idealised home. For

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[65] Jameson, *Postmodernism*, xviii-xxi.
[66] Ibidem, xxi.
[67] Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, transl. Sacha Rabinovitch (New York, NY 1971) 53.
[68] Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, 30.
[69] Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, transl. Martin Nicolaus (London, UK 1973) 631.
[70] Marx, *Grundrisse*, 631.
[71] Lefebvre, *Everyday Life*, 197.

the greater part the norm – as opposed to living in a commune or a hostel-like situation – we want to have a s-place where we can get back to ourselves, where we have a feeling of privacy and security, and which we can personalise to fit our individual selves. These three expectations or promises of the ideal home to the self will be presented and placed within the relevant philosophical tradition supporting these claims below.

Firstly, after a long day outside many of us are happy to be returning home, to recharge our social batteries and to come into closer introspection with the self. The return indicates that the home is generally seen as an essential anchor point from which we navigate the fairways of the world, both physically and mentally. This physical and mental navigation between the inside and the outside is exemplified and the writings of Bollnow. Here, Bollnow argues for the importance of a 'firm dwelling place,' a homeworld if one will, which serves as the ideal base for our lived space.[72] The second promise is that of privacy, safety and security. Being at home in a private s-place means withdrawing from the outside world and sheltering the self from what is there. It also means protecting and safeguarding the *Heimlich*, thus the homely, familiar and most intimate. Bachelard sees the sheltering characteristic of the home as something inherently positive. For him, the home exhibits maternal characteristics that shelter both the self and our dreams. In the writings of Heidegger, too, we can find a reference to the sheltering characteristics of dwelling, namely '*this sparing and preserving.*'[73] In short, this refers to both the sparing of ourselves from harm but also the sparing of the things in their nature, and thus of the world. Lastly, we want our living s-places to feel like they are truly ours, by personalising them and using them as a creative outlet for our inner self. This personalisation is a dynamic process that reflects both our relationship with things and with other beings. Here, 'man the interior designer' feels himself an 'active engineer of atmosphere,' not only decorating the home with furniture and objects but imbuing it with its own soul.[74] Bachelard, too, sees a clear connection between the looks of the home and a human's innermost self. For him, like the nests and shells found in nature, the home is built 'built by and for the body, taking form from the inside.'[75]

It is at this point that the question arises whether the modern late-capitalist home can even fulfil those expectations we have in it and, if not, what the consequences are for the self as an individual and creative agent. To answer this question will be the main endeavour of the second part of this thesis. There, I will return to each of these three promises in greater detail and will thoroughly examine them

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[72] Bollnow, 'Lived-Space,' 33.
[73] Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 147.
[74] Baudrillard later argues against this conception. Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, transl. James Benedict (London, UK 1996) 26.
[75] Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 101.

against the backdrop of late capitalist societal norms and conventions. I shall conclude that the home of this day and age cannot actualise the expectations we have in it due to the ingrained mechanism of alienation found in the plane of the everyday, and that it, to make matters worse, is even more detrimental to our conception of the self.

2.1.   #LifeBox: Where a Sense of Self is not Regained

The separation of work and home environments has for a long time allowed us to simply return home after a tiring day to recharge and come into a closer introspection with the self. This separation of the two realms is also clearly visible in the configuration of the city, in which living s-places are distanced from work, leisure and greater consumption environments. Even though those areas are preferably within reach of the home, they ideally do not overlap with it. However, this ideal has been more and more challenged since the arrival of the internet, which not only allows for consumption from within the comfort of one's home but also once again conflates the work and home environments into that of the latter, as has been seen during and in the aftermath of the CoViD-19 pandemic. It is this constant presence of the outside in the home that threatens its position as a haven for and constitutive of the self.

2.1.1. 'Honey, I'm Home (With Myself in the World)!'

As indicated earlier, the home is seen as a physical and mental anchoring point in place and space respectively. It inherits its perceived stability from the former while leaving room for personal configuration and transformation in the latter. Either way, the home serves as the backdrop from which we extend our movements in place and from which we form our meaning-imbued connection in space. This is true dwelling which, according to Heidegger, requires both a staying *in place* and a symbiosis of the human and the space that is opened up in place. Bollnow echoes this, adding that essentially 'to *dwell* is not an activity like any other but a determination of man in which he realises his true essence.'[76] In his dwelling, man is at home with himself. It is where we furnish our sense of belonging and subsequently our sense of self. Such is the ideal of the modern home, Steiner writes, as it places the 'homely world in a balanced relationship with an inner world of the subject, a subject that has been radically separated from the world outside.'[77] When we then go out into the world, we expect to return, be it physically or mentally, not only to the material structures and confinements of the home but also to our innermost selves. Our doorstep is then somewhat akin to a passage to self, a liminal space if one will, through which we can alternate between the visible and the concealed, the *Unheimlich* and the *Heimlich*. Even the physical and phenomenal aspect of the home, its façade, expresses that there is an *intériorité* as opposed to the separate, infinite *extériorité*. But is it truly possible to regain a sense of self, to recollect, in the late-capitalist urban home? While the CoVid-19 pandemic has seen an even starker increase in working from home, thus once again conflating the two realms into the intimacy of the home, we still yearn for the possibility of recollection that is

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[76] Bollnow, 'Lived-Space,' 34.
[77] Steiner, 'On the Unhomely Home,' 137.

promised to us by the ideal home. Yet this sheer constant presence of the outside in our homes seems to take away all possibility to even find a corner in which we can come to ourselves. Although uttered in a different context, Jameson's observation that late capitalism turns Heidegger's 'house of being' into 'condominium, if not the most miserable, unheated, rat-infested tenement buildings' rings true here in a metaphorical sense.[78] When referring to Heidegger, one cannot but dissect the words and trace their meaning back to their etymological roots. What is interesting here then is the word *condominium* which in its original sense of 'co-ownership' referred to territories over which multiple sovereign powers shared sovereignty. One is not the sole master in one's home but has to share sovereignty with multiple other 'tenants.' These tenants take share mostly in the form of modern technologies that maintain constant connection lines to the outside world. While this is literally the case with landline phones or devices connected to network cables, it is also figuratively so for satellite TV or mobile phones. Instead of being physically seen, we are a mere green dot, two blue check marks, typing …. One goes online not needing to. One posts without any reason except for one's selfish preoccupation with oneself and for the sole purpose of being seen or liked by someone else. Instead of furnishing our sense of self in accordance with the home, we derive our sense of self from that which is outside. And as our homes are thoroughly infested by that which belongs to the *extériorité*, we cannot come to ourselves, cannot recollect ourselves at all anymore, and are alienated from ourselves. When we are not able to realise our essence, to be at home with ourselves, we do not dwell. Such is Heidegger's real *plight in dwelling*. Modern homes are, as Adorno observes too, not equipped for dwelling anymore. In the aphorism *Shelter for the Homeless,* he writes about the impossibility of dwelling in the days after the Second World War. For Adorno, dwelling is made impossible by nativism, the destructions of war (which Heidegger cynically refers to as 'housing shortage') and housing's assimilation into private property.[79] Furthermore, Adorno bluntly states that dwelling is impossible as the residences of old days are simply intolerable as 'each trait of comfort in them is paid for with a betrayal of knowledge, each vestige of shelter with the musty pact of family interests,' and modern functional homes are designed from a *tabula rasa*, in absence of any predetermined goals.[80] The latter are built not out of dwelling but just for the sake of raising physical structures that can be inhabited. Those structures do not exhibit the features of a home but rather those of mass production because they have been built by people who are experts in erecting sites of production and consumption. As such, they are bleak and sterile, 'devoid of all relations to the occupant.'[81] They are mere 'living cases,' reminiscent of the s-place I happened to inhabit during my

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[78] Jameson 1991 35
[79] Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life*, transl. E.F.N. Jephcott (London, UK 2005) 38.
[80] Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 38.
[81] Ibidem.

stay in Warsaw. It had a large poster at the foot-end of the bed, which was screwed into place, reminding me upon waking and sleeping that it was indeed only a #LifeBox that did its bare minimum of, well, boxing life.

2.1.2. Welcome to the Hotel California

Is there a way out of this misery? Can we be at home somewhere in the world? The home would obviously have lent itself to be this somewhere due to its fixity and stability which would allow for a 'firm dwelling place,' from where outwards we extend our lived space (Bollnow 1961, 33). If withdrawal was still possible, so would recollection and coming to oneself be. But we have already caught up on this impossibility by going on vacations or by attending retreats outside of the home to recharge and gain a newly found sense of self. However, upon returning home, we find that this recollection of the self is only temporary in nature, as we soon trap ourselves again in the ever-spinning hamster wheel we so desperately sought to escape from. In a dizzy haze, we await the next possible occasion for self-discovery. Any time of year, you can find it here. It seems as though we have internalised Adorno's illusory solution rather than accepting the truth that 'dwelling in the proper sense is no longer possible.'[82] We make an 'attempt to evade responsibility for one's residence by moving into a hotel or furnished room [which] makes the enforced conditions of emigration a wisely chosen norm,' setting up camp in liminality between home and homelessness.[83] While we seemingly escape from our responsibilities for our residence in the sense of both the physical entity as well as one's act of living in the home, we do not truly break free from the shackles of property relations that are the root source of alienation. Property relations are the source of human alienation, and thus we turn to alternatives like the hotel room, which reversely has us longing for a home, as we are constantly reminded that nothing in the hotel is ours and that we are, once again, sharing this s-place with the ghosts of former 'tenants' that may make themselves known in the odd stain or stray hair we find on the bed or in the shower. You can check out anytime, but you can never leave. While we escape the unbearable and intolerable confinement of our residences by temporarily repotting to a hotel room, we are also blissfully unaware that the forced uprooting of others is exemplary of why we should not feel at home in the world in the first place. The destruction of homes and domestic traditions makes it such that it is 'part of morality not to be at home in one's home.'[84] While Adorno was writing in the wake of the Holocaust, recent events in Ukraine, Sudan and other parts of the world often lead to the same conclusion. We are bound to inevitably be strangers in our own homes, to be alienated from ourselves once again.

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[82] Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 38.
[83] Ibidem, 38-39.
[84] Ibidem, 39.

2.2.   Big Other is Watching You

Being at home in a private s-place means that we want to be able to shelter that privacy and ourselves from the harms of the outside world. Whether that be from the elements, wild animals or nosy neighbours – we want to feel safe and protected within our own four walls. In their idealised form, these sheltering qualities of the home are seen as being something inherently positive, especially when they also constitute an aspect of sparing and preserving that works in symbiosis with the outside world, meaning that we not only shelter ourselves but simultaneously protect the things in nature in their own being. This sheltering aspect of the home then presupposes physical walls that form a clear demarcation between the inside and the outside, between the private and the public space. While this guarantees a physical separation of the homeworld and the greater outdoors, we are generally never fully removed nor safe from that which is outside. We once again deal with intrusion from the outside, yet this time it is not about seeing and being seen but about hiding and being uncovered.

2.2.1. My Home is My Castle – From Surveillance Capitalism to Security Capitalism

Bachelard sees the sheltering characteristic of the home as something inherently positive. Its protection starts from the day we are born, meaning that 'life begins well, it begins endorsed, protected, all warm in the bosom of the house.'[85] For Bachelard, the house thus exhibits maternal characteristics that help us grow, learn and contemplate. The house is 'more than an embodiment of home, it is also an embodiment of dreams.'[86] According to Bachelard, it is exactly this capacity to endorse, embody and shelter dreaming, which makes for the chief benefit of the house.[87] For Heidegger, too, there is an element of sheltering in dwelling, namely 'this *sparing* and preserving.'[88] Here, *sparing* has two interrelated functions concerning the human being: we are its object but also its agent. The former relates to what Heidegger calls *Das Frye*, the free place. To dwell means to be in *das Frye*, to be at peace and safeguarded from any harm or danger, to be spared. On the other hand, the second meaning of *sparing* makes the human being an agent of *sparing*. As an agent, we safeguard each thing in its nature and by that conserve the world. However, in today's world, we can observe a tendency to disregard *sparing* in its second sense, when it denotes the conservation of the outer world. We are more concerned with the *sparing* of ourselves on the inside while regarding that which is outside as a potential threat to ourselves and our livelihoods. This radical change can be observed in most of the Western world as people readily retreat to their inside worlds which they increasingly secure against all kinds of potential harms. One only has to think of the heavily fortified homes that

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[85] Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 7.
[86] Ibidem, 15.
[87] Ibidem, 6.
[88] Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 147.

can be found in the suburbs of US cities. Fences, cameras and alarm systems are installed to protect one's nearest and dearest. If you can read this, you are in range. You, that is the Other. The Other is placed under general suspicion, threatened or even shot rather than spared.[89] Adorno's observations in the aphorism *Do Not Knock* ring even more tragically true today. 'Folks you do NOT ring doorbells in 2023. My .6 was loaded. Keep your kids away.'[90] Rather than caringly *sparing*, we see a naturalisation of 'bad manners,' which, according to Adorno, are brought about by the very way everyday objects and technological gadgets are functioning, 'making gestures precise and brutal, and with them men.'[91] He goes on to say that 'the new human type cannot be properly understood without awareness of what he is continuously exposed to from the world of things about him, even in his most secret innervations.'[92] Here it also makes sense to return to Bachelard's conception that the inside and the outside world are not mere opposites but are rather mutually enhancing each other. The more dangerous we take the outside world to be, the more we seem to want to shield ourselves from it, making the inside world appear ever safer. However, the measures we take to protect ourselves – security cameras, alarms, guns – are precisely those types of objects Adorno would regard as being the source of modern man's brutality. Which man is not tempted, merely by the power of his gun, to wipe out the vermin of the outside world?[93] As such, they alienate us more than they keep us safe, but rather only provide us with a false sense of security.

I will argue for this false sense of security in what I will call 'security capitalism.' This description is based on what Shoshana Zuboff calls 'surveillance capitalism.'[94] According to Zuboff, surveillance capitalism refers to how large corporations use advanced technology to collect vast amounts of personal data from individuals to analyse, predict and influence their behaviour. It is a form of capitalism that uses data as its most valuable commodity, thus the more individuals share about themselves and their experiences the better. Thus, rather than exploiting nature, surveillance capitalism exploits human nature. Adding to this is the fact that personal data collection is often done without the individual's knowledge or consent, and the value is extracted entirely by the corporation. As such, it represents a significant threat to individual privacy, autonomy, and democracy. Crucially though, the generation of data by individuals is a form of (unpaid for) work, meaning that we

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[89] 'US man charged for shooting black teen who approached wrong house,' in: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/4/18/us-man-charged-for-shooting-black-teen-who-approached-wrong-house (last accessed: 13 May 2023).
[90] 'Tweet by Stephanie Robbins,' in: https://twitter.com/TisStef/status/1653039227079098369 (last accessed: 13 May 2023).
[91] Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 40.
[92] Ibidem.
[93] Paraphrase of: 'And which driver is not tempted, merely by the power of his engine, to wipe out the vermin of the street, pedestrians, children and cyclists,' in: Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 40.
[94] Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power* (New York, NY 2019).

effectively are working continuously even when we are not working and producing in. In this, we are alienated in the most basic Marxian sense. When Marx first mentions the distinction between work and leisure time, he is quick to attribute alienation to leisure in that it denotes the time in which we regenerate our productivity. Consequently, we are not unconditionally free but only are so as a means to economic output.[95] If we are (although rather unconsciously) working in our free time too, we are bereft of what little was left for the 'full development of the individual' in the first place.[96] We are alienated from the product of our labour because we do not get to know the final product as such. We are alienated from the act of production especially as we have no direct influence and insight into the data extraction and do not have any freedom to choose how and when this happens. We are alienated from the self as we are reduced to simple abstract numbers in the web of Big Data, becoming mere objects by the mode of production, replaceable elements in a system built on exchange value. Lastly, we are alienated from others as we do not see nor understand that this fate is shared with virtually everyone else on the planet. When Zuboff then talks about security, she does so in combination with privacy and the breaches of it that are discovered in technology. However, I am more interested in other aspects of security and technology. While security breaches are relevant to the feeling of safety, it is the literal and figurative selling of security that is interesting here. What I mean by this are the physical security systems we hook up to our houses and the intangible security systems that are housed by our devices and ourselves. We are buying into an idea of security that is already infested by non-security in the form of, for instance, data collection. Our valuing of safety is exploited and capitalised on in this 'security capitalism.' Therefore, it provides us only with a false sense of security. We are not spared and neither do we spare the other. As neither we are truly safeguarded by our security measures, nor is the other left in its own nature, returned to 'its being, ["freed"] in the real sense of the word into a preserve of peace,' we do not dwell in its original sense.[97] And as such we are once again not at home with ourselves.

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[95] Marx, *Grundrisse*, 631.
[96] Ibidem.
[97] Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 147.

2.3. Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

Modern Western society comes accompanied by an almost obsessive individualism, centred around finding and expressing one's true innermost identity, be it through clothing choices or attending special retreats promising the liberation of the self. This wide array of self-centring activities has been joined by interior design coaches claiming to provide guidance to realise the mental image of one's dream home, having our ever-increasing craving to be other than the other permeate every nook and cranny of our refuges. We want to adapt our homes' looks to match our (perceived) identities and self, obsessing about what certain design choices or domestic scenarios reveal about the person inhabiting the s-place called home. However, the mass production of items with marginal differences and the replacement of symbolic values by organisational values makes the personal distinctiveness of the home a mere illusion.

2.3.1. Man, the Interior Designer

Whereas the creation of the outdoor, meaning the construction of the home as a physical structure as well as the maintenance of its visible characteristics, is regulated by the laws of the state, by the visions of the urban planners or by the conventions of a homeowners' association, we have unlimited freedom with what to do with the inside of the home. We may be restricted by the shape and size of the interior surface, especially when renting in the city centre, but we are free to use this space to our liking. This exemplifies the tensions between structure and agency, control and resistance that are inherent in the distinction between place and space. When then we become an interior designer, an 'active engineer of atmosphere [we are] controlling this space' that is home.[98] We create space, not simple décor. In designing our home, we open it up in accordance with our innermost self. Bachelard references French historian Jules Michelet when he likens the home to the nests and shells found in nature, both of which, he asserts, are 'built by and for the body, taking form from the inside […] in an *intimacy* that works physically.'[99] This intimacy (*intimité*), in an etymological sense, stems from the Latin words *intimare* (impressing, making familiar, making known) and *intimus* (the innermost, inmost nature of things). As such, the interior (*intérieur*) of one's home is the physical representation, the making known, of an innermost nature, of a self. This is exactly what we can observe in the Kierkegaardian conception of the home, Steiner argues.[100] Then, concerning the self, one's interior design is also connected to dwelling. When we can chisel out and act out our defined sense of self in the form of interior design, we dwell. But if we look at Heidegger, we see that a well-designed

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[98] Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, 26.
[99] Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 101.
[100] Steiner, 'On the Unhomely Home,' 137.

dwelling can also show us how to build in the original meaning of the word.[101] A dwelling arises when the fourfold enters '*in simple oneness* into things,' and this is visible in its interior.[102] An outstanding example of this building out of dwelling, according to Heidegger, is the farmhouse in the Black Forest, whose exterior and interior both accommodate earth, sky, divinities and mortals (Figure 3). Its outer structure works in symbiosis with the elements while the interior features an altar and spaces for both the living and the dead.[103] If then we design out of dwelling, we can truly be at home with ourselves.

Figure 4: Heidegger's Hut in Todtnauberg, Black Forest

In these now modern days, however, we design not out of dwelling but simply for the sake of designing. The wide array of design choices offered to us in late capitalist society has us merely obsessing about what certain choices or domestic scenarios reveal about us as the inhabitant of the s-place called home. Personalisation of the home ranges from simple and necessary furniture such as beds and kitchen islands, all the way to ever- 'revolutionised' gadgets such as toothbrushes like the Oral-B iO 10. PERSONALISATION like never before. The choices are endless, and only through that do they transcend the strict necessity of their purchase and allow us to *personally* commit to something beyond.[104] We experience this possibility to choose as freedom, which would ultimately enter our home through our purchases. However, and this is crucial for Baudrillard as well, to see this freedom to choose as actual freedom is to disregard the fact that we do not have the freedom of *not*

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[101] Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 158.
[102] Ibidem.
[103] Ibidem, 157-158.
[104] Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, 141.

choosing. If we want or need a new bed, we cannot simply get a new bed, we have to make a choice between hundreds of different beds that are only marginally different. While we feel that the availability of a greater range of items is at the very foundation of personalisation, this personalisation is only happening in the most inessential aspects. Therefore, the 'freedom' to choose creates an illusion of individual distinctiveness. We fall prey to the ideological concepts that are ingrained in consumer society, with their sole goal of luring people into its claws. As Baudrillard puts it, 'such is the paradox of alienation: a living choice is embodied in dead difference, indulgence in which dooms the subjective project to self-negation and despair.'[105] In a society where everything becomes pure commodity, where everything can be bought or sold, alienation is total. And indeed, the etymological roots of alienation are found in the Latin *alienare*, which means 'to transfer (goods, property) to another, render hostile, estrange.'[106] As late capitalist society is built on the exchange of goods and property, or, in the words of Lefebvre, abstract space knows only exchange values, it is the embodiment of alienation, yes, even total alienation.

2.3.2. The Rooms of an Abandoned Video Game World

But what about going back to our childhood homes, that house the memories and selves of our past? And what about furniture and design that predates that of late capitalist consumerism? Can we be at home with ourselves there? The short answer seems to be: no. The long answer starts with Adorno's observation that 'anyone seeking refuge in a genuine, but purchased, period-style house, embalms himself alive.' [107] Adorno's assertion about mummification makes more sense when read in connection with his critique of the nineteenth-century bourgeois ideal in which he writes that the 'contents of the *intérieur* are mere decoration, alienated from the purposes they represent, deprived of their own use-value, engendered solely by the isolated apartment that is created in the first place by their juxtaposition.'[108] It is not simply the material nature of those objects but their configuration among each other in place that create the image of a historically laden 'still life' that overwhelmingly bears on the inhabitant of the home.[109] There is 'no space for movement, for change, for porosity,' Steiner argues, and as such we are bound to feel suffocated rather than restful and secure.[110] Ultimately, this movement from the 'known to the alien and from the foreign to the homely, processes that make mute things into symbols' is akin to the oscillation between Heimlich and Unheimlich and thus the arising of the Uncanny.[111] Embalming ourselves alive in those period-style homes would be

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[105] Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, 153.
[106] Etymology of Alienation, in: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/alienation (last accessed: 13 May 2023).
[107] Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 38.
[108] Adorno, in: Steiner, 'On the Unhomely Home,' 139.
[109] Ibidem.
[110] Steiner, 'On the Unhomely Home,' 140.
[111] Ibidem.

like moving into Heidegger's Black Forest farmhouse. The *plight of dwelling* is not simply resolved by moving into the homes of old. We cannot learn how to dwell that way and would merely have ourselves preserved in a painful state of being. It would be like walking through the rooms of an abandoned video game world, which traps us all alone among objects that cannot be changed anymore. It would be the denial of any form of historical movement, especially towards the future. This also resonates with Bachelard's assertion that a final, a finished home, 'one that stood in symmetrical relation to the house we were born in, would lead to thoughts – serious, sad thoughts – and not to dreams.'[112] Yet we take the period-style house to exhibit some kind of authenticity that the modern home lacks, especially when thinking about our childhood homes.

This perceived authenticity stems from the symbolic values and meaningfulness we encounter in its furnishings. They speak to us anachronistically, as they truly belong to the past we can remember, and which we may nostalgically long for. As such they are antithetical to the synchronic and diachronic furniture of our times which 'strives to establish systematic and exclusive control over reality.'[113] Those pieces simply exist and refer to the present moment. Furthermore, Baudrillard argues, that modern furniture's pure functionality strips it of any meaning, replacing the symbolic values of old with mere organisational values. If they cannot mean anything beyond functionality at all, they cannot mean anything to us. While the absence of symbolic value means that the furniture becomes free as a functional object, we are only liberated as the user of the object, and we still lose out on our individuality. One might argue that the emergence of retro furniture reminiscent of the old days would serve as a combination of symbolic and functional value. However, this means that retro furniture also combines the estranging aspects of both value systems, denying any historical movement whatsoever. Take the aesthetic style of 'cottage core' as an example: it has us returning to the 'good old life,' denying both the present and future while simultaneously placing us in a past world that does not and did not exist in that way. Instead of truly understanding the past, we cannibalise its styles for the purpose of commodification, a phenomenon of our time and age that Jameson calls pastiche.[114] Retro and 'cottage core' aesthetics are mere representations of 'our ideas and stereotypes about that past […] which itself remains forever out of reach.'[115] Not only is personal distinctiveness a mere illusion created by the need to choose, but it is also a form of alienation. In a society of pure commodification, alienation is total. We cannot even find solace in our childhood homes as they represent the denial of historical movement and thus embalm rather than free us.

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[112] Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 61.
[113] Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, 81.
[114] Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 17-25.
[115] Ibidem, 25.

Back to the Future of the Home

Ultimately, the question remains if we can ever, or should ever, feel at home in our homes. Do we just subscribe to an inescapable 'capitalist realism,' for lack of any conceivable alternative? Or do we simply endorse a form of moral homelessness to deal with the reality of property relations? In the following, I argue that neither of these options is a viable or even sufficient measure in itself and that our recourse is to find alternative living arrangements in alternative spaces.

While this thesis has given a rather gloomy outlook on the experience of the home in this day and age, some may still argue that they do not share this feeling of alienation and are very much at home within their own four walls. However, as hinted in the introduction, this denial of alienation only confirms the very existence of estrangement. Failing to acknowledge the underlying mechanisms of the production of space as well as the effects of commodification on the home means that we alienate ourselves ever further from our species-essence, and consequently from our fellow human beings. For in the abstract space of late capitalism, the home has become a commodified necessity for which we do not own the means of production of space, as its production is mainly reserved for planners operating within predominant social ideologies and conventions. To move forward means to leave behind one's subjective and individual experience and to acknowledge that it, no matter how assured one is of their position, inevitably adds to the problem at large. As long as we do not properly own the means of production of space, and thus of the home, we are alienated from ourselves and others, whether we want to acknowledge it or not. But eventually, even if we were to realise the detrimental nature of the late capitalist urban home, we would have a hard time imagining an alternative. As Jameson argues, it is 'easier for us today to imagine the thoroughgoing deterioration of the earth and of nature than the breakdown of capitalism.'[116] For Lefebvre, on the other hand, it seems to be possible to move beyond capitalism when he illusively speaks of the 'art of living to end alienation.'[117] However, Lefebvre himself became disillusioned with his theory, lamenting that the future of the city, which was supposed to enable individuals to fulfil themselves within it, did not unfold as he had hoped for. And indeed, the current process of urbanization does not resemble the ideal outlined in his work, which he would acknowledge two decades after having written the *Right to the City*. Lefebvre expresses a sense of disappointment when he writes that 'as the city expands, social relations within it deteriorate [...]. City life has not given rise to entirely new relationships.'[118] Consequently, he concludes that 'the urban concept and experience as a social practice is in a state of

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[116] Frederic Jameson, 'Future City,' *New Left Review* 21 (2003) 65-79; there: 76.
[117] Lefebvre, *Everyday Life*, 69.
[118] 'Le premier tient à ce que, plus la ville, s'étend plus les relations sociales s'y dégradent. […] Mais, en réalité, la vie en ville n'a pas donné lieu à des relations sociales entièrement nouvelles,' in: Henri Lefebvre, 'Quand la ville se perd dans la métamorphose planétaire', *Le Monde diplomatique* (May 1989) 16-17; there: 16.

decay and possibly even disappearance.' [119] Lefebvre's sombre observation once again underscores the relevance of the *right to the city,* where he primarily envisioned the future of the city as a construct to be actively built. This would require a move beyond the abstract space produced by capitalist society and towards a differential space in which inclusiveness and use value surpass homogenisation and exchange value. In short, it means to move towards the predominance of representational space, thus that which is 'alive and has an affective kernel or centre,' and which would give the home or dwelling a central spot in the everyday again.[120] However, with the current state of the world, even he moves closer towards Jameson's assertion that we have unlearnt to conceive a future beyond capitalism.

So instead of trying to find solutions in a post-capitalist future, we should scorch the present for viable alternatives. As discussed earlier, for Adorno, the only possible recourse seems to lie in simply accepting that it is 'part of morality not to be at home in one's home.'[121] Owning property in today's day and age is equally precarious as it was in the days of Adorno's writing. While he wrote during and in the aftermath of the Second World War, the ongoing wars in for example Ukraine and Sudan equally produce masses of people forced into exile. Additionally, the impending dislocations caused by the climate crisis of our own making will further add to making the 'enforced conditions of emigration' a widespread norm.[122] The home is past. Dwelling, in its original sense, is impossible. But rather than drowning in the ethical melancholia of our own making, Waggoner argues to reassess Adorno's writing in combination with the concept of 'no-man's land.'[123] The no-man's land is a utopian place found in dumpsters and trenches rather than future wonderlands. It 'will appear in the rubble of failed solutions, the refuse of damaged life,' or, as Adorno writes, it will resurrect the dead 'in the auto-graveyards,'[124] It will be a space beyond possession and control, where the focus shifts to the exteriorisation of the self in deconstructive zones that foster contact and cross-contamination.[125] Here, dwelling moves from interiority and enclosure to cohabitation, owing its success to the alternative bonds of those displaced.[126] Ultimately, Waggoner argues, this allows us to reimagine 'dwelling as no man's lands of exteriorized contiguity and dwelling's ideal social arrangements as alternative kinships.'[127]

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[119] 'l'urbain conçu et vécu comme pratique sociale est en voie de détérioration et peut-être de disparition,' in: Lefebvre, 'Quand la ville,' 16.
[120] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 42.
[121] Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 39.
[122] Ibidem.
[123] Waggoner, 'How Not to Be at Home,' 38.
[124] Ibidem, 39.
[125] Ibidem.
[126] Ibidem, 40.
[127] Ibidem.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I argued that our ideal of the late capitalist urban home is detrimental to the self as an individual and creative agent. The general idea of the home as a s-place suggests that even though place is restricted by societal power structures, we are free in actively transforming it as a space. However, when looking at three distinct characteristics we expect from the home, we see that the late capitalist ideal hampers us in getting those expectations actualised. As a consequence, the homes of our times are increasingly detrimental to the self.

First of all, advancements in technology and the conflation of home- and work environments, particularly since the CoViD-19 pandemic, have made the sheer constant intrusion of our homes by the outside world a widespread norm. Rather than being able to return to the home as a haven of the self, we are sharing it with a multitude of other 'tenants,' making true recollection impossible. Finding (temporary) solace in retreats or a simple hotel room is also illusory as neither truly alleviates us from the responsibilities for our residence. We cannot simply run from the fact that our homes should make us feel uncomfortable in the light of wartime dislocation and planetary destruction, and have to, as Adorno argues, accept that it is part of our morality to not feel at home in our homes. Secondly, while for Heidegger the distinction between the inside and outside of our homes would guarantee a reciprocal sparing and preserving, Bachelard's assertion that the inside and outside are mutually enhancing leads us to the conclusion that ultimately, we regress towards a one-sided sparing and preserving, that of ourselves. The outside is placed under general suspicion, regarded as something that we have to increasingly protect ourselves from, often using 'brutal' equipment such as alarms and guns, whose use makes us more brutal towards the outside world. Furthermore, they only provide us with a false sense of security because a great amount of the equipment requires a connection to the manufacturer's online interface, which inevitably relates to data extraction, a form of alienating production. Lastly, our desire to adapt our homes' looks to match our perceived identities and self, is annihilated in the face of modern mass production as well as in our inability to adequately understand the past and the future. The illusion of personal distinctiveness is created by a need to choose between commodities that are only marginally different, resulting in a society in which alienation is total. We cannot even find solace in our childhood homes as they represent the denial of historical movement and thus embalm rather than free us. Ultimately, simply moving beyond the conditions created by late capitalism seems to be impossible, even inconceivable. Therefore, our only recourse is to find alternative ways of dwelling that both embrace the ethical necessity of not being at home and adopt different kinds of social kinships.

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