

**DWELLING, PLACE MAKING
AND THE EXPERIENCE OF TRANSITION AND RELOCATION**

by

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IN

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I. INTRODUCTION: PHENOMENOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF DWELLING

This study deals with the experience of moving and settling in a new home. It stems from recent research on the experience and use of the dwelling undertaken from a phenomenological perspective by the author of this chapter, and it continues earlier explorations of the subject that lead to the definition of three fundamental characteristics for the home.

In previous work, (Korosec-Serfaty, 1985), the author suggested that, on the one hand, dwelling implies the setting up of and inside-outside, i.e. the differentiation and qualification of space and thus the shift from "space" to "place". Dwelling is a place-creating action, which amounts to the establishment of physical limits as many limits within oneself. It expresses the will to "remake" the outside world, to create an "inside" which seems justified, non contingent.

This non-contingent world gains its meaning only in relation to a situation in the world, any dwelling defines a certain kind of inside-outside relationship. The manners or cultural habits of closing and opening one's home, like the cultural patterns of intimacy and hospitality (P. Korosec-Serfaty, 1989) constitute as many variations of the necessity to establish choices regarding the inside-outside dialectics.

Such cultural and attitudinal variations are then "translated" into architectural decisions. As an example. Ballardur (1949) illustrate this idea by comparing the 17th century classical interior world to modern villa architecture: "In a Classical house, the basic structure of the interior volumes and the decoration are dominated by the constant effort to propose definite elements, whose contours are precise and perfectly stable"(p. 902). The Classical house therefore presents itself as an ordered, still and perfect world, in contrast with a chaotic, changeful and imperfect outside. "The inside-outside relationship is equated here with the relationship between form and formlessness" (p. 904). It derives from the will to deny the "social outside", which is made of disturbances, risks and hazards which may, at any time, disrupt the established order or challenge the privileges pertaining the status of nobleman.

Balladur then examines an entirely different way of establishing the dialectics between the inside and outside of the dwelling. He chooses the Neutra villas to show that the difference in design which separates the modern American dwelling from the French Classical house resides in the fact that Neutra builds the inside with all the characteristics ascribed to the out-side. This is evidenced by the importance granted to the site, the view and the landscape, which will be kept intact, by the use of transparent materials, and by building an inside symmetrical with the outside which contains water, plants, woods and rocks whose natural grain and roughness are preserved. In other words, the inside is not defined but suggested as a potentiality, indicated in a positive mode: the use of transparent materials and of retractable partitions denies the need to conceal, which generally is negatively connotated. In such a house, the dweller no longer sees the world in front of him (like in the Classical house surrounded by formal gardens à la française) but all around him. And "the roughness of the

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inside materials returns to the dweller the consciousness of his own skin" (p. 911).

Through the understanding of the relationship between inside and outside, we encounter the question of what the inhabitant accepts to see of the exterior world and, coextensively, the question of what is exposed of him/herself to the sight of others. More specifically, it is through the experiences of hospitality, openness to others, claims for privacy that the dweller is confronted with the necessity to make their relationship to themselves more explicit.

In other words, dwelling presupposes choices, decisions about visibility, which is thus the second essential characteristic of the dwelling experience. By visibility, we mean that the inhabitant must initiate actions which contribute to hide and to show him/her to others as well as to him/herself, according to modalities which will always be personal. Facades are at once visages and masks. They embody the dialectical confrontation of private and social images the dweller experiences intimately and challenge his/her freedom to act on them as message conveyors of his/her identity (Korosec-Serfaty and Feeser, 1978).

These two phenomenological dimensions show that dwelling is a praxis, a series of concrete actions which are manifest not only at observable levels, such as setting up boundaries, acting on the inside and outside of the home (through maintenance, decoration, personalization, etc ...) but also and above all in the dweller's inner evolution which derives directly from such actions (Korosec-Serfaty, 1973; Graumann, 1978). Thus, the third characteristic of the dwelling experience is the appropriation of space, understood not only as the active mastery over a given place but also as an active personal involvement in giving new meaning to the appropriated places.

II. BACKGROUND FOR THE ANALYSIS OF PLACE MAKING: EMPIRICAL STUDIES OF THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF DWELLING

In subsequent work, the author set herself to test empirically and to define more precisely the phenomenological dimensions of the dwelling experience. She approached the latter from two different angles: either during a dramatic event, when the various aspects of the dwelling experience most strikingly reveal themselves, or through the questioning of apparently benign tasks like putting things away in drawers or in a back room, or making a decision about opening one's door to a visitor.

The first two of these studies in 'vicarious phenomenology" analyze familiar decisions and routine tasks. They deal with visibility and the relationship between the latter and the limits of the house.

The hidden and the visible

The first phenomenological study, at the same time theoretical and empirical, dealt with visibility through the analysis of the experience of the hidden spaces in the home (Korosec-Serfaty, 1984). Be they attics, cellars, boxes, drawers or closets, hidden spaces provide possibilities to experience invisibility, withdrawal, and secrecy as the necessary basis for the assertion of the social self.

Secrecy and hospitality

A later study (Korosec-Serfaty and Condello, 1989) focused on the relationships between the home boundaries, secrecy, and hospitality. More precisely, its purpose was to further examine the effects of our conception of the home as a place for secrecy on our ordinary reactions to requests for hospitality. It categorized visitors as complete strangers, familiar strangers, acquaintances and close friends or kinds, and showed that all are welcome on the basis of a kind of temporary contract ruling the use of the home. Most importantly, it underlines that if the terms of that contract are to ultimately limit a free use of the place by all visitors, in the case of close friends as well as kins such a contract places the moral responsibility of a restricted use of the home in their own hands.

The inside/outside and the experience of boundaries

Another study analyzed the experience of boundaries through its dramatization, in this case when one is burglarized (Korosec-Serfaty and Bolitt, 1986). The results not only showed that the door is perceived as a limit setting dialectical relationships between inside and outside, and represents a self-accepted limit within oneself, but also .that the uncontrolled access by another person to one's "interior" is the more painful as it means uncontrolled access to the hidden and not visible aspect of oneself. The experience of the limit between the inside and the outside of the home does revolve around the experience of an inner self which must be preserved

from the anarchic intrusion of the outside world. But, more importantly, the dwellers refer with more bitterness to the imposed gaze of the burglar on one's home than to the loss of material objects. Again, the importance of the home as a place for a personal definition of one's visibility is revealed.

The third phenomenological dimension of dwelling, that of appropriation, should be now studied, this time during one of its peak moments, that is to say, when people move homes.

III. THE CONCEPT OF APPROPRIATION OF SPACE

The studies dealing with some of the aspects of place appropriation are numerous. They are generally focused on personalization (Hansen and Altman, 1976; Altman and Chemers, 1980; Kron, 1983), the setting of territorial markers (Edney, 1972; Altman, 1975; Proshansky, Ittelson and Rivlin, 1976; Patterson, 1978), the arrangement and manipulation of the social meaning of objects (Baudrillard, 1968; Leroy, Bedos & Berthelot, 1970; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981), the mastery over the mechanisms of privacy and secrecy (Kruse, 1980; Mman, 1981; Korosec-Serfaty, 1984; 1985; 1986), and the attachment to the home (Fried, 1963). However, the present study will focus on the essentially dynamic and dialectic aspects of the appropriation process.

Graumann (1978) and Sansot (1978) believe this dynamism to be the crucial component of appropriation, which distinguishes it from its modes of actualization through the definition of limits, the arrangement of objects, personalization, etc ... "If we see appropriation as the interaction between the confrontation with things and the actualization of individual capacities, an empirical analysis of space appropriation must go along two directions, which are, measuring the changes in the environment, i.e. its objective meanings, and, independently, measuring the changes in the person, i.e. in his/her techniques or styles of confrontation" (Graumann, p. 122). It is to this transformation of the person that Wemer, Altman and Oxley also refer in their study of the temporal aspects in the home (1985). It is because we wish to catch hold of these dynamics in action that we have chosen another particularly dramatic moment in the dwelling experience, that is moving houses.

IV. FOCUS AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY OF PLACE MAKING AND THE EXPERIENCE OF TRANSITION AND RELOCATION

Any move implies a break in dwelling practices and a necessary appropriation of the new home. Analyzing the experience of moving ought to enable us to understand at the same time the psychological processes which prepare it and those processes through which a new and "anonymous" space is turned into a familiar home. The nature of our' focus therefore seems to dictate naturally an analysis made in exclusively temporal terms. We shall however resist such a temptation by proposing an hermeneutic approach which will enable us at the same time:

- 1) to describe moving as a process implying breaks and continuities in the uses and experience of dwelling,
- 2) but also the affective states which orientate it,
- 3) as well as the changes in the person that it implies.

This study is based on data collected during non-directed interviews, focused on moving, with twenty-five adults (thirteen men and twelve women) living with their family and who had moved home during the last year.

Fourteen are office workers, blue collars and maintenance workers, and eleven are commercial or industrial executives and professionals.

The first respondent was asked to provide us with the name and address of one or more other persons among her acquaintances or relatives who had recently moved. We proceeded in the same way with the next person, until we reached the size we had planned for our sample.

All of the respondents had the material means of moving, and the final decision to move was always theirs. None of them could be considered as being in a tragic situation (i.e. forced immigration, exile, losing one's home because of a dramatic family or financial situation), We believe this fact is crucial and should be kept in mind during our analysis. They are aged 25 to 45, i.e. young. Fabre and Taffin (1981) have shown that the younger the person, the more easily s/he moves, since the residential history of a person is linked to his/her family and job history. They also have shown that the persons concerned by moving are to be found among the young and the elderly. Our sample includes no elderly persons, for whom moving can be tragic and associated with the near prospect of death, and that also will have to be kept in mind when we tackle the analysis in temporal terms.

The thematic analysis of the interviews attempts to seize all the facets of the experience as it is described, i.e., reconstructed, by the respondents. It is thus a semantic approach which aims at understanding the phenomenon under consideration as a whole, and to highlight some of its main articulations. Although our aim was neither to find constants of themes nor make a quantitative analysis, let us however note, as an indication, that all the themes which appear here were mentioned by all respondents.

V, THE ANALYSIS

V,1 MOVING AS A SITUATION

The objective reasons of a move vary from one individual to the next: job promotion or change, birth of a child in the family, desire to accede to another social status, etc ... we recognize here what economists tell us about a young population.

However, moving is not experienced only with reference to one or another of these reasons, but in function of the dwellers inner acceptance of a multifaceted perspective. One is a private, intimate consent to the idea of leaving the place one has appropriated until then. The other, inseparable from the "objective" reason of the move and from accepting to go away, may be described as an inner acceptance of a given image of the dwellers future life, once the move is over. Third, moving implies a capacity to project what could possibly be "done with" the new living space. This projection means self-assigned tasks, focused on the dwelling, and thus a new, heightened awareness of how one usually dwells as well as a questioning of this routine. Lastly, a move is a time of active and explicit decisions about means to link past and future. From such decisions, a new spatial order will emerge, whose public and private dimensions will be immediately visible to oneself and to others.

This is why moving is a situation in the phenomenological sense of the word, i.e. not an aggregate of conditions more or less exterior to the person, but a whole which is structured by positions about one's past, a view of the future and intentional actions which will alter the person's own familiar territory.

V.2 THE MOVE AS DISRUPTION

One major facet of the experience of transition stems from the affective disposition of the dweller towards the move, what we call the "intimate consent" to the idea of leaving the place one has appropriated until then. This disposition can be negative or positive, independantly from the "objective" reason to leave. It is perceived as a disruption, i.e. an unwelcome change when the previous home has become the very reference, the anchor point of one's past actions.

Thus, a man belonging to a low income group and a woman belonging to an upper income one use the same words to describe their refusal to leave, the one his native home, the other the home she made for her family.

The man knows that his present house will be cramped when their new baby is born, and he thinks his wife's desire to have a larger home is "reasonable", however he tells us : "it's quite simple, two months before (the move) ... it made me sick, I started feeling terrible about it". The woman tells us her husband has been promoted to a new job, which implied a higher social status, more independence, a better material living: "I experienced this move as a trauma at all levels ... I refused ... I felt panicky about my future life and about leaving a place I'd invested for twelve years ..."

The very thought of the non-accepted move is referred to as a painful physical experience, revealed by expressions such as "I felt sick", a time when the body is unduly tested, challenged, brutally solicited to prove it can accomplish more than the daily routines. On the other hand, what is taken for granted (a familiar place, ordinary ways of appropriating it) suddenly seems to have lost value and meaning in the others eyes: the spouse who suggests the move, the friends who congratulate you for the job promotion or the birth of a child, etc ...

This subjective perception of a loss leads to a kind of passive resistance. We call it "passive", because all our respondents eventually moved homes, but actually it is actively conveyed in their speech, often in violent words which also reveal the way each person "restructures" or rationalizes the reasons of his/her resistance. Thus, a woman refers to the new and higher status house as "an even greater load of work" and finds far reaching terms to express her rejection of the event: "The (new) villa is (implies) a form of physical investment which I refused, for it meant a greater alienation to a new place, and " it meant less time for work (outside of the home), to do something beneficial, beyond the daily routines", Another woman, who moves often as her husband is a military officer, insists "her real home" is in her native town, that she has "nothing to say" about the present one, but would like us to ask her to speak about her real home. She then articulates what we consider to be quite a rigid principle: "when we moved here, my watchword was to do only the minimum (to change the place)".

Thus, anxiety underlies the resistance we are describing. Huguet (1968) and Lugassy (1974) have stressed that new or unusual housing forms, aesthetics and interior design cause such an anxiety among the dwellers. In other words, an unusual structuration of the inhabited space may cause a questioning of the structure of the self. In the experience of moving home, it is the projection of the confrontation with a new space which reveals the fear and anxiety of the questioning of oneself.

V.3 MOVING AS A VISION OF THE FUTURE

Conversely, the capacity to leave behind the dwelling place may be taken for natural, "nonnal" as the respondents say, because it is integrated to a given vision of the dynamism of their life: "I\ isn't an impulsive decision at all, but we decided to move to a better apartment which make for more of a family life" (woman, 25). In this case, the conscious decision is to find a place which would allow an adjustment to one's desire for a new social identity (e.g. as a member of a "real" family). The dwelling sustains an evolution. I\ provides at once a ground to anchor various identification phenomena and to evaluate one's growth.

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Because the home is affectively over invested in our society (Korosec-Serfaty, 1985; 1986), the wish to live in a place whose appearance and characteristics are perceived as being congruent with the image one has of his/her private and social self is socially seen as "nonnal", i.e. common and legitimate. However, the fact that some people resist thoughts of moving homes, while others easily accept them suggests that it is not necessarily in the dwelling that one acts to make visible the representation he has of him/herself, i.e. his/her identity. One could rather say that the action on space in general, and the making of a place in particular (e.g. a work place) is one of the manifest aspects of the making of one's life.

In our cultural context¹, the dwelling is seen as the adequate place for this expression of the evolution of the self. It provides a private territory where identity crises and the hesitant evolution towards the unity of self is not questioned by others. This is why it can be considered as a transitional space, in the sense given to the word "transitional" by Winnicott (1975) when he refers to transitional objects or phenomena. A transitional space is an intermediary space of experience, whose existence must not be justified neither as an inner reality nor as an exterior one. It is a territory where one can attempt to build one's autonomy, mainly through his/her own action upon it.

V.4 CREATIVITY AND THE FEAR OF DEATH

The house as a transitional space is most vividly illustrated by people who insist at once on the creative aspect of making one's own home again and again and on their pleasure to move. They sound jubilant, but their obvious delight is also an active rejection of the threat of death they perceive in immobility. They make their ability to leave their previous home seem like a privilege, and their present themselves as being more creative, more open to the world around them. Such positive value judgments are summed up in the statement of a thirty year old woman: "we're special ... we love moving, we love redecorating apartments ... not a hobby, we don't like to stay forever, we feel like we're suffocating ... it gets me into a good mood, moving, it's relaxing ... there's a concrete result ... It's positive, mostly because it proves that you exist ... you may feel proud about it".

Moving can thus reassure the dweller about his own existence, the fact that s/he is still in control of her/his own life. The dwelling is not a place one adapts to, but a place one struggles with, until a complete mastery is accomplished.

But in order to avoid being alienated by the very space she has appropriated, the dweller must move again, this time to be reassured he is not dominated by his past actions. One man articulates again and again that he must be some kind of a nomad because a place can appropriate him :

"When I finish arranging this apartment, I'll feel like leaving ... I don't like ... sticking to a place ... it's rather creepy ... in a word: I don't like it. I couldn't own an apartment. I think buying a place is a way of dying, you can't but become its prisoner ... I can't ... I don't imagine for a second" (Man, thirty year old).

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This fear of dying from the very security offered by the home is also illustrated in the following statement, made by a man who very willingly moved into a house he bought with obvious pleasure: "In this house, the very development of our lives is at stakes. We shall have to be nice with the neighbors ... for this is where we shall raise our children and enjoy our retirement time ... In a way, maybe it's a bit distressing to know in advance that we shall stay in our own house ... but what evens things is that we'll precisely be in our own house ... we have decided about everything ourselves, we have decorated it, it's an enormous security" (Man, thirty seven year old).

V.5 PACKING AND UNPACKING: THE EXPERIENCE OF FRAGMENTATION

Moving implies that the dwellers dismantle their home landscape, which is routinely experienced as a whole, and in so doing, meet again the traces of their history. This dislocation of a whole challenges the efforts of every person towards unity. The fear of incoherence, of losing hold of the old self, but also the excitement due to the risk moving represents are revealed by the great variety of the words used to characterize the way the disorder created by the various moments of the move (packing things in the old house, unpacking them in the new one) and the fact of moving itself as a global phenomenon: it was a "circus", a "souk" (Le. a north african bazaar), a "fair", a "no man's land", "monstruous", etc ... People also use names of places (like building and military sites), which, in the current french slang, evoke the disorder of objects and general confusion.

However, such a "terrible disorder" also induces a narcissistic contemplation of the "elements" one is made of, e.g. the temptation to immerse oneself in the contemplation of forgotten objects. The respondents describe at length their struggle when they have to sort out objects. The interplay of hesitations and decisions is a playful activity for the dweller who has integrated the move in her/his vision of her/his future: "I would linger ... contemplating the objects with my husband "" but this can't be, things must be done faster ... I discovered a pile of photos which I started to put in order, simply to be able to look at them again (...) this does not make sense, one puts in order what is in disorder just to make order again, well, this is dumb!" (woman, twenty-seven year old)

V.6 DIMENSIONS OF THE EXPERIENCE OF TRANSITION

Narcissistic pleasure and projected action

In other studies devoted to the phenomenological characteristics of the experience of the dwelling, the author has shown that the disruption of one's private order awakes in the dweller the fear of psychological fragmentation. The present study completes such an assertion by stressing that this fear is not unidimensional, but includes a narcissistic pleasure which stems from the sudden heightened awareness of the continuity between one's past and future.

This awareness is the main dimension of the experience of moving as a time of transition. It is based on a deliberate viewing of the future which is a projection, over a space, of potential actions which the inhabitant gives himself as tasks to carry out. Thus moving implies a capacity to foresee in the new home a potential transitional space. Dwellers insist that they "saw" at once what they were going to "do" with the house they were going to live in, and a woman just expresses this idea by saying: "I already lived with that balcony, I now realize that it isn't so different from what I had imagined it would be like" (twenty year old).

Such a capacity to foresee the new house as a transitional space is the second dimension of the experience of transition. It implies trusting oneself, and one's will to provide oneself with a space which is at once a social space (since it is the place of a group, i.e. the family) and a very private one. The projection of another landscape in the new house equals to the "disappropriation" of the old house. This is what is expressed by a respondent who says "I think one has already moved when one is able to imagine one's life in another place. All in all, the most is done and the rest is only a practical Question" (woman, thirty-seven year old).

Transition, therefore, is not an unstable state, the experience of being between past and present but essentially an evaluation of possible futures. The very pleasure to rummage in one's past expresses such a distance towards it as it expresses a complex state of expectation. The inhabitants never disconnect pleasure, playfulness from anguish and self-questioning. However, in all cases, the house is first of all an inhabited image or representation, before it is actually lived in. This oneiric process that makes possible the moving, as well as its inner acceptance or rejection, because it means a fresh approach to oneself, and decisions about the orientations of one's life. One respondent, who consciously decided that this would be his last move is somewhat ill at ease to sound like he has given up all efforts to reconsider from time to time the life ahead of him:

"Well, this may sound a bit morbid. To know life will be just a straight line ...• (man, forty-two years old).

Trusting oneself

The projection of such actions helps the self to feel reassured about its own value, and the feeling of self trust constitutes the other dimension of the experience of transition. It does not imply that all actual actions on space will be positive, or simply sufficient to assert one's identity. But it does tell us that people don't change their environments only to solve practical problems, or to actualize a cultural pattern of social and private life. Dwellers change their environment also in order to exercise control over their own image of themselves, to keep trust in themselves as capable of changing without denying the unity of their self.

Moving as an achievement

The respondents describe their moving as a physical accomplishment followed by a feeling of rest and recovered peacefulness :

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"We finish with a big effort, we settle down, we look around us, we're exhausted but we're happy" (woman, twenty five year old). Or again : "you've got to make a big effort, it's like ... like a tomado which would sweep up something which doesn't belong to us (...) we created our atmosphere here and little by little we feel at home" (woman, thirty year old).

The other aspect of moving as an achievement is illustrated by the big effort the dwellers made to gather friends, neighbors and relatives at various stages of the move to help them. They refer to this part of the story as to an exceptional time of conviviality during which work, talking, eating and drinking were shared.

All respondents stressed that they provided abundant food and drink and that they were not demanding, didn't impose on the helpers their own anxiety to do much, or their deadlines. Food and drink make of the situation a symbolic exchange which masks the actual trade (food for work) and jokes make it a pleasurable time. Its idealization does not prevent several interviewees to reveal that it actually was an agreement to exchange gifts (Mauss, 1925) :

"Friends came to visit us in the old house, and, during the discussion, we mentioned the move. They said, well, then you should give a party before leaving this house. We said, o.k., provided you help us with the move" (woman, twenty-five year old).

V,7 RITES OF PURIFICATION

The account of the first actions on the future home evokes purification rites. By way of particularity concrete words, of realistic descriptions of the dirt in the new dwelling and through detailed and precise enumeration of the things, designated as excrements, abandoned by the former occupants, the respondents communicate a strong desire to drive away the former dwellers. This symbolic expulsion appears in all the cases, even in the dwellings thought to be very clean by the new inhabitants.

This dimension is evidenced by the redundancy of the descriptions, the detailed enumeration of the various stages of the cleaning like in the following sentence: "we washed, cleaned, scrubbed, disinfected every corner" (man, twenty-five year old). It is also evidenced by the use of words which express a violent rejection of the dwelling mode of the former dweller, perceived as "repulsive", "disgusting", and of the dwelling which is said to have been "horrible", "terrible", "dirty", "stuffy", "sad", etc ...

People resort to water, fire and the most powerful detergents to get rid of this unbearable dirt: "we cleaned up everything, took out everything and we burned up the whole lot outside, we made a fire in the garden, it was the only solution" (man, twenty-seven year old).

Cleaning is a "disinfection", i.e. an effort to attain purity which is thus an end in itself, independently from the

"objective" state of the new dwelling : "there's always things to clean up, even if the apartment seems in a perfect state of cleanliness. I think it's natural that we disinfect, some smells linger, there's stains and I think nobody can live in an apartment where there's still something of people who are strangers after all" (woman, thirty year old).

The purification of the dwelling therefore amounts to driving out the stranger who used to live in the home because what cannot be borne is his ownership, symbolized by his dirt. The latter is called "excrement" and considered as his territorial marker. This is why it is his dirt, rather than dirt in general, his smell, and not smells in general, that must be annihilated : "when it's your, well, your own dirt ... we're sore when there's a coffee stain on the carpet, but then we know that it's coffee stain; but when it's the stains made by others, it's repulsive, you see" (man, thirty-two year old).

The expression of repulsiveness is explicitly connected with the lingering presence of a stranger in what is already one's private territory. Its function is to legitimize the need to make the dwelling conform to an idea, to impose a private order on an alien one. In this sense, rites of purification are the equivalent of all the other actions which aim at re-ordering our environment, like decorating, papering, displaying objects, etc ... Douglas (1984) sums up this idea in a few words: "Dirt is essentially disorder" (p.2).

Disinfection and purity also help to avoid contamination, i.e. ultimately, contact. They create and maintain distance, in this case the social distance which society expects us to maintain with strangers. Douglas (1984) believes that "some pollutions are used as analogies for expressing a general view of the social order" (p.3). It is used here first as an analogy for the separation between strangers and, second, for the separation of private territories. Third, it is used as an analogy for the necessity to follow the rules of hygiene, not because they help us to avoid diseases, but because they are moral values, which have been imposed as such (Heller, 1979; Gleichman, 1981). The cleanliness of one's private space serves as a metaphor for one's morality. It is based on an anxiety to prove that one is worth respect and attention. Lastly, pollution is used here as an analogy for the house as the socially legitimized place to anchor one's identity.

This last aspect of the purification process is explicitly conveyed by the respondents' discourse: "it's normal (to clean up). We want to live in our own home, not in the former tenant's. Even if it had been very clean, we'd have redone everything to our taste. If we'd leave something of the former tenant, well, I wouldn't like it, I'd have all the time the feeling that I'm not in my own home, I don't know how to explain it, but after all he was a stranger, we don't know how he lived" (woman, forty year old).

This statement includes a reference to the need to purify the place from a former presence, and connects the new order to the new dweller's own "taste". Most respondents make such associations between their "own mark", their taste, and their need to chase the smells of the former inhabitant. One of them tells us that the new house had a "sad smell", and that it eventually gained "a family smell" which, at last, made her relax. In other

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words, the home appropriation process, of which purification is one aspect, involves a wide array of experiences which are interdependent. The sensory experiences are intimately linked to the actions which alter the order of the place. They reveal the importance of pleasure in the home appropriation process.

The reference to taste is a reference to what the dwellers know about themselves, what they like, and dislike. Thus the knowledge about oneself is enjoyed, becomes a pleasure-associated dimension, when it can be used as a source of action.

V.8 THE CELEBRATION OF THE NEW HOUSE

The new house is celebrated through the sharing of food and drink, sometimes as soon as the move is over, sometimes months after the family has settled in the new house. The rationale for the celebration is the happiness to be in it, but the respondents admit they are expected to give some kind of a party, impromptu or formal. They are thus paying a debt to the group they belong to for their new status. This symbolic payment continues a very old tradition in rural France. This study does not allow us to discern a pattern in this aspect of the appropriation of the new house, but it is clear that the social expectations revolve in this case, as in the case of the invitation of friends and relative to help with the papering, cleaning, and the move to the new house around the idea of exchange of gifts, be they material or not, and in the related idea of debt payment.

Besides the social celebration, one observes other, more private ones, and a sensitivity to the beneficial actions the dwellers feel they should accomplish to attain a certain degree of harmony between themselves and their place. These actions are based on a respectful approach of the house. One respondent clearly states this desire to slowly get acquainted with it : "one must get acquainted with a house the way we get acquainted with a person. There is a kind of exchange. When you hang a picture on a wall, you give something, and the wall gives you something back, which is an aesthetic pleasure" (thirty year old). And another stresses the idea of a discovery as a personal pleasure which excludes brutality : "I think it's fascinating to get acquainted with an environment little by little. Even with the house, one becomes familiar little by little with its sounds and its smells too, it's like being a little bit like an explorer, and I'm still discovering things and places, like the attic" (man, thirty-two year old).

Other actions aimed at creating a favorable atmosphere for the encounter between the house and the dwellers complete such quiet and private celebrations of the new home. One twenty-five year old man puts it this way: "all I wanted was a week off to rest and to savor this new life." And another one mentions that his wife has made some decoration before the move itself, then adds: " it was very pleasant to come in the house, we already felt at home, with some decoration, we felt welcome, it was so pleasant ... once the furniture was in place, it was quite different (...) there is less room for poetry. But it's interesting to discover an apartment in this way, I must confess my wife had a good idea".

Such statements enforce the idea that transition is not an unstable state but an acute awareness of the continuity of one's life and of the fact that one is necessarily oriented towards the future. The dwellers tell us about their own ways to act on what is already psychologically theirs and at the same time about the ways they help themselves to enter this new state of mastery. Non-violence towards their home is non-violence towards themselves. This is why references to pleasure are so clearly articulated: "It was nice to see all this empty flat with only pictures on the wall. It was like an art gallery. one had a feeling of ... of order" (man, thirty year old). And a woman tells us : "When the flat is painted, papered, it's the moment I prefer, without furniture, when it's empty and newly refurbished, it's fantastic, you have the impression that you have immense rooms. Just put a carton in them and it's the last blow. Everything seems to tighten up".

V.9 TIME, BODY, AND PLACE

Lastly, the respondents mention the lapse of time during which they learned to orient themselves in the new home as an important phase of the appropriation process. Shilder (1971) and Lurat's (1976) studies on the body image have shown that the capacity to "situate" oneself in one's own body is the necessary basis for the capacity to orient, move and situate oneself in space. The move into a new space with its own physical constraints (the location of windows, doors and door knobs, electrical outlets, of rooms in relation to the corridor, etc ...) make the awareness of the body image more necessary, until new habits are internalized.

This internalization of the detailed configuration of the new home is the test of the dwellers' projection in the new house. It marks the end of an adjustment to what is "given", i.e. the actual physical constraints" of the place, and the beginning of a new phase, when movements have become "automatic" and when the appropriation processes continues at other levels of the use of the home.

VI. CONCLUSION: THE STUDY OF THE HOME EXPERIENCE IN CONTEXT

The study of the experience of transition and relocation shows that the appropriation process is a continuous struggle with the construction, destabilization, and restructuration of that aspect of one's identity that is anchored in space in general, and in the home in particular. Routine uses of space reassure the dwellers and allow them to invest their energy in other endeavors, but mask only temporarily the complex interplay of anxiety and pleasure, fear of immobility as well as the fear of being confused with a stranger. Lastly, the study shows the importance of social recognition and exchange in place making.

In concluding with this study the series of empirical analysis of the main phenomenological dimensions of dwelling, it is necessary to reassess a few contextual ideas.

First, in this work as well as in the previous ones, the author has regularly referred to the making and uses of the home as processes of construction of the self. However, action on space constitutes only one terrain for such a construction, which involves a large array of psychological, social, cultural, and economic phenomena that find ground for expression and action in a diversity contexts and places, e.g. the work place. Therefore, the understanding of the home experience should not be confused with the study of the self, and, furthermore, should not serve as a pretext for some sort of mystic experience of the self, or vice versa.

Second, studies of the home experience tend to magnify the role of homes, which are often seen as indispensable and ideal shelters. It is important to keep in mind that this vision is a recent one, which stems from a long cultural process of elaboration of privacy as a value and a social right. The emphasis contemporary western societies put on this vision provides the basis for the approach of the home as a place for the construction of the self, but it is neither universal nor "natural".

Third, a more general and critical view of the studies conducted by the author show that the home experience is conflictual, and charged with much anxiety and fear. The dwellers know they have to reassess their ownership daily, and that the frontiers of their private realm are fragile and can be questioned at any time. They fear fragmentation, transparence, visibility, visitors - strangers or otherwise -and the accumulation of dirt: negotiation with oneself and the world outside the home is the key to this constant process of building privacy, and, ultimately, secrecy.

This last idea has important implications : one is that most approaches that focus on the positive dimensions of the home experience deny its complexity, and, therefore, the very characteristics that sustain its dynamics and potential for renewal. Indeed, many poetic approaches of the home experience engage in such celebrations, but, at their best, they draw their strength precisely from their intimate understanding of the home as a place for rest

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and harmony as well as for the dynamics of conflict with oneself and with the outside world.

Similarly, it is simplistic to assimilate the home to a kind of magic territory, full of mysterious qualities that may or may not be beneficial to the dweller. The house is a place for action, and the result of the dweller's actions.

Furthermore, it is as highly simplistic to expect the dweller to be in complete harmony with their dwelling. The house is a place for secrecy, that is to say a place that has its dark, unexplored, and neglected sides that are built by the dweller himself according to his own private evolution and inner needs at various times in his life. Such "dark" sides must therefore exist as the ultimate territory for their privacy, and their complexity as the basis of the very actions of the dweller on the world.

The quest for transparency of the house and complete harmony between dweller and home would amount, in many ways, to a denial of the dialectics between the inner and private evolution of the self and their "translation" into action on the home. It would therefore amount to a reductionist vision of the self, as well as, to a certain extent, an authoritarian view of the home and self experiences as one phenomenon that should be transparent and whole to be authentic.

Lastly, the study of the home experience shouldn't ignore the relationship between the need for secrecy and social distance it reveals in our time and societies and the more general issue of public life. The vision and patterns of contemporary public sociability, like the modern vision of home, are the outcome of the socio-historic evolution of mentalities and conceptions of daily life, and the dialectics between the two are known (Habermas, 1978; Sennett, 1979, 1990; Joseph, 1981, 1984; Simmel, 1984, 1989; Roncayolo, 1990, Korosec-Serfaty, 1985, 1988, 1991). Such a larger approach will be in accordance with the phenomenological method, which stresses the importance of the historic and temporal factors in the understanding of phenomena, and will therefore be useful to the study of the home, but will also give it a useful measure of relativity.

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