HOW NOT TO BE AT HOME IN ONE'S HOME: ADORNO'S CRITIQUE OF ARCHITECTURAL REASON

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Adorno wrote prolifically about modernism in culture and the arts, but little has been written about whether or in what form he might have addressed architectural concerns. The project of exploring this potentially fruitful intersection has been helped in the last couple of decades by authors from philosophy and critical theory contrasting his ideas about dwelling with Heidegger's and by architectural theorists considering the import of his aesthetic theory.[1] If these fall shy of the more immediate connections to architecture that some have hoped to uncover, this is because Adorno almost never wrote about specific buildings and their designers (which is the kind of specificity that you do find in what he wrote about music and literature). Neither did he publish any texts dedicated exclusively to architecture or dwelling, which is not to say that he never wrote about them or that architectural concerns are absent from his work. Adorno's writings on dwelling and architecture live here and there, emerging and then moving on to surface later, if not often as direct commentary then as a kind of architectural gaze his thinking sometimes employs. Dwelling and architecture exist like exiles in his writings even though the question of dwelling— of what it means to inhabit social and space-time worlds as embodied beings—lies as much at the core of Adorno's philosophy as it did in Heidegger's. In Adorno's case, the fact that dwelling resides there as restlessly as it does is a stylistic impression of the theory itself.

> " THE QUESTION OF DWELLING... LIES AS MUCH AT THE CORE OF ADORNO'S PHILOSOPHY AS IT DID IN HEIDEGGER'S "

I begin by revisiting one of his instances of sustained architectural specificity. Though it is no more than a couple of pages, Minima Moralia's (1951) aphorism A18, "Shelter for the Shelterless," is packed with observations about houses and housing that epitomize Adorno's incisive brand of cultural criticism.[2] I suggest the passage should firstly be seen in relation to the opening sections of Le Corbusier's *Towards a New Architecture* (1927).[3] Adorno's pronouncement at the start of "Shelter for the Shelterless" that "dwelling, in the proper sense, is impossible today" is usually set against Heidegger's desire to recover an original, pure dwelling practice. From 1949 (the year Adorno returned to Germany) until 1951, they were both working on problems of dwelling, culminating in the publication of *Minima Moralia* in the Spring of 1951 and Heidegger's delivery of the lectures "Building Dwelling Thinking" and "... Poetically Man Dwells ..." later that year.[4] But the question of whether they consciously responded to one another in these texts and what level of interaction they might have had may well be less significant for the purposes of analysis and interpretation than the fact that Corbusier's text was by all appearances a common touchstone for both of them. When Adorno also writes in "Shelter for the Shelterless" that "the house is past," for instance, he echoes Corbusier's claim that "the house will fall to dust."[5]

To acknowledge points of convergence between Adorno, Heidegger, and Corbusier is not to equivocate, and indeed, the fault lines between Adorno and Corbusier are conspicuous (just as they are with Heidegger). Corbusier identifies housing as *the* architectural question, a "problem for the epoch." Setting an agenda for architecture in the 20th century, *Towards a New Architecture* sets up the house as one of modernity's central "problems," which modern architecture was poised to solve by harnessing processes of mass production. By contrast, "Shelter for the Shelterless" insists that dwelling in modern life is a problem without a solution. More to the point, and bearing in mind Germany's "final solution" and Stalin's "Death solves all problems," Adorno held that what has to be resisted are the usually ominous implications of guarantees of a wholesale solution. Adorno's anxiety about the problem solving attitude was not simply a reaction to the historical events and conditions that shaped his life. It was also, for him, a philosophical claim (a counterpoint to the positivistic tendencies of his day) nicely summarized in his early examination of Husserl's philosophy:

> *The idea that a philosopher must produce a fixed set of irrefutable findings ... presupposes that all the tasks he sets for himself can be fulfilled, that there can be an answer to every question he raises. This assumption, however, is disputable.*

It is possible that there are philosophical tasks which, although arising necessarily in a coherent process of thinking, can not be fulfilled; thus, they lead to an impasse … which has its roots in inherent antagonisms of the problem itself.[6]

This is the root of Adorno's much-discussed negative utopianism. It is why he regarded the highest tribute that can be paid to utopia as the refusal to entertain premature substitutes or to gloss over the persistence of contradictions forestalling its genuine realization. The paradoxical expression of such an act of fidelity is that in order to be true to utopia, one has to resist it.

While this could be seen as a manifesto for architectural pessimism—an inability to countenance Corbusier's hope for an engineered utopia—from Adorno's standpoint it is about safeguarding against the falsification of utopia. The goal was to preserve the real and future possibility of a society transformed so that living with others and otherness, without doing so at anyone's expense, is both publicly supported and privately possible. In a word, the obstacle to such possibilities for Adorno is most certainly capitalism, but more precisely it is the necessity in market societies to secure shelter through exchange and what he calls (for reasons discussed below) the "property relation."

Adorno's generation of intellectuals witnessed capitalism at a time when it was rapidly and very effectively learning how to manage the internal contradictions that Marx suspected would lead to its self-incurred demise. To Adorno and his colleagues in the 1920s and 1930s (the Frankfurt School's formative years), the hope of a successful transition away from capitalism seemed increasingly fraught as the various countermovements protesting the liberal model proved themselves to be deformed versions of the same "identitarian" (totalizing, universalizing) logic of equivalence implicit in capitalism. As long as the underlying contradictions

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of society were going to remain unaltered in any substantial way for the foreseeable future, faithfulness to the idea of the right life was going to necessitate refusals to accept its semblance, no matter how well-planned or well-intentioned the proposals. His rejections of the idea of a "blueprint" for utopia suggest that he sensed an affinity between two trends: on the one hand, the sweeping programs advanced by political parties claiming to once-and-for-all solve the problems of modern society (interpreted as cultural degradation in Germany and inequality and alienation in Russia); on the other hand, the similarly sweeping proposals advanced by architects for master-planned communities and cities (Corbusier's Ville Radieuse in 1930, Wright's Broadacre City in 1932). One of Adorno's concerns about architectural blueprints for utopia was that they failed to account for the persistence of fundamental contradictions like those inherent in the property relation. His other concern about this penchant for master plans was that they seemed to harbor the same totalitarian tendencies as the parties.

Still, Corbusier's criticisms of the "cult of home" and his insistence that the problem of housing remained unsolved resonates with part of the argument of "Shelter for the Shelterless," whose title, it is worth noting, is borrowed from a chapter of Siegfried Kracauer's *The Salaried Masses* (1930). Kracauer tutored Adorno in philosophy during the latter's precocious teen years, poring over such onerous texts as Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason.* Kracauer was a trained and practicing architect in those days and *The Salaried Masses* would become one of the first critical examinations of the birth of middle class labor environs like the office space.[7] It interrogates the *fin de siècle* social fantasy that cubicle life provided respite and greater self-determination than the oppressive drudgery of the factory space, an assumption Kracauer challenges by stressing the mechanization of office work, Kafkaesque means of control implemented by office planners and new managerial systems, and the onset of an even more paralyzing work-incited ennui.

Similarly, "Shelter for the Shelterless" insists that shelter fantasies cannot be abstracted from the material conditions that make optimistic programs of escape, refuge, or shelter-based "problem solving" acts of wishful thinking. The conditions informing Adorno's spatial-architectural pessimism in "Shelter for the Shelterless" include the wartime decimation of the housing stock (Germans, including Heidegger, called it a "housing shortage," which Adorno thought was specious, a way of ignoring the past); the exclusions and the violence of state-sponsored nativism (promoting authentic ties to home and homeland); the mechanizing

effects of technology and mass production on all forms of interiority (including the invasion of the factory model, with its compulsory discipline and injunction to produce and be useful, into the private sphere); and the inescapable means-end logic of the property relation. Adorno's adamance about the underlying conditions of dwelling and the impossibility of extricating oneself from their contradictions responds as much to Heidegger as to Corbusier, despite the obvious tension between Heidegger's concerns about technological reason and Corbusier's technophilia. Adorno's disagreement in both instances is not with the claim that we were not building right, but with the claim that we have the capacity to definitively resolve housing's problems here and now as if they had only to do with misguided conceptions of genuine or optimally efficient dwelling and not with the economic foundations of society.

"Shelter for the Shelterless" illustrates the unresolved nature of dwelling's problems by throwing a spotlight on some of the attempts to evade them and how they fail. German post-war "traditional residences" are contaminated by the "musty pact of family interests." Regardless of one's relation to what took place in them, one cannot live in them free of guilt. "Functional modern houses" like Corbusier's machines for living in facilitate the "straying of the factory model into the private sphere." "Period-style houses" that have been restored and then purchased as historical novelties are mausoleums embalming their inhabitants alive. "Hotels and furnished rooms" sought after in some avant-garde attempt to sidestep the trappings of bourgeois ownership make a mockery of those who really have been driven into homelessness or provisional housing situations. Bombed-out cities and the abandoned structures of what had recently been labor and concentration camps, but are now too politically toxic to repurpose, have become omens of the fate of all housing. Like

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the job that one needs in order to avoid homelessness in a society that commodifies shelter, these neglected structures serve as concrete symbols of the disposable nature of everyone and everything in late modernism after they no longer prove useful. And finally, Adorno cites the Bauhaus-inspired craft movement in architecture, furniture, and design that had set out to eschew form in favor of function but eventually backslid into stylized, curvilinear ornamentation, which is precisely what Corbusier, Loos, Gropius, and others indicted as bourgeois pretension.[8]

Adorno offers the reader a compendium of what are still contemporary tactics for evading the contradictions of dwelling. We could read these six pseudo-solutions as descriptions of various chic-urban attempts today on the part of city planners, private developers, architects, and shelter consumers to make dwelling strategies seem like solutions to bigger problems. The argument of "Shelter for the Shelterless" is that none of them resolves anything because the underlying issues remain unchanged. Nothing escapes the predicament of dwelling in modern life and our attempts, clever and noble though they may be, are shabby conceits and naively complicit.

He credits the inadequacy of these solutions to the structural constraints of the property relation, which is of course something most architects admit and have experienced first-hand. There are two explanations for Adorno's preference for the term "property relation." First, when the Institute for Social Research relocated to Columbia University in the 1930s (because it was forced to shutter when National Socialism rose to power), it began avoiding anything that could have been perceived in the U.S. context as overtly Marxist terminology. They self-censored terms like communism and revolution, even substituting seemingly innocuous terms such as "market society" and "capitalism" for a variety of more generic designations like "exchange society," "instrumental reason," and the "property relation."[9] But the second reason Adorno preferred the language of the property relation is because it allowed him to accentuate the claim that property is indeed a relation, not a thing, which is to say that property is the quintessential example of what Adorno and his colleagues, inspired by Georg Lukacs' writings on the subject, called reification.[10]

Heidegger opens his remarks in "Building Dwelling Thinking" by saying that dwelling is about belonging. The difference between Adorno's philosophy of dwelling and Heidegger's has, in a nutshell, to do with Adorno's suggestion that belonging in communitarian and contractual models of inclusion and ownership is an extension of the logic of possessive exclusion. Although to belong is surely to be in a relation of sorts,

to belong in those ways is to be incorporated—to "rest in the preserve of Being" (Heidegger) or to be assimilated as an appendage of the self (Locke)—thereby nullifying the otherness and particularity (the "non-identity," in Adorno's phraseology) of the thing or person that belongs. To insist on the word "relation" when speaking of the system of private property is to recognize that everything that belongs (a home or a homeland, for instance) is only naively and ideologically the exclusive domain of those whose claims of belonging are deemed legitimate. All property, including every home and every homeland, exists in relation to what lies beyond it, which our ways of speaking and thinking about them disavow.

Adorno's reflections on the nature and scope of the property relation go beyond architecture's often complacent recognition of the constraints of client expectations and market demands. The deepest problem of housing in a capitalist society is that it is a basic need that can only be purchased as a commodity (by most) with wages—money earned by finding purchasers for another commodity, labor—in a market that will not always need to increase production to full employment levels and is sometimes economically compelled to decrease it by shrinking the labor force.[11] This is the double bind of a market-based shelter economy. In addition to the basic economic contradiction that makes dwelling, in the proper sense, impossible, Adorno unpacks the moral facets of its conundrum as well, insisting that regardless of one's relation to it (as property owners, renters, or participants in one of shelter's sub-economies—squatting, camping, living in rehabilitated refuse) every relation to home (and to homeland) is implicated in a system that entails one kind of unsheltering or another.

He argues, for instance, that there is no morally responsible way to own because ownership is inherently exclusive, always taking something from

someone somewhere in the social ensemble (contrary to Locke's claim in the *Second Treatise* that it does not); that the application of techniques of mass production to housing strips them, as it does all commodities, of a singular relation to the owner, negating the claims of genuine belonging; that there is no way out of entanglement since to try and extricate oneself from the system of shelter and shelter impropriety would leave one intolerably exposed; that the interiors of houses have become scenes of pseudo-autonomy from an external world that has, nonetheless, thoroughly intruded upon interiority. "Wrong life," Adorno concluded, "cannot be lived rightly."[12] Economically, morally, and in many cases physically, we are all somehow unhoused.

It was perhaps too hasty, though, to have suggested that Adorno rejects all forms of problem solving. He does offer something, but as one should expect from a consummate dialectician, it takes the form of a paradox. In "Shelter for the Shelterless," he holds that the solution to the predicaments of housing will consist in living in one's home in full knowledge that if one owns (for instance), one does not singularly own anything, and that in some sense it is owners who are objectified and who become possessions. Looking beyond its effects on owners, ownership participates in the unsheltering of others (a claim that can be illustrated in many ways, one of which is the well-studied regional correlation today between increases in property values and subsequent increases in eviction rates).

There is no way out of these kinds of entanglement, so the only responsible course of action, Adorno claims (to the consternation of many of his Left-wing peers and readers, still today), is to participate in an "uncommitted, suspended way," and "not to attach weight to it."[13] This would be hardly different than the knee-jerk architectural shrug were it not for an astonishing additional claim he makes: one must "learn how not to be at home in one's home."[14] A good deal can be said about this deceptively compact formulation: it appears to have originated from Kierkegaard's *Stages on Life's Way* (1845), which Adorno quotes in his first post-habilitation book-length study of Kierkegaard (*Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic,* 1933); Walter Benjamin includes it in his *Arcades Project* (finally published in 1999 but written in the 1930s), not citing the original but Adorno's rendition of it; Adorno revisits it in *Minima Moralia* (in "Shelter for the Shelterless") two decades later, ostensibly as a way of responding to Nietzsche's pride at having never been a homeowner, but more broadly in response to the aforementioned pseudo-solutions to the moral conundrums of housing in post-war Germany; and it resembles

Freud's concept of *das unheimliche*, the uncanny, which is to say not homelike, strangely familiar, or not at home with oneself (many of the Frankfurt School's members, including Adorno, were greatly influenced by Freud, who in a 1919 essay describes the uncanny as an experience of strangeness in the ordinary).[15]

I think we have to read Adorno's dictum as an entreaty to take up relations to homes and homelands—to how we "construct" them geographically and architecturally, as well as to how we inhabit them—in ways that are not just open to neighbors, strangers, and other kinds of visitors, including those who have been excluded or rendered obsolete by various incarnations of the property relation. Even more radically than that, it means that we will need to see ourselves as visitors in our own homes, guests of a sort with no more exclusive claim to them than others. His is an ethic of displacement and a politics of unbelonging that starkly contrasts with communitarian and contractual traditions of right, where moral responsibility is predicated either on a sense of belonging within a community of shared norms and identity or on the abstract logic of an equivalent exchange of possessions. Adorno's argument is that in both cases, communities and contracts are constituted on the model of the property relation, where the good is dependent on claiming sovereignty over this place, this identity, this property, claims that rely on necessary exclusions.

> " OWNERSHIP PARTICIPATES IN THE UNSHELTERING OF OTHERS "

What would be the outcome of such a dramatically reconstituted understanding of property, home, belonging and dwelling? The ethic of displacement points, I suggest, toward the formation of anti-communities, ad hoc and provisional aggregations of those who are commonly displaced and for which the foundational value that binds people together is not identity but non-identity, living with difference. Like the uncanny, it would make the

ordinary strange and the stranger at home.

This idea of informal, ad hoc communities and alternative kinships appears throughout Adorno's writings, including his reflections on American exile after returning to Germany (in which he wrote warmly about the reception he received and about the spirit of collaboration he experienced, despite arriving with a very different methodological and theoretical orientation than what was practiced in the U.S. at that time).[16] The question he leads us to ask is how we might live (and design living arrangements) in ways that subvert the logic of exclusive possession, even though there is no way to escape it under present conditions. Since choosing not to dwell is not an option, and since there is no dwelling in modern life that escapes the property relation, how can we "be at home," how can we rethink its meaning and practice—but also how can we develop, design, and build housing that installs some new practice of being at home so that home is not a possession that excludes but a relation that invites intimacy amid environs of otherness? How can new paradigms of constructing dwelling systems, structures, and arrangements allow for the mobilization of reciprocal styles of residence, where residents are visitors and visitors are welcomed. To do so would be to address the "problem of the epoch" by modeling housing on the precarity of the unsheltered exile rather than on the security of the native/owner with so-called authentic ties to place and property.

Are there pathways from Adorno's post-war philosophy of housing to the present? I will not labor over the obvious associations with contemporary social and political movements like sanctuary cities, the right to the city, and the right to housing, except to affirm that these are certainly benefactors of the kind of reasoning that one finds in Adorno's writings on housing, hospitality, and dwelling. I can think of other examples as well. Richard Rothstein's *The Color of Law* (2017) includes a section near the end of the book in which he permits himself to speculate on how housing segregation could be rectified if there was political determination to do so. He imagines policies aimed at incentivized means of rolling back local zoning practices and federal tax benefits that promote segregated housing patterns. This could be accomplished by making tax subsidies conditional on the inclusion in wealthy areas of a sizable percentage of affordable housing stock and by mandating aggressive measures to attract racially diverse tenants.

Rothstein argues that, although the Supreme Court does not currently recognize it, the legal justification for such assertive measures is based on the fact that it was de jure policies backed by federal and local

governments that for decades created and sustained housing segregation, and thus government has a 14th-amendment obligation to rectify the consequences of its New Deal-, Civil Rights-, and even post-Civil Rights-era illegalities. The intergenerational effects of inclusive housing (through access to better-funded schools and community resources for the children of relocated tenants, for instance) would be enormously impactful.[17] To be sure, even this does not escape entanglement since it involves displacing families from neighborhoods in which they may have deep roots in the community, but it also requires wealthy neighborhoods to open themselves to changes that would fundamentally alter the makeup of those communities as well. Measures that make dwelling inclusive (particularly in middle and upper-middle class white neighborhoods) by dismantling and repairing the harms of housing segregation would be consistent, I think, with what it could mean in a practical, present-day sense to learn how not to be at home in one's home.

FIGURE 1: MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. MEMORIAL, WASHINGTON, D. C.

In the period between 1964 and 1968, prominent voices in the civil rights movement, including President Johnson himself, became intensely vocal about the incapacity of the new civil rights laws—outlawing discrimination in public accommodations and extending the right to vote—to overcome segregation and its direct effect on income and opportunity inequality.[18] Martin Luther King, Jr. argued that expanding the quantity, access, and

" KING'S RHETORIC ROUTINELY EMPLOYED ARCHITECTURAL METAPHORS "

location of low income housing in the U.S. was a necessary step toward racial and economic justice. Usually known for its theological imagery, King's rhetoric routinely employed architectural metaphors as well, such as when he said that "true compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar ... It comes to see that an edifice that produces beggars needs restructuring"[19]; and when he lamented to Harry Belafonte that after all of their efforts and the eventual passage of the civil rights laws in the 1960s, he realized that economic inequality linked to housing segregation would continue unabated. He worried that they had done little more than integrate into a "burning house." (Figure 1).

In 1967, King adopted the image of a "world house" which informed an essay of the same name:

> A famous novelist died. Among his papers was found a list of suggested plots for future stories, the most prominently underscored being this one: "A widely separated family inherits a house in which they have to live together." This is the great new problem of mankind. We have inherited a large house, a great "world house" in which we have to live together—black and white, Easterner and Westerner, Gentile and Jew, Catholic and Protestant, Moslem and Hindu—a family unduly separated in ideas, culture and interest, who, because we can never again live apart, must learn somehow to live with each other in peace.[20]

The image of a world house asks us to see human beings as common inhabitants of the earth who are mutually affected by one another's suffering and insecurity. It is an image of living with difference, which is not only suggestive of welcoming and responding to the other. Implicit in its concept is the idea that I can lay no exclusive claim to a singular instance of housing, homeland, social belonging, or citizenship since there is but one planetary mesh of interconnected housings. King tries to reimagine the shelter of physical residence, political recognition, and economic well-being that white society assured for itself at others' expense as a site of ordinariness that has to become uncanny, defamiliarized. As a radically exteriorized conception of what it means to be housed, this image is reminiscent of what Adorno tries to accomplish with a seemingly very different kind of spatial-architectural metaphor.

Adorno's "no man's lands" are playful in their discourse with the meaning of utopia, which is another kind of no-place. To impute utopian significance to places whose historical references include dumping grounds and the space between two fronts in trench warfare (where the carnage of bombed buildings and disfigured bodies abound) is tongue-in-cheek, a conscious attempt on Adorno's part to insist that utopias will not yet come in the form of successfully implemented solutions to sweeping

problems. For now, they will appear in the rubble of failed solutions, the refuse of damaged life. "The resurrection of the dead," Adorno wrote, "will take place in the auto-graveyards."[21] But no man's lands are not only scenes of destruction and obsolescence. They are also sites of contiguity, non-spaces of in betweenness that lie beyond the boundaries of regions of exclusive possession and control. To inhabit the no man's land is thus to exteriorize the self, to abandon the security of the carapace for the vulnerability and precarity of border regions. No man's lands are deconstructive zones of contact and cross-contamination where binarily conceived relations no longer hold, relations between subject/object, self/other, mind/body, resident/stranger, life/death, reason/affect, utopia/dystopia, home/exile.

Adorno's no man's lands acknowledge that our materiality is an inescapably shared feature of our existence as embodied beings, making us both dependent on and responsive to that which is outside us. This is true because of our need to seek food and shelter amid external environs and social arrangements and because of historically specific intrusions into interiority—mental, affective, and aesthetic interiority through the culture industry, architectural interiority through the mass production of houses and the penetration of the spaces of work and life by new forms of influence and control, and the interiority of social and political belonging, when in the name of authentic ties to home and homeland one is dislocated, either into exile or to the concentration camp. This is why, rather than Kierkegaard's constructions of selfhood through images of interiority (his touchstones tended to be the accoutrements of the 19th-century bourgeois apartment), Adorno preferred Kafka, whose characters could not find refuge. They were instead expelled onto barren surfaces, exoskeletal and exposed. In reference to Kafka, Adorno once called upon the image of no man's lands to describe the

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unlocatable position of characters who suffered an "unsuccessful death," having been so thoroughly depleted and made obsolete that, though not physically dead, they exist in a kind of socially dead/undead state.[22]

But like the unsuccessful deaths in Kafka's stories, Adorno sees promise in the precarity and dislocation of no man's lands. He sees them, for one thing, as scenes that expose us, and for that reason they also expose the real nature of embodied life. The shared frailty of bodies and of the environs upon which they depend is a reminder that to be an embodied being is to be something that lives outside itself (this is another sense in which Adorno used the phrase no man's land, to describe the experience of exteriorization). In other words, embodied life contains within its phenomenology a template of what we mean by dwelling. The necessity of corporeal beings to seek housing in a place, in relations of both physical and social geography, is never purely subjective and cannot be individualized. The sensorium of embodied subjectivity is not even something that happens on its own; it is enlivened by contact with and exposure to other bodies and bodily states. Embodiment bears an essential relation to dwelling because to inhabit a body is to inhabit bodies as such, a common corporeality stitched together by the reflexivity of the touch and by collective modes of meeting shared needs and responding to shared vulnerability. The human experience of dwelling begins with embodiment, with the fact that consciousness is inseparable from the somatic and the sensorial, which are, like everything physical, inherently responsive to, dependent upon, and passively and actively bound up with that which is external to consciousness. Modes of dwelling in bodies and in space are not those of enclosure and sovereignty but of cohabitation and an ethically enlivening non-sovereignty.

No one ever singularly inhabits a body because embodiment is not, as we like to imagine it, a state of being a self-sufficient thing. Its existence is inseparable from and can only be constituted as such within a matrix of contact and connectivity that can either prove sustaining or detrimental, depending on the quality of the bonds. What we should add to this is that the scope of that which stitches me into the world is not exclusively the interfacing of organic bodies. It includes the kind of tethering that binds bodies together by housing them in time and space. There are other ways that I come to exist as a place-holding being in the world and that I am delivered into and hopefully preserved in such constitutive contact with it and with others. For if, as Judith Butler argues in Senses of the Subject, it is not the case that there is already a pre-existent "I" prior to being touched, but that the touch instead enlivens me as a feeling, sensing self, then we must

also maintain that there is no way to conceive of the human being apart from the kind of tethering and contiguous relations that enable me to inhabit the external world.[23] We are fastened to one another by virtue of our common embodiment, but our bodies are also intertwined with one another and with the world inside a global tissue of connected environs that includes such things as streets, neighborhoods, cities, infrastructures, and coverings, the matrix of shelters and shelter arrangements in which we dwell. It is within these structures that we reside with varying degrees of satiety and security, some more enlivening than others. Just as the body does not enclose us from others, shelter does not enclose us from that which surrounds us and in relation to which we are only ostensibly distant and distinct. Rather, dwelling is the activity and shelter the fabric with which the self is extended into and implicated in worlds of being and belonging, which I take to be what King envisioned when he adopted the image of a world house and what Adorno envisioned when he upheld no man's lands as potentially fruitful shared experiences of propulsion into scenes that exteriorize us, over which none of us can claim exclusive nativity or possession.

This brings me, finally, to the other architecturally compelling feature of no man's lands in Adorno's works. It is that Adorno's models of living with difference—aggregations of the commonly dislocated and the kinds of alternative bonds that crystallize among them—invite redefinition of the meaning of housing and home, of the designed character of dwelling and the social arrangements it facilitates. Repositioning exilic states as the foundation for ethical responsibility, Adorno inverts the relation between home and exile such that our model of home is fashioned after the non-exclusive relations that characterize communities of shared displacement. This aspect of Adorno's philosophy of dwelling is just as consistent with King's interest in an expanded and exteriorized conception of the

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house as it is with different models of family and kinship (which were also present in King's reflections on the world house). For it is on the basis of a traditional concept of kinship that homes and homelands have historically acquired their meaning as scenes of common identity and exclusive claims of the right of belonging and possession. Learning how not to be at home in one's home will necessitate, then, learning how to forge bonds of belonging that are predicated on intimacy and proximity between aliens and strangers rather than kin and countrymen. Reimagining houses and housing as no man's lands enlists us in the project of reconstituting the social arrangements that have traditionally organized and orchestrated shelter, and it includes risking their contamination with conceptually promiscuous alternative cohabitation structures. These would no longer be arrangements whose bonds are rooted in exclusive claims of cultural and genetic belonging, nor the claims of contractually legitimized, inherited or purchased belonging.

It is difficult, for obvious reasons, for us to imagine dwelling and housing apart from the logic of possessive exclusion rooted in relations of the family and private property. We know that under the circumstances, when territorial sovereignty, patriarchal vestiges, and the property relation circumscribe every form of dwelling, we would intolerably expose ourselves to insecure states if we did not participate in the shelter-based economy according to its rules. This is why Adorno's "solution" cannot take the form of a master-planned blueprint for utopian dwelling. What he offers us instead is an architectural counter-image to the blueprint by comparing the task of reimagining dwelling and housing to images from land surveys. The blueprint is an abstraction, a rationalization of reality, whereas aerial photographs of the surface of the earth capture the materiality of the terrain. In "Notes on Kafka," having likened the unsuccessful death to a no man's land, Adorno argues that Kafka's stories function like wartime aerial photographs of demolished cities, neighborhoods, buildings, and homes. He describes this function as the production of an impossible view from the standpoint of an as yet unforeseeable utopia, "hell seen from the perspective of salvation." His writing "feigns a standpoint from which the creation appears as lacerated and mutilated as it conceives hell to be." Recalling Jews in the middle ages who were tortured, executed, and hung head down, Adorno tells us that "Kafka, the land-surveyor, photographs the earth's surface just as it must have appeared to these victims during the endless hours of their dying."[24] When Adorno describes these views of the extremes of exposure, suffering, and insecurity as the standpoint of salvation, he is suggesting that we need to invert our notions of pessimism and optimism. Genuine optimism does not conceal

realities beneath abstractions and pseudo-solutions. Its conception of utopia is not that of the blueprint but of the preservation, if only in thought (whose focal point is like an image from afar), of an as yet unforeseeable transformation of the material conditions for dwelling and cohabitation. "To include [Kafka] among the pessimists, the existentialists of despair, is as misguided as to make him a prophet of salvation" since "the light-source which shows the world's crevices to be infernal is the optimal one."[25]

Ever since the ideal cities of Corbusier and Wright, the "optimal solutions" of architecture to the problems of housing have not captured the depth of the damages incurred by dwelling because of its enmeshment in the property relation. Rothstein and others remind us how those blueprints, once approximated in the development of New Deal housing programs and postwar suburbs, led to the even deeper entrenchment of racially exclusive property relations. With the aid of federal support and local zoning practices, the approaches they inspired contributed to the intransigence of segregated housing patterns and the intergenerational economic debilitation of African Americans that resulted from those patterns. In no small part, ideological notions of the proper family model played a role in justifying the exclusions of housing as well, both because of racially coded discrimination against single parent families and because of the inviolable status accorded the nuclear family and individual property, effectively shielding them against government's ability to prevent or police the segregationist practices of developers, real estate agents, banks, and neighborhood associations.

"ADORNO'S 'SOLUTION' CANNOT TAKE THE FORM OF A MASTER-PLANNED BLUEPRINT FOR UTOPIAN DWELLING"

Adorno's critique of architectural reason is an immanent critique that thinks through the categories and concepts of architectural perspectives and practices. What is architecture to

do when its entire task is beset by the ineluctable contradictions of the property relation? Adorno's answer is that architecture must do what art did during the period of high modernism and what artists at its periphery (such as Gordon Matta-Clark) have intimated in their works. Architecture must become anti-architectural, not in the sense that it no longer plans, designs, and builds dwellings and dwelling arrangements, but that it does so in ways that feign an impossible standpoint (rather than blueprinting false solutions) by reimagining dwelling as no man's lands of exteriorized contiguity and dwelling's ideal social arrangements as alternative kinships. It has to learn how not to be at home in its traditional mandate to build spaces that reinforce our preconceptions of proper social space. Dwelling in the proper sense may be impossible today, but its future may be what is, til then, deemed improper.

ENDNOTES

1. Samir Gandesha, "Leaving Home: On Adorno and Heidegger" in *Adorno and Heidegger: Philosophical Questions* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007, pp. 101-28); Hilde Heynen, Architecture and Modernity: A Critique (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999).

2. Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections From Damaged Life* (New York: Verso, 1974). I use "Shelter for the Shelterless" to translate "Asyl für Obdachlose" rather than Jephcott's "Refuge for the Homeless." For an extended investigation into "Shelter for the Shelterless," see Waggoner, *Unhoused: Adorno and the Problem of Dwelling* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018).

3. Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture,* Frederick Etchells, trans. (New York: Dover, 1986). Most readers will be familiar with the history of the text and its title. Originally published in French in 1923 as *Vers Une Architecture,* the first English translation by Etchells appeared in 1927, in which the title was interpreted as *Towards a New Architecture.* In 2007, Getty published a new English translation returning Corbusier's title to the original *Toward an Architecture.* When referring to the book's title in what follows, I follow the Etchells translation since it remains the most widely used version of the text in English.

4. Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought.* Albert Hofstadter, trans. (New York: Harper Collins, 1977, pp. 141-160, 209-227).

5. Heidegger questions the role of the house in a far less pointed and pithy way in "Building Dwelling Thinking": "Today's houses may even be well planned, easy to keep, attractively cheap, open to air, light, and sun,

but do the houses in themselves hold any guarantee that dwelling occurs in them?" (p. 144).

6. Theodor Adorno, "Husserl and the Problem of Idealism," *Journal of Philosophy* (Vol. 37, no. 1, January 4, 1940: pp. 5–18).

7. Siegfried Kracauer, *The Salaried Masses: Duty and Distraction in Weimar.* Quintin Hoare, trans. (New York: Verso, 1998).

8. Adorno, 1974: pp. 38-39.

9. The Institute for Social Research was the institution, founded in Frankfurt under the auspices of its University, that gave birth to the group of scholars known as the Frankfurt School, some of whom were less directly connected to the Institute than others. See Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute for Social Research,* 1923-1950 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).

10. Georg Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1971).

11. Marx, of course, goes one step further when he argues that even labor shrinkages are economically strategic for capital. They create what he calls an industrial reserve army: unemployed (often homeless or insecurely sheltered) workers who are ready at a moment's notice to report to the factory or the office as soon as their labor is again required.

12. Adorno, 1974, p. 39.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Theodor Adorno, *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic.* Robert Hullot-Kentor, trans. (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1989); Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project.* Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, trans. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999); Sigmund Freud, "The 'Uncanny'" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund*

Freud, Volume XVII (1917-1919): *An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works,* pp. 217-256. I suspect there are still more reference points for the quote that I am not yet aware of.

16. Theodor Adorno, "Scientific Experiences of a European Scholar in America" in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, pp. 215-242); Adorno, "Foreword" in *Prisms.* Samuel Weber and Shierry Weber Nicholsen, trans. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1967, pp. 7-8).

17. Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York: Liveright Publishing, 2017).

18. See Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2006).

19. Michael Eric Dyson, *Come Hell or High Water: Hurricane Katrina and the Color of Disaster* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2007).

20. Martin Luther King, Jr., "The World House" in *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1968, p. 177)

21. Adorno 1967, p. 271.

22. Adorno 1967, pp. 270-271.

23. Judith Butler, *Senses of the Subject* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015).

24. Adorno 1967, p. 271.

25. Ibid.